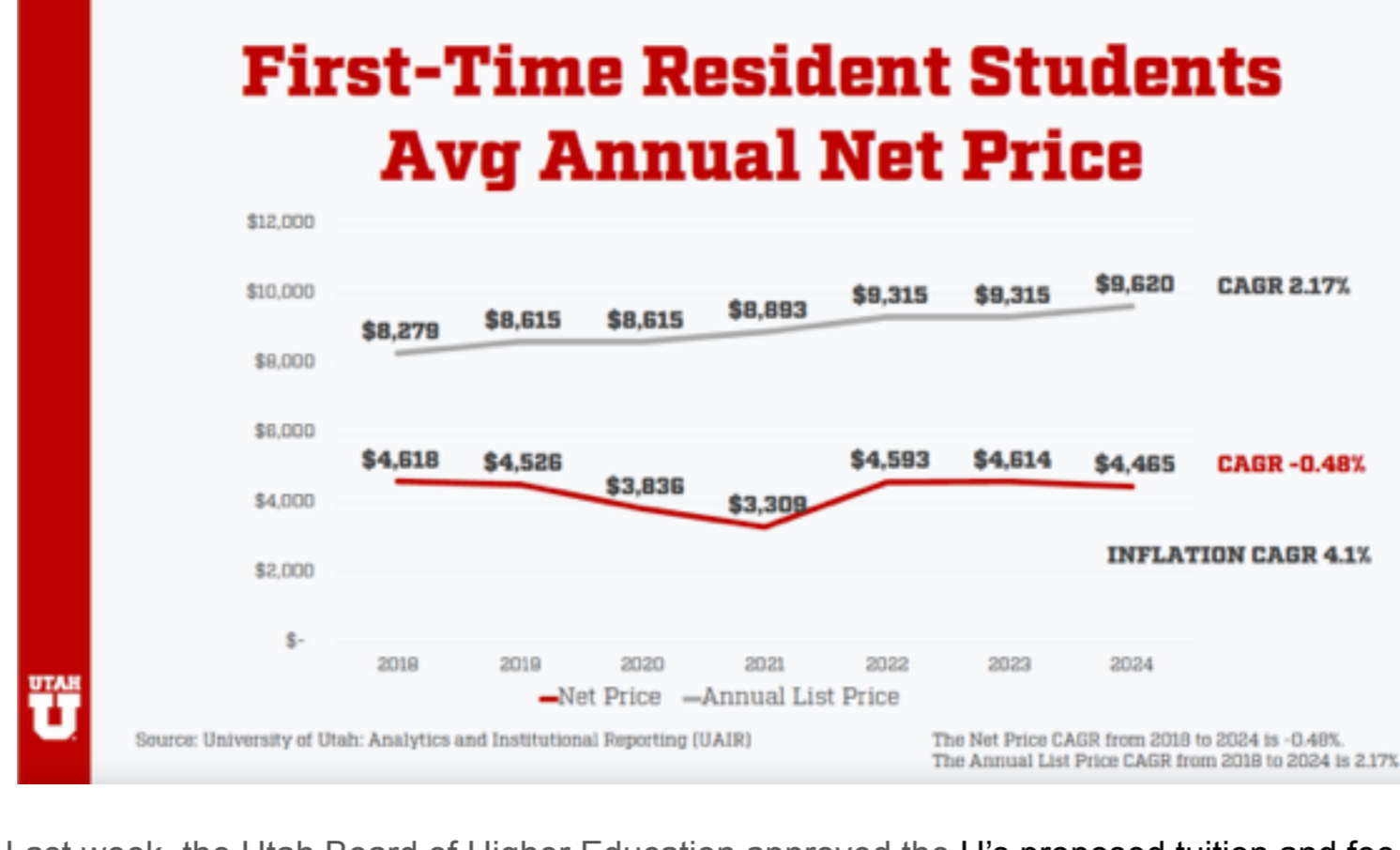


## Provost Perspectives

A newsletter from the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs



Last week, the Utah Board of Higher Education approved the [U's proposed tuition and fee increases](#) for the 2025-26 academic year. The net increase of tuition and fees for the year will be \$224.20, or 2.19%.

While some people may read that and see it as another piece of evidence that college is getting less affordable, a recent [article in The Atlantic](#) has a different take. "In reality, Americans are paying less for college, on average, than they were a decade ago," the article says. "Since the 2014–15 school year, the cost of attending a public four-year university has fallen by 21 percent, *before* adjusting for inflation."

The Atlantic article says the confusion regarding college costs comes from the way we price higher education. All colleges set their official sticker price—as we will do now that we have UBHE approval for our plan for next year. However, as the article says, that is a price that only a subset of students tends to pay in full. For most universities, there is a significant difference between the published cost of attendance, or sticker price, and what students pay once financial aid is factored in, or the net price.

The Atlantic article says that, in the 2021–22 school year, 82% of first-time, full-time undergraduates at U.S. public four-year schools received aid. For the University of Utah in that same year, 79% of first-year, full-time undergraduates received financial aid.

The chart at the top of this piece paints an even more powerful picture. In the chart, CAGR stands for "compound annual growth rate," and it measures the average growth rate of the U's tuition sticker price compared to students' net price. This shows that although our sticker price rose 2.17% from 2018 to 2024, the price paid by our first-time students from Utah actually fell 0.48% over that same period.

The chart also mentions that inflation grew 4.1% during those years, meaning changes in both the sticker price and net price at the U were less than inflation. (The figures for sticker price and net price in the graph are not adjusted for inflation.)

We take affordability seriously here—we have one of the [lowest in-state tuition rates](#) among AAU public institutions—and we will continue to do so. But it's important to note that we're doing many things right when it comes to making sure students can afford to attend the University of Utah. Thank you for all you do in this effort and in ensuring that our students receive a valuable education in return for the investment they make at the U.

— Mitzi M. Montoya

## Student Success



### Health and Wellness Hub Celebrates Grand Opening

The new Health and Wellness Hub on the third floor of the Student Services Building [celebrated its grand opening](#) on March 25.

The hub brings together the University Counseling Center, the Center for Campus Wellness and the Center for Disability and Access under one roof. Drop-in financial coaching and spiritual wellness assistance are also available at the hub.

This initiative is designed to reduce stigma, enhance accessibility and foster collaboration among health and wellness departments. As Associate Vice President for Health & Wellness Dr. Sherrá Watkins said, when resources are co-located, it creates a more welcoming and supportive environment for students seeking assistance.

"This is more than a place. It's a promise," she said during the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The hub features private rooms for telehealth appointments, individual testing rooms and areas for programming and peer mentoring, all designed with student needs in mind.

[Read more](#)

## Research Excellence

### Researchers Study Suicide Prevention for Veterans

For many veterans and service members, transitioning from military to civilian life brings both opportunities and challenges. While some find clear paths to new careers, education or community connections, others struggle with barriers that make it difficult to access the support they need—especially when it comes to mental health.

As reported in a [recent article](#) from the VPR's office, Utah's veteran suicide rate is significantly higher than the national average, highlighting the need for stronger, more effective outreach. To better understand how veterans, active military and service members (including National Guard & Reservists) seek out suicide prevention resources—and why some don't—the Utah Department of Veterans & Military Affairs (UDVMA) partnered with the Kern C. Gardner Policy Institute on a research initiative focused on bridging these gaps.

Through surveys and focus groups, researchers Kara Byrne, Dianne Meppen and Laura Summers are listening directly to veterans, ensuring that their voices shape the solutions designed for them.

This study builds on the momentum of Gov. Spencer Cox's 2021 call to action, which urged state agencies to work together on suicide prevention strategies for service members, veterans and their families (SMVF). The findings will help refine UDVMA's approach to the Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families, a nationwide initiative dedicated to saving lives.

[Read more](#)

### Updates Provided on Flag Display Law and Land Acknowledgement Statements

Utah Gov. Spencer Cox has allowed [HB 77, "Flag Display Amendments,"](#) to become law without his signature, meaning it is set to go into effect on May 7.

Under the new law, flags for the United States, other countries, state government and its subdivisions, the university, the Olympic Winter Games, Native American tribes and veteran or POW recognitions would be allowed. Government units including K-12 schools, colleges and universities across the state are generally prohibited from posting other types of flags in a prominent location, such as Pride flags, Juneteenth flags and government flags with altered colors and symbols.

For more details on what this means for the U, please see the [article posted on @theU](#).

Also, the Utah Board of Higher Education recently adopted new guidelines for indigenous land acknowledgement statements. The [new policy](#) says Utah colleges and universities may have land statements if they have an agreement with, or a grant related to, one of Utah's Native tribes that supports tribal members' access to higher education; are engaged in education, research or service for one or more tribes; and have a land-grant mission. The U's Office of General Counsel indicates the university's current land acknowledgement statement adheres to the guidelines.

Going forward under USHE policy, land acknowledgements may be read at meetings with the tribes; at events where members of a tribe are speaking or being honored; at research or cultural events; or during discussions of land stewardship or management. Land acknowledgements may also be posted on an institution's website.

For more details, please see this [article posted on @theU](#).

## Celebrating U

### Division of Games Earns Top Honors in Princeton Review Rankings

For the second year in a row, the University of Utah's Division of Games has earned top global recognition—ranked #1 in the world among public institutions for undergraduate game design and #2 for graduate programs, according to the [2025 Princeton Review rankings](#) released last month.

These back-to-back honors reflect more than just success—they underscore the sustained excellence and unique character of a program that has become a powerhouse in games education, according to an [article on the division's website](#). With a culture rooted in creativity, collaboration and innovation, the Games Division is nationally and internationally recognized as a launchpad for future industry leaders.

"To receive these rankings in consecutive years is a phenomenal achievement," Professor Michael Young, chair of the Games Division, said in celebrating the announcement. "It's a testament to the unwavering dedication of our faculty, the support of our incredible staff and—most importantly—the boundless creativity and talent of our students. Their work is making waves in the industry, and they graduate with the skills and knowledge to shape the future of games. This is a community of excellence, and I couldn't be prouder."

[Read more](#)



### Transform Associate Professor Recognized with 2024 Legacy Leader Award

Dr. Ed A. Muñoz, associate professor of ethnic studies and adjunct associate professor of sociology, recently received the 2024 Legacy Leader Award from the Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs for his groundbreaking work in preserving and celebrating Latino history and culture in the Intermountain West.

The award recognizes his efforts in creating spaces of connection and empowerment for Latino communities, particularly through his [Construyendo Latinidad in the Intermountain West project](#), and his innovative approaches to education, according to an [article](#) on the School for Cultural and Social Transformation website.

As an undergraduate at the University of Nebraska in the 1980s, Muñoz delved into the history of Spanish explorers on the Great Plains. This academic spark evolved into a professional mission during his tenure as the director of the Chicano Studies Program at the University of Wyoming, where he collaborated with the State of Wyoming Museum and Archives to update its *Hispanics in Wyoming* exhibit.

The project eventually expanded into *Construyendo Latinidad in the Intermountain West*, uncovering stories of resilience and community through a rich exploration of history.

[Read more](#)

## REDTalks Event set for April 3

As part of the University of Utah's 175th anniversary celebration, the U will present its first-ever REDTalks event at 6 p.m. Thursday, April 3, at the Utah Museum of Fine Arts.

This event will feature six distinguished faculty as they speak on a variety of academic and research topics that have helped to elevate the profile of the University of Utah in the academic space for years.

Faculty who will present at the event include Edward Bateman MFA, College of Fine Arts; Rogelio Cardona-Rivera PhD, College of Architecture & Planning; Ken Golden MS, PhD, College of Science; Daniel Malone RPh, PhD, FAMCP, College of Pharmacy; Samantha Moore-Berg MA, PhD, College of Social & Behavioral Science; and Wanda Pillow, PhD, Dean of the College of Humanities and the School for Cultural & Social Transformation.

[Check this link](#) for more information.

[Read more](#)

## Share Your Ideas for Provost Perspectives

If you have an upcoming event or informational item you'd like to publicize in Provost Perspectives, please send it to Greg Kratz at [greg.kratz@utah.edu](mailto:greg.kratz@utah.edu).