

## University Policy 2107: Political and Electoral Participation

**Category:** Community Expectations

**Subcategory:** Individual Rights

**Covered Individuals:** University Employees

**Responsible Executive:** Vice President for Government and External Affairs

**Policy Custodian:** Office of Government and External Affairs, Vice President

**Last Revised:** 2025/10/28

**Previous USU Policy Number:** 333: Political and Electoral Participation

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### 2107.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Utah State University (University or USU) values and encourages employees' participation in public service, in the electoral process, and local, state, and national campaign activities if those activities do not adversely affect University operations. The purpose of this Policy is to set clear expectations and requirements for University employees who participate in campaigning and electoral political activities.

### 2107.2 POLICY

#### 2.1 Running for and Holding Political Office

An employee who wishes to engage in direct political activity by running for or holding political office must do so outside of work hours or while on approved leave.

In accordance with Utah Code Section 63A-17-904, a career service employee elected to any partisan or full-time nonpartisan political office will be granted leave without pay when the employee receives monetary compensation for service in the political office.

An employee must continue to fulfill the employee's job duties and obligations while running for or holding political office.

An employee running for or holding political office may not exploit the employee's relationship with the University for any purpose, directly or indirectly. The employee must comply with applicable provisions of [USU Policy 2301: Individual Conflicts of Interest](#) and Utah Code Title 67, Chapter 16, Utah Public Officers' and Employees' Ethics Act.

An employee may run for and hold public office, including in the Utah State Legislature or United States Congress, without resigning from employment at the University.

#### 2.2 Endorsement of Political Candidate or Political Cause

Only the President and the President's designees are authorized to speak or issue statements on behalf of the University. See [USU Policy 2105: Free Expression and Assembly](#). An employee may not use the name of the University in connection with the endorsement of a political candidate or cause except for the limited purpose of identifying the University as the employer of the employee making the endorsement. An employee who endorses a political candidate or political cause must do so in the employee's personal capacity. If the employee identifies the University as the employee's employer, the employee must make a statement that the employee's endorsement is in the employee's personal capacity and not on behalf of

the University. Any endorsement of a political candidate or political cause that an employee makes must be made in compliance with [USU Policy 2106: Political Activity](#).

### 2.3 Campaigning

A University employee who wishes to engage in direct political activity by campaigning must do so outside of work hours or while on approved leave and, where applicable, in compliance with [USU Policy 2106: Political Activity](#) and Utah Code Section 63A-17-904.

### 2.4 Voting

An employee may take up to two (2) hours of leave on election day during regular work hours to vote. An employee who is scheduled to work for fewer than three hours on election day is not entitled to this leave. See Utah Code § 20A-3a-105. Approved leave for voting is in addition to any other leave to which an employee may be entitled under USU policies.

Before the appropriate election day, an employee must request leave from their immediate supervisor to cast a ballot during scheduled work hours.

## 2107.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

### 3.1 University

#### 3.1.1 Approving leave for holding or running for public office.

The supervisor and appropriate Dean or Vice President of an employee who runs for or holds public office is responsible for approving leave required for campaigning activities and fulfilling the responsibilities of holding public office. The supervisor and Dean or Vice President will work with the employee to arrange a mutual agreement for approved leave.

For an employee who is a legislator in the Utah State Legislature, leave will be granted for authorized legislative days and authorized legislative training days in accordance with Utah Code Section 53B-2-115. If the Board of Trustees determines that granting leave to an employee for authorized legislative days or authorized legislative training days would cause the University significant difficulty or expense when considered in relation to the size, financial resources, nature, or structure of the University's operations, leave will not be granted. See Utah Code § 53H-3-404 (4).

In accordance with Utah Code Section 63A-17-904, leave approved for an employee for holding any partisan or full-time nonpartisan political office will be without pay for any time when the employee receives monetary compensation for service in the political office.

#### 3.1.2 Approving leave for voting.

The immediate supervisor of an employee who requests leave to cast a ballot on election day shall approve up to two (2) hours of leave during regular work hours while the polls are open to allow the employee to vote. The supervisor may specify the hours in which the employee may be absent but the supervisor must grant the employee's request if the employee requests the leave at the beginning or end of the work shift. Leave is not required to be granted if the employee is not scheduled to work for three or more hours while polls are officially open. See Utah Code § 20A-3a-105.

### 3.2 University Employees

#### 3.2.1 General.

An employee must communicate with the employee's supervisor about any campaign activity, duties of public office, or other political activities that may interfere with the employee's regular duties.

### 3.2.2 Holding or running for public office.

An employee who files as a candidate for an elective public office must notify the employee's department head or immediate supervisor in writing. The employee must forward a copy of the written notice to the appropriate Dean or Vice President, the Vice President of Government and External Affairs, and the President.

If the candidacy, campaign activities, or office responsibilities, if elected, require substantial time away from the employee's duties during work hours, the employee must arrange for approved leave with the employee's supervisor and the appropriate Dean or Vice President. Approved leave may include accrued vacation leave, leave without pay, or reducing the employee's hours to part-time while running for or holding public office.

### 3.2.3 Voting.

An employee whose work schedule prevents the employee from casting a ballot in a state or national election must request leave to vote during work hours from the employee's direct supervisor before election day.

## 2107.4 REFERENCES

- [Utah Code Ann. § 20A-3a-105](#)
- [Utah Code Ann. § 53H-3-404](#)
- [Utah Code Ann. § 63A-17-904](#)
- [Utah Code Ann. Title 67, Chapter 16, Utah Public Officers' and Employees' Ethics Act](#)

## 2107.5 RELATED USU POLICIES

- [USU Policy 2105: Free Expression and Assembly](#)
- [USU Policy 2106: Political Activity](#)
- [USU Policy 2301: Individual Conflicts of Interest](#)

## 2107.6 DEFINITIONS

### 6.1 Campaigning

Participating in a political campaign, including by soliciting votes for the individual or on behalf of another individual, managing a political campaign, working for a political campaign as an employee or volunteer, soliciting campaign contributions, or directing group action on behalf of a political candidate or for or against a political issue.

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**Information below is not included as part of the contents of the official policy.** It is provided only as a convenience for readers/users and may be changed at any time by persons authorized by the president.

## RESOURCES

### Contacts

- [Vice President for Government and External Affairs, Devin Wiser](#)

## POLICY HISTORY

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