



# VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH

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## THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

### **Quick Guide for U of U Leaders & Researchers:**

*Empowering you to speak confidently – and responsibly – about the impact of research at the U.*

Updated June 2025

## **WHY THIS GUIDE MATTERS**

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As a leader or researcher at the University of Utah, your voice matters. Whether you're speaking to policymakers, the media, collaborators, or the public, this guide will help you highlight the value of university-based research in ways that are powerful, responsible, and aligned with university policy.

In today's climate, research funding is under scrutiny—and your ability to speak clearly about its importance is more critical than ever.

## **WHAT YOU CAN SAY**

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You are encouraged to speak about:

- Your research and its real-world impact—on people, communities, and industries.
- The benefits of public research funding in driving discoveries in health, national security, climate, technology, and the economy.
- The positive impacts of research on Utah and the Mountain West.
- The University of Utah's leadership in solving real-world problems through research and innovation.

- The importance of sustained investment in science and higher education to ensure future breakthroughs.

*Example: Research at the U improves lives across Utah and beyond—from helping premature infants survive, to advancing clean energy and national defense technologies.*

*Example: Our labs are supported by competitive, peer-reviewed funding that fuels discovery and prepares the next generation of scientists and innovators.*

## CONSIDERATIONS WHEN SPEAKING PUBLICLY

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University researchers and leaders are powerful messengers for the value of science—but it's important to speak in ways that reflect both our public mission and our responsibilities as state employees.

Here are key considerations to keep in mind when speaking externally (in interviews, public panels, op-eds, etc.):

- You can speak about your research, its public benefit, and the importance of sustained support for science.
- You should not use your university title or role to endorse or oppose specific legislation, ballot initiatives, or political candidates.

## IF YOU'RE ASKED ABOUT RESEARCH FUNDING CUTS

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It's possible you may be asked about state or federal research funding reductions, especially during public talks, interviews, or community conversations. These are sensitive topics, and your words carry weight. Here's how to respond effectively and appropriately:

What You Can Say:

- That the U—like other research universities—is watching developments closely.
- That funding cuts could slow progress in health, technology, national defense, and economic development.
- That continued investment helps keep Utah competitive and supports real-world outcomes.

You should not use your university title or role to speculate on the causes of funding cuts, budget decisions, or the motivations behind them—or to comment on elected officials, agencies, or political groups. Our job is to show how research improves lives. That message matters even more when funding is at risk.

## REQUIRED ANNUAL TRAINING: THE POWER OF SPEECH

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In accordance with Utah House Bill 261 (2024) and Utah Code Section 53B-1-118(3)(c), all university employees must complete annual training on the separation of personal political advocacy from institutional speech.

- Takes about 7 minutes
- Due: Tuesday, July 1, 2025
- Questions? Contact [training@utah.edu](mailto:training@utah.edu)
- Additional Resource: [Academic Freedom & Speech](#)

## IF YOU'RE SPEAKING PUBLICLY OR TO THE MEDIA

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To amplify impact while maintaining alignment with university policy:

- Keep it focused on facts related to science, outcomes, and people impacted.
- Share real examples—clinical trials, startups, student researchers, community partnerships.
- Avoid policy commentary unless directly trained or authorized to do so.
- Refer policy-related media inquiries to University Marketing & Communications (UMC) or the VPR office.
- Include this disclaimer when appropriate: I'm speaking from my perspective as a researcher, not on behalf of the University.

### **Need Help Preparing for a Public Opportunity?**

Media training, message coaching, and interview preparation to help you:

- Refine your message for diverse audiences
- Prepare for live or recorded interviews
- Stay on message while responding authentically
- Handle tough questions with clarity and confidence

Contact Rebecca Walsh ([Rebecca.Walsh@utah.edu](mailto:Rebecca.Walsh@utah.edu)) or Heather King ([Heather.King@utah.edu](mailto:Heather.King@utah.edu)) to schedule media coaching or request materials.

# KEY RESEARCH MESSAGING FOR UTAH & BEYOND

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Use these university-aligned talking points to frame your impact:

## **The Work of Research: Real-World Impact**

Research at the U doesn't stay in the lab. It improves lives—enhancing health, advancing technologies, and informing policy.

## **Research for Utah**

Our research benefits every region of the state—from rural clinics to aerospace corridors.

## **Interdisciplinary Breakthroughs**

We're breaking silos and connecting ideas through seed funding, hubs, and collaborative teams.

## **Economic Growth & Commercialization**

University research drives new companies, creates jobs, and attracts investment.

## **Advancing Health & Well-being**

Through medical research and innovation, we address pressing health challenges, improving care across Utah and beyond.

## **Alignment with State & National Priorities**

We support Utah's industries—biotech, defense, energy—while advancing national needs in AI, cybersecurity, and quantum tech.

## **Workforce & Education**

Research is how we train tomorrow's scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs—not just for jobs, but to create them.