



July 16, 2021

Amendment to Board Policy R312, Configuration of the Utah System of Higher Education and Institutional Missions and Roles

Overview

The Utah Board of Higher Education has the responsibility to “establish, approve, and oversee each institution’s mission and role” within the parameters set by Utah Code (53B-1-402(f)). These roles and missions are outlined in Board Policy R312, which was first approved by the former Board of Regents in May 2003. The policy distinguishes the different *roles* of specific types of degree-granting institutions established by the Board of Higher Education: research universities (the University of Utah and Utah State University), regional universities (Weber State, Utah Valley University, Southern Utah University, and Dixie State University), and comprehensive community colleges (Salt Lake Community College and Snow College). The policy also contains an individual *mission statement* drafted by each institution and approved by the institutional Board of Trustees and the Board of Higher Education.

Institutions regularly revise and update the mission statements that guide them within their broader role, especially following intensive strategic planning undertaken by the president, faculty, staff, and Board of Trustees. The most recent changes were for the University of Utah, Salt Lake Community College, Dixie State University, and Southern Utah University in 2016.

Two regional universities, Weber State University and Dixie State University, are proposing updates to their mission statements.

Process

1. New mission statements must first be approved by the institutional Board of Trustees.
2. The Commissioner’s Office assesses whether the proposed mission statement fit within institutional role.
3. The Board of Higher Education’s Academic Education Committee has the first responsibility of vetting the proposed statements to determine if they fit within the institutional role and if they should be forwarded to the full Board for approval.

4. The Board decides whether to approve the proposed updates to the mission statements and amends Policy R312 to reflect the approved changes.

The Weber State University and Dixie State University Boards of Trustees have approved the new mission statements. The Academic Education Committee reviewed the mission statements during its June 2021 meeting and voted to forward both to the full board for approval.

Key Definitions from Policy R312

3.1. “Roles”: the general category within which an institution fits as described in Utah Code §53B-16-101, Establishment of Institutional Roles and General Courses of Study.

3.2. “Mission Statements”: written statements of the general purposes and functions of various institutions approved by the Board.

4.2 The Regional University role is to “provide career and technical education, undergraduate associate and baccalaureate programs and select master’s degree programs to fill regional or state workforce demands. After a new master’s degree program’s fifth year, the program should be awarding a minimum average of five degrees per year as measured over a previous three-year period to be considered sustainable. Regional universities emphasize teaching, scholarly, and creative achievements that complement teaching and community service. Transfer programs allow students to seamlessly seek degrees at other institutions within the system. The institution contributes to the quality of life and economic development at the local and state levels. Student success is supported through developmental programs and services associated with a comprehensive community college. Weber State University, Southern Utah University, Utah Valley University, and Dixie State University are regional universities.”

Proposed updates to institutional missions

Weber State University: After a year of planning and discussion, in March of 2021, the Weber State University Board of Trustees approved a new strategic plan and mission statement, which will guide the institution through 2026.

Current Mission Statement:

Weber State University provides associate, baccalaureate and master degree programs in liberal arts, sciences, technical and professional fields. Encouraging freedom of expression and valuing diversity, the university provides excellent educational experiences for students through extensive personal contact among faculty, staff and students in and out of the classroom. Through academic programs, research, artistic expression, public service and community-based learning, the university serves as an educational, cultural and economic leader for the region.

Proposed Mission Statement:

Weber State University provides transformative educational experiences for students of all identities and backgrounds through meaningful personal connections with faculty and staff in and out of the classroom. The university promotes student achievement, equity and inclusion, and vibrant community relationships through multiple credentials and degree pathways, experiential learning, research, civic engagement, and stewardship.

Dixie State University: Dixie State University also implemented a year-long strategic planning process, and the strategic plan and mission statement were approved by the Board of Trustees in December of 2020.

Current Mission Statement:

Dixie State University is a public comprehensive university dedicated to rigorous learning and the enrichment of the professional and personal lives of its students and community by providing opportunities that engage the unique Southern Utah environment and resources.

Proposed Mission Statement:

Dixie State University is an open, inclusive, comprehensive, polytechnic university featuring active and applied learning to advance students' knowledge and skills while fostering competent, resilient, lifelong learners to succeed in their careers and personal lives as creators, innovators, and responsible citizens.

Analysis

The proposed amendments to the institutional missions fall within the role for regional universities established by the Board of Higher Education through Policy R312. Specifically, each institution provides career and technical education, undergraduate associate and baccalaureate programs and select master's degree programs within an open-access environment. They are aiming their missions around carefully defined learning experiences for students (i.e., experiential learning, applied learning) and emphasize equity and inclusion.

A note on Dixie State University's proposed polytechnic model: although all regional universities offer the same range of types of degrees (from associate degrees to master's degrees) and must provide a solid liberal arts core, they often focus their other program offerings around faculty strengths and regional workforce demands so that every possible program does not have to be replicated at every institution across the state. A polytechnic model, based on the integration of sciences, technology, and engineering along with the liberal arts, certainly falls within the institutional role and is aimed at regional workforce demands.

The Academic Education Committee also recommended that the updated policy R312 include a definition of polytechnic. The proposed definition is:

R312-5. Polytechnic Education: Degree-granting institutions may adopt a polytechnic educational model, which is a student-centered, comprehensive, interdisciplinary, applied learning model that integrates the liberal arts with intensive science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs and that prepares graduates for professional careers in collaboration with regional industry partners to meet local economic needs.

5.1. Institutions that adopt a polytechnic educational model have not altered their statutory and Board designated roles and shall maintain strategic planning, academic programs, communications and marketing that reflect those roles.

Recommendation

The Academic Education Committee is forwarding the mission statements for Weber State University and Dixie State University and definition of “polytechnic” to the full board for consideration.

Attachments



R312, Utah System of Higher Education and Institutional Missions and Roles¹

R312-1 Purpose: To establish the distinct missions and roles of the institutions in the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) and foster economic growth and innovation.

R-312-2 References

- 2.1 [Utah Code 53B-6-101](#), Master Plan for Higher Education
- 2.2 [Utah Code Section 53B-16-101](#), Establishment of Institutional Roles and General Courses of Study
- 2.3 Board Policy [R301](#), Master Plan Executive Summary
- 2.4 Board Policy [R310](#), System-wide Vision and Mission Statement
- 2.5 Board Policy [R315](#), Service Area Designation and Coordination Off-Campus Courses and Programs
- 2.6 Board Policy [R485](#), Faculty Workload Guidelines

R312-3 Definitions

- 3.1 **“Roles”**: the general category within which an institution fits as described in Utah Code §53B-16-101, Establishment of Institutional Roles and General Courses of Study.
- 3.2 **“Mission Statements”**: Written statements of the general purposes and functions of various institutions approved by the Board.
- 3.3 **“Teaching Load”**: the institutional average teaching workload for full-time faculty at the various institutions.
- 3.4 **“Open Admission”**: an admission policy that allows all applicants to be admitted. An open admission policy does not necessarily grant students to all courses until the institution has assessed the student’s level of preparedness.

R312-4 Institutions Roles and Missions

¹ Approved on May 30, 2003; amended May 29, 2009. Revisions approved by the Board of Regents on May 29, 2009, May 20, 2011, September 16, 2011; May 17, 2013; January 22, 2016; April 1, 2016; July 15, 2016; May 18, 2018, and May 17, 2019

4.1 Research Universities: A research university’s role is to provide undergraduate, graduate, and research programs and to discover, create and transmit knowledge through academic programs at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional with emphasis on teaching research and service. Transfer programs allow students to seamlessly seek degrees and other institutions within the system. The institution contributes to the quality of life and economic development at the local, state, and national levels. Many research efforts generate grants and contracts that also impact economic development, which underwrites the cost of their products. The University of Utah and Utah State University are research universities.

4.1.1 University of Utah Mission Statement (2016): The University of Utah fosters student success by preparing students from diverse backgrounds for lives of impact as leaders and citizens. We generate and share new knowledge, discoveries, and innovations, and we engage local and global communities to promote education, health, and quality of life. These contributions, in addition to responsible stewardship of our intellectual, and financial resources, ensure the long-term success and viability of the institution.

4.1.2 Utah State University Mission Statement (2003): The mission of Utah State University is to be one of the nation’s premier student-centered land grant and space grant universities by fostering the principle that academics come first; by cultivating diversity of thought and culture; and by serving the public through learning, discovery, and engagement.

4.2 Regional Universities: The regional university’s role provides career and technical education, undergraduate associate and baccalaureate programs, and select master’s degree programs to fill regional or state workforce demands. After a new master’s degree program’s fifth year, the program should be awarding a minimum average of five degrees per year as measured over a previous three-year period to be considered sustainable. Regional universities emphasize teaching, scholarly, and creative achievements that complement teaching and community service. Transfer programs allow students to seamlessly seek degrees at other institutions within the system. The institution contributes to the quality of life and economic development at the local and state levels. Student success is supported through developmental programs and services associated with a comprehensive community college. Weber State University, Southern Utah University, Utah Valley University, and Dixie State University are regional universities.

4.2.1 Weber State University Mission Statement (2007):

Weber State University provides transformative educational experiences for students of all identities and backgrounds through meaningful personal connections with faculty and staff in and out of the classroom. The university promotes student achievement, equity and inclusion, and vibrant community relationships through multiple credentials and degree pathways, experiential learning, research, civic engagement, and stewardship.

Deleted: Weber State University provides associate, baccalaureate and master’s degree programs in liberal arts, sciences, technical and professional fields. Encouraging freedom of expression and valuing diversity, the university provides excellent educational experiences for expression, public service and community-based learning; the university serves as an educational, cultural and economic leader for the region.

4.2.2 Southern Utah University Mission Statement (2016): Southern Utah University is a dynamic teaching and learning community that engages students in experiential education, leading to personal growth, civic responsibility, and professional excellence.

4.2.3 Utah Valley University Mission Statement (2007): Utah Valley University is an integrated university and community college that educates every student for success in work and life through excellence in engaged teaching, services, and scholarship.

4.2.4 Dixie State University Mission Statement (2016): Dixie State University is an open, inclusive, comprehensive, polytechnic university featuring active and applied learning to advance students' knowledge and skills while fostering competent, resilient, lifelong learners to succeed in their careers and personal lives as creators, innovators, and responsible citizens.

Deleted: Dixie State University is a public comprehensive university dedicated to rigorous learning and the enrichment of the professional and personal lives of its students and community by providing opportunities that engage the unique Southern Utah environment and resources.

4.3 Comprehensive Community Colleges: The comprehensive community college's role is to transmit knowledge and skills through transfer education at the associate of arts and associate of science degree level along with offering associate of applied science degrees, career and technical education, customized training for employers, developmental education, and strong student services to support these functions. Transfer programs prepare graduates to begin upper-division work. The institution emphasizes teaching, training, scholarly, professional, and creative achievement, community service and contributes to the quality of life and economic development of the community and the state. The comprehensive community college's role is identifiable in its organizational structure and is supported through programs, service, and specific administrative responsibility. Salt Lake Community College and Snow College are comprehensive community colleges. All institutions except the University of Utah provide varying degrees of community college functions in their respective service areas.

4.3.1 Snow College Mission Statement (2011): Snow College continues a tradition of excellence, encourages a culture of innovation, and cultivates an atmosphere of engagement to advance students in the achievement of their educational goals.

4.3.2 Salt Lake Community College Mission Statement (2016): Salt Lake Community College is your community college. We engage and support students in educational pathways leading to successful transfer and meaningful employment.

R312-5 Polytechnic Education: Degree-granting institutions may adopt a polytechnic educational model, which is a student-centered, comprehensive, interdisciplinary, applied learning model that

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integrates the liberal arts with intensive science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs and that prepares graduates for professional careers in collaboration with in collaboration with industry partners to meet regional economic and workforce needs.

5.1 Institutions that adopt a polytechnic educational model have not altered their statutory and Board designated roles and shall maintain strategic planning, academic programs, communications and marketing that reflect those roles.

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R312-6 Accreditation: Specialized accreditation is a goal for all programs for which this accreditation is available and appropriate for the institution's mission and role.

R312-7 Faculty

7.1 Criteria for Selection, Retention, and Advancement

7.1.1 Research Universities: Faculty are selected, retained, and promoted on the basis of evidence of effective teaching; research, scholarship, and creative achievements; and service and extension activities.

7.1.2 Regional Universities: Faculty are selected, retained, and promoted primarily on the basis of evidence of effective teaching. Additional criteria include scholarly, professional and creative achievements, and service that complements the teaching role.

7.1.3 Comprehensive Community: Faculty are selected, retained, and promoted primarily on the basis and evidence of effective teaching and training. Secondary criteria include scholarly, professional, creative achievements, and service that complement the teaching role.

7.2 Educational Preparation

7.2.1 Research Universities: Regular full-time tenure-track faculty will have earned the appropriate terminal degree for their field and specialty.

7.2.2 Regional Universities: Regular full-time tenure-track faculty will have earned or be working toward the appropriate terminal degree for their field and specialty. Faculty in career and technical education or professional fields also will have practical, related work experience.

7.2.3 Comprehensive Community Colleges: Regular full-time tenure-track faculty will have practical, related work experience and recognized professional credentials for

their discipline and teaching level. To teach courses in general education or other special transfer programs, the master's degree is a standard requirement.

7.3 Teaching Loads and Research Activities

7.3.1 Research Universities: Average teaching loads are expected to be lower than that of faculty in regional universities reflecting necessary faculty involvement with research, scholarship, and creative achievements. Institutional teaching loads will average at least 18 credit hour equivalents each academic year.

7.3.2 Regional Universities: Average teaching loads are higher than those of faculty in research universities. These teaching loads reflect regional universities having fewer graduate programs and less emphasis on research and scholarship than research institutions. Institutional teaching loads will average at least 24 credit hour equivalents each academic year.

7.3.3 Comprehensive Community Colleges: Average teaching loads are somewhat higher than those of faculty in regional universities, because faculty do not have extensive research responsibilities. Institutional teaching loads will average at least 30 credit hour equivalents each academic year.

R312-8 Student Admission

8.1 Research Universities: Research universities are selective in admissions.

8.2 Regional Universities: Regional universities are open-admission institutions unless otherwise excepted by the Board of Regents. Regional universities may test or assess students for directed course placement, the ability to benefit from specific courses for financial aid purposes, and the students' projected ability to succeed.


8.3 Comprehensive Community Colleges: Comprehensive Community Colleges are open-admission institutions. Incoming students may be tested or assessed for course placement and the ability to benefit from specific courses for financial aid purposes.

R312-9 Support Services

9.1 Research Universities: These institutions provide library services, support services, equipment, and other resources to support undergraduate and graduate programs, and student and faculty research.

9.2 Regional Universities: These institutions provide library services, support services, equipment, and other resources to support undergraduate programs, a limited number of master's programs, and the needs of students and faculty.

9.3 Comprehensive Community Colleges: These institutions provide library services, student support services, equipment, and other resources to support lower-division programs in career and technical education, general education, developmental education, transfer programs, and the needs of students, faculty, and the community.

DATE: December 9, 2020
TO: Utah Board of Higher Education
FROM: Richard B. Williams, Ph.D., ATC 
President
SUBJ: Request for Dixie State University Mission Revision

Dixie State University (DSU) has achieved significant growth in student enrollment, programs, and institutional capacity since becoming a university in 2013, and there is a palpable excitement and energy among stakeholders about the future of the institution. This excitement and energy was even noted by members of our NWCCU accreditation team during their virtual campus visit in October. One reason for the excitement is the teaching and learning opportunities generated through our informal adoption of a polytechnic academic model five years ago. Since deciding to implement a polytechnic model, faculty and staff have worked thoughtfully and successfully to develop and apply many of the basic tenets. President Williams has shared the vision of becoming a polytechnic over the past few years with members of USHE leadership, including the Dixie State University Resource and Review teams, Commissioners Buhler and Woolstenhulme, as well as legislators, all of whom were encouraged by this institutional direction and focus.

Dixie State University now requests a revision to the institutional mission to formally incorporate the polytechnic model as well as other highly valued characteristics. The proposed new university mission is a direct outcome of a year-long strategic planning process beginning in August 2019 and concluding in July 2020. It was created using a structured process of qualitative and quantitative data collection, stakeholder meetings, literature review, consultation, and reflection. The proposed mission was subsequently approved unanimously by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, President's Cabinet, Academic Council, University Council and the Dixie State University Board of Trustees at its November 20, 2020 meeting.

The proposed mission is aligned and consistent with Policy R312-4. Institutional Roles and Missions and specifically R312-4.2 Regional Universities. It incorporates language reflecting two distinct institutional components: 1) the four design characteristics selected as a framework for the university, including open education (encompassing dual-mission), inclusion, comprehensive, and polytechnic; and 2) the five DSU institutional learning outcomes, including knowledge, skills, innovation, responsibility and grit or resilience.

The four design characteristics highlighted in the proposed mission reflect the revised institutional core values and vision (see below). Open education was selected as a design

characteristic for the university to emphasize and extend our dual-mission role, inclusion was selected because it aligns with the Board of Higher Education commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, while comprehensive was selected to reflect our statutory and policy requirement to offer career and technical education, undergraduate associate and baccalaureate programs, and select master's degree programs to fill regional demands (per Utah Code Section 53B-16-101 and USHE R312-4). Finally, polytechnic was selected as a design characteristic because our academic model is based on the common tenets of a 21st century polytechnic university, specifically active and applied learning, career focused education, industry partnerships, and STEM intensive programs integrated with liberal arts and sciences. The adoption of the polytechnic academic model is also responsive to and aligned with the regional university role (R312-4.2) to “contribute to ... economic development at the local and state levels.” The aim of a polytechnic university is exceptional career readiness and collaboration with industry partners to support learning and economic development. Incorporating the polytechnic model within the DSU mission will provide the framework for the university to support and catalyze the economic growth of southern Utah.

The current Dixie State University mission is:

Dixie State University is a public comprehensive university dedicated to rigorous learning and the enrichment of the professional and personal lives of its students and community by providing opportunities that engage the unique Southern Utah environment and resources.

We propose the following new Dixie State University mission:

Dixie State University is an open, inclusive, comprehensive, polytechnic university featuring active and applied learning to advance students' knowledge and skills while fostering competent, resilient, lifelong learners to succeed in their careers and personal lives as creators, innovators, and responsible citizens.

We formally request approval of this proposed new university mission.

Vision and Values

Below are the revised DSU vision and values that were co-created with the new mission during the 2019-2020 strategic planning process.

Dixie State University Vision

Dixie State University aspires to be a premier open, inclusive, comprehensive, polytechnic university distinguished through an ethos of innovation and entrepreneurship and the achievement of exceptional student learning and success.

Dixie State University Values

The Dixie State University community values:

- Academic Distinction
- Student Learning and Success
- Equity and Inclusion
- Purposeful Discovery
- Collaborative Culture
- Public Service
- Local and Global Resources
- Innovation and Responsiveness



WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY
Office of the President

May 21, 2021

Commissioner David R. Woolstenhulme
Utah System of Higher Education
60 South 400 West
Salt Lake City, UT 84101

RE: Mission Change Approval Request for Weber State University

Dear Commissioner Woolstenhulme:

On behalf of Weber State University, I offer this letter as a formal request to the Utah Board of Higher Education (“Board”) to approve the university’s newly-revised mission statement.

Over the last year, the entire community of Weber State—faculty, staff, students, alumni, business and community leaders at large—came together virtually to contribute to the university’s future in a strategic planning process. The process took place from February 2020 to March 2021, ending specifically with approval of the plan by the university’s Board of Trustees on March 16. The full process is detailed at this [link](https://weber.edu/accreditation/strategic-planning-process.html) - <https://weber.edu/accreditation/strategic-planning-process.html>.

The completed plan (available at this [link](https://weber.edu/strategic-plan) - <https://weber.edu/strategic-plan>), which covers the next five years, includes revised foundational statements (mission, vision, core values), goals, desired outcomes, and strategies, an equity framework in alignment with the Utah System of Higher Education’s equity framework, and an enrollment assumption.

In accordance with Utah Code (53B-1-402(f)), which states that the Board shall “establish, approve, and oversee each institution’s mission and role” Weber State submits the following proposed mission statement for approval by the Utah Board of Higher Education.

Proposed Mission Statement:

Weber State University provides transformative educational experiences

for students of all identities and backgrounds through meaningful personal connections with faculty and staff in and out of the classroom. The university promotes student achievement, equity and inclusion, and vibrant community relationships through multiple credentials and degree pathways, experiential learning, research, civic engagement, and stewardship.

Current Mission:

Weber State University provides associate, baccalaureate and master degree programs in liberal arts, sciences, technical and professional fields. Encouraging freedom of expression and valuing diversity, the university provides excellent educational experiences for students through extensive personal contact among faculty, staff and students in and out of the classroom.

Through academic programs, research, artistic expression, public service and community-based learning, the university serves as an educational, cultural and economic leader for the region.

Weber State, through its divisional leaders, entered the strategic plan's implementation phase shortly after board approval of the plan. This phase begins with the divisional leaders forming divisional plans in alignment with the new strategic plan and the university as a whole repositioning itself to operate with the new plan at the center of all decisions.

If you need further information to aid your recommendation to the Board to approve Weber State's new mission statement, reach out to me for prompt follow-up.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brad Mortensen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Brad L. Mortensen, Ph.D.
President