DIXIE STATE
COLLEGE OF UTAH

University Benchmark 2012 Update

Introduction

In January 2011, the Utah State Board of Regents approved the proposal that Dixie State College of Utah (DSC) move toward university status and enhance its role as one of three open-access, teaching universities in the state. Subsequently, the state legislature approved a resolution in support of Dixie State's direction and development toward university status, which was signed in April 2011 by the Honorable Gary R. Herbert, Governor of the State of Utah, on the campus of Dixie State College.

During 2010, Dixie State College administration worked with the Academic Affairs unit of the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) Commissioner's Office to produce a document that set forth benchmarks for a teaching university and plans for Dixie to achieve those benchmarks.   The document was developed from research that included university-level expectations based upon institutional characteristics from three peer-comparator groups. It set benchmarks related to the necessary foundational degrees, the number and types of faculty, and the necessary student and administrative services, and laid out a three-year cost plan for achieving the elements necessary to attain university status. The purpose of this document is to provide an update on progress made by the institution toward those university expectations.

Dixie State College of Utah – Then (2007 Baseline Year) and Now (2012)

Dixie State College is focused on students and their success. From recruitment to alumni activities, the College seeks to provide excellence in its offerings and student opportunities. Individual student attention and subsequent successes, coupled with enhanced degree offerings, have provided the impetus for unprecedented and sustained student enrollment growth (see Table 1 and Figure 1). Fall 2012 held enrollment gained through 2011 that translates into an impressive 52.9 percent simple increase over the original benchmark plan's base year 2007. Not only are there more students on campus than ever before, but the average credit load is greater. The Student FTE (Full Time Equivalent) growth of 64 percent over the 2007 baseline results, at least in part, from an increase in baccalaureate-

seeking student behavior. Enrollment reports for Fall 2012 indicate the number of first-time freshman are at an all-time high of 1948, a 49 percent increase over the 2007 freshman class of 1249 students.

Table 1: DSC Student Headcount and FTE Growth

	HEADCOUNT	FTE
Fall 2007 (Third week)	5944	3987
Fall 2012 (Third week)	8863	6539
PERCENT INCREASE	49%	64%

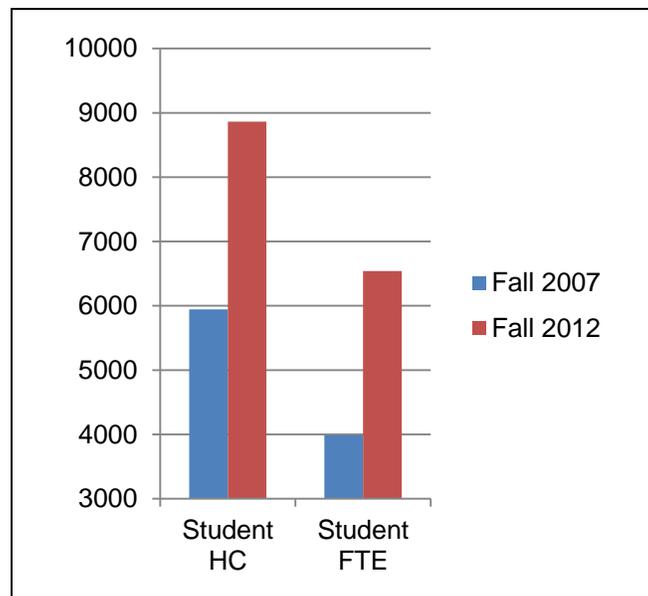**Figure 1: Enrollment Comparison, 2007-2012**

Table 2 shows the baccalaureate degree-seeking intentions of DSC students by major. Over 65 percent (15/23) of the degrees selected by students in Fall 2012 were not available at the institution in 2007. As the chart totals indicate, there has been a 345 percent increase in baccalaureate-seeking declarations by students over the 2007 level. See Appendix 1 for a complete listing of degrees currently offered at Dixie State College.

Table 2: Declared Baccalaureate Majors
Fall 3rd Week 2007 vs. 2012

Degree	Fall 2007	Fall 2012
School of Arts and Letters		
Art*	0	15
English	62	96
Music*	0	109
Psychology*	0	383
Theater*	0	51
School of Business and Communication		
Accounting*	0	186
Business Administration	310	497
Communication	1	391
School of Education		
Elementary Education	138	269
Integrated Studies*	0	395
Math Education*	0	28
Music Education*	0	28
Secondary Biology*	0	17
Secondary Biology* Integrated Science	0	1
Secondary English*	0	59
Theater Education*	0	1
School of Nursing and Allied Health		
Dental Hygiene	17	172
Nursing	174	704
School of Science and Technology		
Biology	128	405
Computer Information Technology	120	268
Computer Science*	0	24
Mathematics*	0	46
Physical Science Composite*	0	3
Total Declarations	**953**	**4241**
PERCENTAGE INCREASE		**345%**

*New degrees approved since 2007

In addition to the efforts listed in the original proposal related to the faculty needs to support expanding student populations, Dixie State faculty and staff have increased specific student retention efforts. These include:

- Employing an early alert system,
- Purchasing and developing Degree Works (a program to help individual students identify and take the shortest pathway to the desired degree),

- Centralizing catalog and course changes for immediate publication,
- Developing degree requirement advisement sheets,
- Increasing internship options for students,
- Developing cohesive assessment behavior by department and function, which carefully defines desired outcomes for each department and strategies for assessing progress toward those outcomes,
- Dedicating regionally specific recruiters, who become the personal liaison for students as they move through the enrollment path. These recruiters become on-campus mentors for students to ensure that students meet admission and registration deadlines,
- Training recruiters and advisors to maximize cross-content support, to ensure that students receive a variety of well integrated support systems in a timely manner,
- Increasing service-learning opportunities,
- Dedicating upper-division, department-specific advisement,
- Dedicating resources for student internships,
- Enhancing Career Center functionality and support for students,
- Establishing a Multicultural Center, and
- Winning three men's conference basketball championships in a row (thrown in for gee whiz value).

The institution is brimming with activity; faculty and staff are engaged and challenged by the opportunity to serve the college's much larger student body. The vibrancy of the growing and changing institution, combined with successful student experiences, continues to attract students. Signs of maturity are evident in departments and programs all across the campus. Academic indicators of maturity include: the number of terminally degreed faculty; the quality and reputations of institutions from which the faculty received their terminal degrees; the number of faculty involved in leadership at the state, regional, and national levels within their disciplines; the number of students successfully presenting, competing (winning), and representing departments at regional and national conferences, competitions, and festivals; the establishment of units in support of academics, including honors, undergraduate research, women's issues, accreditation, assessment, and first-year experience; and the number of specialized accreditations received or that are in progress.

The academic maturation processes within the institution are supported by facility changes that enhance the student experience. Completion of the new Jeffrey R. Holland Centennial Commons Building and subsequent remodeling projects provide the necessary facilities to meet physical requirements of academic program growth and better respond to student life issues. The physical changes also include walking and running paths, outdoor study areas, and plans for an outdoor academic study commons with Wi-Fi, power, and, possibly,

the most important element in southern Utah-shade. The aggregate impression will be a place worthy of university status that focuses on the holistic development and well-being of its students. The enhanced physical facilities and student support services provide concrete frameworks for the academic growth of the institution. The increase in student population is an exciting dimension to the institution's advancement. The overall atmosphere of excitement is communicated through the entire student engagement process. Reports of "standing room only" at high school information presentations about attending Dixie State College, and maximum attendance at orientation sessions, show that students and parents are interested in student success at Dixie State College. Students are seeking out opportunities to attend Dixie State College, and when they come, they take advantage of outdoor study areas, the relocated and enlarged testing center, as well as the tutoring and advising opportunities.

Plan Implementation

The continued growth in new student enrollment at Dixie State and the College's developing effectiveness in student retention have provided additional tuition dollars which have been used to accelerate accomplishment of the goals laid out in the plan for achieving university status approved by the Regents. With the available new tuition and admirable ingenuity applied to becoming even more efficient and effective, Dixie State College has achieved the benchmarks set in 2010 a year earlier than targeted. The inserted charts entitled, "University Status Foundational Benchmark Degrees – Appendix 2" and "University Status Benchmark in Other, Established Degrees – Appendix 3" highlights the progress made on meeting the targeted benchmarks for Degrees, Faculty, and Non-faculty Staffing. Each is briefly addressed below.

Degrees

At the time of the original proposal, five major discipline categories were identified as representative of degrees awarded at DSC peer institutions. These areas included Arts, Humanities, Sciences, Social Sciences, and Other (Education and Business). Within these categories, there were eight core and foundational baccalaureate degrees that were offered at peer universities that were not offered at Dixie State College and would need to be developed for university status, as follows. (Dates when the degrees were approved by the Board of Regents are indicated in parentheses):

- ➢ Art (2012)
- ➢ History (In process, Jan. 2013)
- ➢ Social Science (2012)
- ➢ Foreign Language, Spanish (2012)

- ➢ Physical Science Composite (2011)
- ➢ Computer Science (2012)
- ➢ Mathematics (2011)

As of the date of this report, only one degree (History) remains to be approved. Thus, it is anticipated that the foundational/core degree benchmark will be met in January 2013.

Figure 2 shows the growth in the number of associate and baccalaureate degrees available to students. The number of students completing both associate and baccalaureate degrees increased significantly from 2007 to the present, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 2: DSC Degrees Available

YEAR	Associate Degrees	Baccalaureate Degrees
2010	18	22
2011	19	22
2012	19	38
2013 (Total Anticipated)	20	40

Figure 3: Degrees Awarded

YEAR	Associate Degrees	Baccalaureate Degrees
2007	864	134
2010	894	318
2012	1131	483*
INCREASE (2007-2012)	30%	260%

*As a point of comparison, Southern Utah State College awarded 521 baccalaureate degrees during the 1990-1991 academic year prior to its university status, according to available IPEDS data.

Faculty

In the original proposal, the institution identified several faculty benchmarks as follows:
- Sufficient tenured and tenure-track faculty to staff each foundational/core baccalaureate program,
- Sixty percent of tenured and tenure-track faculty with the appropriate terminal degree for the baccalaureate level disciplines/programs,
- Increase in faculty positions sufficient to decrease the teaching workload from 27 credits annually to 24 credits annually for tenured and tenure-track positions.

Dixie State College advertised and hired full-time, terminally degreed faculty for 61 new tenure-track positions. The identified positions and hires not only meet the identified benchmarks, but provide sufficient terminally degreed faculty for anticipated institutional growth through 2013. Through substantial coordination and focus, new faculty hires will be completed to meet the required benchmarks by July 1, 2013. Dixie State has worked for more than a decade to staff new and vacated faculty positions with appropriately prepared faculty, with terminal degrees consistent with expectations of baccalaureate-granting institutions. (Appendix 4, Dixie State College Organizational Chart of Full-time Tenure-track Faculty Positions in Foundational Degrees and Appendix 5, Dixie State College Organizational Chart of Full-time Tenure-track Faculty Positions in Other, Established Degrees). Given the impact of the recent recession on the region Dixie serves, the decision was made not to include faculty for potential master degrees at this time.

Non-Faculty Staffing

Goals for Non-faculty Staffing, as identified in the 2007 Plan, included staffing that leads to: (1) improved student/advisor ratios and retention services, (2) enhanced student support services (in additional to advising and retention), (3) increased "real world" learning opportunities via additional internships, and (4) additional staff to serve student enrollment growth needs.

<u>Improved Advising and Retention Services</u>. Additional hires and cross-training of existing personnel in advisor positions have resulted in adjusted student-advisor ratios, which currently match best practice expectations. Previous ratios were at about 900:1; currently they are at 400:1, including the degree-specific advisors located within departments.

Additionally, the Advisement Center has established a Retention Center and hired new full- and part-time advisors, as well as student peer retention advisors, in the core academic areas. This new Center will serve students seeking assistance and those identified by the StarFish and DegreeWorks software programs as potentially at risk in enrolled courses. These early warning systems are designed to allow real time interventions that will encourage and enhance student success (Ellucian Degree Works, 2012; Longwell-Grice, 2003; Starfish Retention Solutions, 2010; Tinto, 1990).

These organization realignments and new staff additions are providing students with structural support that coordinates recruitment, advisement and retention efforts. These efforts increase the all-important contact with institutional employees, which are shown to

increase student retention dramatically (Habley & McClanahan, 2004; Seidman, 1989; 2005).

Student Support Services. Dixie State College has recently converted newly acquired properties into facility space. The Health and Wellness Center now provides a "one-stop" location for students to access health and wellness support services in one building. The facility provided an opportunity for the institution to contract for mental health counselors to be on campus property for scheduled appointments throughout each weekday of the semester, thus eliminating the need for a minimum of two DSC-based employee positions while still meeting student mental health needs with well-prepared professionals. In addition, the facility allowed DSC to address minor student medical needs on campus, which are attended to by a nurse practitioner under appropriate supervision.

Another major relocation provided the Testing Center with facilities that have accessible parking and doubled capacity for students. The Center can now serve twice the number of students at one time both for computer and at-desk testing. The expanded facility and staff allow the Center to provide additional services such as outreach testing, which supports online students, and a pickup and delivery option to support faculty testing and grading needs.

Increased Internships. The Career Center is in the process of expanding internships for students. With a new staff coordinator, the institution is making a dedicated effort to provide internship options in support of every baccalaureate degree at Dixie State College. For instance, six on-campus, accounting intern positions provide students with non-profit organization experience, which will complement their portfolios. Another eight internships for Visual Technology (VT) support were added to on-campus opportunities. The majority of internships (175) exist across local industries such as the computer industry, and with agencies such as recreational venues. Internships currently being filled include those related to studies in art, education, business administration, computer science, recreation, accounting, web design, and communication, to name a few.

Increased Capacity to Serve Student Enrollment Growth Needs. Dixie State College has also hired additional personnel to accommodate physical plant growth. Infrastructure for IT services continues to reorganize and change, with four remaining additional positions prioritized over the next two years.

When the benchmark process started, it was based on a modest growth projection. Plans were anticipated presuming a consistent growth rate. As the student population grew and reached unanticipated increases, plans were modified in order to meet changing needs on campus. The required flexibility included continual monitoring of unit staff needs.   This dynamic review resulted in shifted priorities, duty alignments and reassignments. The

purpose of the planning document was to provide a snapshot of institutional projections at a specific time. Mission-critical needs were maintained as priorities, but other needs were reviewed and sometimes incorporated into a previously unidentified area. The bottom line is that 56 positions were identified in the original documents and 64 have been hired as of September, 2012.

Figure 4 contains a summary indicating the projected hiring needs and the actual hires for non-faculty related units. As indicated from the information below, some targeted positions in the planning document were modified or replaced with positions that were prioritized due to the realities of massive enrollment growth and emerging priorities not identified in 2007 when the planning document was written. Analysis of job functions and reorganization of assigned tasks provided opportunities for consolidation of effort and, therefore, a shift to apply staff growth to other support areas.   Institutional planning is an on-going and dynamic process that remains flexible to the current and future needs of the institution, as this hiring pattern for non-faculty positions reveals. For a complete list of individual non-faculty hires by area, see Appendix 6.

Figure 4: Non-Faculty Hiring Distribution

Unit	Benchmark Hiring Projections 12/15/10	Actual Hires 12/31/12
Student Services	21	26
Institutional Research	2	2
Human Resources	0	2
Information Technology	11	7
Business Services	5	3
Internal Auditor	0	1
Administrative Services	6	4
Security	2	2
Lecture/Advisors	9	17
TOTAL	**56**	**64**

Figure 5 summarizes the benchmark categories and the degree to which the benchmarks have been met in each category.

Figure 5: Updated University Benchmarks
December 31, 2012

BENCHMARK	FY11 (2010-2011) Original Goal December 15, 2010	FY13 (2012-2013) December 15, 2012	BENCHMARK Complete by December 15, 2012
New Faculty	51 FTE	51 FTE	√
New Faculty to Reach 60% with Terminal Degrees in Core Areas	5.0 FTE	5.0 FTE	√
New Staff	56.0 FTE	64.0 FTE	√
New Core Degrees • Art • Spanish • Physical Science Composite • Computer Science • Mathematics • Social Science Composite • History	Degrees • Art • Spanish • Physical Science Composite • Computer Science • Mathematics • Social Science Composite • History	Degrees • Art • Spanish • Physical Science Composite • Computer Science • Mathematics • Social Science Composite • History	√ √ √ √ √ √ Jan 2013 SBR
Academic Budget	$ 5,935,000	$ 5,935,000	√
Student Services Budget	$ 1,479,000	$ 1,479,000	√
College Services Budget	$ 1,270,400	$ 1,270,400	√
One-Time Support Budget	$ 1,950,000	$ 1,950,000	√

Funding

The projected costs for mission change presented in the original plan were established based on state support and tuition income at 2007 rates. As indicated in Figure 6, the targeted goals for resources in each of the major categories are approaching the target. No doubt, the appropriate question at this point is to ask where the money came from to accomplish the goals. The unanticipated increase in enrollments that occurred with the

economic downturn generated tuition dollars that were allocated to meet the demands of a larger student body and to achieving the benchmark goals. Figure 6 shows the increase in tuition dollars that resulted from the explosion in student enrollment growth.

Figure 6: Available Tuition Dollars

Source	FY 2008	FY 2012
FTE Student Enrollment at Dixie State	3987 FTE	6598 FTE
Tuition per FTE	$ 2292	$ 3288
Tuition Revenue	$ 9,138,204	$ 21,694,224
	Difference in Generated Tuition Revenue $ 12,556,020	

Through slow, consistent, and targeted strategic implementation, the current anticipated revenues from sustained growth have been reinvested into the institution's ongoing infrastructure. The $8,984,400 anticipated for plan implementation projected in 2007 has been met largely through tuition revenue increases that resulted from both anticipated and unanticipated student enrollments. It is clear that the funds generated from a dramatic growth in student population provided an accelerated pathway to meet the projected financial obligations of the University Benchmarks.

It is worth noting, that although the additional revenue, which positioned Dixie State for significant and meaningful changes in staffing and program development, came from student growth, that are consistent with university status, the model is sustainable. Administrative budget decisions use a conservative approach that provides a necessary buffer to mitigate the ebb and flow of enrollments; in addition, institutional leadership is advancing a revenue mix change that includes additional out-of-state and international students. Limited recruitment of these revenue-rich populations will help to ensure ample resources for sustainability confidence.

Sustainability

Attainment of the minimum University Benchmarks is essentially complete. The institution has completed its Second Century Strategic Planning effort. This process, which involved internal and external constituents in concert with the campus-wide core theme development for accreditation, will determine who, what, and how Dixie State will serve its communities going forward.

At this stage of the process, there are some accepted givens that influence the discussions. The first is that higher education in the state of Utah will not be "business as usual" in the future. The second is that technology requires adaptable and innovative approaches to best serve multiple diverse student populations. In order to best serve the continuum of students who will come to the future university, Dixie State must adapt its delivery models. In part, future monies received from the state will support efforts with instructional redesign at the institution. The advantage for DSC with its lean approach to business is an ability to efficiently and rapidly create and implement a large-scale response to disruptive technology. The goal is to develop and maintain an overall academic nimbleness that will serve its students with quality, relevant opportunities.

The color and personality of a community often supports more unique and expanded offerings outside core and foundational areas. Dixie intends to explore future degrees that offer greater flexibility and community support in the most cost-effective and efficient manner available. Dixie State College recognizes and pledges an essential dedication to standards and will not sacrifice quality or educational integrity for expediency. It further pledges to remain aggressively resolved to its strong commitment to undergraduate education.

Conclusion

Dixie State College has greatly benefited from the process of identifying the characteristics that are common to teaching universities. The benchmarks agreed to by the Commissioner, Regents, and the College have provided a blueprint for development during the last three years. The enrollment growth and accompanying tuition increases have provided the resources needed to meet the benchmarks, which will all be met by July 1, 2013. In sum, Dixie State has met the criteria established by the Board of Regents and Commissioner's office and in the spring of 2013 will be prepared for university designation.

References

Ellucian Degree Works, (2012, January). Retrieved from
    http://www.ellucian.com/Solutions/Ellucian-Degree-Works/

Habley, W. R. & McClanahan R. (2004). *What works in student retention?* All Survey College,
    ACT.

Longwell-Grice, R. (2003). Get a job: Working class students discuss the purpose of college.
    The College Student Affairs Journal, 22 (2), 40-53.

Starfish Retention Solutions, (2010). *Strategic enrollment management: Practical
    applications of technology to drive student retention.* White paper, November 2010.

Seidman, A. (1989). Recruitment begins with retention: Retention begins with recruitment.
    Colleague. State University of New York, 40-45.

Seidman, A. (2005). *College student retention: Formula for student success.* Westport, CT:
    ACE/Praeger.

Tinto, V. (1990). Principles of effective retention. *Journal of Freshmen Year Experience, 2*,
    35-48.