

The background of the slide is a photograph of graduates in black caps and gowns. Several hands are visible, some holding white diplomas. The image is partially obscured by a large blue rectangular overlay on the right side.

The USHE Equity Lens Framework in Addressing Postsecondary Gaps

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HONORING HOW WE STARTED



Salt Lake City on Saturday, May 30, 2020



[Portraits in Salt Lake City memorialize Utahns killed by police violence, in addition to George Floyd](#)

LEVERAGING NATIONAL BEST PRACTICES

- Met with Oregon Rudy Ann and Markisha Smith (October, 2020)
- Learn from past experience
- Eliminate reinventing the wheel



Oregon Equity Lens

The Oregon Equity Lens was adopted by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) in 2014 as a cornerstone to the State's approach to education policy and budgeting. The Equity Lens was originally developed by and adopted by the former Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB), and is implemented by the Oregon Chief Education Office in addition to the HECC.



Oregon Equity Lens: Preamble

In 2011, the Oregon Legislature created the Oregon Education Investment Board, which had a vision of educational equity and excellence for each and every child and learner in Oregon. The OEIB believed that we must ensure sufficient resource is available to guarantee student success, and that the success of every child and learner in Oregon is directly tied to the prosperity of all Oregonians. As the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, with our Oregon education partners, we continue this critical work started by the OEIB and reaffirm that the attainment of a quality education strengthens all Oregon communities and promotes prosperity, to the benefit of us all. It is through educational equity that Oregon will continue to be a wonderful place to live and make progress towards becoming a place of economic, technologic and cultural innovation.

Oregon faces many growing opportunity and systemic gaps that threaten our economic competitiveness and our capacity to innovate. The first is the persistent gap of student growth as measured by graduation rates, state assessments and daily attendance for our growing populations of communities of color, immigrants, migrants, and rural students navigating poverty. While students of color make up 35% of the educational pipeline in our state¹—our opportunity and systemic gaps continue to persist. As our diversity grows and our ability to meet the needs and recognize the strengths of these students remains stagnant or declines—we limit the opportunity of everyone in Oregon. The persistent educational disparities have cost Oregon billions of dollars in lost economic output¹ and these losses are compounded every year

Chief Education Office Vision Statement

Our vision is to build and coordinate a seamless system of education that meets the diverse learning needs of students from cradle to career, and ensures each student graduates high school with the support and opportunities to prosper.

Higher Education Coordinating Commission Vision Statement

CREATING & ADOPTING AN EQUITY LENS FRAMEWORK (FOR UTAH)

- Met with various constituent groups August-December (2020)
- Worked with institutional Chief Diversity Officers to co-create USHE's Equity Lens Framework to meet Utah context
- Collective effort: Students and USHE staff provided input
- Adopted by Utah Board of Higher Education, December 2020





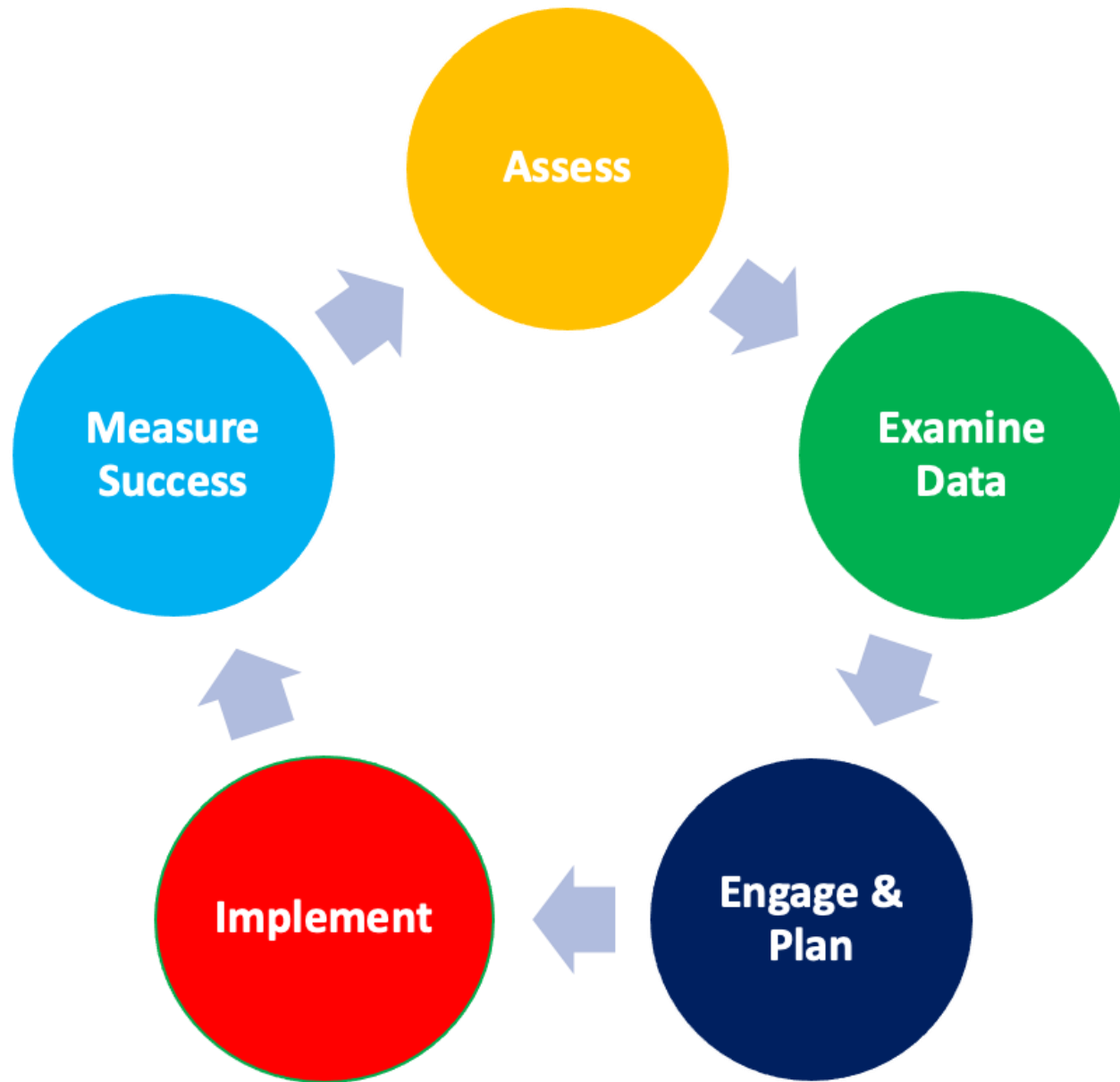
HOW USHE DEFINES AN EQUITY LENS FRAMEWORK

An *equity lens framework* is a **tool** comprised of shared beliefs, common definitions, and critical questions through which an organization ***commits to continually evaluating*** any existing or new strategy, policy, or initiative. The beliefs and definitions ensure the organization begins from a common understanding and sets the ***groundwork for clear accountability***, allowing all efforts to be focused on closing opportunity gaps for marginalized populations. Underlying this framework is how data is collected and synthesized ***to impact policy and systemic change***.

STARTING FROM A PLACE OF SHARED BELIEFS:

We believe that every student has the ability to learn, and that the System has an ethical and moral responsibility to ensure optimal learning and workplace environments exist on USHE campuses for all students, faculty, and staff.

We believe students who are academically underprepared for college are being failed by the educational system. To remedy this reality, the System and its 16 colleges and universities must meet students *where they are* and work to build on and improve each student's educational outcomes.



TIED TO BOARD 5-YR STRATEGIC PLAN

- Reflective in USHE vision and mission
- Measuring for student outcomes

INSTITUTIONAL EXAMPLES

WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY

An Equity Framework

Disparities in access and educational attainment pervade higher education. In order to eliminate these disparities, we must adopt a framework that defines equity as “an actionable concept of quality and practice.” The framework must pervade the entire institution rather than be viewed as an add-on without institution-wide commitment and accountability (Witham et al. 2015, p. 3).

Equity-minded practices require:

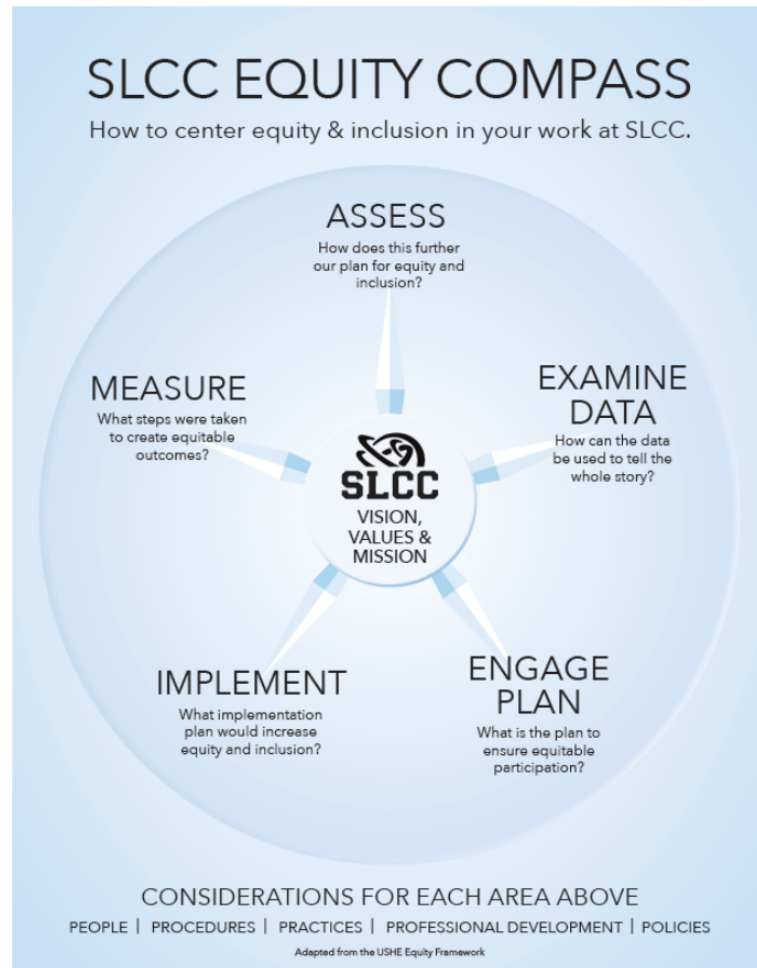
1. Willingness to look at student outcomes disaggregated by race and ethnicity as well as socioeconomic status;
 2. Recognition that individual students are not responsible for the unequal outcomes of groups that have historically experienced discrimination and marginalization in the United States;
 3. Respect for the aspirations and struggles of students who are not well-served by the current educational system;
 4. Belief in the fairness of allocating additional college resources to students who have greater needs due to the systemic shortcomings of our educational system in providing for them;
 5. Recognition that the elimination of structural racism in institutions of higher education requires intentional critical deconstruction of structures, policies, practices, norms and values assumed to be race neutral.
- (Witham et al. 2015, p. 2).

These practices are in alignment with the [Utah System of Higher Education’s Statement on Racial & Social Injustice](#). Furthermore, it follows the August 2020 [Resolution to Advance Equitable Systemic Change Within the Utah System of Higher Education](#) and utilizes a similar structure for [assessment, impact and improvement for all learners](#).



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GUIDE TO EQUITY, INCLUSION AND TRANSFORMATION AT SLCC



SLCC Equity Compass Is a tool comprised of shared beliefs, definitions, and five areas to ask critical questions through which we at SLCC commit to continually evaluating any existing or new strategy, policy, or initiative. The compass will be used to:

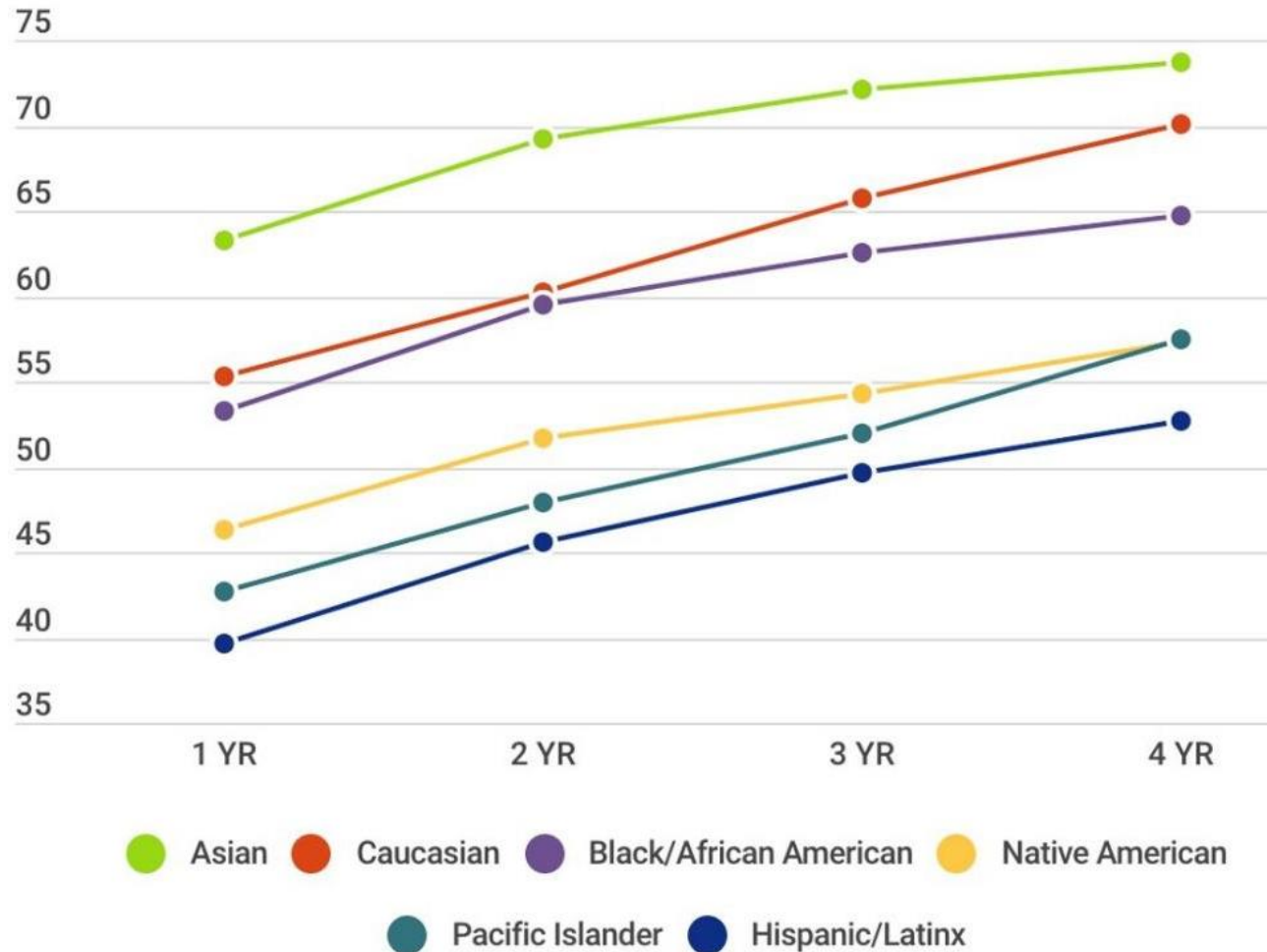
- Ensure understanding across our organization of the connections between our mission, vision, and values and the role that each of us has at the organization
- Establish processes that promote clear accountability
- Focus our college efforts towards student success and completion are attainable regardless of identities



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THE IMPACT & CHALLENGES OF DATA TO INFORM

THE IMPACT OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

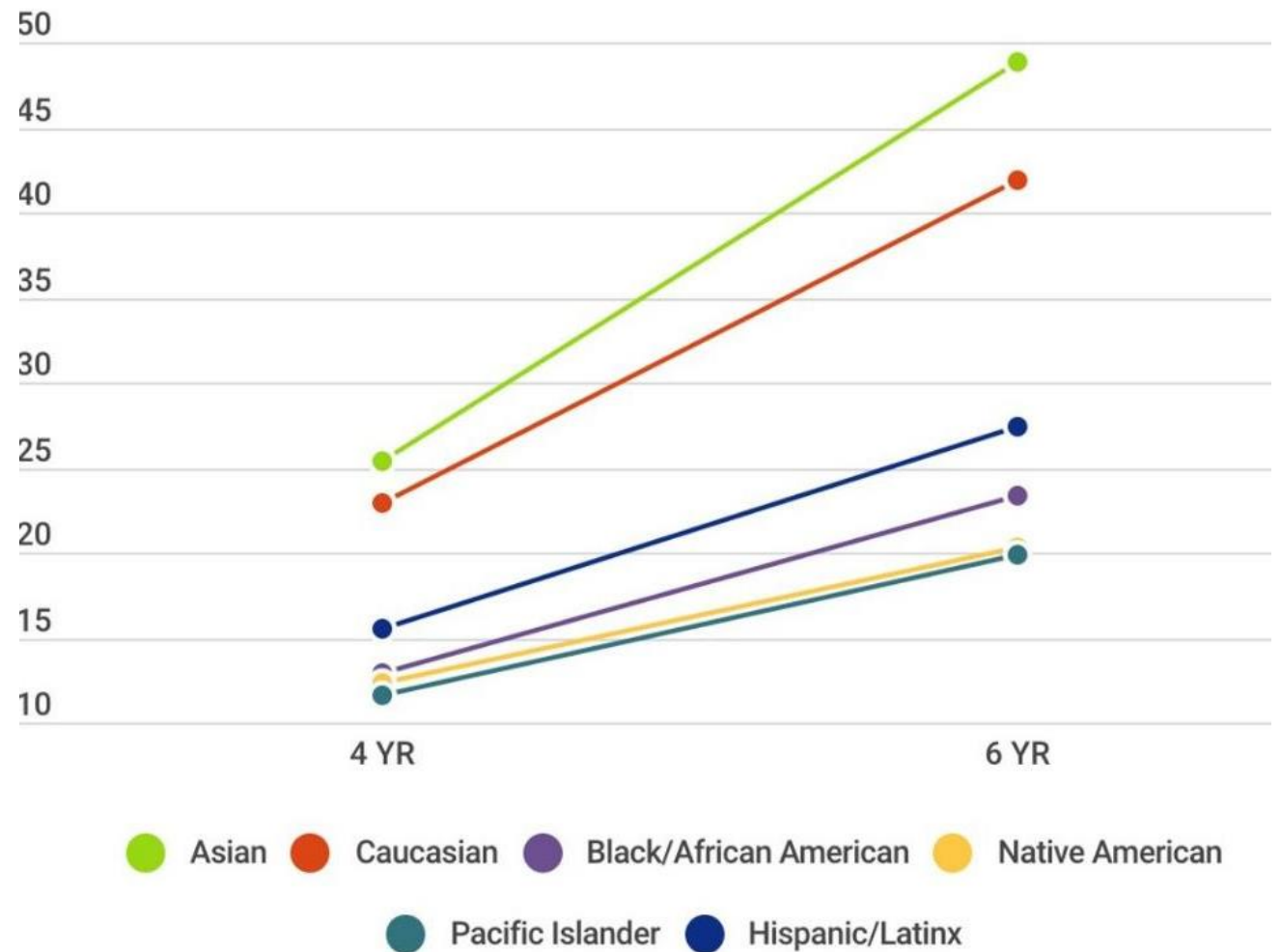


DISPARITIES IN COLLEGE PARTICIPATION

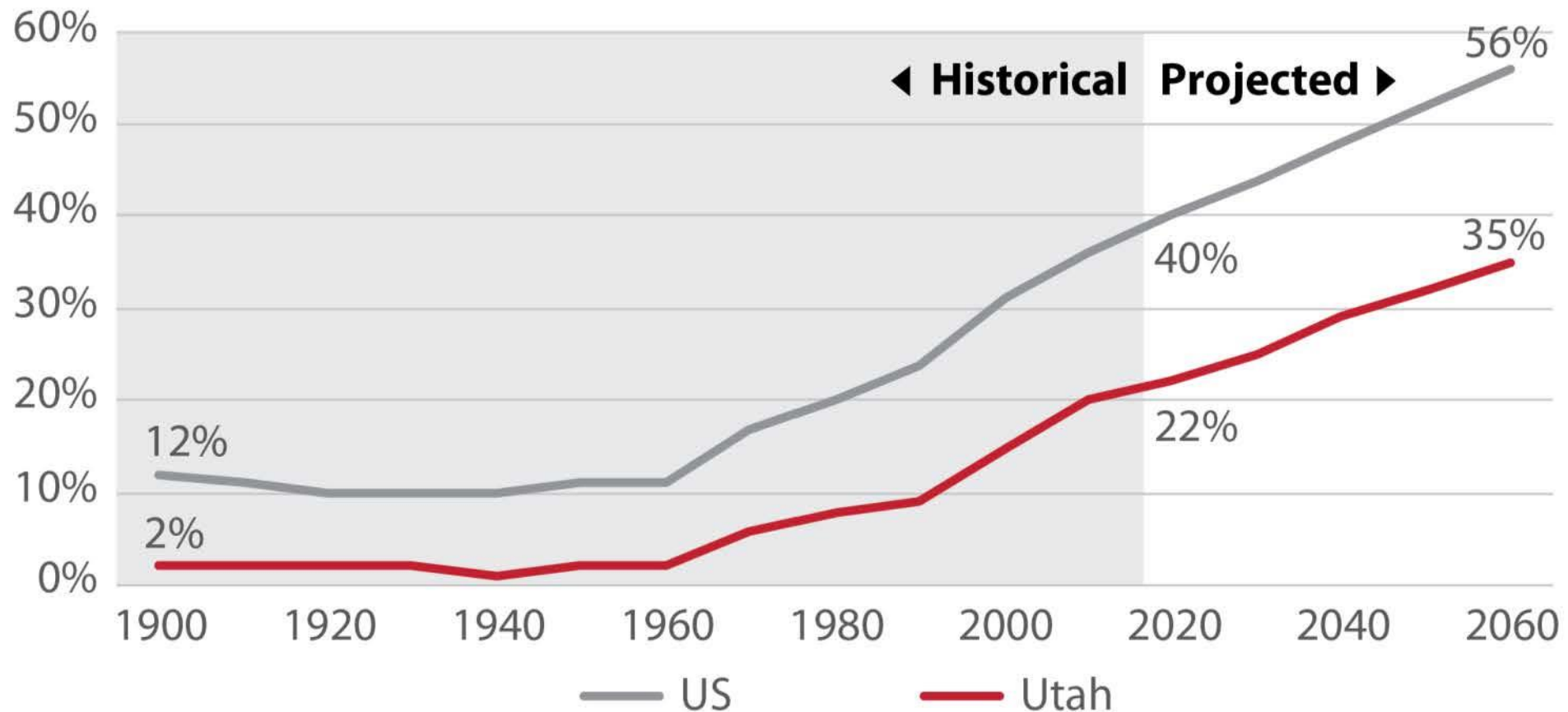
The differences in enrollment rates between Utah's students of color and white students are as much as **40%.**

DISPARITIES IN COLLEGE COMPLETION

The differences in completion rates between Utah's students of color and white students are as much as **35%.**



Minority Share of Population, Utah and U.S.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute

EQUITY ATTAINMENT GOALS DRIVE BOARD 5-YR STRATEGIC PLAN

Access



Increase the college-going rate of high school grads by 3% in 5 years.



Increase the college-going rate of underrepresented groups by 4% in 5 years.

Workforce Alignment



Increase the completion rate of graduates in high-demand, high-wage programs by 7% in 5 years.



Increase the completion rate of underrepresented groups in programs aligned with high-wage, high-demand jobs by 8% in 5 years.

Completion



Increase timely completion of degrees and awards by 3% in 5 years.



Increase the timely completion of underrepresented students by 4% in 5 years.

DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS SUPPORT STRATEGIC PLAN

- Disaggregation of existing data tools
 - Enrollments dashboard
 - Completions dashboard
- Development of new data tools
 - Faculty & Staff diversity dashboard
 - Strategic plan dashboard
- Analysis of undocumented students receiving non-resident tuition waiver (HB-144)
- Partnerships with institutions to gather additional demographic data in support of equity efforts

EQUITY-DRIVEN DATA CHALLENGES

COLLECTION CHALLENGES

- Definitions
- Student privacy
- Cell sizes
- Resources

ACTION CHALLENGES

- Shared ownership and accountability for equity gaps
- 'Equity gap' disparities often affirms deficit mindset and prevents action
- Incentivizing equity action (institutional/system levels)

Thank you, SHEEO Communities of Practice

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