

UT SOUTHWESTERN POLICY HANDBOOK

ADM-302 POLITICAL ACTIVITY AND COMMUNICATION WITH PUBLIC OFFICIALS OR GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

CHAPTER 2: ADMINISTRATION

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ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Responsible Office: Office for Government Affairs and Policy
Executive Sponsor: President
Effective Date: 01/31/1998
Last Updated: 04/16/2021
Contact: policyoffice@utsouthwestern.edu

POLICY LINK

To ensure appropriate access when sharing or linking to this policy, *copy and paste* this URL:

<https://secure.compliance360.com/ext/xlzNqX9HpKw=>

POLICY RATIONALE AND TEXT

The UT Southwestern Medical Center (UT Southwestern) mission of education, research, and patient care is supported by a diverse faculty, staff, and student body who may have occasion to participate in political activities or interact with public officials and government agencies. This policy will outline the guidelines and requirements for UT Southwestern administration, faculty, staff, and students to follow when participating in political activities as private citizens or when communicating with governmental representatives in their role at UT Southwestern or for their area of expertise.

Prohibition of Political Aid and Legislative Influence

As a state institution, UT Southwestern must comply with all Texas laws regarding political activities by public entities and individuals. In accordance with such laws, UT Southwestern administration, faculty, staff, students, and individuals affiliated with UT Southwestern are strictly prohibited from using state funds, state property, or other UT Southwestern resources, including but not limited to time, funds, material, supplies, equipment, credit cards, vehicles, and information to influence the outcome of any election, to promote the passage or defeat of any legislative measure, or to participate in any political activity or campaign.

Incidental use of UT Southwestern resources to engage in political activity is not permissible. (See [ETH-101 UT Southwestern Ethics Policy](#).)

Political Activity or Communication as Private Citizens

Many opportunities present themselves for members of the UT Southwestern administration, faculty, staff, and students, **as private citizens**, to testify before government bodies or to write letters of opinion to public officials and agencies. This policy

is not intended to limit or proscribe the right of individuals associated with UT Southwestern to voice their personal opinions; indeed, it is desirable and proper for members of the UT Southwestern community to be engaged citizens.

It is UT Southwestern policy that UT Southwestern administration, faculty, staff, or student body who are communicating personal opinions, testifying before government bodies, or participating in lobbying or other political activities as private citizens, must do so on their own time and without using any UT Southwestern resources, stationery, email, titles, or any UT Southwestern logo or logomark. When members of the UT Southwestern administration, faculty, staff, or student body are communicating personal opinions, testifying before government bodies, or participating in lobbying or other political activities as private citizens, it is essential that individuals avoid giving the impression that they are speaking for UT Southwestern. If individuals wish to disclose an affiliation with UT Southwestern, they must first obtain the approval of the Office for Government Affairs and Policy for communications with governmental entities, and the communication must clearly indicate that it is a personal opinion and is not being made on behalf of UT Southwestern.

Additional information is provided in [EMP-263 Jury Service and Other Court Duties](#). For guidance about testifying as an expert witness, please also see [EMP-158 Outside Activities and Conflict of Commitment](#).

Communication with Public Officials or Government Agencies

To ensure that appropriate, consistent, and accurate official information about UT Southwestern is consistently conveyed to public officials and government agencies, the President has designated, except for legal matters, the Office of the Vice President for Government Affairs and Policy as the primary source of interaction with public officials and government agencies.

Communication Related to UT Southwestern Role or Expertise

Many contacts and communications with governmental representatives are unrelated either to political, legislative, or rulemaking processes or to UT Southwestern's overall interests and priorities and thus are properly within the purview of individual faculty members or operating units. Examples include physician-patient relationships, contracts, grant-related issues, regulatory, or legal matters. There is no intent in this policy to restrict or hamper these beneficial working relationships that promote UT Southwestern's mission.

However, to ensure that all contacts or relationships with public officials or agencies are compliant with state and federal law and with UT System and UT Southwestern policies, it is UT Southwestern policy that members of the UT Southwestern administration, faculty, staff, or student body should notify the Office of the Vice President for Government Affairs and Policy of any consultative or advisory activities with public officials or government agencies.

If members of the UT Southwestern administration, faculty, staff, or student body wish to contact a legislative office, public official, or public agency regarding any UT Southwestern program or activity, before any contact is made, they must inform the Office for Government Affairs and Policy and be approved by that Office, which will consult with the Office of the President as appropriate.

Any member of the UT Southwestern administration, faculty, staff, or student body who is asked by a public official or government agency to provide institutional information or sworn testimony related to their role at UT Southwestern should immediately inform the Office of the Vice President for Government Affairs and Policy, which will coordinate and oversee all responses to such requests, in consultation with the Office of the President as appropriate.

Travel to and Testimony in Washington, D.C.

Regardless of the funding source, individuals invited to Washington, D.C., to testify before a congressional committee or agency with rule-making authority must provide an advance copy of the proposed testimony to the Office of the Vice President for Government Affairs and Policy. The Office for Government Affairs and Policy will review the proposed testimony and consult with the Office of the President as appropriate.

Any state-funded travel to Washington, D.C., that is undertaken for the purpose of a congressional or general agency visit, or for the purpose of testifying before a congressional committee or agency with rule-making authority must be reported to the

Office of the Vice President for Government Affairs and Policy as soon as the invitation to testify is received and must also be reported to the Texas Office of State-Federal Relations (OSFR), using the form provided on the OSFR website:

https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/general/State_Funded_Travel_To_DC_Form_2015.pdf

Texas Public Information Act

Requests for institutional information that are submitted through the Texas Public Information Act must be requested in accordance with [ADM-303 Requests for Public Information \(Texas Public Information Act\)](#).

SCOPE

This policy applies to all UT Southwestern employees, including but not limited to administrative officers, faculty and staff members, clinical residents and fellows, and postdoctoral scholars appointed to academic training positions. It also applies to UT Southwestern students. This policy does not apply to physician-patient relationships, contracts, grant-related issues, regulatory, or legal matters.

RELATED STATUTES, POLICIES, OR STANDARDS

Texas Government Code 751:001, 002, 023

Texas Government Code Title 5, Subtitle A, Chapter 556

Texas Senate Bill 1, General Appropriations Act, Article IX, Section 6.12(c)

UT System Board of Regents' *Rules and Regulations*, Rule 30103: Standards of Conduct

UT System Board of Regents' *Rules and Regulations*, Rule 30104: Conflict of Interest, Conflict of Commitment, and Outside Activities

[ADM-301 Communication with the Media](#)

[ADM-303 Requests for Public Information \(Texas Public Information Act\)](#)

[EMP-158 Outside Activities and Conflict of Commitment](#)

[EMP-263 Jury Service and Other Court Duties](#)

[ETH-101 UT Southwestern Ethics Policy](#)

[ETH-106 Personal Use of UT Southwestern Resources](#)

[FSS-102 Solicitation](#)

CONTACTS/FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Office of the Vice President for Government Affairs and Policy 214-648-3684

Office of the President 214-648-2508

POLICY HISTORY

April 16, 2021: Completed scheduled review; added provisions from and subsequently deleted ETH-110 Prohibition Against Political Aid and Legislative Influence.

June 5, 2019: Added provision that the Office of Office of the Vice President for Government Affairs and Policy should be notified of consultative or advisory activities with public officials or government agencies.

August 8, 2018: Updated process in section covering Travel to and Testimony in Washington, D.C.

May 29, 2015: Reviewed, revised, and published as ADM-302 Communication with Public Officials and Government Agencies.

January 1998: Published as 2.10.1 Official External Communications and 2.10.2 Faculty and Staff Communication of Opinion to Lay Publications and Public Officials.