



# Some things I've learned


C. Shane Reese

President, Brigham Young University




# Questions


(and yes, I'm going to be annoying and ask you to raise your hand)




Who traveled more than 20 miles to attend this evening?




Who has been in their role on  
the school board for less than 1  
year?




Who is fully confident in every decision your board made in the last 6 months?



Who has rural schools as part of  
the school district you  
represent?



Who is an optimist about  
education?




Who cares deeply about the  
education of the young people in  
Utah?





# Some things I've learned

- We have more in common than differences on the things that matter most about our primary purpose.
- Mission matters.
- Trust in education has eroded, but not beyond repair.
- Success depends critically on the premise that all we do must begin and end with students.



We have more in common than differences on the things that matter most about our primary purpose.

- Higher lifetime earnings
- Higher civic and community engagement
- Friendships and social networks
- Deepened appreciation for different perspectives and people
- Ability to build and lift others
- Capacity to serve in our communities
- Deepened character



“Self-interest generates contracts. In a contract, two or more individuals, each pursuing their own advantage, come together to make an exchange for mutual benefit. I pay my garage mechanic to mend my car. I and others pay our taxes to ensure that we have the social services we need. So there is the commercial contract that creates the market, and the social contract that creates the state ... the motivating factor is self-interest. Contracts are about ‘I.’ ... A covenant generates a different kind of relationship altogether. Recall that what makes it different is that in a covenant, two or more individuals, each respecting the dignity and integrity of the other, come together in a bond ...of trust, to share their interests, sometimes even to share their lives, by pledging their faithfulness to one another, to do together what neither can achieve alone. Unlike contracts, which are entered into for the sake of advantage, covenants are moral commitments sustained by loyalty and fidelity, even when they call for sacrifice. They are about you and I coming together to form a ‘We.’”



# Mission matters

- Strengthening the Student Experience
- Retaining and Strengthening a Focus on Undergraduate Teaching
- Reinforcing our “Dual Heritage,” or being Bilingual, for Faculty, Staff, and Students
- Developing the Courage to Be Different
- Building a Community of Belonging
- Investing in Mission-Inspired Scholarship
- Focusing on Mission-Aligned Hiring



# Eroding Trust in Education

- Gordon Gee – “we are in this together”
- Avoid distractions: focus on our primary task -- education
- Student centricity is key



# It must begin and end with students

- Epidemic of loneliness
- Hire personnel (faculty and staff) who are committed to, or willing to learn to be student-centric.
- Gallup study: Characteristics of faculty who led to odds of graduates being **engaged at work** more than doubled, as did their odds of **thriving in their well-being**.
  1. who cared about them as a person
  2. made them excited about learning
  3. encouraged them to pursue their dreams



# We are in this together

- We have more in common than differences on the things that matter most about our primary purpose.
- Mission matters
- Trust in education has eroded, but not beyond repair.
- Success depends critically on the premise that all we do must begin and end with students.