



STATE OF UTAH

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KADE R. MINCHEY, CIA, CFE  
AUDITOR GENERAL

December 10, 2018

Report No: ILR 2018-E

President Wayne Niederhauser  
Speaker Greg Hughes  
Members of the Legislative Audit Subcommittee

## **Subject: Initial Survey of Dixie State University Faculty Terminations**

Members of the Audit Subcommittee,

We have completed an initial survey of recent faculty terminations at Dixie State University (DSU). Our office was asked to answer the following questions:

1. If DSU termination policy meets best practices,
2. If DSU adequately followed policies in recent tenured faculty discipline and terminations, and
3. How morale at DSU has been impacted by recent termination/discipline practices.

We found that DSU did successfully document policy violations on the part of tenured faculty. However, more work would be needed to determine if DSU's response to the violations was appropriate. We address each audit question in detail below.

**Question 1.** Based on our limited work, we believe that DSU policy is in line with Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) policy and policies across other Utah higher education institutions. USHE and DSU policies provide that tenured faculty may be terminated for reasons of professional incompetence, serious misconduct or unethical behavior, serious policy and/or rule violations, and others. Additional work is needed to document other states' best practices on tenured faculty discipline.

**Question 2.** We believe DSU adequately established that the faculty in question violated policy, and we recognize management discretion must be used in discipline decisions. However, we believe more work is needed to determine whether DSU's response to the policy violations was appropriate. As stated above, policy provides that faculty may be terminated for policy violations, but DSU policy does not specify the level of violation that may be grounds for termination versus less disciplinary action. The issue in question is whether the specific policy violations by some tenured faculty rise to the level of immediate termination without prior recourse to DSU's lesser disciplinary measures. To answer the

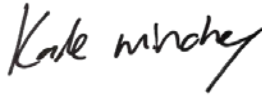
question, a more detailed audit would examine all DSU terminations/discipline in recent years as well as tenured faculty terminations at other USHE institutions in recent years.

**Question 3.** Measuring the impact of recent terminations on DSU morale would likely be difficult without specific morale measurements being conducted prior to the terminations.

If the audit subcommittee desires a more thorough analysis of the above listed questions, a full audit of DSU's termination practices could be approved.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kade Minchey". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Kade R. Minchey, CIA, CFE  
Auditor General