MESSAGE FROM
PRESIDENT COCKETT

I am pleased to release USU’s new Aggie Action 2028 Strategic Plan.

There is no better time for Utah State University to start a new strategic effort. We have seen a great deal of change over the last few years in all parts of national, state, and local communities and our economy. This includes what students expect from their post-secondary education.

The strategic plan does three important things: It identifies who we are, it defines where we want to go, and it measures how well we succeed.

Aggie Action 2028 will help ensure we meet the expectations of future students and fulfill our service and outreach mission as a land-grant, R1 institution. This plan will guide us in how we strategically invest university resources in programs and initiatives, positioning USU to take on challenges affecting the state like never before, including in the areas of land, water, air, mental health, and quality of life (to name just a few).

Being an Aggie means thinking about how we can best serve our communities, caring about the impact we make in the world, and acting with courage. I encourage the entire university community and stakeholders to read, understand, and embrace this plan. Your support and engagement are essential to our success.

Best Regards,

Noelle E. Cockett
President
Utah State University
MISSION
Utah State University is a premier land- and space-grant institution committed to excellence, access, and inclusion.

VISION
We empower all people to lead successful lives of involvement, innovation, and impact.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION
We champion exceptional education, research and discovery, and community contribution.
Utah State University is a land-grant institution. President Lincoln’s Morrill Land-Grant Colleges Act focused on the practical application of knowledge for people of all classes and walks of life. The second Morrill Act expanded “land-grant” to all Americans, regardless of race, class, or income. Since its founding, Utah State has successfully met these responsibilities for more than 134 years. Today, we continue to strengthen this work with a presence in every county in Utah.

Every year, millions of Utahns are connected to Utah State and the land-grant mission through 4-H and youth programs; Extension services; family and economic development work; cultural and music programs; athletics; teaching and lifetime learning; research and business development; health, wellness, and nutrition; or other programs.

**Access**

A college degree opens doors, transforms lives, and can bring up to an additional $1.2 million in earnings over a person’s lifetime. With academic programs available anywhere in Utah or online, USU excels in providing access to post-secondary education for all Utahns. As Utah becomes more diverse, USU is prepared to meet the needs of all learners and help them create an educational legacy for their families.

**Research**

USU is one of only 146 national universities that have achieved the highest Carnegie research designation of R1 for very high levels of research. USU’s land-grant mission ties this research back to Utah communities, and USU has been recognized for having one of the best undergraduate research programs in the nation.

USU’s Space Dynamics Lab is a trusted agent to the government, supporting national security and defense. As a designated University Affiliated Research Center to the Department of Defense, SDL recently received a $1B contract for over the next 10 years.

**Outreach**

USU experts are serving in every county in Utah, working on issues affecting all aspects of our lives: business and community development, health and wellness, family finances and relationships, and agriculture and natural resources. The integration of teaching, research, and public service enables USU Extension to respond to serious and emerging issues with research-based, practical information.
OVERVIEW

Aggie Action 2028 comprises four pillars that highlight USU’s areas of focus over the next half-decade. Each pillar includes priority objectives and specific outcomes to be achieved.

PILLAR 1: DELIVER AN EXCEPTIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

USU is uniquely suited to meet and support learners where they are — educationally, personally, and geographically — with top-tier academics, strong support services, and an inclusive Aggie community that connects us worldwide.

• Objective 1.1: Deliver High-Quality, Best Value, Personalized Pathways to Success
• Objective 1.2: Develop Innovative Curricula and Educational Programs Aligned with Learner Needs
• Objective 1.3: Expand Accessible and Inclusive Learning Opportunities
• Objective 1.4: Strengthen a Healthy, Vibrant, and Resilient University Community

PILLAR 2: DRIVE IMPACTFUL RESEARCH AND CREATIVE EXCELLENCE

USU is a leader in research and creative activities that positively impact Utah, the nation, and the world. USU’s expert researchers in high-impact areas such as space; transportation; climate; land, water, and air; education; and health and well-being, are driven to solve the grand challenges of our time.

• Objective 2.1: Strengthen USU’s Status as a Major Research Institution
• Objective 2.2: Lead Research that Results in Practical Applications and Sustainable Solutions
• Objective 2.3: Excel in Creative Work and Impact
• Objective 2.4: Advance a Culture of Graduate and Undergraduate Research and Creative Distinction
• Objective 2.5: Model Best-Practice Principles for High-Quality Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work

PILLAR 3: BUILD PROSPEROUS LOCAL AND GLOBAL COMMUNITIES

USU drives innovation and finds solutions that improve communities. Prosperity includes many facets, such as good health, lifelong learning and growth opportunities, vibrant cultures, economic growth, and sustainable practices.

• Objective 3.1: Deepen Impact as the Trusted Resource in Utah Communities
• Objective 3.2: Drive Economic Opportunity for Secure, Innovative, and Vibrant Utah Communities
• Objective 3.3: Advance Global Solutions
• Objective 3.4: Enhance Community Culture and Quality of Life

PILLAR 4: CULTIVATE USU COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

Once an Aggie, always an Aggie! USU champions an engaged, inclusive, and ethical culture. We invest in our network and commit to expand its reach and increase its strength through meaningful lifelong contributions.

• Objective 4.1: Further Opportunity and Success
• Objective 4.2: Enhance Belonging and Engagement
• Objective 4.3: Strengthen an Ethical and Trusted Culture
• Objective 4.4: Sustain USU as a Healthy and Vibrant Institution

usu.edu/strategic-plan
DELIVER AN EXCEPTIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE
USU is uniquely suited to meet and support learners where they are — educationally, personally, and geographically — with top-tier academics, strong support services, and an inclusive Aggie community that connects us worldwide.

OUTCOMES

USU ENROLLMENT GROWS TO 30,000

ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING GROWS TO $250 MILLION

TIMELY COMPLETION IN ALL USU ACADEMIC PROGRAMS INCREASES BY 7.6%

3/4 USU DEGREES ARE AWARDED IN HIGH-DEMAND AREAS

MORE THAN 90% UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS ENGAGE IN HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICES
OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 1.1
Deliver High-Quality, Best Value, Personalized Pathways to Success

USU prepares students to succeed through exceptional teaching and skills preparation in academic programs fitted to current needs. We provide the personal support learners require to persist and achieve their goals, whether their plans are local or global, workforce, or continuing education.

OBJECTIVE 1.2
Develop Innovative Curricula and Educational Programs Aligned with Learner Needs

USU adapts and advances programs to ensure they remain relevant and rigorous. Our academics prioritize dynamic critical thinking and link learners to people with experience and talent, providing transformative educational and creative opportunities that extend student potential.

OBJECTIVE 1.3
Expand Accessible and Inclusive Learning Opportunities

USU positively impacts the life of every Utahn as the state’s land-grant university. Our educational reach extends far beyond USU’s physical campuses and enrolled students, offering a broad range of opportunities that meet learner needs at all stages of life.

OBJECTIVE 1.4
Strengthen a Healthy, Vibrant, and Resilient University Community

USU recruits, supports, and retains people who enhance the USU mission. We practice sound fiscal stewardship, enrollment management, and operations and infrastructure development that sustain robust operational health.
PILLAR 2

DRIVE IMPACTFUL RESEARCH AND CREATIVE EXCELLENCE
USU is a leader in research and creative activities that positively impact Utah, the nation, and the world. USU’s expert researchers in high-impact areas such as space; transportation; climate; land, water, and air; education; and health and well-being, are driven to solve the grand challenges of our time.

OUTCOMES

EXTERNAL RESEARCH FUNDING ANNUALLY EXCEEDS $500 MILLION

COMMUNITY & INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS EXPAND
- NEW INITIATIVES
- RESEARCH PROGRAMS
- GRANT FUNDING

INCREASED NUMBER OF
- INNOVATIVE EXPERIENCES
- PRESENTATIONS
- EXHIBITIONS
- PERFORMANCES

INCREASED NUMBER & DIVERSITY OF STUDENTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH & CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

PROCESSES & SYSTEMS THAT ENSURE RESEARCH SAFETY & INTEGRITY ARE ADAPTED & REFINED
OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 2.1
Strengthen USU’s Status as a Major Research Institution
USU leverages our strength as a top-tier institution to invest in the best researchers and students, and build innovative facilities to drive impactful discovery.

OBJECTIVE 2.2
Lead Research that Results in Practical Applications and Sustainable Solutions
USU’s strong community connections and thriving industry partnerships enable our researchers to address real-world issues. We find innovative and practical solutions that improve health and well-being, economic development, and the environment locally, nationally, and worldwide.

OBJECTIVE 2.3
Excel in Creative Work and Impact
USU’s culture of creative excellence produces engaging original and visionary works. Diverse expressions of creativity expand the boundaries of innovation and human potential and help communities learn, know, and appreciate the essence of others.

OBJECTIVE 2.4
Advance a Culture of Graduate and Undergraduate Research and Creative Distinction
USU students collaborate with faculty and fellow students in research and creative projects. Our nationally recognized programs empower students to advance their skills, enhance their critical thinking, and realize their potential.

OBJECTIVE 2.5
Model Best-Practice Principles for High-Quality Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work
USU leads with high standards of integrity, responsibility, and accountability. We achieve these standards by advancing effective training and practices, and we sustain the trust of our partners and the public through transparent reporting and reliable results.
BUILD PROSPEROUS LOCAL AND GLOBAL COMMUNITIES
USU drives innovation and finds solutions that improve communities. Prosperity includes many facets, such as good health, lifelong learning and growth opportunities, vibrant cultures, economic growth, and sustainable practices.

OUTCOMES

**ECONOMIC IMPACT EXCEEDS $1 BILLION ANNUALLY THROUGH INVESTMENTS IN PEOPLE • BUSINESS • COMMUNITIES**

**CONTACTS THROUGH USU’S**
- SERVICES
- EXTENSION
- CAMPUSES
- CENTERS

EXCEED 10 MILLION ANNUALLY

**NEW PARTNERSHIPS ARE CULTIVATED FOR**
- POLICY
- SYSTEMS
- COMMUNITY
- GLOBAL INITIATIVES

**EXPANDED ACCESS TO USU’S CULTURALLY ENHANCING & COMMUNITY ENRICHING ACTIVITIES**
OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 3.1
Deepen Impact as the Trusted Resource in Utah Communities
USU’s breadth and depth of expertise, with our network of county Extension offices and our deep roots in local communities, makes us the state’s trusted resource for all Utahns to improve health and well-being; home, family, and relationships; agriculture and natural resources; and youth development.

OBJECTIVE 3.2
Drive Economic Opportunity for Secure, Innovative, and Vibrant Utah Communities
USU’s Statewide Campuses, Extension services, and partnerships connect us to community and industry needs. We educate the workforce, advance entrepreneurship, and deliver innovative solutions that strengthen communities and economies statewide.

OBJECTIVE 3.3
Advance Global Solutions
USU’s focus on developing practical solutions to complex problems reaches far beyond Utah. Our solutions contribute to global food and water security, human development, climate change adaptation, and space exploration.

OBJECTIVE 3.4
Enhance Community Culture and Quality of Life
USU’s arts, athletics, museums, and exhibits enrich lives and connect our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and communities. We facilitate exposure to diverse experiences and perspectives that create a stronger and well-rounded society.
CULTIVATE USU COMMUNITY AND CULTURE
Once an Aggie, always an Aggie! USU champions an engaged, inclusive, and ethical culture. We invest in our network and commit to expand its reach and increase its strength through meaningful lifelong contributions.

OUTCOMES

INCREASED ENGAGEMENT & RELATIONSHIPS STRENGTHENED WITH MEMBERS OF THE AGGIE COMMUNITY & NETWORKS

ROBUST BEST PRACTICES ARE ENSURED FOR

- RECRUITING
- DEVELOPING
- RETAINING FACULTY & STAFF

REFINED POLICIES THAT CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT OF

- EQUITY
- ACCOUNTABILITY
- GOOD GOVERNANCE

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF

- SKILLS
- CULTURAL HUMILITY
- LEADERSHIP
- COMPETENCIES

$200 MILLION INVESTED IN PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE & HUMAN CAPITAL
OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 4.1
Further Opportunity and Success
USU increases access to lifelong learning and provides the support to pursue it. We offer individualized pathways and personal guidance to empower students, employees, alumni, and other community members to keep contributing and succeeding throughout their lives.

OBJECTIVE 4.2
Enhance Belonging and Engagement
USU communicates respect, promotes inclusion, and creates a sense of belonging for all. We welcome everyone with different backgrounds, identities, experiences, and perspectives.

OBJECTIVE 4.3
Expand Accessible and Inclusive Learning Opportunities
USU assures students and employees are treated equitably and empowered to be proficient and principled in their studies and work. We are responsible fiscal stewards and manage resources wisely.

OBJECTIVE 4.4
Strengthen a Healthy, Vibrant, and Resilient University Community
USU builds infrastructure and creates support systems that improve safety, health, and well-being. Our leadership actively seeks feedback and is transparent and responsive to concerns, creating a culture of accountability.
AGGIE ACTION 2028

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**PRINCIPAL**
Noelle Cockett
Utah State University President

**CO-CHAIRS**
Michael Torrens
Executive Director
Analysis, Assessment & Accreditation

Robert Wagner
Executive Vice President

Matt White
Vice President, Advancement;
President of the USU Foundation

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**
Abby Benninghoff
Interim Department Head
Animal, Dairy and Veterinary Sciences

Lisa Berreau
Vice President
Research

Jed Hancock
President
Space Dynamics Laboratory

Brian Higginbotham
Associate Vice President
Extension

Jane Irungu
Vice President
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Becki Lawver
Department Head
Ag Systems Technology
Past Chair of the Faculty Senate

Dave Patel
Associate Dean
Huntsman School of Business

Bill Plate
Vice President
University Marketing & Communications

Matthew Sanders
Executive Associate Dean
College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Larry Smith
Provost, Chief Academic Officer
Past Vice President, Statewide Campuses

Richard Walker
Associate Dean
Caine College of the Arts