UtahMentor.org – Utah’s Premier College Access Web Portal

Start-Up:
Utah’s College Outreach Program originated in 1999 under the direction and guidance of the Utah System of Higher Education. In 2007, this program has expanded to include other state wide collaborative partnerships, and a staff of five dedicated to grass roots efforts relating to college access and outreach. UtahMentor.org, intuitively connects, guides, and assists Utah students with proper academic and financial information allowing for proper preparation for college. This program is funded and sustained by the Utah Higher Education Assistance Authority, a subsidiary of the Utah System of Higher Education.

Mission Statement:
Utah’s College Outreach & Access Mission is to inform, educate, guide, and assist all students and parents with making informed decisions about preparing, participating, completing, and paying for Higher Education in Utah, with a priority and emphasis in serving low-income, first generational, and ethnic minority students.

Partnerships:
K-16 Alliance
Utah System of Higher Education (USHE)
Utah Higher Education Assistance Authority (UHEAA)
Utah Education Savings Plan (UESP)
Public & Private Two and Four Year Colleges and Universities
  - Offices of Admissions, Recruitment, School Relations, Financial Aid, & Student Services
  - GEARUP, TRIO, Upward Bound, and ETS
Utah’s College of Applied Technology (9 campuses)
Utah State Office of Education
Utah School Districts (Middle and High Schools)
Utah’s Department of Workforce Services
Adult Education
Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Issues and Hurdles:
Marketing and branding (name recognition and web portal address)
Aligning philosophy, objectives, goals, and rigorous curriculum, between public and higher education
Aligning cohesion between the Utah System of Higher Education and UHEAA
Creating and sustaining informational, educational, and professional development for Utah Educators
Aligning state web based systems (Choices and Mentor)
Building and sustaining trust with State constituents

Sustainability:
School, Student & Outreach Services Team
State wide “Buy-In”
College Access Initiative (HERA), State Guaranty Agency required to deliver by Federal law
State agencies recognizing the “VALUE” in state wide collaborative partnerships
Non-duplicative efforts (combined funding and resources)
Measuring and evaluating usage, success, and application to educational policy
Funding: Guarantee Agency, Legislature, Grants, Federal Perkins (or combination thereof)

Future Projections:
An enhanced College Access Web Portal with one universal message, “Prepare, Participate, and Complete Higher Education.”
  - Education Pays, work demographics have shifted, sustaining a family of four, and quality of life
Ongoing Legislative funding
State wide GEARUP partnership (collaborative web portal and training)
State Agency shared funding contribution, marketing, and resources
Re-branding from UtahMentor to a new program, alliance, URL, and/or foundation name to represent all agencies
- Consolidating many current related college and career planning web sites into one
- UtahMentor, UtahChoices, UtahPathways, UtahMajors, & UtahCTE
Utah Scholarship Database
Measure and evaluate association of services with enrollment, participation, and completion rates using StudentTracker

**Web Site Delivery and Methodology:**
- Connect Careers to Majors to Colleges
- Plan & Prepare Academically for College
- Select and Visit a Campus
- Apply for Admissions
- Search Scholarships
- Research & Apply for Financial Aid
- Save, Add, and Edit your information in your eBackPack