PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVE
THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING
1-2009-1

Revised April 18, 2016

SUBJECT: University Government Relations

1. **Purpose.** To coordinate university efforts regarding government relations and clarify University employees’ rights to free expression. The directives below ensure these rights while enabling Board of Trustees and the President to ensure that the University’s institutional interests are communicated to policymakers in a manner consistent with institutional priorities, goals, and objectives.

2. **Who can speak on behalf of the University.** As a public institution, only the Board of Trustees and the President of the University, or the President’s designees as described below, can speak on behalf of the University. Only the Trustees and the President have the authority to make or approve requests directed to, oppose actions by, or make recommendations to members of Congress, federal Executive Branch Agencies, the Governor, other elected officials of the State of Wyoming, State Executive Branch Agencies, the Wyoming Legislature, committees thereof, members thereof, and staff of any of the foregoing. The President’s designee for all University matters is the Vice President for Governmental and Community Affairs. Each Vice President, the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, and the Special Advisor for External Relations are the President’s designees for subject matter within their respective areas. Nothing in this directive precludes the President from designating additional individuals to speak on behalf of the University on an ongoing basis.

3. **Personal communications by University personnel.** As citizens of Wyoming and as members of the University community, University employees enjoy the right of freedom of expression. The employee may freely consult and communicate with members of Congress, members of the Wyoming State Legislature, federal and state agencies and other federal and state authorities, including elected officials, as long as the employee indicates that the employee’s views are his or her own private views or considered professional views and do not represent, imply representation of, or are authorized by the University. Personal letters should not appear on University letterhead. Equipment or resources of the University, including University email accounts, should not be used for such personal communication, since this may be construed to imply that the communication has been approved by or represents an official position of the University. University titles should not be used when signing personal letters; however, the writer may identify the writer’s job title in the text of a letter if this information is relevant to the communication.

4. **Requests from state and federal elected officials and agencies.** University employees have a responsibility to respond to requests from state and federal elected officials and agencies for factual, non-partisan information. Such requests may involve informational visits to University facilities by elected officials or their staff. University employees shall advise their supervisors of such requests, and the supervisors shall advise both the Vice President for their division and one of the President’s designees, as described in Section 2. The President’s designee may determine that it is necessary to assume responsibility for coordinating the institution’s response to the inquiry.

5. **Messages of support or opposition for state legislative, congressional or agency action.** University units often become aware of possible federal or state action of concern to the unit’s programs. This includes being advised by professional organizations and other sources to take action, typically in the form of messages of support or opposition, for state legislative, congressional
or agency action regarding a matter that relates to the unit’s mission. Good intentions notwithstanding, employees must take care not to assume that the perceived interests of their disciplines or professional organizations coincide with the best interests of the University. If the employee believes that an institutional stance or action is warranted, the unit’s director shall contact one of the President’s designees to determine whether, and if so, how, the University’s position will be communicated.

6. **Meetings of academic or professional organizations.** University employees often attend meetings of academic or professional organizations in venues, such as the state capital or Washington, DC, where part of the meeting agenda includes visits with government officials, such as members of the congressional delegation of each attendee’s state. The meetings typically involve providing program information to the delegation, as distinct from advocating specific positions or actions. These meetings are expected and acceptable. UW employees attending such meetings shall advise one of the President’s designees prior to the employee attending such a meeting.

Approved

Richard C. McGinity
University President

4/27/16

Date

Source:
Originally approved April 2, 2010