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To: [David M. Bagley](#); [Chad R. Baldwin](#); [Nycole Rae Courtney](#); [Adrienne B Freng](#); [Robert W. Godby](#); [Rochelle Anne Green](#); [Kelsey Kyne](#); [Long Lee](#); [Bob Link](#); [RoseMarie London](#); [Steven C. Lupien](#); [Whit Madere](#); [Jamie Markus](#); [Martha McCaughey](#); [Brandon McElroy](#); [ASUW President](#); [Peter William Moran](#); [Farrell Rapp](#); [Alan R. Romero](#); [Derek \(Kines. & Health\) Smith](#); [Taylor Stuemky](#); [Mike Smith](#); [Scott Turpen](#); [John D Stark](#); [Amanda Christine DeDiego](#); [Daniel A Dale](#); [Brett Befus](#); [Cass Kvenild](#); [Jenna Min Shim](#); [Julie Andersen Hill](#); [Patrick C. Hardigan](#); [Alex Kean](#); [Thomas K. Burman](#); [Andara Jessie Frasier](#)
Cc: [Medina, Paula](#)
Subject: Compliance with 2025 Legislative Action Work Session - Message re: HB 147 and Prohibition of Institutional Discrimination
Date: Monday, August 18, 2025 12:27:00 PM
Attachments: [Welcome Environment Comms Guidance_Final.pdf](#)

Dear members of the *Compliance with 2025 Legislative Action* Working Group,

As stated previously, one goal of the committee is to be more transparent and effective in communication with University stakeholders. You have previously sent three messages to your stakeholders:

- Repeal Gun Free Zones and Preemption Amendments on May 15, 2025
- International faculty, staff, and student support on June 19, 2025
- 2025 laws enacted by the Wyoming legislature with immediate impact on University operations on June 27, 2025

You can find links to these messages [here](#).

We ask that you share this one last email with your constituents, including faculty/staff in the units you represent (please work with your supervisors or chairs as needed to distribute this message).

HB 147 and Prohibition of Institutional Discrimination

The University and its leadership remain committed to maintaining an environment that is welcoming and supports the success of all students, faculty, and staff (see attached for *Guidance for UW Employees in Communicating a Welcoming Environment*). Wyoming is the Equality State, and the University of Wyoming is the State's only land-grant and flagship University. We will continue to uphold our land-grant mission, the Wyoming constitution, and the U.S. Constitution's First and Fourteenth Amendments.

In addition to the University's core missions of teaching, research, outreach, and service, we want to reaffirm the University's principal values of:

- Being open and welcoming to all
- Supporting and treating everyone fairly and respectfully
- Political neutrality as an institution
- Merit-based hiring and grading

[HB 147](#), signed into law by Governor Gordon and effective July 1, 2025, prohibits any program, activity, or policy that promotes differential or preferential treatment of individuals based on race, color, religion, sex, ethnicity, or national origin. The legislation has implications for instructional practices and for non-instructional programs on campus (see details below). Fortunately, for instructional practices, UW has had a directive related to Academic Freedom since 1963 that aligns

with HB 147 (see [UW Regulation 2-15](#)) and a 2023 Free Expression, Intellectual Freedom, and Constructive Dialogue [Initiative](#). UW Regulation 2-15 protects free and open learning and research, including faculty and student rights and responsibilities in the classroom. Our existing practices line up well with HB 147's requirements because UW already avoids punishing faculty for legitimate teaching, research, or scholarly expression, and UW already forbids discrimination against students.

To assist with education and compliance, the Office of Academic Affairs has prepared a presentation on *Academic Freedom and Wyoming State Law: Education v. Promotion of Institutional Discrimination*, which can be found [here](#). This presentation notes that Academic Personnel have the freedom to teach and discuss their subject in the classroom, including material reflecting scholarly standards, understandings, and expertise, but they also have the important responsibility to preserve a climate of ongoing inquiry where ideas can be openly shared and rigorously examined by all.

The presentation also states that responsibilities of academic personnel include:

- Ensuring that their teaching is consistent with the standards of their discipline;
- Being careful not to persistently introduce material that has no relation to the subject being taught; and
- Respecting students' liberty to engage critically and express reasoned dissent, while still holding students accountable for mastering the course content.

During fall 2025, the President's Office, the Provost's Office, and the Faculty Senate will be working collaboratively on a process safeguarding faculty and student rights in the classroom, which will be shared with university constituents for review and feedback. Additionally, the Provost's Office plans to provide resources for academic personnel, including suggested syllabus language and how to handle controversial speech in the classroom. Check [here](#) for updates. Additionally, Instructor FAQs can be found [here](#) and Student FAQs can be found [here](#).

As part of the University of Wyoming's implementation of [HB 147 Prohibition of Institutional Discrimination](#), all instructional faculty are required to complete a training module developed by Academic Affairs.

To access the training, please log into WyoCloud and navigate to: **My Profile > Learning and Development > My Learning** (You may also refer to the [Navigating WyoCloud Learning ORG](#) for step-by-step instructions). Faculty who received this message and completed the training over the summer do not need to retake it; it remains available in your WyoCloud Learning account for reference. Deadline to complete the training is **August 30, 2025**.

More specific information related to HB 147 can be found below.

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[UW's Free Expression, Intellectual Freedom, and Constructive Dialogue Initiative](#)

A Working Group on Freedom of Expression, Intellectual Freedom, and Constructive Dialogue at the University of Wyoming was charged on December 5, 2022, by President Ed Seidel to "articulate and refine our principles of freedom of expression and to find practical ways to operationalize respectful

discourse on campus.” The Working Group, made up of students, staff, faculty, administrators, and a trustee, examined the state’s history, consulted with internal and external stakeholders, and discussed a number of events, statements, and reports at other institutions. The resulting Statement of Principles reflects both Wyoming’s distinct heritage of neighborliness, equality, and respect and the University of Wyoming’s longstanding aspiration of inclusion and individual rights in the discovery and dissemination of knowledge.

As UW’s Martha McCaughey, Director of the Free Expression, Intellectual Freedom, and Constructive Dialogue Initiative, points out, “Our faculty know the difference between pushing ideologies and engaging in inquiry. UW has for years championed [critical and creative thinking](#), helping students become curious, fair-minded, evidence-based, complexity-embracing, no-bull-accepting independent thinkers. Some classes might examine controversial topics, but all courses are rooted in real-deal, rigorous, Research 1-worthy scholarship.” See [At Wyoming, We’re Not Just Holding the Reins for Show — The James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal](#)

Diversity, equity, or inclusion programs, activities, policies, and training

Below is a brief timeline related to diversity, equity, and inclusion matters:

- **Early 2024:** During the 2024 Wyoming Legislative budget session, lawmakers adopted footnote 12 to section 0.67 [HB0001 House Enrolled Act 50](#), prohibiting funds from this appropriation to be expended on the office of diversity, equity, and inclusion at the University of Wyoming and any diversity, equity, or inclusion programs, activities or functions.
- **March 2024:** President Seidel charged the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Review Working Group to review UW’s DEI activities and provide suggestions on which programs, activities, and functions should be continued, modified or discontinued.
- **March 2024:** Governor Gordon line-item vetoed the “programs, activities, or functions” portion of the footnote.
- **April 2024:** The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Review Working group submitted its [report](#) to President Seidel.
- **May 2024:** The University of Wyoming Board of Trustees [adopted](#) the Equal Opportunity and Prohibited Efforts Statement.
- **July 2024:** The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion was closed and key activities transitioned.
- **August 2024:** Brandon McElroy appointed Vice Provost for Access & Engagement through August 2025.
- **October 2024:** Access & Engagement Working Group Charged by President Seidel to support Vice Provost McElroy in aligning campus activities with law and policy.
- **March 2025:** UW paused activities that are exclusionary or preferential in name only (even if open to all) related to sex or race.
- **June 2025:** [Standard Administrative Policy \(SAP\) on Equal Opportunity, Allowable Efforts and Prohibited Functions, and Institutional Discrimination](#) was implemented.
- **July 2025:** Wyoming law [HB147 - Prohibition of institutional discrimination](#), which details prohibited practices by state governmental agencies based on a person’s race, color, religion, sex, ethnicity or national origin, became effective.

The University has worked with internal units to ensure compliance with this new law, including:

- Reviewing admissions practices
- Sunsetting diversity, equity, and inclusion advisory councils, tasks forces, and committees
- Discontinuing identity-based groups that were exclusionary
- Pausing identity-based groups (based on sex and race) in name only (even if open to all) until further guidance is received from the U.S. Department of Justice or the Office for Civil Rights
- Modifying scholarships, awards, and assistantships programs that have a preference related to sex or race (unless they are part of the University's Cowboy Commitment or Brown and Gold Commitment structure, where the scholarships are awarded based on non-discriminatory criteria such as grades, test scores, etc.)
- Reviewing University trainings for adherence to the new law
- Removing preferential goals from the University's strategic plan
- Halting individual unit mandates for search committees to advance candidate pools based on protected class or without a competitive process
- Halting individual unit requests for diversity or loyalty statements from candidates
- Removing the evaluation of an employee's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion the staff annual performance evaluation

The University has also enhanced its student success efforts by ensuring all students are offered services related to emotional and mental health, health and wellness, food and nutrition, academics and tutoring, activities and interest, housing and finances, and post-graduation and career services. This effort includes modifying its Student Organization structure and processes to allow student groups to continue to associate with any group they choose (more to come on this modification soon).

If you have questions about what is allowable and what is specifically prohibited, you can find the University's Standard Administrative Policy and Procedure (SAP): *Equal Opportunity, Allowable Efforts and Prohibited Functions, and Institutional Discrimination* [here](#). For example, academic freedom is protected and certain trainings are still allowable, while requesting a diversity statement from potential candidates is not.

Additional questions about the implementation and enforcement of the new law can be directed to the Access and Engagement Committee found here: [Contact Access and Engagement at UWyo](#)

- You can access and share with students and employees a one-minute micro-course focusing on rights and responsibilities in the classroom [here](#).
- You can find a training on how the First Amendment applies to students, staff, and faculty [here](#).

As always, we appreciate your participation in the committee and your commitment to a culture of communication.

Thank you!

Mike Smith and Tara Evans



Guidance for UW Employees in Communicating a Welcoming Environment



Each and every member of the University community plays an important role in fulfilling our mission to unlock the extraordinary in every person through education, research, innovation, engagement and service. For this reason, the University of Wyoming is committed to maintaining an environment that is welcoming and supports the success of all students, faculty and staff.

Part of fulfilling this commitment includes helping employees understand how to incorporate equal opportunity ideas into their communications. President Seidel's Access & Engagement Working Group has developed this guidance document to support employees throughout the university to infuse this commitment through official communications. It's important to note that the guidance provided in this document will not apply in totality to every situation. It is also important to recognize that this guidance is just that, a set of suggestions that we believe would generally be helpful to achieving success in communications and ultimately in UW's mission.

Basic Guidance

In general communication should be:

- Genuine and context appropriate with transparency and honesty.
- Welcoming and supportive.
- Tailored to an audience, treating them with respect, valuing them and their contributions as members of the UW community.
- Delivered at an appropriate time through an appropriate medium.
- Open to feedback whenever possible.
- Constructed with the recognition that all UW communications are public records.
- Cognizant of UW's commitment to inclusive decision making and shared governance through [UW Regulation 1-4](#).

Strategies by Medium

Strategy	Communication Medium
Begin and/or end communication with a positive note/news, affirmation that all are welcome, and/or gratitude for everyone's contributions to unit or UW	Mass Email, Verbal & Web
Include mention of UW resources related to the content of the communication	Mass Email, Verbal, Social Media & Web
Use images that reflect the audience of the communication	Social Media, Print, Video & Web
For events and announcements, affirm that the subject is open to all of UW community	Mass Email, Verbal, Social Media & Web
Introduce full titles before using an acronym	Mass Email, Social Media & Web

Social Media Comment Moderation

Social media serves an important role in offering communication to target audiences and receiving engagements back from that audience. Here are some tips for managing social media comments:

- If the comment is positive, like it or even respond with a positive note back to encourage more positive engagement.
- If a comment is asking a genuine question, do your best to respond with the knowledge that you have and link to UW resources when possible.
- If a comment is spam or scam from a bot account, this can be removed or hidden.
- If a comment contains speech that is unprotected by the First Amendment, it may also be removed or hidden. Unprotected speech includes incitement, true threats, fighting words, obscenity, defamation, fraud and perjury, and speech integral to criminal conduct. Before removing any comments that may contain unprotected speech, please reach out to digital@uwyo.edu to discuss.

Further Guidance

When possible or meaningful communication can include:

- Links to UW policies to continue education about UW institutional functioning
- Specific mention of the intended audience
- Where to go for further support