



POLICY MANUAL

GENERAL

Number 103

Subject: The University's Mission, Purpose and Functions

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103.1 UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT

Utah State University integrates teaching, research, extension, and service to meet its unique role as Utah's land-grant university. Students are the focus of the University as they seek intellectual, personal, and cultural development.

The mission of Utah State University is to provide high quality undergraduate and graduate instruction, excellent general education, and specialized academic and professional degree programs. USU is committed to preparing students to serve the people of Utah, the nation, and the world.

USU provides nationally and internationally acclaimed programs of basic and applied research. USU engages in research to further the quest for knowledge and to help society meet its scientific, technological, environmental, economic, and social challenges.

Outreach to Utah's citizens through extension and service programs is central to the University's mission. The University's outreach programs provide to individuals, communities, institutions, and industries throughout the state, services that help improve technology, the environment, and quality of life.

In all its endeavors, the University is committed to developing responsible citizens through freedom of inquiry and expression, and through its best efforts in teaching, research, creative arts, extension and service, and encouraging cultural diversity.

103.2 PURPOSE OF THE UNIVERSITY

The paramount objective of the University is the continued reappraisal, enlargement, and dissemination of knowledge to improve humankind. The specific goals of the University are to:

- * Maintain a strong undergraduate program which encourages the intellectual and personal development of students.
- * Conduct major research programs which broaden the horizons of knowledge and seek answers to problems of importance.
- * Make available to the public the benefits of modern discovery, of creative achievement, and of cultural developments.
- * Maintain a strong graduate program which encourages the intellectual, research, and personal development of graduate students.
- * Expand the services and educational resources offered by the University through the development of cooperative educational programs with other institutions and other local, state, federal, and international agencies.
- * Provide for each student the opportunity to understand her or his relation to the human family and the natural world; the opportunity to learn and understand basic political and economic principles of democracy and the American system; and the opportunity to develop the skills of civic, social, and political participation and leadership in local, national, and international affairs.

103.3 PRIORITIES AND MISSIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY

Effective planning requires projections of expected University growth in numbers of people and revenues, faculty, physical plant, academic programs to be offered, and academic priorities and their characteristics. There are three factors to recognize in setting priorities: (1) the obligation of the University to seek for all programs the level of support needed to achieve acceptable quality and to accommodate projected enrollments, (2) the obligation of the University to facilitate the attainment of national and international leadership of programs which are at or near this level of quality and those that are distinctive to the University, and (3) the need to fulfill existing legal and administrative mandates and to meet the needs of the University's primary constituents.

3.1 Programmatic Priorities

The three programmatic priorities reflect the primary functions of the University as an academic community (see policy 403.1). All other ancillary programs that are not academic in nature are considered to be of lower priority, except where they are clearly and demonstrably critical to the fulfillment of the University's academic mission, as specified in the priorities below.

The priority listing is not intended to be structured so that institutional priorities that are innovative cannot be accommodated. The goals and priorities are meant to be considerations for planning. For example, there must be a critical mass of faculty and student scholars and of physical plant to support priority programs; there must be mechanisms for measuring, supporting, and encouraging extraordinary faculty achievements; and there must be recognition and continuing analysis of the University's legal and administrative mandates and the needs of the public elements served by it, including students and prospective employers.

(1) First priority.

Programs with first priority are those that:

- (a) fulfill legal and legislative mandates;
- (b) have existing role assignments from the Regents;
- (c) make a substantial contribution to the general and liberal education of students;
- (d) meet the needs of a wide spectrum of students;
- (e) meet local and regional needs that cannot otherwise be provided by other institutions on an economical basis;
- (f) meet national needs of special significance to the University because of their particular capabilities; or
- (g) meet international needs through programs and projects which require specialized support and are mutually beneficial to the University and the host country.

(2) Second priority.

Programs with second priority are those that:

- (a) show strength but are not part of mandated or assigned roles, do not directly address local or regional needs, and are not existing or near-potential centers of excellence;
- (b) support programs that contribute only minimally to general education and to a liberal education but have no special distinction within their national disciplines; or
- (c) programs that are neither mandated nor assigned and are not unique to the University within the state.

(3) Third priority.

Programs with third priority are those:

- (a) where other state institutions have primary role assignments;
- (b) where others in the region have superior programs and/or are more cost effective;
- (c) not in the first priority which have an insufficient number of students resulting in excessive costs; or
- (d) waning because technology, science, or public needs are making them obsolete.

3.2 College Mission Statements

Each college should consider these factors in the development of a mission statement against which its priorities can be assessed. As college mission statements are formulated and revised, more specific, short-range goals can be developed by appropriate administrative units. These plans can then be used to assess each unit's activities within a given year to refine the goals and mission statements and to determine how suitable the unit is to the performance of its role.

3.3 Support of the Academic Mission of the University

The administrative and noninstructional staffs of the University facilitate and support the work of faculty and students and, in certain cases, contribute directly to student development. Support units should also develop mission and goal statements.

103.4 RESIDENT INSTRUCTION

4.1 Statement on Teaching

The Lund Act, by which the Utah Territorial Legislature established what is now Utah State University, specifies that the University shall offer instruction in such "branches of learning as are related to Agriculture and Mechanics Arts and such other scientific and classical studies as shall promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life." At the University, students pursue different combinations of technical, scientific, liberal, and professional education. However, for all students a liberal education, with emphasis on the sciences, humanities, and communication, is considered essential. Successful teaching at the University depends largely upon: (1) employing and maintaining a superior faculty; (2) providing adequate classroom, laboratory, library, and other educational facilities; (3) giving careful attention to the curriculum; and (4) providing an atmosphere which encourages the fullest intellectual and moral development of students.

4.2 Goals for Student Development

Student development is one outcome of resident instruction. The goals for student development are to:

(1) Develop skills of critical thinking and reasoning and to foster the process of intellectual discovery.

The University seeks to develop students' abilities to acquire both general and specialized knowledge, to integrate knowledge from a variety of perspectives, to apply alternative modes of reasoning and methods of problem solution, to distinguish the relevant from the irrelevant, and to derive and formulate general principles for clarification and explanation. By focusing on the creative elements of learning and the importance of fostering intellectual curiosity, the University encourages an awareness of the imaginative and creative elements of intellectual endeavor, helps students develop a familiarity with the philosophies and methods of research in a variety of academic disciplines, and promotes an attitude of individuality which results in intellectual self-awareness and personal initiative.

(2) Develop an awareness of and interest in the breadth of human intellectual achievement and cultural experience.

A broad understanding of world cultures and of the diversity of forms in which intellectual and artistic achievements have been expressed is an important characteristic of an educated person. Students are encouraged to gain a historical and integrated perspective of the cultural, political, legal, scientific, and social components of various societies and to understand the processes, complexities, and consequences of change. The University also strives to foster a lifelong interest in intellectual and artistic endeavors as a matter of continuing personal development.

(3) Prepare students for personally satisfying careers.

The University has an obligation to develop in students the knowledge and skills required for employment and advancement in professional fields of endeavor. In those fields of study which have traditionally led to clearly defined careers, the curricula should equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary for at least entry-level employment. In those fields which have not traditionally led to clearly defined careers, students should be encouraged to develop supplementary skills which qualify them for career entry of some useful and remunerative nature. In seeking to advance these results, the University should also provide a variety of opportunities for students to gain work experiences in appropriate fields, encourage an orientation to careers that recognizes a variety of employment patterns and considerations of lifestyle, provide appropriate career counseling to students, and provide direct assistance in obtaining employment.

(4) Facilitate emotional development, health, and clarification of personal values.

The University seeks to foster in students a positive self-concept and a feeling of personal worth and psychological well-being; an awareness of how emotions, attitudes, and values influence thought and behavior; clarification of personal values; and a sense of personal responsibility for one's view and actions.

(5) Facilitate physical development, health, and well-being.

The University is committed to providing a healthy, safe, and secure environment; providing physical activity, recreation, and other leisure activities necessary to the well-rounded development of students; and creating and maintaining a psychologically and physically supportive campus environment that includes appropriate medical, housing, recreational, and educational programs.

(6) Maintain a campus environment that will foster a sense of community and social responsibility, and will facilitate social development and effectiveness in interpersonal relationships.

A sense of community is critical to the achievement of all the objectives of an institution of higher learning. The University must demonstrate in its pursuit of learning a commitment to the ideals and values of social responsibility and equality of opportunity. These values must be communicated to students to effectively participate in University decision-making processes, in community activities and governmental processes, and in a broad spectrum of cultural events.

A wide range of communication and leadership skills and the ability to interact effectively with others are essential attributes of an educated person, and the University must provide for development of these skills. Exposure to a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds is also a hallmark of an educated person. The University shall endeavor to facilitate interaction and enhance understanding among heterogeneous elements of the University community.

4.3 The Colleges' Role in Resident Instruction

The resident teaching program operates through the Colleges of Agriculture; Business; Education; Engineering; Family Life; Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences; Natural Resources; and Science.

4.4 Commitment to the Teaching of Students

The principal value of the University is its commitment to the teaching of students; to their growth and knowledge; and to their physical, emotional, and social development as they grow intellectually. The University is obligated to stimulate in students a genuine excitement for learning and to equip them with a variety of intellectual perspectives, in short, to provide a liberal education which aims at larger self-fulfillment for every student. This holds true regardless of the chosen field of study because specialized study without exposure of ideas, principles, and theories central to all learning can only result in parochialism. The University also provides the specialized studies that lead to careers, particularly those of a professional nature, which are based upon advanced knowledge. The entire intellectual, recreational, and social environment of the campus is involved in giving life to such a learning experience.

103.5 RESEARCH AND RESEARCH PROGRAMS

Research, which is of fundamental significance for the state and the nation, is a major function of the University. It includes scholarly and creative endeavors in the humanities, as well as in the sciences. The research function of the University is overseen by the Vice President for Research.

5.1 Goals for Research and Creative Programs

The goals for all University research programs are to:

(1) Contribute to the advancement of scientific theory and the base of empirical knowledge.

The province of a university is knowledge, both the dissemination of existing information and the development of new knowledge through research. A major long-range goal of research is to develop theories which represent the natural and social laws by which the universe and society operate, and which provide science with its predictive power. The worth of such theories is principally based in the body of empirical knowledge that is conscientiously derived from observations in the laboratory and the field.

(2) Solve societal problems.

While knowledge is considered to have intrinsic worth apart from its application in problem solving, and research in universities is appropriately conducted as an end in itself, the land-grant universities have the added tradition and responsibility of conducting mission-oriented research. The University's applied research goals have continued to emphasize agriculture and have expanded to address numerous industrial, educational, business, engineering, family, social, and natural resources problems, to mention a few. Research in these areas to solve societal problems remains a major function of the institution.

The goal for creative arts and humanities is to contribute to artistic and humanistic endeavor. This contribution includes creation in various media of works of art, architecture, dance, film, music, literature, and theater. The faculty who are involved in such creative works or processes should involve students in active problem solving. This contributes to the development of the student's professional skills and understanding of the human condition.

5.2 Commitment to the Discovery and Advancement of Knowledge

A second fundamental obligation of the University is its commitment to the discovery and advancement of knowledge, for its own sake and for its practical benefits to society. The quest for knowledge, which runs deep in the human spirit, is an end in itself. Knowledge is also a source of solutions to societal problems and a force in the advancement of civilization. The world's great discoveries often occur in universities.

The commitment to research, evaluation, and scholarly inquiry is the foundation of the University's unique role in society and the wellspring of its functions.

103.6 COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

6.1 Statement on Cooperative Extension

The Extension Division was created and began to serve the people of Utah in 1907 as part of the Agriculture Experiment Station. A few years later it became the Cooperative Extension Service and part of a nationwide program authorized by passage of the Smith-Lever Act by Congress on May 8, 1914. Cooperative Extension is the arm of the University responsible for formalized outreach and engagement, and it thereby distinguishes the University and its land-grant mission from all other institutions of higher learning in Utah. The activities and programs of Cooperative Extension are developed and implemented through the collaboration and combined efforts of the University and of public and private organizations, agencies, and groups of people in all parts of the state, and with funding support provided by federal, state, and county government. All the activities and programs of Cooperative Extension are conducted on a voluntary basis and are designed to help people help themselves.

6.2 Mission and Goals of Cooperative Extension

Cooperative Extension has a dual mission to the public: to extend the resources of the University to the people and to receive suggestions and ideas from the people on concerns the University should address. Its overall goal is to benefit the state and its citizens by fostering positive outcomes that:

- (1) Enhance the quality of life for individuals, families, and communities;
- (2) Improve the economic well being of individuals, families, businesses, communities and the state;
- (3) Promote sustainability of agriculture, the environment and communities;
- (4) Develop leadership and citizenship through community, youth, and volunteer programs.

6.3 Structure and Function of Cooperative Extension

Cooperative Extension is structured to deliver useful information that improves the lives of people, and to implement applied research and discovery that provides solutions to the immediate and emerging problems of people. In cooperation with local county government, Extension faculty members are located in counties throughout the state thereby providing an extensive local presence that expands the University's reach beyond the confines of campus classrooms and research laboratories. The placement of Extension faculty across the state facilitates active engagement with citizens in the local communities and fosters partnerships that are key to successful extension programs.

Extension faculty members located in the counties deliver useful information that improves the lives of citizens, and they bring problems back to the University for

solution. These faculty use a variety of formal and informal teaching methods to design learning experiences appropriate for their audience. They organize programs, leadership training schools, short courses, tours, and other educational activities in partnership with community, county, state, and federal entities. Extension faculty members develop programming to meet the specific needs of the people in the counties, and they often initiate and implement applied research that addresses the problems faced by people in the county, state and region. At the same time, Extension county faculty members provide a useful response mechanism to convey the informational needs and problems requiring further study to their colleagues on campus.

Cooperative Extension also supports faculty members located in many departments across campus. These departmental faculty members develop curricula and major programs for delivery through Cooperative Extension. They also provide valuable discipline-specific expertise augmenting the ability of Cooperative Extension to respond to critical and emerging issues with research-based, unbiased information.

6.4 Commitment to Utilize Extension Programs for the Benefit of the State

The University is committed to utilize Extension programs for the benefit of the state. This function is peculiarly evident in land-grant institutions. Extension faculty reach beyond the confines of University classrooms and research laboratories to provide informal educational experiences to individuals and groups or to provide formal classes for residents throughout the State. These experiences are designed specifically to meet local needs. Extension programs are facilitated by the fact that Extension faculty (agents) live among and work with the people in every county of the state. They use a variety of formal and informal teaching methods to design learning experiences appropriate for their audience (students). Extension faculty also provide a useful response mechanism, to convey problems needing further study to their research colleagues. University resident faculty are valuable resource for Extension programs.

103.7 OTHER COMMITMENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY

7.1 Commitment to Extend University Resources through Public and Professional Service

The University is committed to society through public and professional services. These public and professional services are in addition to the Extension programs described above. Research and teaching contribute to the public good, but faculty, staff, and students often reach beyond the confines of their classrooms and laboratories to engage directly in community, national, and world affairs. A keener understanding of the public condition is one approach to public betterment, and the University makes an appreciable contribution.

Teaching, research, extension, and public service are compatible functions which draw strength from each other. Faculty members publish the results of their scholarship for the enlightenment of their peers throughout the world. Thus they participate in a process by which knowledge is kept alive and expanded. An active research faculty excites students with learning, opens their minds to the imaginative and creative elements of inquiry, equips them with analytical methods for making decisions, and leads them in their own inquiries and fresh understandings. One hallmark of a university is the belief that research and teaching stimulate each other and should always proceed companionably. Research is in much the same way the wellspring of the extension and public service function, the source from which come the analytic models which enable a better understanding of societal problems.

Activities within the professional expertise of a faculty/staff member, performed without remuneration, are also among the valued public services of University personnel. Students become alumni who apply their education to improve their own lives and to benefit their families and communities. The whole University responds to requests from such groups/individuals as legislatures, governors, agencies, public groups, alumni, students, and parents.

The University maintains contact with its former students, takes pride in their individual success, and seeks ways to provide for their continuing needs. The Alumni Association provides these services through chapter organizations in locations throughout the country.

The need for assistance to developing nations is forecast to increase dramatically. Land-grant universities have traditionally taken the lead in staffing overseas assignments, and the University has made significant contributions in international projects in the past. The University has the knowledge, abilities, and proven performance record to help developing countries.

7.2 Commitment to Freedom of Inquiry and Expression

The University is committed to freedom of inquiry and expression. The rights and obligations of faculty and students to pursue knowledge wherever it may lead are fundamental to the advancement of knowledge. To deny this right would be to imply that the results of scholarly inquiry and the benefits to society are entirely predictable. The right to pursue inquiries and to publish the results freely is essential.

Freedom of inquiry and expression is as necessary to teaching as it is to research. The University is committed to preserving these rights of free inquiry and discussion and to maintaining the high standards of scholarship which are intended for such rights.

Faculty members and administrators have special responsibilities to students, colleagues, their field of specialization, the University, and to society. These responsibilities are further detailed in policy 403.

7.3 Commitment to Standards of Quality

The University is committed to standards of quality which earn it respect in all of its communities of interest, including the national and international community of universities.

Excellence in teaching, high standards of scholarship, and fruitful public service comprise the currency by which the University earns an honored place in society.

The University is committed to all of the fundamental attributes associated with outstanding universities. A shared commitment to such values among students, faculty, and staff promotes an environment of cooperation wherein they can work together, both formally and informally, to shape the policies and perform the roles of the institution.

7.4 Commitment to Educational and Program Assessment

The University is committed to timely internal and external assessment of its programs to assist in productive academic planning and the fulfillment of its mission and goals. To meet this commitment, the University and all of its units shall gather, analyze, and publish data annually that relate to the planning for and evaluation of the accomplishment of the missions, goals, and objectives of the University and its units. Such assessments are intended to determine the extent to which University programs meet their goals and objectives and further the mission of the University; to establish a culture of evidence for assessment; and to meet the standards of the Regents, the Trustees, the Commission on Colleges of the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, and the University. The assessment process shall be a continuous process which shall involve faculty and other concerned stakeholders in central roles. Furthermore, assessment results will directly inform planning and other decision-making activities.

103.8 OFFERING OF DEGREES

The University is committed to offer undergraduate and graduate degrees, including the most advanced graduate degrees, in a wide range of professional and liberal fields of study. Knowledge has become so vast in the twentieth century that no single institution can be expected to flourish in every field, and financial constraints must be considered to avoid programmatic over commitment. Without a reasonably broad range of undergraduate and graduate offerings in the humanities, fine arts, sciences, social sciences, and selected professional fields, however, the University cannot lay claim to being a university.

The fields of knowledge are interrelated and no discipline or field of study is an intellectual island. In many instances, the mutually reinforcing nature of disciplines and fields is readily apparent. For example, the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences provide much of the theoretical underpinnings for advanced study in a variety of professional fields. In turn, the construction and testing of theories in the professional schools reinforce and add to the store of knowledge in the underlying disciplines.

Different departments and colleges of the University offer the following degrees: The Associate of Arts (AA), the Associate of Science (AS), the Bachelor of Arts (BA), the Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA), the Bachelor of Science (BS); the Master of Arts (MA), the Master of Education (MEd), the Master of Science (MS), several other specific master's or other professional degrees in one or more the colleges; the Doctor of Education EdD), and the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

103.9 NON-DEGREE RECOGNITION

9.1 Special Certificates

Special certificates are awarded in specific areas for completion of non-degree curricula.

9.2 Military Commissions

Military ROTC units are located at the University. Successful completion of the courses outlined and the summer camp requirements lead to a commission as a second lieutenant in the Army or Air Force Reserve. Outstanding students in both programs are designated Distinguished Military Students and are eligible to apply for commissions in the regular military services.

103.10 ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS AND PRIORITIES

The administrative and noninstructional staff of the University facilitates and supports the work of faculty and students and, in certain cases, contributes directly to the development of students. Consistent with these purposes, major functions of administration are to:

- * Initiate development of institutional plans, policies, and procedures necessary to preserve and enhance the vitality of the intellectual enterprise as a whole.
- * Acquire the resources necessary to support teaching, research, and service, both directly through its own efforts and indirectly through provision of information on funding sources and other matters to faculty, staff, and students.
- * Develop and maintain programs and services which contribute directly to the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development of students within the context of a total learning environment.
- * Provide those administrative services to faculty, staff, and students which either directly support the learning process or are necessary to its existence.
- * Maintain appropriate relationships with various external publics to facilitate the work of faculty and students and to satisfy accountability requirements in both education and economic terms.

* Develop and maintain appropriate means of coordination and oversight to ensure the goals and priorities of the institution are accomplished as effectively and efficiently as possible.

* Support the academic freedom necessary to the overall fulfillment of University goals.

These major functions provide the framework within which all administrative units must articulate their goals and objectives to support the educational mission of the University. The process of priority setting among administrative units of the University follows essentially the same logic as for academic units.