

## R251, Campus Speakers<sup>1</sup>

**R251-1 Purpose:** To provide guidelines for Utah System of Higher Education (“USHE”) institutions’ policy and procedures related to campus speakers.

### R251-2 References

- 2.1 [Utah Code § 53H-3-303](#), Duties and Responsibilities of the President
- 2.2 [Utah Code § 53H-1-504](#), Prohibited Discriminatory Practices
- 2.3 [Utah Code Title 53H, Chapter 3, Part 9](#), Enforcement of Regulations at Institutions
- 2.4 [Utah Code Title 76, Chapter 8, Part 7](#), Offenses Against the Administration of Government
- 2.5 [Board Policy R120](#), Board of Higher Education Bylaws

### R251-3 Campus Speakers

**3.1. Institution Campus Speaker Policy:** The Utah Board of Higher Education is committed that campus speakers and others invited by members of the campus community may exercise their constitutionally protected rights of free expression, speech, assembly, and worship. USHE institutions shall establish policies, practices, or procedures related to campus speakers that include the following minimum principles:

**3.1.1.** Part of an institution’s role is to provide the campus community with a marketplace of ideas. USHE institutions shall introduce the campus community to diverse viewpoints, including inviting speakers, sponsoring symposiums and lectures, or presenting other opportunities to hear differing perspectives and ideas.

**3.1.1.1.** Institutions shall avoid rescinding invitations to speakers or canceling events solely on the basis that groups oppose the viewpoints being expressed. Institutions may cancel a speaker if keeping the speaker is likely to cause a substantial disruption to university operations or threaten safety.

**3.1.2.** Invited campus speakers have the right to engage in free expression at approved events or venues on campus, free from substantial disruption.

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<sup>1</sup>Adopted June 17, 1970; amended September 2, 1999; and May 14, 2026.

**3.1.2.1.** Institutions shall adopt policies or procedures outlining the actions the institution will take in the event of a substantial disruption related to a campus speaker and the relevant disciplinary policy for individuals who engage in the substantial disruption or incitement of violence during events.

**3.1.3.** An institution may place restrictions on the time, place, and manner of expressive activity conducted on its property or within its operations provided such restrictions are not based on the content or viewpoint of the expression and are designed to serve legitimate operational, safety, or business interests.

**3.1.4.** Policies shall align with the Utah Board of Higher Education’s [Resolution Establishing Expectations for Implementing Principles of Free Expression on Campus](#).

**3.1.5.** The prohibitions articulated in [Utah Code section 53H-1-504](#) do not apply to a presentation or instruction by a guest lecturer in an academic course or a speaker invited by an administrative unit of the institution, faculty member or organization, staff member or organization, or student club or organization to speak virtually or in person.

**3.1.6.** All persons on campus, including but not limited to campus speakers, are subject to the law. Those who violate the law while on campus are subject to prosecution, as are any other citizens. It is the obligation of each USHE institution to review and establish its own policies, rules of conduct, and methods of enforcement of such rules, as well as state laws, within the guidelines established in this policy.

#### **R251-4 Commencement Speakers**

**4.1.** Commencement ceremonies are intended to be celebratory and focused on honoring student achievement.

**4.2.** Commencement speakers play a vital role in inspiring graduates, offering wisdom, and marking the transition from a student’s academic life to a professional career.

**4.3.** USHE institutions shall select commencement speakers based on the individual’s achievements in an academic field, their connection to the institution’s mission and role, the ability to deliver an inspirational message to students, and relevance to the graduating

student body. Speaker selection shall also be guided by the ability of a proposed speaker to meet the objectives outlined in subsections 4.1 and 4.2.

- 4.4. The institution's president may present a proposed commencement speaker to the Board of Trustees, and the institution may not proceed with a commencement speaker absent Trustee approval.

## **R251-5 Institutional Policies**

- 5.1 **USHE Institution Policy Implementation:** USHE institution policies regarding campus speakers shall be adopted by the president and approved by the institution's Board of Trustees.