GROUPS

• TOTALS:
  • 47 Focus Groups
  • 317 Focus Group Participants
GROUPS

- University Ambassadors (current DSU students)
- General community group
- Regional corporate marketing and communications execs
- University Donors
- Alumni Association Board
- President’s Cabinet
- Board of Trustees members
- DSU Faculty at Large
- Business leaders from major employers in the region
- Dixie Foundation members
- DSUSA members
• University Council members (group 1)
• University Council members (group 2)
• High School Counselors, administrators and DSU staff
• UBHE board members (group 1)
• Utah State Legislature – elected officials
• Greater Zion staff members
• Students at Large
• Community Group (ICL and Community Ed participants)
• DSU National Advisory Council members
• UBHE board members (group 2)
GROUPS

• Staff Association Board
• DSU Staff at Large
• DSU SAAC members (current athletes)
• Alumni (group 1)
• Student Alumni Association
• MIC students (current students as DSU)
• Alumni (group 2)
• Donors
• St. George City employees
• Community members/Federal delegation staff
• Prospective Students
• Alumni
GROUPS

- Area city council members
- Donors
- Region Mayors
- Admissions staff
- WAC Commissioners and Staff
- Legislative Leadership
- DSUHC Leadership
- Local business leaders
- St. George Area Chamber of Commerce members
- Board of Trustees members
- St. George-area historical societies’ leadership
METHODOLGY
METHODOLOGY

• Identical methodology
• Introduced focus group by reminding/introducing the survey that ran approximately a month ago and reviewing three findings to set the stage for the larger discussion.
• The moderator then instructed the group to “put themselves in the Name Recommendation Committee’s shoes”, explaining how the Committee was formed, its purpose, and the process for the name recommendation (recommending a name to the Board of Trustees, etc.).
METHODOLOGY

• Introduced and explained the language of the legislation and the instructions included in it by which any potential name should be evaluated:
  • Significance to region and state
  • Reflect the institution’s mission
  • Enable the University to compete and be recognized nationally
METHODOLOGY

• Introduced the six name themes that emerged from the survey:
  • Academic Mission
  • Deseret
  • Dixie
  • Geological/Geographic
  • St. George
  • Utah

• Explained that the group would then discuss each theme separately, exploring the pros and cons around each name theme and the example names provided.
METHODOLOGY

• Order in which the name themes were presented to the focus groups was changed approximately every five focus groups to ensure the order in which the themes were presented didn’t have an influence on the themes.

• Each theme was presented with an explanation of the theme as well as two or three example names with those names also presented on the school’s marquee.

• After each theme and example name introduction, the focus group participants were then encouraged to share their opinions of the pros and cons of each theme.

• After the focus groups shared their opinions, the moderator shared pros and cons that emerged in research and the focus groups to spur additional discussion.
Academic Mission

The polytechnic or technological focus adopted by the university allows for a strong attachment to the academic mission of the school.

UTAH INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY - UIT

UTAH POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY - UPU

UTAH TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY - UTU
REACTIONS

Reaction to the Academic Mission theme was mixed – ranging from strongly enthusiastic to strong opposition. Reasons for support and opposition included:

Support:
- Aspirational name for what the university could become
- Descriptor of the academic focus
- Places university on national stage
- Formalizes the academic focus through the name
- If combined with Utah, could fulfill the legislature’s mandate of supporting the academic mission, significance to the state and enable the school to compete nationally
Academic Mission

REACTIONS

Quotes in support:

• “To me these are the most aspirational names.”
• “This is a great opportunity to help create something with a really strong reputation.”
• “I love them. I like how prestigious they sound and think they tie in really well with Trailblazers and ‘Active Learning. Active Life.’”
• “We could make ourselves the tech school in a pretty techie state.”
• “Makes a bigger, bolder statement.”
• “Would be a mark of distinction for the school within Utah.”
• “It would put us on the level as a University of Utah or USU.”
• “There is prestige to a technological university outside of Utah.”
Academic Mission

Concerns:

- Confusion and misunderstanding around the terms *Polytechnic* and *Technological*
- Concern that using the term *Technological* or *Polytechnic* in the university’s name could be a deterrent to enrollment for students who:
  - Aren’t pursuing a STEM-related degree or
  - Feel a school with a name including one of those terms is too elite for them
- Worry that an Academic Mission-themed name does not fit with the school’s purpose of being an open-enrollment, comprehensive, regional university
- Unease that the university will not succeed in achieving the academic mission or that the academic mission will be changed in the future resulting in the need to rename the school again
Academic Mission

REACTIONS

Quotes in opposition:

• “To me having tech in the name sounds like a step backwards for the university – like an ITT Tech.”
• “Would we have to change the name again if the academic mission changes?”
• “I would not have looked at the school at all if it had a name like that.”
• “I don’t want the name to turn kids off from coming.”
• “Polytech to me sounds cheap.”
• “The name is a disconnect for me with a lot of what the school offers.”
• “The average person doesn’t understand what the term polytechnic means.”
• “Would a name including polytech or technological conflict with our open enrollment mission?”
Deseret is a name that is core to Utahns, while still providing a sense of place and connecting to the heritage of the area.

DESERET UNIVERSITY - DU

DESERET STATE UNIVERSITY - DSU
Results

Deseret

REACTIONS

Reaction to DESERET was nearly entirely opposition from focus group participants. Support was expressed only a handful of times in all the focus groups.

Reasons for support:
- The heritage and history of the term
- Ability to maintain the DSU (Deseret State University) logo and simplify rebranding
Deseret

REACTIONS

Quotes in support:

• “If it’s not going to be Dixie, Deseret would be my choice.”
• “Wouldn’t have to change the DSU logo.”
• “It would be unique.”
Concerns:

• Tied to a specific religious group, religious connections, etc.
• Confusing term for those not familiar with it (many expressed that it looks like a typo)
• Requires a great deal of explanation
• Perceived affiliation with other organizations using the term Deseret in their name (copyright issues?)
• Sounds like “BYU-lite” or a sister school of BYU
• Does not fulfill the legislative mandate of supporting the academic mission or competing nationally
Deseret

REATIONS

Quotes in opposition:

• “Sounds strictly like a religious school.”
• “We would go through another renaming almost immediately if we adopted Deseret.”
• “I’m an active Latter-day Saint, and I think it’s a terrible idea.”
• “Would be an immediate turnoff, maybe even more than Dixie.”
• “It would make it hard for coaches or recruiters to recruit here.”
• “Looks like a typo.”
“Dixie” blends location and heritage, which ranked as top factors in naming a university, while retaining a unique and established naming theme that is familiar to the community.
REACTIONS

Reaction to the term Dixie being used in the name of the university ranged from fervent support to passionate opposition, with the majority of participants falling somewhere between the two extremes. A majority of focus group participants expressed that while they appreciated the history and heritage of the term Dixie and how it is used in Southern Utah, they would support changing the name of the university to support its future success.
Dixie

REATIONS

Reasons for support include:

• The heritage, history and tradition of the term
• Cost savings
• Fear of losing local support (community, donors, etc.)
• Distrust of the motives behind changing the university’s name
• “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” – DSU has been experiencing success with the name, so why change it?
• Strong skepticism of the data being used to support a name change
• Timing – Is the current name change effort simply a reaction to national events/cancel culture?
REACTIONS

Quotes in support:

• “We have over a hundred years of history and no one has ever said it was a problem.”
• “The Dixie spirit is special – we could be going out and promoting that.”
• “The Dixie name hasn’t held us back so far, why would it in the future?”
• “If we change the name, we will lose a lot of community support.”
• “To me the term Dixie is sacred.”
• “I love Dixie in the name. I have a whole lot of Dixie in me.”
• “We’ve done a ton of recruiting with this name (Dixie) and people are starting to understand the meaning.”
• “Dixie has always meant ‘welcoming and hospitality’ at least to me.”
Results

Dixie

REACTIONS

Quotes in support:

• “If we teach it, if we frame it, I think we can overcome the negative connotations of Dixie.”
• “If we change the name of the University, when does it stop?”
• “I have a hard time seeing that any student is not coming to Dixie because of the name.”
• “There is a great spirit here at Dixie and I think it’s need to stay.”
• “The name change discussion is giving legitimacy to the idea that the word Dixie is racist.”
• “Kids who grow up here dream of playing sports for Dixie.”
Dixie

REATIONS

Quotes in support:

• “I travel throughout the state and people ask why a name change is even being discussed.”
• “I have great concern that a rebrand will drive up tuition costs.”
• “This is all just a reaction to cancel culture.”
• “We have 75-80 years of inertia behind the name.”
• “I look at it as more a celebration of our heritage and history.”
• “People will be very angry if it’s changed.”
• “I worry we will go down this same road in the future if the name changes now.”
• “Dixie is the only word that really connects all the communities of the region.”
Concerns:

- Confusing for those unfamiliar with the term Dixie used as a reference for the region
- Requires explanation of its use in a Utah-based university’s name
- Different meaning/associations outside the St. George region
- Association of the term with Confederate symbols, imagery, verbiage, and history
- Does the current name support the University’s future and fulfill the legislative mandate?
Dixie

REACTIONS

Quotes in favor of change:

- “If we had a cleaner history, we wouldn’t have the issues with the Dixie name.”
- “Whether we like it or not the name is divisive and controversial.”
- “Keeping the Dixie name continues the school’s party-school image.”
- “As a student, I don’t want to have to spend 10 minutes explaining the history of the name in a job interview or grad school interview.”
- “Coming from out of state, I got a lot of interesting comments about the name Dixie.”
- “Now that I’ve been presented with more information, my perspective on the Dixie name has changed.”
- “The name needs to be changed now that we are evolving as a school.”
Quotes in favor of change:

• “Anywhere outside of the area, I spend more time explaining the name rather than how great the school is.”
• “The moment my friend took Dixie off his resume, he got three times the interviews.”
• “No one is ever really satisfied with the explanation of where the name came from.”
• “If we keep Dixie in the name, in 5, 10, 15, 20 years we would have to go through this again.”
• “It’s a big deal to be competitive on a national stage.”
• “I love the name Dixie, but I can see why it’s a challenge.”
Quotes in favor of change:

- “If even one student is hindered by this, it needs to change.”
- “It detracts from the academic mission of the school.”
- “Dixie is the antithesis of the rules set out by the legislature.”
- “I think it’s sad that the name (Dixie) has such a negative connotation, but that is the reality we live in.”
- “Keeping the name would make us lose credibility around the country.”
- “The name is the biggest impediment to hiring faculty in my experience.”
- “When I go to conferences, this (the name Dixie) becomes the only thing I talk about.”
Dixie

REACTIONS

Quotes in favor of change:

• “I’m from the South, and there are no good connotations to the word Dixie.”
• “Changing the name is a vital step in separating the school from its questionable past.”
• “Removing the name won’t destroy the community. I think it will lift it up.”
• “Very regional connection – and not necessarily to Utah.”
• “Are students going to be disadvantaged? If yes, then the discussion ends.”
• “Time to lance the boil and get it over with.”
• “Dixie is a term that is dear to my heart, but I struggle to see how it supports the three elements outlined at the outset: mission, regional impact, and national recognition.”
Quotes in favor of change:

• “The meaning of words change over time. And I don’t see that tide changing.”
• “When I heard that they were thinking of changing the name, that’s when I decided to enroll.”
• “I thinks it’s a name that sounds small and only regional.”
• “Anything but Dixie.”
• “We owe it to students to help them be successful.”
• “I think it would be a negative to maintain the word in the name in light of the current situation.”
• “When the community, school and students decided it was OK to incorporate racist symbols that’s when it became racist.”
Geological/Geographic

A geological or geographic name that portrays the uniqueness of the area: detailing the beautiful red rock and desert settings and capturing the essence of the location and area around the university.

RED CLIFFS UNIVERSITY - RCU
RED ROCK UNIVERSITY - RRU
DESERT STATE UNIVERSITY - DSU
Results

Geological/Geographic

REACTIONS

Support for a Geologic/Geographic term in the name of the school was ultimately lukewarm at best. Many initially expressed support for this theme, but upon further exploration expressed more cons than pros. Of note, there was more support for a name including the term “Zion” than any of the example names.

Primary reasons for support and opposition included:

Support:
- No negative connotations
- Potentially unique name
Results

Geological/Geographic

REACTIONS

Quotes in support:

- “I like the idea of a geological term, but it would need to be something more specific than just red rocks, red cliffs or desert.”
- “It could be unique.”
- “It would really appeal to a lot of people coming from out of state.”
- “We could keep the DSU (Desert State University) logo.”
- “It would be a really safe option.”
Concerns:

• Does not sound like a serious or prestigious institution of higher learning
• Names sound like a “degree mill”
• Not a good location identifier – red rocks, red cliffs, and deserts exist throughout the southwest US
• Names do not support the academic mission nor enable the school to compete nationally
• Of note, “Zion” had more concerns than support attached because of its religious associations
Geological/Geographic

REACTIONS

Quotes in opposition:

• “Sounds like a ‘degree mill’ and not a serious school.”
• “There are red rocks and deserts all over the place, those names don’t do a good job identifying where the school is located.”
• “Sounds to me more like Arizona, Nevada or even Colorado.”
• “None of those names do anything to set the university apart.”
• “Sounds like a for-profit university rather than a state school.”
• “Arizona is already known as the desert state.”
• “Doesn’t lend credibility to the school.”
• “Any of these names would need a subhead to really define the school.”
Results

Geological/Geographic

REACTIONS

Quotes in opposition:

• “Those names could perpetuate the party school image we’ve worked so hard to rectify.”
• “They sound so generic they could backfire.”
St. George

St. George is a name that is unique that provides a community-driven name while anchoring the university to a specific location.

ST. GEORGE UNIVERSITY - SGU
UNIVERSITY OF ST. GEORGE - USG
ST. GEORGE STATE UNIVERSITY - SGSU
St. George

REACTIONS

A name for the University including the term St. George received moderate support from most focus groups. More than an outright positive response, it was generally viewed as a safe alternative to other proposed names.

Support:
• Safe alternative
• St. George is a rapidly growing city/region that will only continue to grow in size and stature and the school could grow along with it
• Original name of the school, decent tie-in with heritage and history
• Well-known brand within the region
• Familiar naming pattern for universities
St. George

Supporting quotes:

• “St. George State University – goes right back to our heritage and history, and I would vote in favor of that.”
• “Those who do know St. George have really positive associations with it.”
• “Would help connect it to the community.”
• “I like that it would be unique.”
• “I like it, but I think we would need to include the name of the state in it.”
• “Our dominant recruiting area knows the name St. George well.”
• “There is some historical significance that we can point to with the original name of the school being St. George Stake Academy.”
St. George

REATIONS

Concerns:

• Potential confusion with a private, Catholic school
• Some concern with the origin of the name St. George (honorring George Albert Smith)
• Not currently a strong location identifier as recognition of St. George’s location limited to the state/region
• The name St. George does not represent the entire region
St. George

REACTIONS

Quotes in opposition:

• “It sounds like a community college to me.”
• “Even being from one state away, St. George doesn’t resonate with me.”
• “Sounds just like a Catholic school.”
• “Is there confusion around the location? Would it need to have Utah in it?”
• “SGU is the airport code. Is that a problem?”
• “Might reinforce stereotypes we don’t need to enforce.”
Utah establishes a strong presence of location and serves to localize the university while allowing for flexibility in how to construct the name itself.

SOUTHWESTERN UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY – SUSU

UTAH WESTERN UNIVERSITY - UWU

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHWEST UTAH - USWU
Results

Utah

REACTIONS

Support was quite strong for including Utah in the name of the university with certain caveats. Most of the focus groups were cautiously in favor of the term Utah IF a unique, significant name could be determined.

Support:
- Strong location identifier
- Increased status for the university
- Association with other top-tier Utah-named universities (Utah and Utah State)
Utah

Supporting quotes:

• “I like that it would identify where we are.”
• “I would love to have Southwestern or Southern Utah be in the name somehow.”
• “Utah is a nice piece of the name.”
• ”Needs to be the state name plus another identifier.”
• “You would be connected to something that is not going to change.”
• “It gives it presence.”
• “I think Utah needs to be in the name.”
• “Utah would give us credibility.”
• “Having a degree from something ‘Utah’ would be awesome.”
Concerns:

- Using a directional/regional modifier could make the university appear strictly regional and not top-tier
- Confusion with other Utah-named schools
- Does the university lose its distinction with a potentially generic-sounding, location-based name?
Utah

REACTIONS

Quotes in opposition:

• “Using Utah would not be unique, and I think we need to be more unique.”
• “There are too many Utah universities already.”
• “Concerned that we would be perceived as a satellite campus.”
• “We don’t want to be perceived as having less autonomy if we are perceived as a satellite school.”
• “Does it imply an official connection with the other Utah-named schools?”
• “I don’t know if a geographic identifier is needed.”
Focus Group Survey Results

June 1st, 2021
Final Scoring

Total Points by Theme (out of 100)

- Utah: 70.2
- Academic Mission: 62.8
- St. George: 60
- Geological: 52.6
- Dixie: 49.4
- Deseret: 33.4
The naming theme reflects the institution's mission.
(avg. value on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 being not at all reflective and 5 being very reflective)
Results

The naming theme reflects the institution’s significance to the surrounding region and state. 
(avg. value on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 being not at all reflective and 5 being very reflective)
The naming theme enables the institution to compete and be recognized nationally.

(avg. value on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 being not at all reflective and 5 being very reflective)
Focus Group Survey results

Results

The naming theme will help improve the academic reputation of the University.
(avg. value on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 being not at all reflective and 5 being very reflective)
**Focus Group Survey results**

**Results**

The naming theme will assist graduates with attaining employment.

*(avg. value on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 being not at all reflective and 5 being very reflective)*

![Bar chart showing results](chart.png)

- **Academic Mission (Q5)**: 3.44
- **Deseret (Q5)**: 1.44
- **Dixie (Q5)**: 2.24
- **Geological (Q5)**: 2.23
- **St. George (Q5)**: 2.74
- **Utah (Q5)**: 3.47
Results

The naming theme honors the history and heritage of the local community.

(avg. value on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 being not at all reflective and 5 being very reflective)
The naming theme supports students who plan to further their education.

(avg. value on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 being not at all reflective and 5 being very reflective)
Focus Group Survey results

Results

The naming theme will be welcoming and inclusive for all who wish to attend the university.

(avg. value on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 being not at all reflective and 5 being very reflective)
Results

The naming theme enhances the ability to recruit students from primary recruiting regions.

(avg. value on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 being not at all reflective and 5 being very reflective)
The naming theme enhances the ability to recruit top faculty, staff, and administration.

(avg. value on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 being not at all reflective and 5 being very reflective)
Results

The naming theme will support the institution’s reputation as a STEM-focused, polytechnic university.

(avg. value on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 being not at all reflective and 5 being very reflective)
Focus Group Survey results

Results

The naming theme compliments and strengthens the Trailblazer athletic identity.
(avg. value on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 being not at all reflective and 5 being very reflective)
Focus Group Survey results

Results

The naming theme is unique and helps set the institution apart.

(avg. value on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 being not at all reflective and 5 being very reflective)

![Bar chart showing values for different institutions]
Results

The naming theme is likable and will resonate easily with various audiences.

(avg. value on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 being not at all reflective and 5 being very reflective)
Focus Group Survey results

Results

The naming theme is not associated with negative connotations that could potentially hurt the institutional brand.

(avg. value on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 being not at all reflective and 5 being very reflective)
Based on the focus groups’ responses, their evaluations of each theme, and the rubric data the Geologic/Geographic and Deseret themes could be set aside from consideration.

While each one had some support, the concerns expressed surrounding them and their poor performance in the rubric survey, we recommend they be dismissed.
Recommendations

After review of the focus group participants’ responses, approximately 65 percent of the participants expressed support for changing the name of the university and that it not include the word Dixie.

Equal passion was expressed by both proponents and opponents of retaining the current name, and yet nearly everyone expressed the same goal – helping the university become nationally regarded while still serving the southern Utah region as an open-enrollment, comprehensive university.

In addition, responses to the rubric survey reinforced the need to choose a name that will put the institution on its best footing to ensure its future success.
Therein lies the question – does the current name fulfill the legislature’s mandate? Based on all available data as well as the prevailing sentiment from the focus groups and rubrics, we think it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible for the institution to fulfill this mandate into the future with its current name.

However, based on the community’s support for the term Dixie, we recommend the institution should dedicate additional time to developing ways to honor the region’s history and heritage should the term Dixie be removed from the name.
Recommendations

The remaining themes (Utah, St. George and Academic Mission) should receive further review and discussion by the Name Recommendation Committee, with strong consideration given to combining multiple themes to create name options.

Finally, once official finalist names have been developed by the Committee, we recommend one additional round of research (focus groups with stakeholders) to test specific names.
Thank You