September 14, 2018

To whom this concerns:

The Five County Association of Governments was formally established in 1972 under the provisions of the Inter-local Cooperation Act of 1965. The six other regional associations of government in Utah were established in a similar fashion and time frame. The Five County region in Utah encompasses over 11 million acres of land in southwestern Utah. The Association serves 38 municipalities (incorporated cities and towns), five county-wide school districts and the county jurisdictions of Beaver, Garfield, Iron, Kane, and Washington. The Five County Association of Governments provides professional staff expertise to local elected and appointed officials for the purpose of aiding in the development and implementation of effective decision-making process. The overall purpose of the Association is to provide a forum to identify, discuss, study, and resolve area-wide planning and development concerns. The Association provides assistance in Community and Economic Development, Transportation Planning, Small Business Financing, Aging Programs, Human Services Planning, and Home Child Care Resources and Referrals.

The mission of the Five County Association of Governments is to Plan, Prepare and Partner with federal, state and local governments to strengthen the role of southwestern Utah local officials in the execution of state and federal programs at the local level.

Many years ago the Economic Development Administration in the U.S. Department of Commerce formally designated the Five County Association of Governments as a regional Economic Development District. In our role as that ED District, the Five County Association of Governments enthusiastically supports the proposed master’s program in Technical Writing and Digital Rhetoric at Dixie State University. This program will lead to a career tract which will fill needed positions that are likely to come from the expected expansion of technical companies in this part of the state, as Tech Ridge, Innovation Plaza at DSU, and other high-tech areas in Utah’s Dixie continue to develop. This new master’s program will enhance the skills needed in our community for continued economic development.

Sincerely,

Gary O. Zabriskie, EDFP
Deputy Director and Director of Community & Economic Development
August 30, 2018

Dr. Joy McMurrin
Dixie State University
225 S University Avenue
St. George, UT 84770

Subject: Support for MA in Technical Writing and Digital Rhetoric

Dear Dr. McMurrin,

Thank you for presenting your intention to create a MA program in Technical Writing and Digital Rhetoric. In working closely with the local technology industry, we have found that there is indeed a real need for graduates with more advanced technical writing skills and the ability to use such skills across a variety of digital platforms.

A large portion of local technology firms are development shops. These shops develop software, websites, and other digital materials for clients nationwide and in some cases, worldwide. Often, development jobs are slowed down by the need for content. Development shops expect clients to provide “content,” which can come in many forms such as video and images, but a large majority of it is written content. This issue demonstrates that the need for technical writing professionals with experience in digital platforms is not only in high demand, but the need extends well beyond this community.

Another area of our work includes working with manufacturers. We have received feedback from aerospace to food production manufacturers that reveals they too would benefit greatly from employees with a skill set that includes the ability to create user manuals, documentation, and technical publications that are consistent across various platforms and media.

We fully support the creation of a MA in Technical Writing and Digital Rhetoric at Dixie State University and feel it would greatly benefit the companies we work with.

Sincerely,

Jeriah Threlfall
Executive Director