

# Utah Tech University Policy

## 135: Government Relations



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### I. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to facilitate official communications between Utah Tech (“the University”) University and government officials and agencies, ensure University compliance with all lobbying and gifts laws, and note rules for the scheduling of political events on University premises.

### II. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all university students, faculty, and staff who represent the university in an official capacity. It further applies to all university colleges, departments, committees, or entities. It has specific relevance to the Office of the President and the President’s designated government relations officer, the Assistant to the President for Government & Community Relations.

### III. Definitions

- 3.1 **Employee:** An employee is any instructor-track faculty, contracted employee, regular or part-time employee, or seasonal/temporary employee as defined in University Policy 342.
- 3.2 **Official contact:** Official contact means any oral, written, or electronic communication on behalf of the University to any public official that could reasonably be interpreted to represent the official position of the University.
- 3.3 **Public official:** A public official is any elected or appointed government official, including that official’s staff. A public official includes any government official at the municipal, county, tribal, state, or federal level.

- 3.3.1 This definition excludes any public official that is already associated with the University through an employment or other official relationship.

#### **IV. Policy**

- 4.1 This policy in no way curtails the University employees' ability to exercise their constitutionally protected right to free speech. Rather, it ensures appropriate communications between employees operating in their official capacity and public officials.
- 4.2 Role of the President's Office and the Office of Government & Community Relations
  - 4.2.1 At the University, government relations is a function of the Office of the President. Unless otherwise specified by the President, only the President or the Assistant to the President for Government & Community Relations may speak on behalf of the University to public officials. The University's government relations agenda is determined by the President in consultation with the board of trustees, cabinet members, and the President's staff. Should employees have questions or concerns related to the University's interactions with the government, they should contact the Assistant to the President for Government & Community Relations in order to bring attention to new issues or to raise the administration's awareness of current or pending government policies.
- 4.3 Official contact with public officials
  - 4.3.1 While all employees and students are free to communicate individually with elected representatives about their personal views, any official contact with public officials must be approved by the Office of the President.
- 4.4 Responding to public officials
  - 4.4.1 If public officials request information or opinions about particular public policy issues, employees must carefully differentiate between their personal views and the views of the University. Before responding on behalf of the University, employees must consult and receive approval from the Office of the President.
- 4.5 Gifts to public officials
  - 4.5.1 The University will comply with all state and federal laws and rules governing gift-giving to public officials.

4.5.2 The University will comply with the expenditure requirements outlined in Utah Board of Higher Education Policy R250.

#### 4.6 Grassroots lobbying and advocacy

##### 4.6.1 Association lobbying and advocacy

4.6.1.1 Employees planning to attend meetings which public officials are likely to attend are encouraged to consult with the Assistant to the President for Government & Community Relations. Employees attending such meetings must take care not to imply official or unofficial endorsement of or support for any position by the University, any individual members of the University administration, or any official University organization.

##### 4.6.2 Letter-writing to public officials

4.6.2.1 University employees who wish to write letters to public officials are encouraged to notify the Office of the President prior to writing. Employees cannot write on behalf of the University without approval from the Office of the President.

#### 4.7 Events

##### 4.7.1 Event invitations to public officials

4.7.1.1 Before inviting government officials to speak at or attend University events, employees must consult the Office of the President. Because of the importance of government decisions to the University and the need to prioritize University requests and account for all government contacts, it is essential that the Office of the President be aware of potential invitations.

##### 4.7.2 Political events on University Premises

4.7.2.1 Political parties, candidates, and public officials often request space on University premises to host town halls, campaign events, or other meetings. The University will give fair and equitable consideration to all political parties, candidates, and public officials who submit such requests, as outlined in Policy 441.

## **V. References**

- 5.1 [The House Gift Rule](#)
- 5.2 [The Senate Gift Rule](#)
- 5.3 [University Policy 342: Payroll](#)
- 5.4 [University Policy 441: Central Scheduling of Campus Facilities and Events](#)
- 5.5 [Utah Board Higher Education Policy R250, Legislative Communications](#)
- 5.6 [Utah Code 36-11, Lobbyist Disclosure and Regulation Act](#)
- 5.7 [Utah Code 67-16, Utah Public Officers' and Employees' Ethics Act](#)

## **VI. Procedures – N/A**

## **VII. Addenda – N/A**

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Policy Owner: President

Policy Steward: Assistant to the President for Government & Community Relations

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