

# EdUcation is Utah

**Strategic Plan  
2024-2030**

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The College of Education extends sincere thanks to the college community for their active participation and continued engagement throughout the strategic planning process. The feedback provided by our faculty, staff, students, and external partners, along with their collaborative vision for the future of the college, is the foundation of this plan and a testament to their effort, dedication, and insight.

We also express our gratitude to the members of the strategic planning steering committee whose dedication, guidance, and insights have been invaluable to shaping this plan and the college's future.

**Kirsten Butcher:** Steering Committee Chair, Associate Dean for Faculty and Academic Affairs and Professor, Department of Educational Psychology

**Erin Castro:** Associate Professor, Department of Educational Leadership and Policy

**Cori Groth:** Associate Director, Utah Education Policy Center

**Kerry Ann Herman:** Career-Line Associate Professor, Urban Institute for Teacher Education

**Sharlene Kiuvara:** Associate Professor, Department of Special Education

**Jim Logue:** IT Manager

**AJ Metz:** Associate Professor, Department of Educational Psychology

**Jason Newnum:** Academic Advisor, Department of Education, Culture, and Society

**Wenyang Sun:** Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Culture, and Society

# LETTER FROM THE DEAN



Dear College of Education Community,

At the beginning of this year, we began a historic strategic planning process for our college. The goal of this process was two-fold: to create a unique and visionary plan tailored to the strengths and opportunities of our college, and to further the goals set by the university through the Strategy 2030 planning process.

This plan was built upon the idea that EdUcation is Utah, taking inspiration from four pillars that set the framework for this strategic planning process. From the dedication of our college community to the continued guidance of our steering committee, I have watched these four pillars come to life in ways that make me more excited than ever for the future of our college and for the path this strategic plan has laid out for our future:

**EdUcation is IMPACT:** It is the foundation of learning and serves as a pillar of the University of Utah and the College of Education. The unique voices of all who participated in this strategic planning process and the impact of our past and future work, drove the development of this ambitious, yet grounded plan.

**EdUcation is PROGRESS:** It is inextricably linked to change and transformation. This process highlighted the key steps our college can, and should, take to improve and innovate the way we shape future educators, train current and future leaders, and prepare professionals for diverse fields.

**EdUcation is COMMUNITY:** It is a driving force that informs our mission of teaching, research, and service at both the university and the college. By bringing together students, faculty, staff, alumni, and key stakeholders, this process served as a unifier for our college community.

**EdUcation is YOU:** Its impacts spread to alumni, K-12 districts and schools, colleges and universities, and into educating youth, preparing leaders and professionals who become the future of Utah. Innovation in education begins with YOU! Your dedication and commitment to participating in this strategic planning process will have a unique and significant impact on educators and educational leaders for years to come.

I can't begin to express how proud it has made me to watch the way you - our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and partners - have united your voices to lay the groundwork for the College of Education's future. From the start, it has been our goal to build on our strengths as a college as we worked to create this plan that supports the innovation and growth of education in our state, across the county, and the globe. What has become evident through this process is that one of our college's greatest strengths is our voices, our commitment to one another, and our passion for the future of education. We saw this most clearly in the way you all showed up in significant ways to participate in this process.

I am energized by our college's mission, vision, and values which were refined through this process to better communicate our aspirations as a college and the values that guide the work of our faculty, staff, and students every day.

Thank you to everyone in our community for your hard work over this year, your willingness to share ideas, and your dedication to both the college and our university.

I encourage you to view this plan as both the culmination of a process driven by you and as a roadmap of our collaboration, bringing life to the ambitious vision we set for the college.

I look forward to the future and to working alongside you as we realize this vision and impact education together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frankie Santos Laanan'.

**Frankie Santos Laanan**  
Dean, College of Education



# CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	01
INTRODUCTION .....	03
MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES .....	05
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES .....	07
LOOKING TO THE FUTURE .....	19

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past year, the College of Education has embarked on an extensive strategic planning process aimed at charting a course for the future. This process was driven by robust stakeholder engagement that included listening sessions, surveys, focus groups, and more with our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and partners. It was also shaped by the guidance of a dedicated steering committee consisting of faculty, staff, and leadership with representation from all of our departments.







The College of Education's strategic plan is anchored by its mission, vision, and values, which guided our approach. Our mission articulates our purpose, to transform education through research, partnership, and innovation, while our vision statement shares our aspiration to be a leader in addressing educational challenges through partnership. Our core values of innovation, excellence, collaboration, and community engagement are woven through each priority area, goal, and strategy.

The strategic plan outlines five key priority areas: growing enrollment and learner supports, enhancing academic innovation and curricular development, investing in our research enterprise, driving coordinated external engagement, and positioning ourselves to pursue operational excellence. From expanding enrollment and piloting new and innovative teaching strategies to supporting multidisciplinary research and engaging advisory boards, each action detailed in this plan was thoughtfully developed to advance our college's mission and vision.



# INTRODUCTION



Founded in 1850, the University of Utah College of Education, originally the University of Deseret, has evolved significantly, marking its place as a cornerstone of education in Utah and beyond. From its first commencement in 1886 to its transition into a comprehensive center for educational innovation, the college has continuously championed the transformative power of education. This power not only uplifts individuals and communities but also addresses societal disparities and shapes enduring impacts on society.







Today, as we align with the University of Utah's broader goals, our college is dedicated to reinforcing its role as a pivotal force for societal impact. Through a year-long, community-engaged strategic planning process involving college members, university leaders, and external partners, we have unified around a visionary commitment to educational excellence and innovation. This collaborative spirit is embodied in our mission to transform educational outcomes through the continued growth of our research output, an investment in collaborative partnerships across the spectrum, and a commitment to providing cutting-edge best practice in our teaching, equipping our graduates for success in their careers as educational practitioners and leaders, and researchers.

Our strategic focus is clear: we have specific goals across five key areas of focus. These areas, related to the distinctive functions of our college, are focused on growing our student population, enhancing student support systems, continuously innovating our curricula to meet the dynamic needs of the educational sector, expanding our research impact, coordinating effectively with partners to maximize societal benefits, and investing in the foundational systems and processes that will enable our ambitious agenda.

As we step into the future, we do so with a shared vision crafted by our community, driven by our core values of innovation, excellence, collaboration, and community engagement. Together, we are forging a path where education at the University of Utah is not just about learning – it is about leading change and creating a substantial impact on both local and global scales. The future is indeed bright for the College of Education, where we move forward, inspired by our rich history and commitment to shaping the next generations of educational leaders.



# MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

The following statements are foundational guidelines that serve as a cornerstone to how we approach our work.

This mission statement defines our purpose and primary objectives, serving as the foundation for our strategic decisions and actions, while our vision statement outlines our college's aspirations for the future, describing what we aim to achieve in the long run.

Our values reflect the principles and beliefs that influence our daily operations and interactions, ensuring that we conduct ourselves with integrity and in alignment with our goals. This section sets the tone for the strategic plan, aligning our actions with our deepest commitments to our community and partners.

## MISSION

**The College of Education transforms educational knowledge, practice, and outcomes through cutting-edge research, deep community partnerships, and innovative approaches to teaching, learning, and training.**

## VISION

**To be a leading College of Education that addresses educational challenges as a trusted partner in innovation, development, growth, and societal impact.**



## VALUES

### Innovation

We are dedicated to being forward-thinking and innovative, continually building knowledge and pushing the boundaries of what we know. We strive to lead in academic innovation, integrating best practices and practical experiences across each of our educational offerings. We foster collaborative and cross-disciplinary research, positioning our college to lead at the forefront of educational transformation.

### Excellence

We are committed not just to doing, but to doing well. Our pursuit of excellence permeates all aspects of our work. Our commitment to continuous improvement drives us to continually assess and enhance our programs, resources, practices, and methodologies. This includes our approach to curriculum, teaching, research, as well as our service and engagement with communities. By striving for excellence in every area, we provide the best possible education and support to our students and the communities we serve.

### Collaboration

Collaboration is at the heart of our work. We approach the challenges we face through a lens of partnership, understanding that working together enhances our ability to drive significant societal impact. By fostering deep, reciprocal relationships across our college community, and with external partners, we ensure that our research, teaching, and service are informed, inclusive, and transformative.

### Community Engagement

We are deeply committed to community engagement, recognizing that our work extends beyond the walls of our college. By intentionally engaging with alumni, supporters, and educational systems, we create meaningful connections that enhance our impact. Our partnerships with schools, districts, educational agencies, and community organizations allow us to identify and address emerging needs, ensuring our work is relevant and beneficial to the communities we serve. Through these efforts, we position ourselves as trusted partners and leaders in educational innovation and improvement.





# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This strategic plan outlines the direction of the College of Education for the coming years. The plan is organized around five priority areas that are crucial to the continued growth, innovation, and success of the college. Within each priority area, there are broad goals that define success, supporting and actionable strategies and initiatives meant to guide implementation, and success metrics to foster accountability.







# 01

## GROWING OUR ENROLLMENT AND LEARNER SUPPORTS

As the College of Education at Utah's flagship university, we have a commitment and responsibility to provide access and opportunity by growing the number of student scholars we serve, thereby expanding the pipeline of educators and educational leaders who serve our communities across the state and beyond. Our goal is to expand enrollment in our undergraduate and graduate programs, set intentional goals for each, and increase coordination to position the college as the first choice for aspiring educators, researchers, and professionals who seek to make a difference in the world.

Recruitment is only one part of the equation—to truly grow our impact, we must attract competitive, high-caliber students and provide the financial and programmatic support necessary for their success. Retaining students throughout their programs and in their professional careers requires robust support systems. By focusing on both recruitment and comprehensive student support, we aim to ensure our students thrive during their time at the college and in their subsequent educational careers. Our commitment aligns with the university's enrollment goals and emphasizes the importance of holistic student support.



## GOALS & KEY STRATEGIES

### Increase Enrollment

- Invest in staff and leadership dedicated to recruitment at the college level
- Leverage university-level resources (e.g., personnel and expertise) to coordinate activities with college academic units
- Conduct a comprehensive enrollment review to develop a strategic growth plan supported by meaningful goals and concrete strategies for each graduate and undergraduate program
- Develop a targeted, college-level marketing plan that facilitates coordinated outreach to prospective learners
- Develop additional strategic pathways for current undergraduate students to pursue graduate credentials and degrees within the college

### Expand Student Support

- Develop and pilot an educator residency program aimed at providing comprehensive financial support and increasing the pipeline of educators across Utah

- Increase the overall competitiveness of financial assistance available to graduate students' professional development, including prioritizing guaranteed, multi-year funding packages for doctoral students
- Establish additional financial resources for undergraduate and graduate students through application-based funds to support conference travel and research
- Develop a shared, interdisciplinary onboarding process for incoming graduate students to include professional and research development
- Standardize and strengthen student advising systems, protocols, training, and practices across the college, creating additional touchpoints, and equipping students to access available support services
- Integrate data and data-based decision-making capabilities to better anticipate and identify opportunities for tailored student support, in coordination with university-level student services
- Support the development of new student organizations aligned with high-impact professional organizations in education

## METRICS

- Student enrollment
- Four- and six-year completion rates
- Graduate program time to completion
- Job placements upon graduation
- Licensure rates post-graduation
- Student satisfaction surveys

# ENHANCING ACADEMIC INNOVATION AND CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT

The educational sector is rapidly evolving, driven by the shifting needs of learners and changing expectations for educators, administrators, and professionals. As a leading College of Education, we are committed to continuously developing and integrating innovative best practices and high-quality experiences into our curricula. By fostering collaboration and cross-disciplinary approaches, we will evaluate and evolve our degree programs and course offerings, positioning our students and faculty to lead at the forefront of educational transformation.

Our approach to academic innovation extends beyond teacher training to include professional programs and traditional and executive doctoral initiatives that prepare educational leaders, higher education administrators, and clinicians. We are dedicated to being forward-thinking and continually building knowledge that ensures our graduates are equipped to create systemic impact. By being anticipatory and responsive to the changing nature of educational organizations and community contexts, our curriculum is continuously evaluated and evolved, applying our value of innovation to prepare professionals who are not only adept at meeting today's needs but are also prepared to meet the educational challenges of the future.





## GOALS & KEY STRATEGIES

### Assess Programs, Processes, and Offerings

- Conduct a comprehensive audit of programs, program requirements, and courses across the college, focused on identifying opportunities for collaboration and cross-unit instruction
- Improve coordination and efficiency of graduate course offerings within the college to limit duplication of faculty efforts and ensure course availability for students
- Clarify roles, responsibilities, and processes and regular cadences for implementing curricula updates

### Evolve Curricula to Address Dynamic Educational Needs

- Leverage partnerships with districts, local education agencies, and other educational institutions to identify emerging topics and skill sets, integrating these into coursework, market-aligned certificates, and professional development trainings
- Work with colleges and departments across campus to revitalize a shared, interdisciplinary core curriculum for all teacher preparation programs

- Re-envision the mediums and modalities of course delivery to enhance accessibility, including concurrent enrollment courses, stackable micro-credentials, and pathways for paraeducators
- Develop a funded roles for faculty to focus on the development and implementation of effective, technology-supported practices for graduate and undergraduate curricula

### Explore Creation of a College-Affiliated Laboratory School

- Conduct research, analysis, and due diligence to understand and select the ideal school model and scope (e.g., elementary, community, or other)
- Develop plan for creation of a college-affiliated school that will serve as an incubator for piloting new practices and model best practices in education
- Integrate the school as a site for research, teaching, service, fieldwork, and teacher, administrator, and counselor placement across programs

## METRICS

- Nontraditional and concurrent student enrollment
- Development of new, innovative online undergraduate and graduate programs
- Total faculty lines
- Average graduate course enrollment
- Completion of assessment for college-affiliated laboratory school
- Number of interdisciplinary courses offered

# INVESTING IN OUR RESEARCH ENTERPRISE

The College of Education is dedicated to advancing the field of education through innovative and high-quality research, playing a critical role in developing new knowledge and pioneering best practices. Our research mission not only pushes the boundaries of educational disciplines but also ensures that our students learn at the cutting edge of their fields. As a research-intensive institution, we are committed to addressing grand challenges through interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches, investing in world-class faculty who employ innovative methodologies. By embracing collaborative research that requires significant financial and structural support, we enable our faculty to challenge existing paradigms and to address pressing educational and societal challenges in new and innovative ways. This strategic approach significantly enhances our contribution to the educational landscape, positioning us as leaders in each of the distinct disciplines within our college.

Our commitment aligns with the university's overarching goal to become a top-10 public university with unsurpassed societal impact. The College of Education contributes to this vision by focusing on research that addresses critical societal needs, thereby enhancing research impact. By fostering interdisciplinarity and investing in enabling processes, we not only advance our research mission but also significantly contribute to the university's goals of achieving national prominence and delivering real-world impact.



## GOALS & KEY STRATEGIES

### Foster Interdisciplinarity and Multidisciplinarity in Research Pursuits

- Form and support cross-disciplinary research groups with the goal of strategic positioning for the pursuit of competitive, large-scale national funding sources
- Hire a dedicated staff member to oversee the coordination of interdisciplinary research efforts, including researcher matching, funding identification, and project management, ensuring cohesive and efficient progress in collaborative projects
- Develop and maintain an accessible directory of researchers and their research interests to enhance internal visibility and awareness, facilitating connections and collaborations on research projects
- Formalize and intentionally scale the Research-Practice-Partnership program to support faculty collaboration with K-12 districts and schools to address problems of practice

### Invest in Structures and Processes

- Expand current capacity and expertise in the Office of Research, Innovation, Scholarship, & Entrepreneurship (RISE) to scale pre- and post-award grant support
- Conduct a comprehensive audit of current course buy-out processes, procedures, and costs, developing and implementing guiding best practices

- Expand pre-award support and develop standardized resources (institution, facility statements, etc.) required in funding pursuits
- Scale wraparound support for post-award business, accounting, and compliance functions to streamline and support the entire research lifecycle
- In partnership with the Utah Education Policy Center (UEPC), increase accessibility to resources supporting the translation of research outcomes and best practices for educators, leaders, and other practitioners
- Implement an incentive structure to drive competitive extramural research, leadership, and training grant submissions
- Create best practice guides and tools to equip faculty members to lead community-engaged research efforts effectively and consistently
- Assess current promotion and tenure standards to ensure that interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and collaborative extramural and intramural proposals and funded research within the college and across campus are appropriately recognized and celebrated
- Restructure processes for college-level seed project funding to position researchers for successful pursuit of state, federal, and foundation research funding

## METRICS

- Total research expenditures
- Grant submissions, awards, and hit rates
  - Improved grant submission scores
- Publications
  - Co-authored publications (interdisciplinary and with graduate students)
  - Level of influence (e.g., citations)
  - Outlet level publication metrics
- Research awards
- Faculty leadership in professional organizations and journals
- Utilization of college and university seed funding

# DRIVING COORDINATED EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

As the College of Education, our work is intrinsically linked to educational systems and communities. From preparing practitioners and professionals to continuous professional learning throughout career lifespans, connections and community-engaged research and scholarship are critical to our success and impact. This includes partnerships through the University of Utah Prison Education Project (UPEP), University of Utah Reading Clinic (UURC), Utah School Mental Health Collaborative (USMHC), Utah Education Policy Center (UEPC), Urban Institute for University Teacher (UITE), as well as the partnerships forged by individual faculty and staff. We are committed to telling our story and to investing in and strategically growing our external partnerships to position the college as the go-to educational partner in the state.

Recognizing the tremendous opportunities that arise from working with our alumni and supporters, we understand that intentionally engaging them is essential as we build the future vision of a college that is both impactful and transformative. We know that the actions necessary to drive major impacts for both our college community and the broader educational system, in Utah and beyond, must be supported by our external partners. We aim to amplify our reach and influence by expanding the scope and depth of our marketing and communications efforts and growing our partnerships. We will ensure that our external engagements are effective, sustainable, and mutually beneficial through strategic initiatives and metric-driven approaches.

We are dedicated to disrupting outdated systems that do not optimally serve the needs of all members of our community. By fostering deep, reciprocal relationships with external partners and leveraging the expertise and support of our alumni, we can drive meaningful change and advance educational access and opportunities for all.





## GOALS & KEY STRATEGIES

### Expand Scope and Depth of Marketing and Communications

- Create comprehensive brand guidelines, tools, and templates for units across the college
- Develop and implement a coordinated, multi-medium communication strategy for the college and its units
- Strengthen the college's digital presence through strategic use of social media, website optimization, and online advertising

### Grow Partnerships

- Develop a clear and accessible process for external partners to initiate work with the College of Education
- Develop and implement standard expectations for faculty-led partnerships to prioritize deep, reciprocal relationships with external partners
- Establish advisory boards at the college and department levels to provide strategic guidance and input from external partners
- Reestablish community and superintendent consortiums and reinforce strong, reciprocal relationships with state-level agencies

### Expand Philanthropic Partnerships

- Design and execute a multi-year targeted fundraising plan focused on identifying donor and partner philanthropic interests
- Implement bi-yearly in-person events to engage with potential donors, alumni, and external partners to highlight the college's work and ongoing projects and needs
- Develop and implement a structured framework for regular alumni engagement, including a mix of digital communication, events, and donor recognition
- Pursue support for endowed chairs and professorships throughout the college

## METRICS

- Number of varied individuals and communities served, by geographic areas and population types
- Number and diversity of partners (geography, populations, etc.)
- Number of alumni touchpoints by year
- Philanthropic funding
- Engagement data
  - Website traffic, social media likes, shares, following, and increased engagement with newsletter publications

# PURSuing OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Foundational structures, policies, and resources are critical enablers of success across each of the strategic areas identified in this plan. By focusing on our internal culture, physical assets, and organizational processes, we can build a strong foundation that supports our growth and helps achieve our goals. This section emphasizes the importance of tangible assets like technology and infrastructure, as well as the need for a supportive and reaffirming culture for our people, who are central to the work of the college.

Building intentional structures and investing strategically in these foundational elements will ensure the long-term success of a college that is expanding from a position of strength. Effective collaboration and streamlined processes, guided by data-driven decision-making, are essential for our progress. This includes having the right technologies to connect with students statewide and creating innovative spaces, materials, or platforms for teaching, learning, and research. By prioritizing these foundational resources, we demonstrate our commitment to the essential elements that enable all other aspects of our work, setting the stage for sustainable growth and continued excellence.



## GOALS & KEY STRATEGIES

### **Assess Current Processes, Policies, and Structures**

- Conduct a comprehensive structural assessment to determine the college organization and structures that are most conducive to promoting innovation in education, research, and collaboration
- Assess current college- and department-level committees with a particular focus on efficiency and streamlined decision making processes
- Conduct a structural and financial analysis of current college, department, and units to position the college to effectively advance its strategic priorities in the future

### **Invest in Physical Assets Conducive to Excellent Teaching and Research**

- Upgrade classroom and teaching technologies at the Salt Lake City and St. George campuses
- Assess and rework current space to create additional work spaces for faculty, staff, and graduate students
- Identify and build out additional long-term, stable campus space for research and teaching

### **Expand Central Resources and Systematizing Data-Informed Decision Making**

- Build out a central college analytics function to increase access to data by faculty, staff, and the leadership team
- Invest in expanded supports for online learning, including additional IT personnel and online program design support

### **Foster a Stronger Internal Culture**

- Enhance internal communication to support regular information sharing and transparency
- Alleviate administrative burdens on leadership to ensure adequate time for faculty and staff mentorship and support
- Increase staff and faculty compensation to equitable levels
- Strategically pursue university, national, and discipline-specific awards that recognize and celebrate faculty, staff, and student excellence
- Invest in leadership development offerings for current and aspiring unit and college leaders

## METRICS

- Dedicated/recurring technology funds
- IT and online program support levels
- Faculty and staff engagement surveys
- Additional square footage for research, teaching, or office space
- Assessment of college- and department-level committee efficiencies
- Competitiveness of faculty and staff salaries compared to peer institutions

# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

This strategic plan serves as a roadmap for the future, guiding decision-making and investments to ensure we achieve our mission and vision. The College of Education remains committed to aligning its strategies with the priorities of the University of Utah, as identified through the current strategic planning process. We are dedicated to being good stewards of our available resources, using them for the highest and best purposes guided by the priorities within this plan. As a leading College of Education, we are committed to having a broad-scale societal impact across Utah and beyond, working collaboratively to solve problems and champion educational innovation and human improvement.

As a next step, individual departments and units within the college will be tasked with developing their own strategic and operational plans to advance the strategic priorities within this plan. These department- and unit-level plans will be integral to our collective success, fostering a cohesive approach to achieving our goals and reinforcing our commitment to excellence, innovation, and service in education. Our next step includes the development of an accompanying implementation plan which will include baselines and growth targets for all plan metrics.













COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
1721 CAMPUS CENTER DRIVE, SAEC 3202  
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84112

EDUCATION.UTAH.EDU  
801-581-8221  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION@UTAH.EDU