Abbreviated Form:  New and Changes to Administrative Units

*Form for DSU Internal Approval Sequence only*

Proposed Unit Title:  Lyman Southwest Geosciences Center

Currently Approved Unit Title:  (for changes only)

Sponsoring School or Division:  College of Science, Engineering, and Technology

Sponsoring Academic Department(s) or Unit(s):  Physical Sciences

Proposed Effective Date\(^1\):  July 1, 2019

Institutional Board of Trustees’ Approval Date:  

*DSU Approval Sequence:  CCC, UCC/GC, AC, UC (informational only), and Board of Trustees*

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**Proposal Type**

- ☑ New Center
- ☐ New Institute
- ☐ New Bureau
- ☐ New Office
- ☐ Name change of Existing Unit
- ☐ Administrative Unit Transfer
- ☐ Administrative Unit Restructure (with or without Consolidation)
- ☐ Reinstatement of Previously Suspended Administrative Unit
- ☐ Reinstatement of Previously Discontinued Administrative Unit

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\(^1\) “Proposed Effective Date” refers to date after Trustee approval when change to unit is published.
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*Form for DSU Internal Approval Sequence only*

Date: 03/27/2019

Section I: Request

The Southwest Geological Sciences Center will be a regional hub for activity related to student learning about the wealth of geological features surrounding DSU, and provide a central resource center with experts in Geology to collaborate with institutions across the country and around the globe in teaching and research activities. The Center will also be a partner in several new degrees being proposed in the Earth and environmental sciences, and will provide students with advanced learning and research opportunities in collaboration with DSU faculty and internationally recognized experts in related fields.

Section II: Need

There is absolutely a need for a Center that can serve as a resource for regional geosciences. It is critical to provide a mechanism for students and the community to understand the unusually diverse geology of the area. Additionally, we should be leveraging the access we have to this area that can provide learning and research opportunities to people around the world, and be a resource for those that want to study and learn about the scientific aspects of this region.

There is also a demand to learn and understand the geology of this region, as demonstrated by the popularity of our field courses in the geosciences and the Road Scholars program that take students and community members to the regional national parks and geological sites. These trips already utilize our expert faculty to provide the scientific background that explains what we see every day. We also already have existing partnerships with the National Parks and Bureau of Land Management to study the natural area and promote sustainable practices as this region grows. Additionally, we have significant student demand to study this region: a recent poll in our related classes estimate that there are about 150 students in the current freshman class that are interested in learning about the Earth and environmental sciences. For job market demand, there are currently nearly 200 positions in the Utah Department of Workforce Services for Natural Resource positions alone – when you add in the geosciences and related environmental science positions that this degree would feed into, there are over 300 positions currently in the DWS System – that is over 3 times the listed mechanical engineering positions (97 listed in DWS).

There are few places like the DSU region, where three significant ecosystems and geological classifications merge and intersect, and at the same time allow easy access to those areas because of the high degree of surface exposure of the geological features. Schools and scientists around the world come to this area to study geology, and many programs from all over the world are already doing research on the geology that is under our feet every day. We are fortunate to be in this location with access to such a plethora of actual scientific data, and it is critical as the regional university that we
serve as a resource center for scholars, visitors, and the community, to help understand, appreciate, and protect this area. It makes sense to be completely intertwined with our local geology: other universities have similarly taken advantage of their local environments and/or culture. For example, UNLV has the International Gaming Institute, Northern Arizona University has the Grand Canyon Ecological Restoration Institute and the Native American Cultural Center, and the University of Utah has a Energy and Geoscience Institute. DSU can have the Southwest Geological Sciences Center as a central resource to all of these institutions and more.

Section III: Institutional Impact

This new Center will impact the Department of Physical Sciences and College of Science, Engineering and Technology in multiple aspects. The Center will help us develop a resource center for students and faculty to support pending new programs in the Earth and environmental sciences, for which we already have significant student demand. As a result, we would expect the development of the Center to publicize the expertise on campus in these fields, and attract students from the area and nationally to study the geological sciences in the ideal “outdoor laboratory” setting. The Center will also help develop significant collaborations with external institutions across the country and around the globe – they all visit this region to study geology and earth sciences already, and building partnerships with them will have tremendous impacts on our students and on DSU as a whole. We also expect to develop further outreach opportunities as a result of this Center.

Section IV: Finances

DSU recently received a significant donation from a local resident who is passionate about supporting students in the sciences, and in particular feels that we need to have a mechanism to support the study and learning about the geology of our region. The initial funding is to support an Endowed or Distinguished Faculty position in Geology, with the idea that this will catalyze the growth of geological sciences at DSU and provide opportunities for the community and the university to interact through a resource center on campus. There were also be some expenses associated with outreach and community activities.

In addition to this position, we have four existing faculty that would support and collaborate with the center. We are requesting one additional tenure-track faculty position, which is already being requested with the proposed new degrees in the Earth and environmental sciences, to get the new programs live and running and to ensure that we have the breadth of expertise to best serve the students and community in learning about the region.