



UTAH SYSTEM OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TAB A

October 27, 2021

Dixie State University Name Change

In its 2021 session, the Legislature passed H.B. 278, *Name Change Process for Dixie State University*, which established a committee made up of “students, university personnel, community members, and industry leaders” to seek broad input from and collaboration with the community and to recommend a name for Dixie State University to the University’s Board of Trustees. The law then directs the Board of Trustees to review the committee’s recommendation and “choose whether to forward a name for the institution to the Utah Board of Higher Education.” As part of their charge, the Trustees needed to ensure the name “reflects the institution’s mission and significance to the surrounding region and state and enables the institution to compete and be recognized nationally.”

The naming committee completed its work on June 14, 2021 and recommended to the Board of Trustees the name Utah Polytechnic State University, with the additional recommendation that the University’s nickname be Utah Tech. On July 14, 2021, the Board of Trustees voted to forward the name Utah Tech University to the Board of Higher Education. The Board of Trustees selected the recommended nickname after receiving significant stakeholder and public feedback.

Because the Board of Trustees forwarded a name to the Board of Higher Education, the law directs the Board to “vote on whether to approve and recommend the name to the Legislature.”

The law further instructs that should the Utah Board of Higher Education and the Board of Trustees recommend a name for the institution to the Legislature, they shall submit the name for the institution to the Legislative Management Committee no later than November 1, 2021.

Commissioner’s Recommendation

The Commission recommends the Board vote on whether to approve and recommend the name Utah Tech University to the Legislature, in accordance with Utah Code 53B-2-111(3)(c).

Attachment

July 14, 2021

Utah Board of Higher Education
Two Gateway
60 South 400 West
Salt Lake City, UT 84101-1284

Re: Recommendation for New Institutional Name

Utah Board of Higher Education,

As outlined in H.B. 278, “Name Change Process for Dixie State University,” the Board of Trustees of Dixie State University formally forwards the name *Utah Tech University* as the new institutional name. After completing one of the most exhaustive and comprehensive institutional naming processes in our state’s history, we are confident this name is the strongest name for this institution. *Utah Tech University* reflects the institution’s mission¹ and significance to the surrounding region and state², and enables the institution to compete and be recognized nationally³.

At our most recent Board meeting on June 29, 2021, the following motion passed with a 9-0 vote:

“I motion that we move forward with the name Utah Tech University. It reflects the institution’s mission and significance to the region and to the state, and it also enables us to be recognized on a national stage.”

In consultation with the Utah Board of Higher Education, the Board of Trustees’ *ad hoc* Name Recommendation Committee (the “NRC”) engaged in a several month-long process to make recommendations regarding the institution’s name to our Board. As required in H.B. 278, the NRC was comprised of students, university personnel, community members, and industry leaders. Enclosed with this letter is a copy of the NRC Chair Julie Beck’s report to the Board of Trustees summarizing that process in detail.

As you know, the NRC’s process included an extensive listening tour with students, community members, business leaders, and a local coalition group opposed to a name change, among others. The process provided opportunity for input from, and collaboration with, the public including residents of southwestern Utah, institutional partners, and University faculty, staff,

¹ 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.

² The institution is the state-sponsored regional university for Washington and Kane Counties.

³ The name is inclusive.

students and alumni. Nearly 60 focus groups comprised of these stakeholders were conducted, and an open public survey received over 14,000 responses. The Board of Trustees is fully confident in the sincerity and thoroughness of the NRC's work.

On June 14, 2021, the NRC recommended to the Board of Trustees the institutional name *Utah Polytechnic State University*, with the additional recommendation that the University's nickname be *Utah Tech*. While there was strong NRC support for *Utah Tech University* being recommended as the institutional name, at that time the NRC chose to recommend the name *Utah Polytechnic State University* in deference to input from the Utah Board of Higher Education's representatives on the NRC.

After hearing additional feedback from our stakeholders, particularly the public, and receiving assurance from the Utah Board of Higher Education's representatives on the NRC that *Utah Tech University* is a strong name option, the Board of Trustees chose to modify the recommended name to *Utah Tech University* and to forward this institutional name to the Utah Board of Higher Education for consideration. This shorter name was strongly supported in the NRC's process and best represents the institution's active learning and career-focused approach to higher education.

We are grateful to the Utah Board of Higher Education and the state legislature for supporting this process. We are convinced it has produced the strongest institutional name, both for our region and state. The name *Utah Tech University* not only meets the requirements of H.B. 278, but most importantly, will allow our students the opportunity to become dynamic leaders in today's ever-modernizing workforce.

Sincerely,

Dixie State University Board of Trustees

Enclosure

cc (w/ enclosure): Dave Woolstenhulme, Commissioner

Name Recommendation Committee Report

June 29, 2021

The Name Recommendation Committee, following specific instructions it received from the Board of Trustees and per the guidelines outlined in House Bill 278, has completed its work and is now prepared to submit their recommendations regarding the institution's name to the board of trustees.

This committee, chosen by the DSU Board of Trustees and approved by the Utah Board of Higher Education, was comprised of University personnel, students, industry leaders, and community members. The committee included individuals from diverse origins, experience, and perspectives, and many members had never previously met before this process began. It is worth sharing that the committee never received guidance from DSU in any way as to how to think, react, or vote on this topic. Each committee member was free to review the information and participate in the best way they saw fit.

To accomplish their work, the committee pursued industry standard methodology in one of the most exhaustive, meticulous and thorough name searches ever conducted in the state of Utah.

The committee began its work by "listening with a vengeance" in order to receive input from a comprehensive representation of community and University stakeholders. The committee listened to hundreds of individuals in various settings ranging from a large town hall type meeting to smaller listening groups. Groups included representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, business and technology, healthcare, city development and planning, heritage groups, numerous citizens at large, and DSU student government, athletes, coaches, academic deans, faculty, and staff association leaders.

In addition, the committee was provided additional pertinent data to assist with the decision including past and current DSU name studies, perception studies, and strategic plans.

Next, the DSU trustee executive committee commissioned Love Communications to collect additional data for the committee through a quantitative survey that was designed to discover high-level, common naming themes. The participation for this survey was beyond anything we could have imagined. The goal was 5,000 survey responses; however, Love collected nearly 15,000 completed individual responses, including 3,328 responses from students and 5,064 from former students.

House Bill 278 was referenced repeatedly in all discussions and deliberations as being the criteria for a name recommendation. Through the listening tours and the data collected in the survey, six name themes that best met the instructions of the legislation were given further study in focus groups. The name themes included for further study were geological, Deseret, St. George, Dixie, Utah, and academic mission based.

Next, Love Communications administered 47 focus groups with more than 300 stakeholders to understand the strengths and limitations of each name theme. These findings allowed for three viable themes to emerge – Utah, St. George, and academic mission – while three themes were eliminated – Deseret, Dixie, and Geological – based on various concerns with focus group members and uncontrolled logistical limitations such as trademarks, double meanings, URLs, name availability, naming trends, and more.

In addition to this data, representatives of the various stakeholder groups – both for against a name change – were brought into committee meetings for all to hear. Though feelings among the committee members were varied and passionate, the business of the committee was conducted with respect for diversity of thought and consideration was shown to all who were brought into committee meetings to represent various perspectives.

After reviewing all of the collective data, the committee chose to focus on two themes that could be combined to provide a complete name for the University: Utah and a mission-based name.

Love Communications then conducted 12 additional focus groups with more than 100 stakeholders to review several mission and Utah based names. The most appropriate mission-based names centered on the words technological and polytechnic. Both reflect the academic mission of the University and would assist the University to be recognized nationally. The committee had a spirited discussion about the pros and cons of each of those name options. The preference for the word “tech” was very strong and received the most support from the committee. In fact, the committee’s first recommendation was for “Utah Tech” to be the University’s nickname, regardless of the recommended name. However, it was noted that technical colleges in the state also employ the word “tech” in their names, and out of deference to those schools and the representatives of the Board of Higher Education on the committee, the mission-based name Utah Polytechnic State University was selected to move forward. All of the information regarding the process and the pertinent data, can be found at dixie.edu/nameprocess. In addition, we have several committee members along with Love Communications present today, who are able to answer any additional questions you might have.

The committee chair wishes to express gratitude to the board of trustees for selecting a strong committee and thank you for supporting a robust name search process. Committee members who participated through the conclusion of the process hope their work will bless the students, faculty and staff of the University long into the future. A name that reflects the University’s location in Utah and its mission will allow the University to be a strong community partner, and bring academic prominence to the University nationwide.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie B. Beck
Name Recommendation Committee Chair