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[Letter from Lianna Etchberger, Associate Vice President and Professor]

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UtahStateUniversity
Moab

Dear USU Moab Leaders of 2072,

Greetings from 2022! I hope the campus is thriving and folks are excited to retrieve the time capsule.

The Moab community created this time capsule to celebrate the near completion of the first building on the new campus site. The capsule contains messages describing our lives in the Moab valley, our joys and challenges, and our hopes for the future. It will be buried at the ribbon cutting ceremony on April 1, 2022. The dream for a new campus began over 20 years ago. When I took the leadership role in 2017, few believed that we would ever see a new campus. So, I intentionally chose April Fool's Day to commemorate this dream come true. We have our new building on the new campus, no fooling!

We had a difficult time navigating the COVID-19 pandemic for the past two years. The US followed CDC recommendations to wear face masks and socially distance (stay at least 6 feet apart) to reduce the spread. On Friday, March 13, 2020, USU transitioned to online classes only as the country shut down, and everyone but essential workers employed at hospitals, grocery stores, etc. stayed at home. The transition to online went well for USU as remote course delivery is what we do, but other universities and K-12 schools struggled. I expected to shut down the physical campus, but students still came to use our reliable internet, to get some quiet time away from the children, or to just talk to another human. The country was anxious with the uncertainty and frustrated with being confined. Political unrest ensued as news broke of more black people like George Floyd dying at the hands of police. Vaccination became a contentious issue. As the shut-down continued, supply chains were broken, and the cost for the new building went up. Moab and other outdoor recreation areas slowly became inundated with campers needing to escape. The ribbon cutting will be a welcomed celebration not only of the new building, but also of our slow emergence from a trying time.

USU Moab students, staff, faculty, and community members are extremely grateful for this new building designed for gathering and learning. Technical Education is new to Moab, and the Health Professions lab and the welding and building construction shops are exciting additions for growing our programs that will serve even more students. Grand County Extension will have an activity space and demonstration kitchen to expand their non-credit programs. We now have a science teaching lab and a state-of-the-art nursing skills lab. Water-wise and the first net-zero energy building for USU, it was designed to serve as a shining model for sustainability in our Moab community and beyond. I hope that USU Moab continues to model new habits for sustainable living that disrupt the status quo. I hope it will be a seed that grows the USU Moab campus into a garden of sustainable spaces for learning, discovery, and community engagement. Fundraising, design, and construction were managed by amazing support teams of experts. The challenges, many exacerbated by the pandemic, were addressed with transparency and collaboration. I am grateful for to everyone who executed the vision.

I wish I were there with you in 2072 to see how USU Moab has evolved over the past 50 years. I have so many questions!

Is USU Moab still a part of the Statewide Campuses system? In 1967, Moab and Uintah Basin were the first legislative-sponsored campuses created to serve their communities. Faculty from Logan took trains and later flew

airplanes to these campuses to teach agricultural and general education courses. Various forms of technology evolved for delivering courses remotely, leveraging the growing faculty in Logan and across the state at new regional campuses. When I began my career as a biology professor at the Uintah Basin Regional Campus in 1995, the Distance Education and Regional Campuses system was in place to provide structure and support for the satellite centers. President Albrecht later declared USU as “one university geographically dispersed” and formally strengthened faculty assimilation with their departments. Two years after I transitioned to administration at the Moab campus, President Cockett (our first woman president!) created the USU Statewide Campuses system lead by a new Vice President. During my 28-year career at USU, I watched the campuses become stronger with each new restructuring, better able to serve their students and communities with centralized support systems for student success like advising, mental health, student government, and more. I wonder what the campus system looks like for you now.

Who are the students attending USU Moab? Around one hundred twenty students attend USU Moab with almost 50 Grand County High School students taking concurrent enrollment courses. Our students are mostly post-traditional, working full time jobs and managing families while earning their degrees. The demographics do not reflect the Grand County population with few Native or Latinx students enrolled. Intergenerational poverty is a serious issue. I believe that education is a door to opportunity. I hope that more young people are taking advantage of post-secondary opportunities at USU Moab, and that our technical education programs will attract more folks who currently don't envision themselves as college students. I am confident that you have built stronger relationships with the communities to welcome and include students from all backgrounds and experiences.

What programs are available for students? Currently, we offer over 65 degrees and certificates. Our most popular degree programs include Nursing, Social Work, Recreation Resource Management, and Education. In fact, three of our elementary education students have been invited to bury the time capsule since it is *their* students who will be present to recover it. Moab is in a unique landscape where researchers from all over the world come to study and explore. I hope that, through closer relationships with the many government agencies in Moab, that programs have expanded in natural resource management and environmental studies.

How is the campus serving the Moab community? We designed the building to be warm and inviting, to promote intentional collisions, interactions between people. It is a healthy space filled with natural light, comfortable study spaces, clean air, and inviting seating areas that promote conversation. While we couldn't afford a large meeting space, there is a large classroom area that can easily be transformed for small events. With degree programs, technical education, non-degree programs with Extension, and the Moab Business Resources Center, there truly is something for everyone under our roof. We intend to create events that bring each student from kindergarten through high school to campus, so it feels comfortable and familiar. I hope they will see college as a natural part of their life's journey, even if they attend another institution. I hope there will be art openings and live music and lecture series and workshops that provide happiness for every person in our community. I wonder what creative events your team will offer.

What does the campus look like? I hear rumors that physical facilities may no longer be necessary with the growth of online programs and courses where students can attend remotely from home. My experience with students during COVID convinced me that students there will always be a sector of students who need a place to study and humans to support them. My personal dream for the next building is a public lands center where USU faculty collaborate with other universities to provide useful data for land managers, and to offer field-intensive courses to student from across the world to learn in this incredible red rock environment in the only Utah city residing on the Colorado River. A new generation of innovative thinkers would be trained to address the environmental and social challenges of climate change. Perhaps the next building would be a field station where faculty and student researchers can download data, meet to debrief, clean their field equipment, cook a meal outside in the shade, and

get a good night's sleep. Perhaps there will be facilities for new technical education programs? I am confident that you have developed a thriving campus that makes Moab a wonderful place for all to live, learn and work.

I am grateful to my USU Moab team for their diligence: Samantha Campbell (Director of Students); Shanda Thompson (Academic Advisory and Student Success Coordinator); Allyssa Keogh (Business Services Representative); Ian Jewel (Testing Center Coordinator and Nursing Program Assistant); Zacharias Mason (Facilities Maintenance Representative); and the part-time employees who work at the front desk and make ensure that delivered classes start on time and to connect students with the resources they need to succeed. Our local faculty are incredible, talented, and student-focused teachers. My advisory council members are strong advocates for USU Moab and liaisons to the community: Jim Webster; Joe Kingsley; Dave Sakrison; Leticia Bentley; Jen Sadoff; Ashley Korenblatt; Keith Hughes; Mary McGann; Jason Taylor; and Taryn Kay. They have done it all with gusto and a smile.

Soon I will retire with great pride in the work we have done here together. I won't survive to see the inside of the time capsule again, but I will never stop wishing USU Moab well and wondering what the impact of this new building will be. Carry on!

Sincerely,

Lianna Etchberger
Associate Vice President and Professor