

Legislative Communication

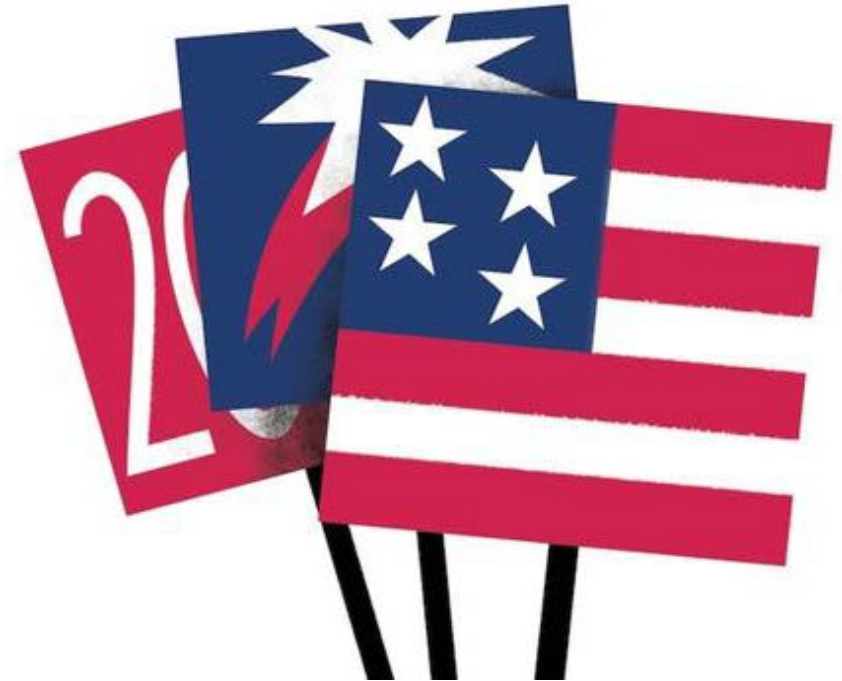


Barbara Damron, PhD, RN, FAAN
Cabinet Secretary
New Mexico Higher Education Department

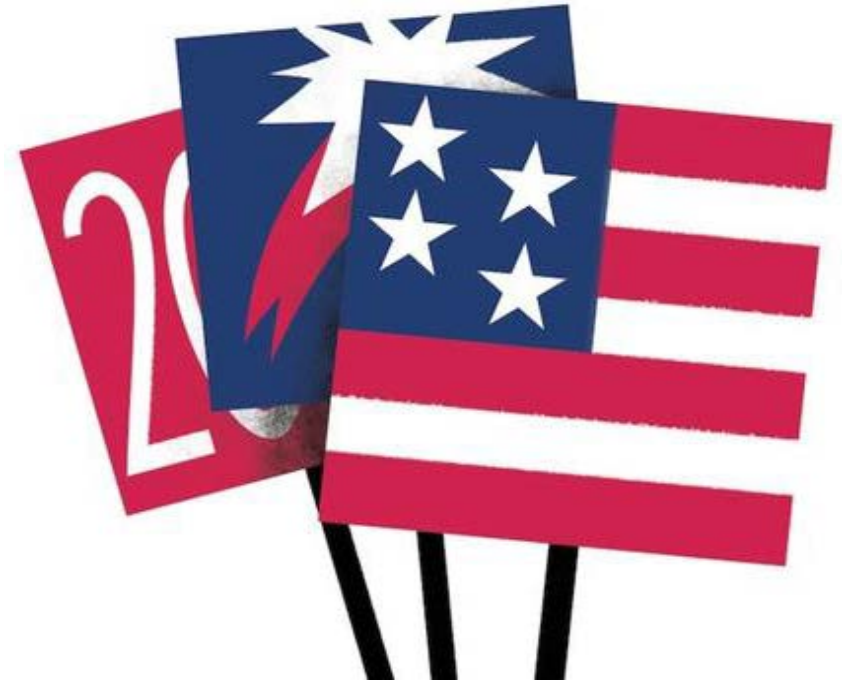
POLICY

&

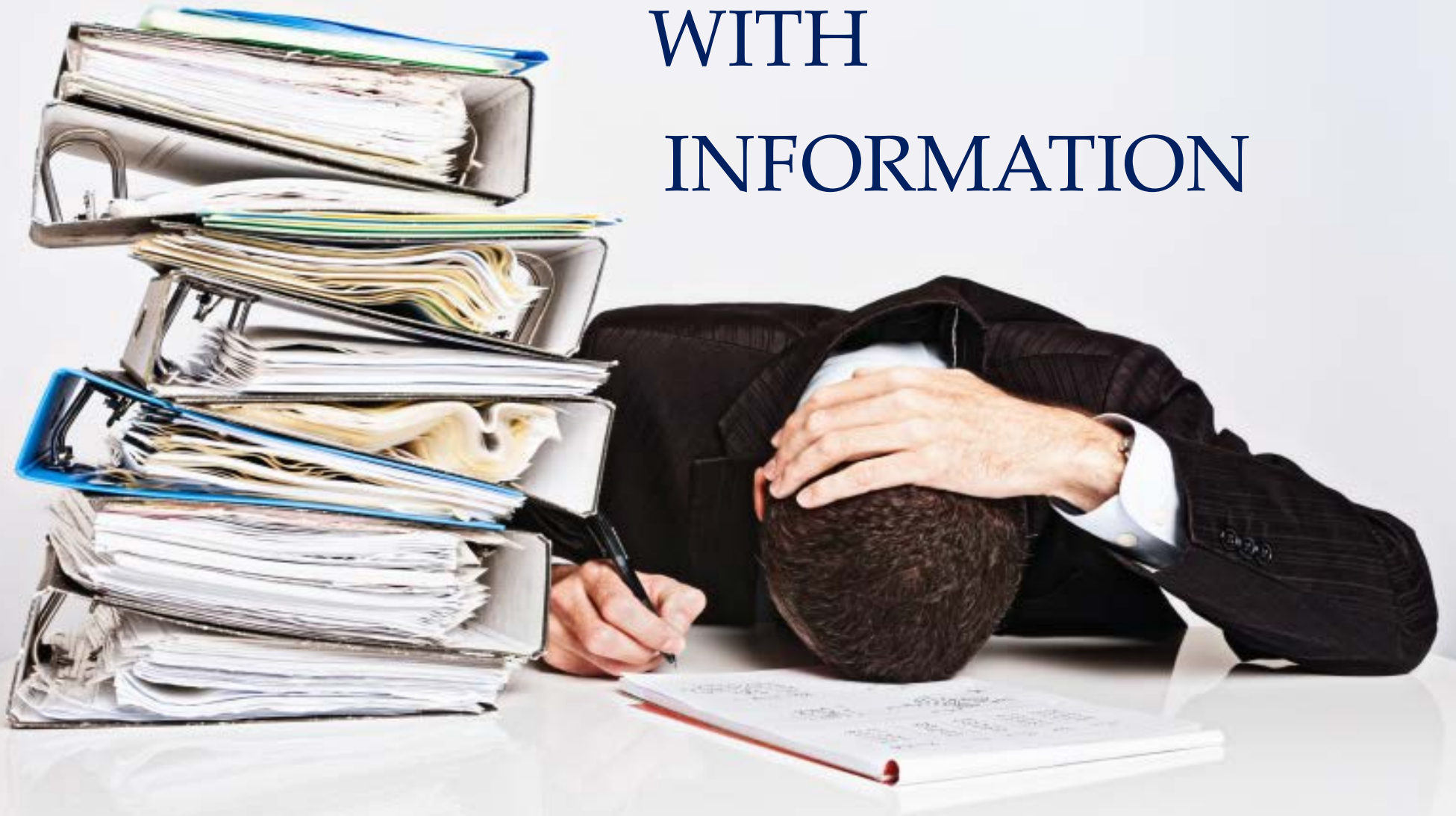
POLITICS



CAN THEY CONNECT?



LEGISLATORS ARE BOMBARDED WITH INFORMATION



WHICH IS WHERE POLICY EXPERTS CAN BE HELPFUL



BUT YOU WILL HAVE TO STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD



EXPERT FOR
PROPOSAL



EXPERT AGAINST
PROPOSAL

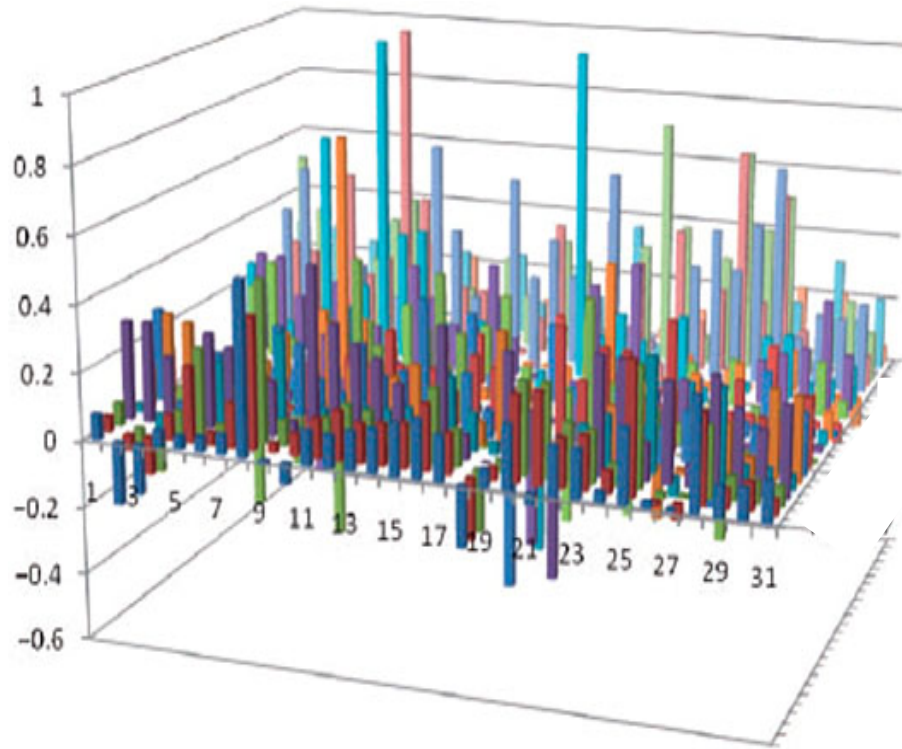


LOBBYIST



CAMPAIGN
STRATEGIST

DATA CLARITY IS PRICELESS



INEFFECTIVE



EFFECTIVE

EXPLAIN THE FISCAL IMPACT OF YOUR POLICY

- ECONOMIC GROWTH
- EMPLOYMENT
- STATE COST/REVENUE



ENGAGE WITH POLICYMAKERS YEAR ROUND





FACTS ALONE DON'T MAKE DECISIONS

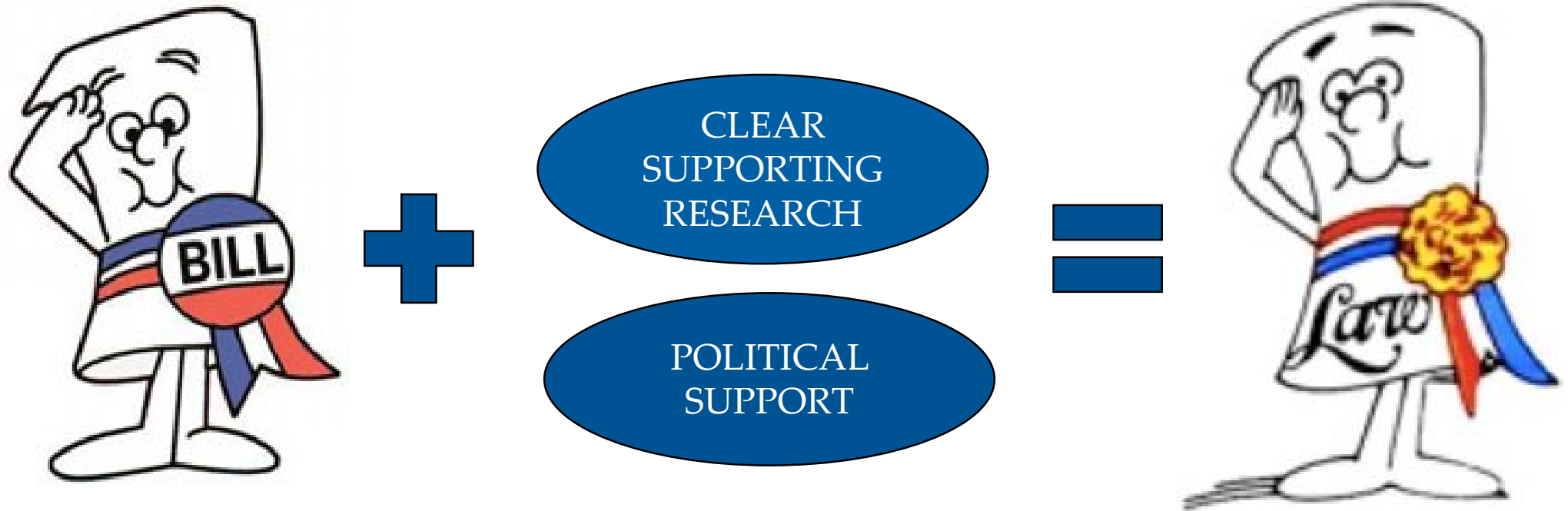


NETWORKING IS VITAL IN A SMALL STATE

POLICY AND POLITICS DON'T STOP AFTER THE SESSION



HOW RESEARCH CAN SHAPE LAW

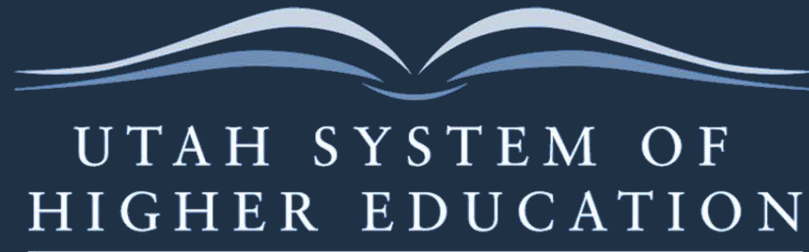


POLICY & POLITICS CAN CONNECT



“If you can’t explain it simply, you don’t understand it well enough.”
~Albert Einstein

Making Student Mental Health a Priority



David L. Buhler PhD.
Commissioner of Higher Education

Overview

- December 2016: Board of Regents established working group
- January 2017: Regents work with Utah Student Association on passage of HCR 16 – advocating for improving mental health services on campus
- September 2017: Board of Regents adopts recommendations
- January 2018: Safe UT App launched at University of Utah
- 2018-2019: Safe UT app to roll out to remaining state colleges and universities

Working Group

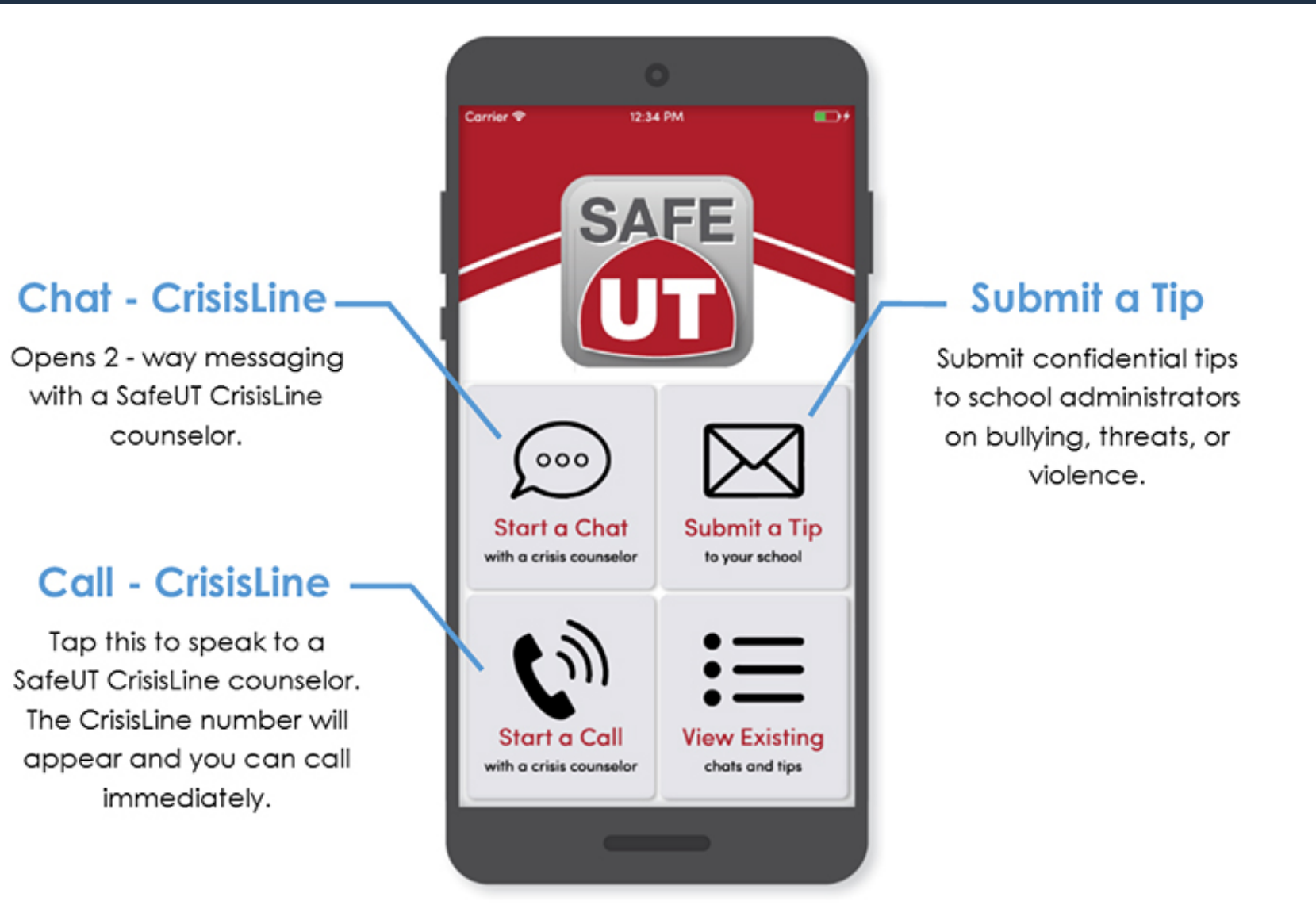
Membership:

- Regents
- Chief Student Services Officers (2 institutions)
- Student Regent
- K-12 leaders
- Utah Neuropsychiatric Institute (housed at University of Utah)
- Hospital association
- State and private organizations
 - Social services
 - Behavioral health
 - Substance abuse

Regents' Recommendations

1. Assess the mental health and wellness needs of USHE students
 2. Improve mental health education at USHE institutions
 3. Increase access to mental health services
 4. Develop institutional five-year mental health implementation plans
- University/College presidents are to update the Board of Regents on their progress at Board meetings held at their institution.

Safe UT App



Safe UT App

- Launched in K-12 in 2016, now reaches 80% of students
- 819 tips/month
- Suicidal thoughts number one issue
- Intercepted 86 'credible' threats since July 2016
- Downloaded 12,000+ times week following Parkland, FL. Tragedy
- One of four states that provides '2-way' messaging
 - (Utah, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois)
- Implementation at all public colleges and universities by Fall 2018.

University of Utah Utilization

January 2018-March 2018

- Chats – 632
 - Including 16,206 threads
 - 26 average threads per chat
- Tips – 8
 - Including 22 threads
 - 3 average threads per tip
 - Tips have include dating violence, discrimination, suicide, mental health & alcohol.

Examples

- A student used SafeUT to call the Crisis Line as he was actively thinking about walking into traffic. SafeUT staff were able to contact local Police and the school who worked together to locate the student and ensure his safety.
- A concerned friend sent a Tip and school officials were able to stop a fight where a student was being bullied after his parent died by suicide.
- A student took a cocktail of medications as a suicide attempt before school. After being reminded of SafeUT at an assembly that school morning, he sent in a chat to ask for help.

UTAH SYSTEM OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

Effective Communication with Legislators, Behavioral Health in Washington as an example

Rep. Gerry Pollet

WICHE Commissioner, Washington

Faculty, Univ of WA School of Public Health

Message and Hier Ed Messengers:

- We do research, and work with data: so we want to show that our requests are data based
 - Recognize that you have to ASK, not just present the data
- We often don't utilize best messengers in higher ed
- Trustees are appointed because they are politically connected. CTC Trustees often know every legislator in region. But, do they present your message and request in small group meetings? In testimony?
- Do students, faculty and alum present your message? Story telling more powerful than data. Certainly needed to support data.

Effective... if presented, supported
with stories and not undermined:

January 30, 2018

**Depression, anxiety affect more than one-fourth of
state's college students**

[Kim Eckart](#) UW News

The survey of more than 10,000 students at 13 of Washington's two- and four-year institutions shows the need for mental health services on campus, advocates say, especially as the state Legislature considers two bills that would fund suicide-prevention resources in higher education and additional mental health counselors for college students who are veterans. It was the first time the Healthy Minds Study was administered to students in Washington.

Concerns Led to Legislative Funded Task Force, report 2016:

Report on Mental Health & Suicide Prevention
in Higher Education: November 2016 | Task Force on
Mental Health and Suicide Prevention in Higher Education
“In 2015, the Washington Legislature enacted House Bill
1138 to create a Mental Health & Suicide
Prevention in Higher Education Task Force. The
legislation charged the Task Force with determining the
policies, resources, and technical assistance needed to
support higher education institutions in improving
access to behavioral health services and improving
suicide prevention responses.”

Task Force report 2016 recommended:

1. Prioritize ongoing state funding to support behavioral health counselors at Washington's postsecondary institutions
2. Develop a public behavioral health and suicide prevention resource for all postsecondary institutions in Washington
3. Establish a grant program to support resource challenged postsecondary institutions
4. Report annually

Legislature as a whole promptly ignored the report in budget after having work sessions:

1. NO ongoing state funding to support behavioral health counselors
2. NO prevention resource for all postsecondary institutions in Washington
3. NO grant program to support resource challenged postsecondary institutions
4. Report annually: NO

Beware of desire to “look good”
undermining message to have your
needs met:

- Report urged funding for tools, assessments, counseling...
- But, MESSAGING emphasis on survey finding:
“The average reported wait time for non-crisis appointments in 2015 was 1.98 business days for two –year institutions, 6.67 for public four–year institutions and 2.67 for private nonprofit four-year colleges and universities”

Some Legislators Work Closely with Advocates and Pull Recommendations:

- Same study that found adequacy also reported that recommended level of FT counselors to students: 1:1,600
- Actual, 8/8 four year degree institutions
> 1: 4,000
- Community and Technical College may have highest need populations, most difficult to serve, and fewest resources.
 - For same 2017 budget, we struggled to recommend \$1.6 million for regional and research institutions, but just \$300,000 for CTCs
 - 2018: added \$500,000 for CTCs to evaluate and contract for services.

More Effective... story telling in support of data:

- Students sharing how they could not obtain professional counseling for weeks – or at all – was more powerful than prior survey that claimed students were seen at counseling centers within 24 hours or days.
- Ironically, the 2018 UW Forefront survey undermined the 2017 official multi-campus survey and report.

More Effective... appeal to values and committee consensus goals

- Legislators nationwide mostly committed to increasing retention and completion success
- Appeal to this by including behavioral health as essential part of retention and success:
- “Nearly 4 out of 5 college students report that emotional distress impacts their academic performance,” said Jennifer Stuber, a University of Washington associate professor of social work and co-founder of Forefront Suicide Prevention. “During this major transition time in the lives of students, it is important to provide them with counseling and other types of support for emotional distress to ensure they can set a healthy course, flourishing academically, athletically and socially.”
- 76% reported mental health issues leading to academic problems in prior four weeks

Note emphasis on veterans:

- Legislators' interest in being viewed as supporting veterans leads to support –
- Acknowledge data that student veterans more likely to self-harm and have behavioral health needs... Reinforced by much media.
- How to ensure that all other students are not left behind?