

# Presidential Statements

Universities play a unique role in the discovery, expansion, and dissemination of knowledge by fostering scientific exploration, free inquiry, and a robust exchange of ideas. Free speech is the cornerstone of this pursuit of knowledge and safeguarding an open environment for free expression is paramount to Utah State University fulfilling its mission and [principles of community](#).

Against this backdrop, I wish to provide transparency about how and when I, as president, will use the university's voice and speak on behalf of Utah State University. As president of Utah State University, I am often asked to make a statement or assert a position on behalf of the university in response to current social and political events. But as a community of diverse backgrounds, life experiences, identities, and viewpoints, there is not one collective community perspective.

Consequently, when determining whether the university should take an official position or issue a statement regarding current events, I rely on our university mission and [principles of community](#) as a guide and reserve the university's voice for advocating for or against policies, actions, and events that endanger our institution's ability to fulfill its land-grant promise of research, teaching, and service. On all other matters, the university as an institution should and will remain neutral.

## Position of Neutrality

As a modern land-grant university, Utah State University's role is to serve as a catalyst for discourse and engagement that enhances our communities. This is best achieved when the institution maintains a position of neutrality, and when I, as president, facilitate an open environment where faculty and students are empowered to explore their own beliefs, opinions, and personal values and are encouraged to engage in conversations that transcend differences. As stated persuasively by the University of Chicago [Kalven Report](#).

The neutrality of the university as an institution arises . . . not from a lack of courage nor out of indifference and insensitivity. It arises out of respect for free inquiry and the obligation to cherish a diversity of viewpoints. [T]his neutrality as an institution has its complement in the fullest freedom for its faculty and students as individuals to participate in political action and social protest. It finds its complement, too, in the obligation of the university to provide a forum for the most searching and candid discussion of public issues.

## University's Role During Social and Political Events

While maintaining a position of neutrality and reserving the university's voice, Utah State University will remain steadfast in our commitment to training the next generation of ethical leaders, nurturing intellectual growth and the expansion of knowledge, respecting the fundamental value of [freedom of speech](#), and encouraging a diversity of perspectives. We will also remain steadfast in our commitment to creating a caring community. When students or employees are directly affected by social and political events, university leaders will identify actions we can take to support affected individuals and communities. We will lean into individualized communication and aid those in need and we will ask the same of all members of our community.

## Additional Resources:

- [Free Speech at USU](#)

- [USU's Principles of Community](#)
- [USHE Resolution on Free Speech](#)