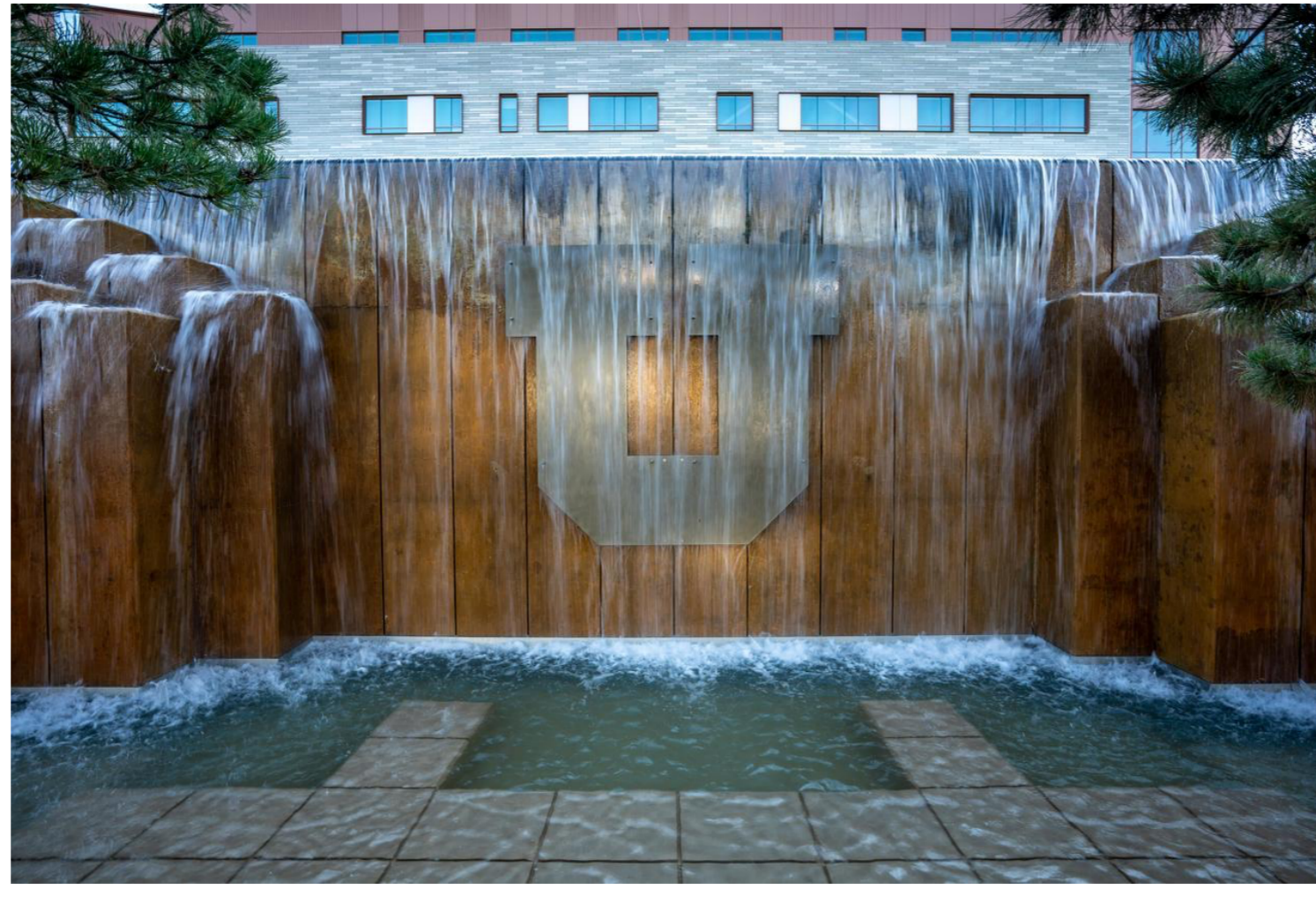# Provost Perspectives

A newsletter from the
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

You've likely heard several recent references—from me and others—to the moment of reinvention we're in at the U. This "moment" will include hundreds of steps, big and small, that move us toward our ambitious goals for the future of our university. We took a couple of the larger steps this week.

President Randall presented phase one of our strategic reinvestment plan to the Utah Board of Higher Education (UBHE) today. This marked a significant step in the university's three-year response to House Bill 265—a state mandate requiring all public institutions of higher education to reallocate a portion of their state-appropriated budgets toward high-priority areas aligned with workforce needs and student outcomes.

An @theU article about the president's presentation provides more detail about the proposal, which requires additional approval from UBHE and two legislative committees during the next three months. If approved, the plan for the first year of the strategic reinvestment process will have the U prioritizing areas where we can consolidate administrative structures and services, reduce duplication and shift resources toward academic, research and clinical priorities. Meanwhile, the university will reinvest in areas that expand our societal impact and workforce readiness, including engineering, nursing, biotechnology, behavioral health, responsible AI and civic engagement.

While this strategic reinvestment plan represents a big step for the U, we made further progress toward our vision for the future when we presented our proposed Academic Affairs budget for next year to the President on Thursday. That budget reflects proposed cuts and reinvestments in all our Academic Affairs units, aligned with H.B. 265 and with the Impact 2030 strategic plan.

I want to thank all of you who have helped with myriad projects and initiatives during the last few years, allowing us to prepare for this moment, present a thoughtful budget and respond to H.B. 265. As we move forward, such efforts will be part of Mission-Aligned Planning (MAP), which is the process we're using to ensure Academic Affairs planning and resource allocation decisions are tightly aligned with the U's mission and strategic goals.

We now have a MAP webpage to provide additional details about the process and what it will mean for the units as we roll it out this year and continue to develop it in the years to come. On the webpage, you can learn more about how MAP works and what it does.

Some of the key components of MAP include academic portfolio review, research planning, operational efficiency, resource planning and new program evaluation. Everything we do with MAP will bolster our commitment to student success, research excellence and societal impact.

I invite you to visit the MAP page often. We'll post additional details and informational articles there in the months to come. The page also includes a feedback form, and I hope you'll use it to share your questions and ideas.

With this moment of reinvention comes a corresponding opportunity to build a university that improves the life of every Utahn and sets a new standard for public higher education. As we continue to communicate, innovate and work together, we can map our path to a strong future for the U.

— Mitzi M. Montoya

[Read more]

Dean Philip Osteen Begins Role as Chief Behavioral Health Officer

College of Social Work Dean Philip Osteen has accepted an offer to serve as the inaugural Chief Behavioral Health Officer in Academic Affairs as part of the U's Wellbeing + Resilience effort.
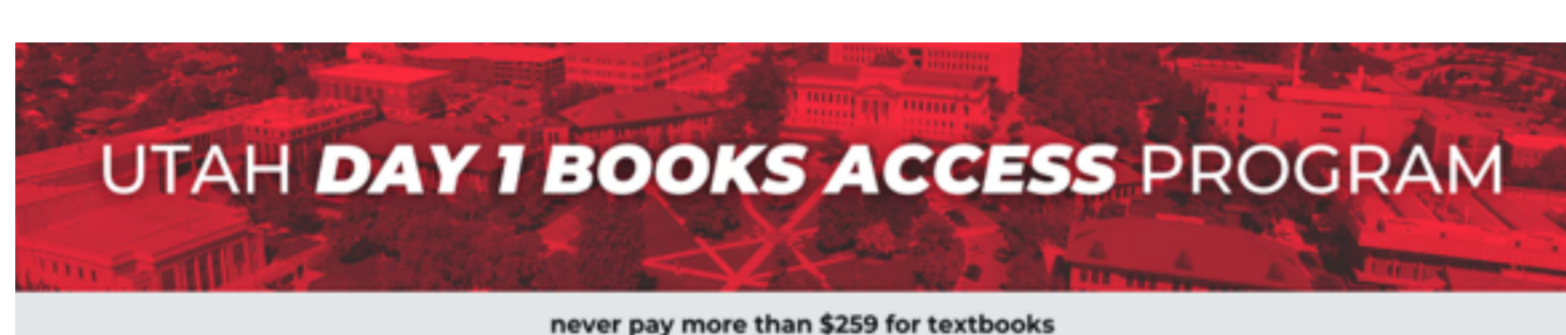
Dean Osteen began working in this new position effective June 1 while continuing to serve as the dean for the College of Social Work. He will report directly to the Provost and serve as an advisor regarding the university's role in various behavioral health initiatives. Other responsibilities will include:

— Representing the university externally on behavioral health matters.

— Serving as a liaison for Academic Affairs with Health Sciences and the Huntsman Mental Health Institute.

— Leading an assessment of the current portfolio of behavioral health-related programs at the university to identify gaps and opportunities.

— Serving as co-lead of the Wellbeing + Resilience initiative, along with Chief Wellness Officer Dr. Amy Locke.

The state has made a significant investment and commitment into building out a comprehensive roadmap for the behavioral health workforce in Utah. The U is well-positioned to lead in the development of additional educational programs to address this societal and healthcare need with students and employees, while collaborating and developing new initiatives and relationships with academics and industry.

Dean Osteen will play a vital role in this work, and his research expertise will lend itself to advancing behavioral health research at the U.

[Read more]

UTAH **DAY 1 BOOKS ACCESS** PROGRAM

never pay more than $259 for textbooks

Student Success

U Launches New Textbook Program for Fall

The University of Utah is launching the Utah Day 1 Books Access Program for fall 2025. As part of Navigate U in partnership with the Campus Store and J. Willard Marriott Library, this program ensures undergraduate students have access to all required digital and print course materials starting the first day of class for a single charge of $259 per semester.

This initiative aims to improve student affordability, preparedness and sustainability to further reduce costs and enhance student success, according to an @theU story. This program not only benefits students financially, but has also been proven to increase academic performance.

All undergraduate students are enrolled in the Utah Day 1 Books Access Program at the beginning of each semester, with all digital materials available distributed through Canvas. Within Bookshelf, undergraduate students will be able to access their course materials and select which tier of the program they would like to participate in, allowing them to choose which materials and/or price works best for their needs.

Faculty or staff members who would like to attend a free webinar about the program should register here.

[Read more]

Research Excellence

Neuroscience & Computing Initiative Kick-off Event Set for June 25

The Office of the Vice President for Research will host a one-hour event at 11 a.m. Wednesday, June 25, to kick off the Neuroscience & Computing Initiative: Computational Principles at the Interface Between Biological and Artificial Systems.

The event will be in the Warnock Engineering Building, Evans Conference Room (WEB 3780). Those interested in attending can register at this link.

The primary goal of the event is to foster a collaborative and interdisciplinary community of researchers dedicated to advancing the field of neuroscience, computing and its intersection. Rajeev Balasubramanian and Jim Heys will present on the two main pillars of this initiative:

— Neuromorphic Computing explores the design of efficient systems that can execute neural functionality at extremely low budgets for power, energy, cost and latency.

— Principles of Computational Neuroscience focuses on understanding how the brain processes information, learns and generates behavior through the lens of mathematical models and algorithms. This theme emphasizes the powerful synergy between advanced computational tools from computer science—such as machine learning, optimization and dynamical systems—and new experimental methods that allow us to measure and manipulate brain activity and behavior at unprecedented temporal and spatial scales.

Please direct any questions about the event to Natalie McElroy.

[Read more]

Celebrating U

Dr. Manish Parashar Receives ACM Distinguished Service Award

University of Utah Chief Artificial Intelligence Officer Manish Parashar has been named as the 2024 recipient of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) Distinguished Service Award for service and leadership in furthering the transformative impact of computer and computational science on science and engineering.

Parashar, who is director of the Scientific Computing and Imaging (SCI) Institute, chair in Computational Science and Engineering, and Presidential Professor in the Kahlert School of Computing, will be formally recognized at ACM's annual awards banquet on June 14 in San Francisco.

"Parashar's record of service includes leadership at the National Science Foundation (NSF), where he developed NSF's strategic vision for a National Cyberinfrastructure, as well as the White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), where he developed the Future Advancement Computing Ecosystem Strategic Plan (FACE)," according to an ACM press release about the award. "For ACM, Parashar served two terms as Editor-in-Chief of ACM Transactions on Autonomous and Adaptive Systems (ACM TAAS), and has led steering, organizing and programming committees for numerous ACM conferences."

The official citation says Parashar is receiving the award "for his long-lasting and influential disciplinary contributions, significant and broad interdisciplinary impact, and his efforts to broaden research in high performance parallel and distributed computing and computational sciences."

[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.