

January 11, 2021

Julie B. Beck

Dixie State University, Trustee

Juliebb98@gmail.com

Dear Senator,

I have been serving on the Dixie State University Board of Trustees since 2012. It has been a wonderful time to serve. During these almost nine years, we have grown from a small community school with only 36 total degrees to a serious, open, inclusive, comprehensive, polytechnic university. That progress and vision could only have been achieved through great university leadership, the full support of USHE, and the Utah State Legislature. Thank you.

I am a Dixie College graduate. My ancestors, the Hamblins, were the very first pioneer family sent to settle in Washington County. My great-great-great grandfather, Isaiah Hamblin, was the first settler buried in the Santa Clara Cemetery. I have a long and distinguished family history in Washington County. Yet, I am willing to build on the legacy of my forefathers by improving the name of a school I love. To honor them, I can strive to be as courageous as they were by focusing on the future as they did. I believe my ancestors would expect it of me. Rather than repudiate the impact study conducted about the institution's name, and ignore the world our students live and compete in, I consider it essential to look honestly into the history of the university, acknowledge colloquial, inappropriate and hurtful practices of the past, and build on the heritage of a great community.

In my role as the chair of the Board of Trustees' Academic Committee, I have been the liaison with the university to refine, approve, and actualize a far-sighted academic program to fulfill the mission of the university. We have added an astonishing 111 programs in the past five years alone, with more carefully structured programs coming forward. Our certificates and associate degrees have been designed to stack into bachelor programs to simplify advancement toward a bachelor's degree and to make academic achievement possible for first generation and non-traditional students. Dixie State has also become a premier educational option for top-tier students because we offer the best scholastic dollar investment in the State of Utah. We are very proud of that accomplishment and are profoundly grateful for the capital investment to our infrastructure that makes those programs viable for our students. As we have developed into a polytechnic university, we have begun to fill a previously unmet educational need in the State of Utah.

Students, today's students, are why the university exists and whom the Utah tax dollar supports. At our university, the students and their futures, are our primary concern and purpose.

We found in the recent documented study, in previous studies, and through anecdotal evidence collected over time that many of our students suffer because of our name. In one of the most competitive job markets in history, our current name makes it harder for our students to:

- Acquire employment outside of the St. George area

- Gain acceptance to graduate programs nationwide
- Have access to talented faculty who will not teach at a school named Dixie
- Compete for grants and funding
- Demonstrate their allegiance to their alma mater publicly

These and other factors present critical disadvantages to our students. In many ways, the university has simply outgrown its name. It is now our responsibility to even the odds for our students by providing them with a university name and a diploma they can display with confidence and pride. That should be a reasonable and worthy gift to a new generation of learners and contributors.

I am willing to talk to you about the unanimous board decision and answer any questions you have regarding the university's name. I plead with you to preserve the good that has been accomplished by the State of Utah to help Dixie State mature and vote to give it a greater identity through a strong, respectable university name.

Sincerely,

Julie Bangerter Beck

Dixie State University, Board of Trustees 2012 -current

Brigham Young University, Alumni Executive Board 2018-current

Brigham Young University, Trustee, 2007-2012