The Utah State University Student Association (USUSA) Executive Council unanimously passed a bill adopting a standing inclusion statement, using its first legislative action of the term to commit the organization to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. Executive Council Bill 2022-01 establishes the following message as USUSA’s official, continuously standing USUSA Inclusion Statement:

"You belong here. The Utah State University Student Association includes every USU student — we support the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Demonstrating our commitment to these principles, we support and advocate for every student regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, language, worldview, education, socioeconomic background, family structure, veteran status, and other identities and backgrounds. We condemn and stand up against social injustice in all forms. Our commitment to building a more inclusive environment in our organizations, events, campuses, and communities is ongoing — each of us has a role to play in realizing this vision."

ECB 2022-01 requires the statement to be referenced in all USUSA officer position descriptions and committee applications to help commit each student representative to DEI action. The bill further amends officer ethics bylaws to require officers to adhere to the principles and values outlined in the statement.

"The passage of this bill proactively signals USUSA’s values and commitments concerning diversity, equity and inclusion,” USUSA President Lucas Stevens said. “I’m especially excited to implement this statement in our organization’s guiding documents and share its message with our fellow students as we move forward in building a more inclusive campus.”

The bill was sponsored by Stevens and co-sponsored by Emilee Harmon, the organizations and campus diversity vice president, and Niyonta Chowdhury-Magaña, the graduate studies senator. The sponsors will now work to prominently display and promote the statement to the student body at-large.

"This is our commitment to creating a safer environment for students with marginalized identities,” Vice President Harmon said. “It is important to acknowledge that this statement is only the starting point. There is a lot of work ahead, and I hope you as students hold USUSA officers accountable."

Listed in the bill’s text are previous USUSA legislative actions and ongoing DEI initiatives accompanied by the council’s acknowledgement of that further work is necessary.

“A statement unaccompanied by representative action is a false statement and invokes the misunderstanding that it is sufficient work to advance inclusion, equity, and social justice,” Senator Chowdhury-Magaña said. “In order to avoid institutional complacency and causing more harm to marginalized members of our Aggie community, we must now operationalize this statement by enacting tangible change."
The council unanimously passed ECB 2022-01 in its first reading on Sept. 21, which advanced it to the final vote on its second reading today. The USUSA Statewide Executive Council, composed of student representatives from the university’s statewide campuses, is also expected to give final approval to a corresponding bill next week, adopting the position for the student government across the state.

The full text of ECB 2022-01 can be read at usu.edu/legislation.

About USUSA

The Utah State University Student Association (USUSA) is the hub for student involvement and leadership at Utah State University. As the student government elected by the USU student body, the association works to improve the quality of campus life and enhance student wellbeing. USUSA is an organization made by the students, for the students, and because of students – every student at USU is a member of the association and can actively participate in all activities, committees, clubs, events and initiatives.