

## UTAH SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION 2019-2020 OPERATING BUDGET REQUEST

Snow College

\$1,225,000

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### **Institution Budget Priorities: IT Upgrades and Employment Needs** **\$1,010,000**

**Regents' Strategic Priorities** – Capacity—Implement needed upgrades to our IT infrastructure; hire an HR specialist to meet increased employee needs and hire five additional faculty in high-demand areas.

#### **Description** –

As demand for integrated technology needs have increased, Snow College struggles to meet the challenges of IT security, backup, and capacity. We have immediate needs to update servers and systems that facilitate storage, information access, and growth capacity.

Our Human Resources office has two full-time employees and a part-time employee. The College has 344 full-time employees, 200 part-time employees, approximately 100 adjuncts, and on average 400 student employees. CUPA national standards recommend one HR FTE per 63 full-time FTE employees. This would suggest that Snow College needs 5.5 HR FTE's. An additional full-time specialist will allow us to help reduce the burden currently being placed on our HR office as a result of the growth of the College's full-time FTE's in the recent past. This specialist will be tasked with managing searches, data entry, tracking staff and handling new employee onboarding tasks.

Snow College has seen steady overall enrollment growth. As a two-year institution, we must provide access to General Education courses and courses that prepare students to transfer to four-year institutions. In addition, we have an increased need to better prepare students for the majors they will declare when they transfer to four-year institutions. These additional faculty members will help us meet these challenges.

#### **Justification** –

Our IT Department has taken many steps to upgrade our computing systems. We have built server modules, made hires in systems analysis, IT security, and improved cabling and distribution. Increased pressure on existing systems has caused internet breakdowns and other temporary system failures because we no longer have enough capacity in our existing systems. Funding in this area will greatly relieve these pressures and give us room to facilitate system growth.

Our HR office has found it difficult to manage searches, process forms and provide service in a timely way because of growth in the number of College employees. Increased reporting requirements, growth in the number of applicants seeking employment, and the need to enter and store data in efficient ways is weighing heavily on our HR employees. An additional specialist will greatly ease this burden and will help our HR office respond to College needs in a timely manner.

As the College rolls-out a new enrollment management plan and a new general education program, we are going to need to adjust to the needs of students in bottleneck courses. Traditionally these bottlenecks have been common in composition, mathematics, life science and physical science courses. Curricular challenges are shifting, however, as we experience high demand for courses in other areas. For this reason, we are experiencing challenges meeting student demand in a number of areas, including typical first-year courses and courses that prepare students for majors.

**Outcomes** – Funding for IT will enable us to increase server and other technology capacity, add additional employees to address ongoing challenges and be better prepared for IT expansion in the future. It will also give us greater security of data stored in our systems.

The addition of a position in Human Resources will help the College improve HR responsiveness in the following areas:

- Data entry and management;
- Timely management of applications and search processes;
- Tracking of onboarding procedures;
- Division of office responsibilities.

In addition to addressing student demand for General Education courses, additional faculty will help us respond to demands for courses that four-year institutions want students to have completed prior to their transferring to those institutions, including:

- Sophomore-level discipline-specific methodology courses;
- Quantitative methodology courses;
- Prerequisite courses that will enable students to take 3000 and 4000 level courses at four-year institutions.

### **Assessment** –

IT oversight is provided by our Chief Information Officer (CIO) and by the Vice President for Finance and Administration (VPFA). The CIO is assisted by the Integrated Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC) which is composed of staff and faculty who work with IT in addressing the needs of the College. ITAC reports regularly to the Faculty Senate and is very aware of the needs of IT and will be a good resource in working with IT as they add staff and equipment. The VPFA meets regularly with the CIO and will be able to monitor and advise as IT hires new employees and adds equipment.

We are conducting an internal audit of our Human Resources office. This audit will help us identify areas where we need to improve. As with all audits done by our internal auditor, and based on the recommendations of the audit, the College will identify priorities that must be met, and we will create a job description and a review process of this position as well of all of HR, to

insure that we are addressing our most pressing needs. Snow College completes follow-ups on all audits to insure that best practices are used in addressing areas of concern. In addition, regular performance reviews will be done to make sure that the new full-time HR employee is meeting the needs of this office and the College.

Snow College recently completed a strategic enrollment management plan. Based on this plan, we have identified curricular needs we face now and will face in the future. We have charged our Institutional Research Director and our future Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management (search underway) to help us follow through in assessing:

- Areas we need to develop in order to meet student applicant interests;
- Areas of bottleneck courses;
- Areas where methodology and prerequisite courses need to be created to prepare students for transfer.

We are guided in our enrollment plan by an ongoing environmental scan of potential students as well as constant analysis of enrolled courses and analysis of student success and transfer plans. Information is gathered and submitted to the Enrollment Management Steering Committee that assesses and makes recommendations in recruiting and retention.

***Budgetary Plan –***

**IT:** Two Full-time staff members: Salary and Benefits: \$180,000  
Equipment Upgrades: \$400,000

**HR:** Full-time staff member. Salary and Benefits: \$80,000

**Four Faculty Positions:** Salaries and Benefits, regular faculty members: \$350,000

Total: \$1,010,000

**Institution Budget Priorities: Predictive Analytics Software and Student Success Expansion  
\$215,000**

***Regents' Strategic Priorities*** – Timely Completion—Predictive analytics software is needed to meet the growing demands of assessing student progress. We need to better identify potential barriers to completion. Analytic software programs have proven to be valuable assets in identifying ways colleges can assist students in their curricular plans. We also face increased demands in our advising office. Two additional full-time advisers will greatly help us meet student demand.

***Description –***

While Snow College has one of the highest completion and transfer rates among two-year colleges in the country, we know we can do more. Students who can complete college often

drop out because they encounter barriers in the form of inadequate course preparation, enrollment in courses that may not be the best options for major preparation, poor course sequence planning, and other related challenges. Predictive data analytics packages such as *Civitas* and *Starfish* provide institutions of higher learning with tools that identify barriers and provide data that can be used to help students get past these barriers. With the passage of S.B. 206, all institutions are seeking ways to better access and use data to assist them in directing students into paths that will increase success.

We would like every first-year student to meet regularly with academic advisers. Advisers serve in the trenches in helping to direct students in course selection and planning for majors. But they also help students understand the need for proper sequencing of courses and direct them to get help from special courses that can help them succeed in areas such as course testing, homework skills, seeking assistance in math and writing, time management and so forth. Increasing our full-time advising office with two additional advisers will greatly expand our abilities to serve more students and relieve some of the burden on existing advisers so they can be more effective in following up with students who are more likely to need help.

#### ***Justification –***

We have utilized data resources such as *Argos*, *Banner*, and *Qualtrics*. While all of these software packages are helpful, none of them “talk” to one another. We need a predictive data analytics system that enables us to do quick studies and longer-term studies of courses, student choices and enrollment trends. Studies done by Utah State University and the University of Utah have shown that data analytics programs such as *Civitas* and *Starfish* are highly effective in identifying student preferences, student challenges and trends that help institutions adapt quickly to meet the needs of students. In addition, these data are also of great interest to USHE and the legislature because they provide the most accurate picture of how resources can be deployed to increase student completion rates.

Based on *NACADA 2011 National Survey of Academic Advising* the national median case load of advisees per full-time professional academic advisor was 296:1. Currently Snow College has a ratio of approximately 554:1 on the Ephraim Campus. The student to advisor ratio on the Richfield campus is currently close enough to the suggested guideline to be adequate there. It is also important to note that most Student Success Advisors currently have additional duties in excess of their normal academic advising responsibilities (ex: 4-Year University visit coordination, Help Sessions & Supplemental Instruction coordination, etc.). The addition of two additional advisors would reduce the Snow College ratio to 364:1 and allow Snow College to: (1) assign academic advisors for all first-year students (2) become more proactive in the way we interact with assigned advising caseloads (3) better leverage existing and emerging technologies to identify “at-risk” student populations early and intervene in a timely manner.

***Outcomes*** – The University of Utah estimates that their predictive analytics tool helped retain 250 students who otherwise would have dropped out of college. In addition to being a \$750,000 savings to the university, the data analytics tools helped them identify areas they were unaware of that created barriers to student completion. In addition, they note that studies can be done in a day that help them determine program effectiveness. These studies used to

take weeks and months to complete. We believe we can do more to help students complete and to finish. We are confident from conferences we have attended and our conversations with colleagues in our sister USHE institutions that the predictive analytics software will be a boon to student retention and success.

In recent years, the Student Success Advisement Office has expanded office hours, adopted new technology, changed their advising practices, and implemented a peer mentoring program. These efforts have greatly improved our advising outreach and abilities. The additional advisers will enable us to reduce our Ephraim campus student to adviser ration to 364:1 from 554:1. This will greatly improve the quality of advising.

**Assessment** – Predictive analytic tools require one to two years to implement fully. We will be able to assess the tool's performance as we go as we share data with the Office of Institutional Research, Academic Affairs, Students Success, Enrollment Management, Trio and academic departments. We keep a statistical yearbook and an environmental scan of current and prospective students. These data books will be able to report the increase of usable data and the outcomes achieved. We expect to see student completion improve by several percentage points in the first three years of usage as we learn of areas we can improve in.

Our advising office keeps records of advising caseloads. We will easily be able to gather statistics that shows how the advising load has been distributed and we will be able to follow student course completion per adviser. These are statistics that we keep on a regular basis.

**Budgetary Plan –**

Predictive Analytics tool: \$65,000

Two staff adviser positions: Salary and Benefits: \$150,000

Total: \$215,000

Total for Institution Budget Priorities Category: \$1,225,000