



History and Background

In 1886, William B. Dougall gathered several local leaders from Salt Lake City together to make an important proposal: that the youth of Salt Lake City should have a school of their own. And so, what we know today as Ensign College was born.

It was a meeting that almost didn't take place.

The gathering was scheduled to occur in a bookstore owned by James Dwyer, but the night before the meeting a fire broke out in the building. The next morning, water that had been used to put out the fire was still dripping from the destroyed roof. That could have been the end of Dougall's dream, but his group of determined, resourceful pioneers met anyway, sitting on boxes and crates in the charred, damp remains of the bookstore.

The symbolism of that first meeting cannot be ignored. Surrounded by the ashes of books, the gathered leaders made plans for a place of learning. The phoenix that rose from those ashes was the Salt Lake Stake Academy, now known as Ensign College.

Since its founding, Ensign College has moved eight times, and instruction has been provided in a total of 16 buildings. It stood on the location of the current Church Office Building for the longest span of time, from 1901 to 1961.

From 1962 to 2006, Ensign College occupied the Wall Mansion in downtown Salt Lake City before moving to its current location at the Triad Center, just west of Temple Square.

The school's purpose is to provide a spiritually grounded, career-based education. Ensign College provides programs in business, health professions, information technology, software development, interior design, paralegal studies, social media marketing, applied technology and more.

Through these in-demand professional certificates, associate and bachelor degrees—with programs offered both on campus and online—students become job-ready in one to two years and are prepared to earn a working wage quickly after graduation.