

NISTS 2023

BE A CONNECTOR FOR TRANSFER STUDENT SUCCESS

Virtual • February 1-3 | Portland, OR • February 22-24

The following presentation was given at the 21st Annual Conference for the National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students. Please cite responsibly and direct questions to the original presenter(s).

Educational Session

2848 - STEM Transfer Success: Building Community Through Cross-Institutional Recruitment Initiatives

Partnerships and Collaboration, Transition Programs and Supports

Transfer-student recruitment events usually include opportunities to meet with advisors and representatives from student support services, but what if they could also provide a deeper connection to the campus community? The STEM Success Fair was designed to introduce transfer students to faculty, research, scholarships, and resources to make the transfer process easier. Learn how two institutions worked together to help build a community for STEM students, faculty, and staff through one event.

Allyson Rocks, *Academic Program Manager*
University of Utah



STEM Transfer Success: Building Community Through Cross-Institutional Recruitment Initiatives

Allyson Rocks

Academic Program Manager,
Utah Pathways to STEM Initiative (UPSTEM),
University of Utah



Overview

- What is UPSTEM?
- Barriers to transferring in STEM
- Why Aren't Students Transferring?
- Our STEM Success Fair
 - Challenges
 - Outcomes
- How else can we connect and support transfer students?

Utah Pathways to STEM (UPSTEM)



- Part of a nationwide HHMI initiative to promote *inclusive excellence* in STEM



- **Collaboration** between the University of Utah and Salt Lake Community College

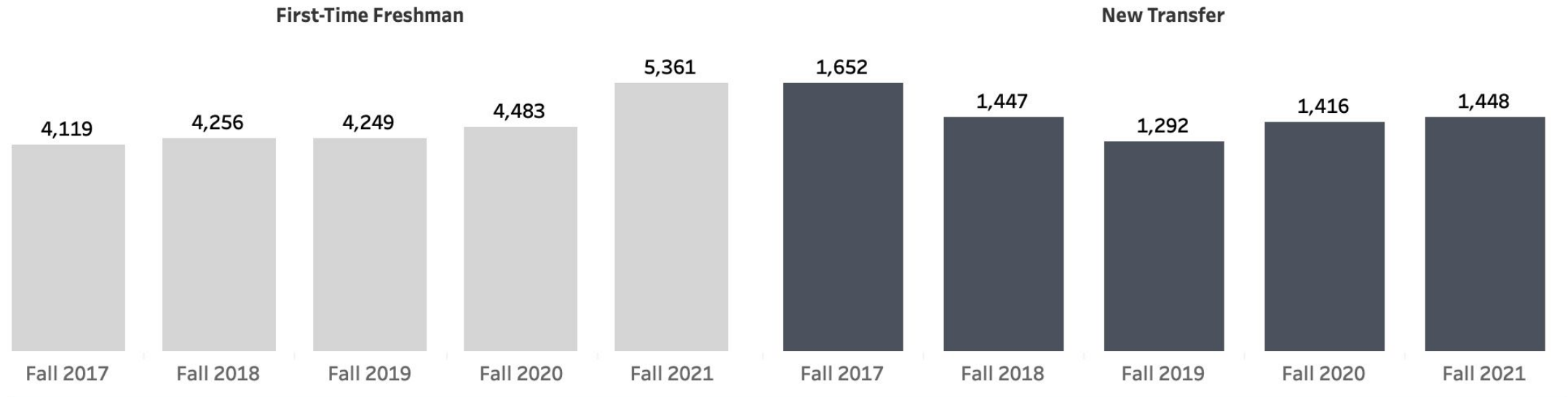


- Focuses on **transfer students** and students from **historically marginalized** groups in STEM

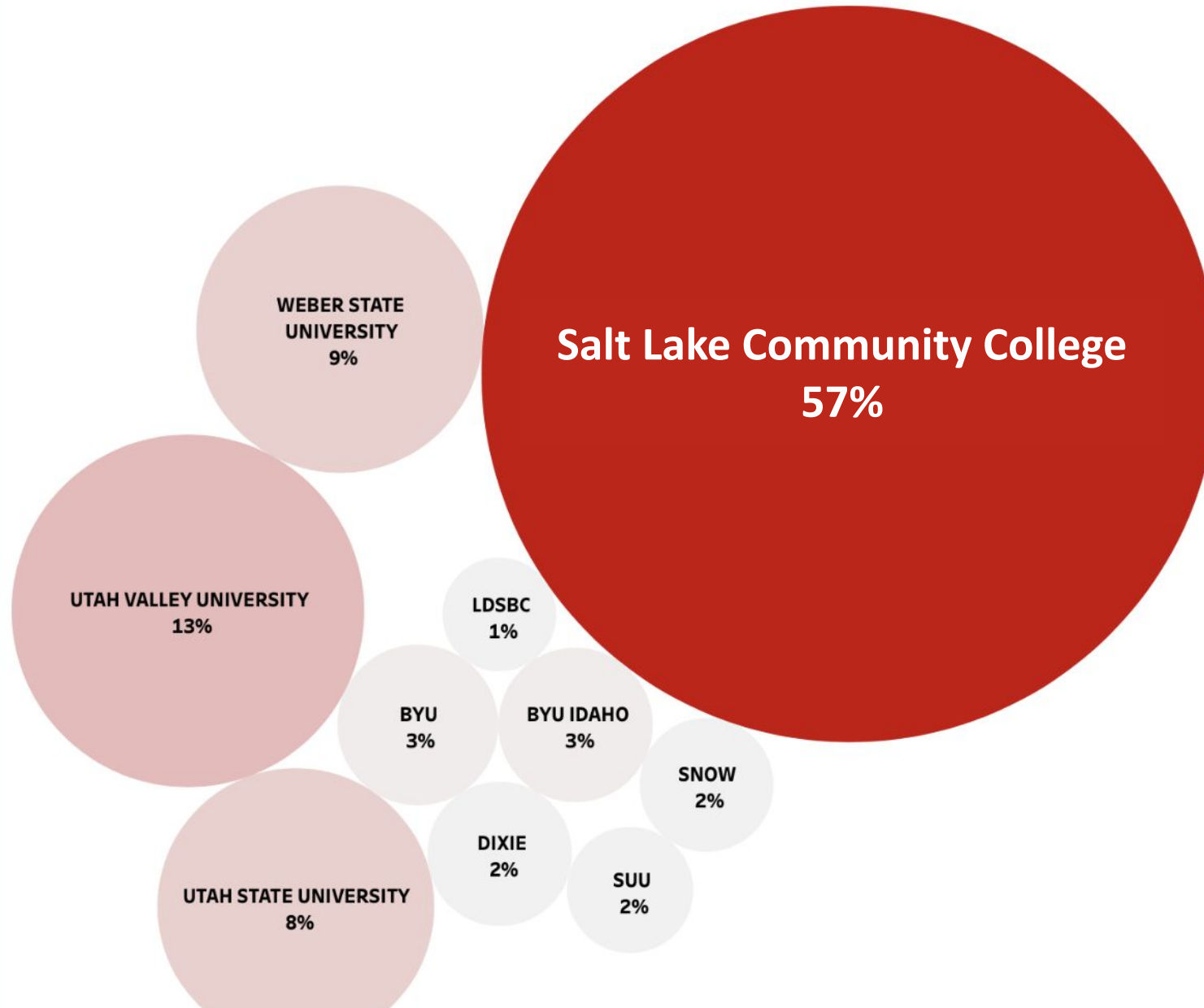


- Prioritizes building **institutional capacity** and **infrastructure** for inclusion

Transfer Student at the University of Utah



Top Institutions Students Transfer From



23

Average Transfer Age

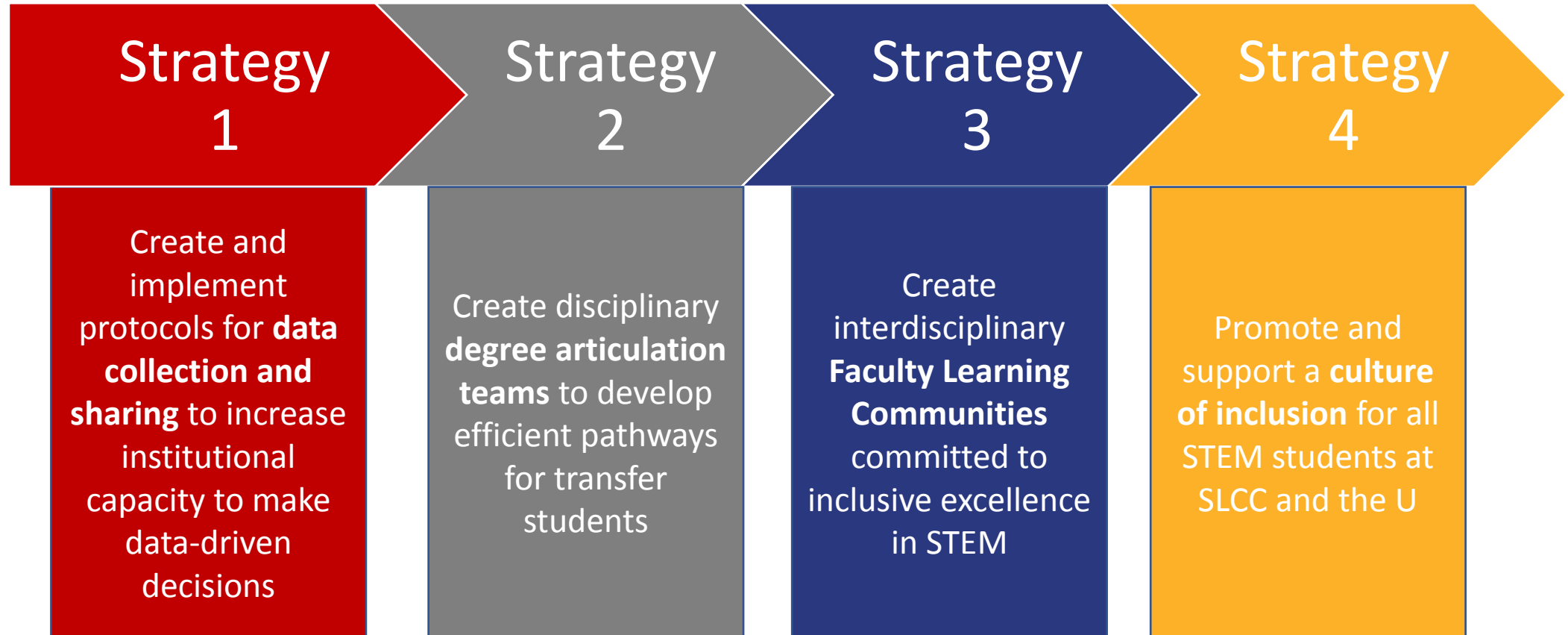
3.32

Average Transfer GPA

59

Average Transfer Credits

UPSTEM's Multi-Pronged Approach



Barriers to STEM Transfer?

With a neighbor, discuss the following:

- What are obstacles a student might face when transferring to a 4-year institution in STEM?
- How would you rank these barriers in level of difficulty?
- How do they relate to or differ from barriers in other disciplines?

Enrollment/Retention Trends

- After two years of the pandemic, transfer enrollment declined 13.5 percent overall, falling two times more steeply than non-transfer enrollment (-6.3%).
- Upward transfers with an associate's degree fell by 10.3%
- Upward transfers without an associate's degree also fell by 9.3%
- The student persistence rate one term after transferring declined across the board and remained below pre-pandemic levels. Year 2, however, showed signs of recovery among younger students (20 or younger), men, bachelor's degree-seeking students, and at private nonprofit four-year institutions.

What is Happening?

- In your opinion what are the major factors that are contributing to these declines?
- How should institutions articulate to students the value of earning an associates degree and transferring?
- How should 2-year and 4-year institutions work together to support students through the transfer process? How do you see your role in supporting this process?

Utah Pathways to STEM
presents

STEM SUCCESS FAIR

STEM Success Fair

Annual recruitment event planned by both institutions (starting Fall 2021)

Faculty, staff, & students participated from the following:

Salt Lake Community College

- School of Science Math & Engineering

University of Utah

- College of Science
- College of Mines and Earth Science
- College of Engineering (2022)

Meet University of Utah faculty, staff, and students at the STEM Success Fair. Learn about scholarships, research experiences, internships, and additional opportunities to take advantage of before and after you transfer!

9 AM - 1 PM

September 28th, 2022

SLCC Taylorsville Campus
Science and Industry Building
STEM Learning Center



01

Faculty

- U & SLCC Faculty presence
- Low-stakes setting to build relationships
- Faculty brought research papers, material samples, and ran live demonstrations

02

Student Support

- U & SLCC advisors were present to answer logistical questions about transfer articulation, scholarships, etc.
- TRIO programs, Undergraduate Research, Admissions, and Transfer Centers also participated

03

Students

- SLCC & U student clubs were invited to participate and recruit for their organizations
- U students (direct admits and former transfer) were invited to share their experiences





“SLCC’s campus is a much different environment than the U. Anything we can do to ease that transition, we want to do it. It’s important for STEM students to engage with researchers. If you’re a first-generation college student, faculty can seem scary, and it’s hard to approach them on your own. We invite U and SLCC faculty to the STEM Success Fair to be in a casual setting with low stakes”

- Craig Caldwell, co-principal investigator of the UPSTEM Initiative and Dean of the School for Science, Mathematics, and Engineering at Salt Lake Community College



“Faculty aren’t usually at recruitment events so having them there makes the STEM Success Fair unique. Here, students can start to form a relationship with faculty so that they know at least one professor when they transfer to the U campus. A lot of transfer students think they want to major in pre-med but at the STEM Success Fair, they meet researchers from many different fields and might fall in love with something they didn’t expect.”

- Holly Godsey, principal investigator of the UPSTEM Initiative, Director of STEM Initiatives in the College of Education, and Associate Professor in the Dept. of Geology and Geophysics at the University of Utah

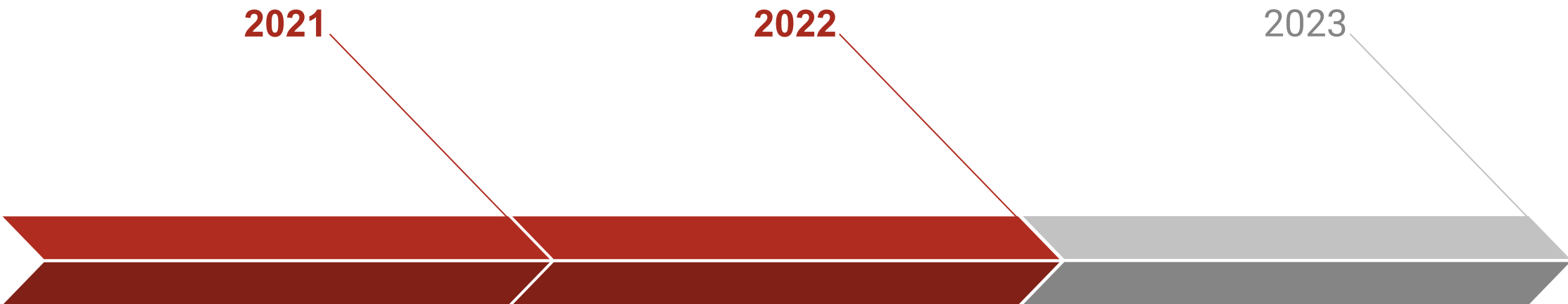
Challenges

Here are some challenges/worries we have:

- Faculty Participation
- Varying Support from Institutional Leadership
- Cost
- Student Turnout (always a mystery...)

What are some potential challenges you anticipate in your own institutions/divisions if you were to do something similar?

Outcomes



2021

2022

2023

188 SLCC STUDENTS

Over 70 Faculty & Staff from the U & SLCC participated

340 SLCC STUDENTS

Added U College of Engineering

Over 40 Faculty & Staff from the U & SLCC participated

SLCC business majors came too!

Will add U Health Sciences





“I just kind of guessed my way through the first two years of college. Then I started talking to these geologists about their field, about the courses offered where you go on fields trips outside the classroom. I love adventures and being outside. I realized I could pursue this other field while still staying in education.”

Zach Knettles: First-Year U transfer who decided to switch from Special Education to Earth Science Secondary Education after conversation with faculty from the University of Utah’s Geology & Geophysics department at the STEM Success Fair.

Other Ideas?

- Share opportunities that your home institutions provide to connect transfer students to vital resources and community at the transfer institution.
- What are some new ideas you'd like to implement to build connection and community between transfer partner institutions?

Questions?

You can find
me at:

ally.rocks@utah.edu



NISTS 2023

BE A **CONNECTOR**
FOR **TRANSFER STUDENT**
SUCCESS

Thank you
for attending!

**PLEASE COMPLETE
A SESSION EVALUATION**

(via the conference app)

This
session's
id# is:

2848