

Center for Civic Excellence at Utah State University

2025 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: John D. Johnson

House Sponsor: Karianne Lisonbee

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**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**

This bill establishes the Center for Civic Excellence at Utah State University (center).

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This bill:

- defines terms;
- establishes the center as a pilot program;
- provides the purposes, curricular focus, responsibilities, authority, and administration of the center;
- requires a report to the Utah Board of Higher Education to consider system-wide changes to general education; and
- establishes a sunset date for the center.

**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

None

**Other Special Clauses:**

None

**Utah Code Sections Affected:**

AMENDS:

**63I-1-253**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Third Special Session, Chapter 5

ENACTS:

**53B-18-1901**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

**53B-18-1902**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

**53B-18-1903**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

**53B-18-1904**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

**53B-18-1905**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

28 **53B-18-1906**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

29 **53B-18-1907**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

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31 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

32 Section 1. Section **53B-18-1901** is enacted to read:

33 **Part 19. Center for Civic Excellence**

34 **53B-18-1901 . Definitions.**

35 As used in this part:

36 (1) "Center" means the Center for Civic Excellence established in Section 53B-18-1902.

37 (2) "Program" means the general education program at Utah State University.

38 Section 2. Section **53B-18-1902** is enacted to read:

39 **53B-18-1902 . Center for Civic Excellence establishment -- Purpose.**

40 There is established the Center for Civic Excellence as a pilot program and an  
41 administrative unit in the Office of the Provost at Utah State University to:

42 (1) provide general education for all Utah State University students;

43 (2) replace the existing distribution model of general education with a coherent curriculum  
44 with a foundation of the core values, principles, and purposes described in Section  
45 53B-18-1906; and

46 (3) develop a curriculum grounded in the following mission:

47 (a) engaging students in civil and rigorous intellectual inquiry, across ideological  
48 differences, with a commitment to intellectual freedom in the pursuit of truth;

49 (b) ensuring, through engagement with foundational primary texts representing "the best  
50 of what has been thought and said," that all graduates, regardless of the graduate's  
51 major, engage with the "big questions, great debates, and enduring ideas" that  
52 continue to shape society's self-understanding, the American experience, and the  
53 modern world; and

54 (c) cultivating students' intellectual and personal habits of mind to enable the students to  
55 contribute and thrive in the students' economic, social, political, and personal lives  
56 with a focus on civil discourse, critical thinking about enduring questions, wise  
57 decision-making, and durable skills.

58 Section 3. Section **53B-18-1903** is enacted to read:

59 **53B-18-1903 . Duties -- Authority.**

60 The Center for Civic Excellence shall:

61 (1) serve as the program home of general education at Utah State University;

- 62 (2)(a) govern faculty over all general education curriculum; and  
63 (b) establish a faculty curriculum committee to develop and review program outcomes  
64 and all courses;  
65 (3) develop and assess the program and all general education courses, ensuring alignment  
66 with the purposes and commitments described in Sections 53B-18-1902 and  
67 53B-18-1906;  
68 (4) appoint and evaluate all instructors who will teach general education courses at Utah  
69 State University; and  
70 (5) provide professional development for instructors teaching in the program to ensure  
71 fidelity to the program's purposes, values, and outcomes.

72 Section 4. Section **53B-18-1904** is enacted to read:

73 **53B-18-1904 . Leadership.**

- 74 (1)(a) The Office of the Provost shall house the center.  
75 (b) The provost shall appoint a vice-provost to:  
76 (i) lead the center; and  
77 (ii) report to the provost regarding the operation of the center and the general  
78 education program.  
79 (2) The vice-provost overseeing the center shall:  
80 (a) appoint faculty to the center's curriculum committee;  
81 (b) oversee the development and assessment of the general education program and the  
82 program's courses;  
83 (c) manage the recruitment of affiliate instructors from other academic units;  
84 (d) approve appointments of affiliate instructors who will teach for the center;  
85 (e) approve syllabi from affiliate instructors who will teach for the center;  
86 (f) oversee the development of performance expectations for affiliate faculty;  
87 (g) manage the evaluation of affiliate instructors; and  
88 (h) manage the review and approval of petitions for exceptions for general education  
89 requirements.

90 Section 5. Section **53B-18-1905** is enacted to read:

91 **53B-18-1905 . Faculty.**

- 92 (1) Only an instructor whom the vice-provost leading the center grants an appointment as  
93 an affiliate instructor in the center may teach general education courses at Utah State  
94 University.  
95 (2) In appointing an instructor under Subsection (1), the vice-provost leading the center

shall:

- (a) grant an at-will appointment on a two-year, renewable basis;
- (b) require the instructor to engage with all professional development the center mandates; and
- (c)(i) ensure the center annually evaluates the instructor on the instructor's teaching performance in the general education program; and
- (ii) deliver the performance evaluation to the faculty member, department head, and dean.

Section 6. Section **53B-18-1906** is enacted to read:

**53B-18-1906 . Curriculum.**

(1) The center shall:

- (a) govern the general education program and general education courses at Utah State University; and
- (b) ensure that:
  - (i) the general education program aligns with the general education program requirements described in board policy; and
  - (ii) there is general education transferability to and from Utah State University and other institutions within the Utah System of Higher Education.

(2) The center is founded on the following principles, values, and purposes:

- (a) a commitment to viewpoint diversity and civil discourse, ensuring that students understand opposing points of view and can contribute in the public square in civil and productive ways;
- (b) the development of program outcomes and courses that engage students in enduring questions of meaning, purpose, and value; and
- (c) the cultivation in students of the durable skills necessary to thrive in educational, social, political, economic, and personal contexts.

(3) The center shall ensure, within the general education program:

- (a) a cap of 30 credits;
- (b) the integration of six written and oral communication credits with three humanities credits;
- (c) that three three-credit courses in the humanities:
  - (i) engage with perennial questions about the human condition, the meaning of life, and the nature of social and moral lives;
  - (ii) emphasize foundational thinking and communication skills through engagement

- 130 with primary texts predominantly from Western civilization, such as:  
131 (A) the intellectual contributions of ancient Israel, ancient Greece, and Rome; and  
132 (B) the rise of Christianity, medieval Europe, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment,  
133 and post-Enlightenment;  
134 (iii) include texts for each course that are historically distributed from antiquity to the  
135 present from figures with lasting literary, philosophical, and historical influence,  
136 such as Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Lao Tzu, Cicero, Maimonides, Boethius,  
137 Shakespeare, Mill, Woolf, and Achebe; and  
138 (iv) are organized around themes central to the preservation and flourishing of a free  
139 society, such as the moral life, happiness, liberty, equality and justice, and  
140 goodness and beauty; and  
141 (d) that one three-credit course in American institutions:  
142 (i) engages students with the major debates and ideas that inform the historical  
143 development of the republican form of government of the United States of  
144 America;  
145 (ii) focus on the founding principles of American government, economics, and  
146 history, such as natural rights, liberty, equality, constitutional self-government,  
147 and market systems; and  
148 (iii) use primary source material, such as:  
149 (A) the Magna Carta, the United States Constitution, the Federalist Papers; and  
150 (B) material from thinkers, such as Marcus Aurelius, Seneca, Adam Smith, John  
151 Locke, Montesquieu, and Alexis de Tocqueville.  
152 (4) The vice-provost overseeing the center:  
153 (a) shall ensure that the center:  
154 (i) no less than seven days before the first day of class for a given semester or other  
155 academic term during which the institution offers a course, makes available to the  
156 public on the institution's website a syllabus for each section of the courses in the  
157 humanities described in Subsection (3) that:  
158 (A) provide the section number;  
159 (B) provides a brief description of each major assignment and examination;  
160 (C) lists any required or recommended reading; and  
161 (D) provides a general description of the subject matter of each lecture or  
162 discussion;  
163 (E) is accessible from the home page of the institution's website by use of not

- 164 more than three links;  
165 (F) is searchable by keywords and phrases; and  
166 (G) is accessible to the public without requiring registration, use of a user name  
167 and password, or another method of user identification;  
168 (ii) continues to make the information described in Subsection (4)(a) available on the  
169 center's website until at least the second anniversary of the date on which the  
170 center initially posted the information; and  
171 (iii) updates the information described in Subsection (4)(a) as soon as practicable  
172 after the information changes; and  
173 (b) may assign duties under this Subsection (4) to one or more administrative employees.

174 Section 7. Section **53B-18-1907** is enacted to read:

175 **53B-18-1907 . Oversight -- Reporting.**

- 176 (1) The vice-provost leading the center shall submit an annual report:  
177 (a) to the provost, president of the institution, and the commissioner;  
178 (b) that includes a mission-based accounting of:  
179 (i) program and instructor performance and goals for improvement;  
180 (ii) professional development offerings and future goals;  
181 (iii) the course offerings and syllabus publication described in Section 53B-18-1906;  
182 and  
183 (iv) a full account of the center's budget.  
184 (2) The commissioner shall report annually to the Education Interim Committee regarding  
185 the implementation and activities of the center.  
186 (3) Each year, the center shall:  
187 (a) assess the quality of teaching and adherence to program principles, values, and goals;  
188 (b) identify expectations for addressing deficiencies or for continued improvement; and  
189 (c) share the review described in Subsections (2)(a) and (b) with appropriate department  
190 heads.  
191 (4) Before July 1, 2029, the center shall:  
192 (a) report to the board educational outcomes and impacts of the pilot program;  
193 (b) provide recommendations for system-wide general education curriculum; and  
194 (c) report to the Education Interim Committee regarding the implementation and  
195 activities of the center.  
196 (5) Based on the pilot program's outcomes, the board shall, in consultation with academic  
197 experts, pedagogical specialists, and institutional stakeholders, develop a proposed core

of system-wide general education courses aligned with the educational principles of this section.

Section 8. Section **63I-1-253** is amended to read:

**63I-1-253 . Repeal dates: Titles 53 through 53G.**

- (1) Section 53-1-122, Road Rage Awareness and Prevention Restricted Account, is repealed July 1, 2028.
- (2) Section 53-2a-105, Emergency Management Administration Council created -- Function -- Composition -- Expenses, is repealed July 1, 2029.
- (3) Section 53-2a-1103, Search and Rescue Advisory Board -- Members -- Compensation, is repealed July 1, 2027.
- (4) Section 53-2a-1104, General duties of the Search and Rescue Advisory Board, is repealed July 1, 2027.
- (5) Title 53, Chapter 2a, Part 15, Grid Resilience Committee, is repealed July 1, 2027.
- (6) Section 53-2d-104, State Emergency Medical Services Committee -- Membership -- Expenses, is repealed July 1, 2029.
- (7) Section 53-2d-703, Volunteer Emergency Medical Service Personnel Health Insurance Program -- Creation -- Administration -- Eligibility -- Benefits -- Rulemaking -- Advisory board, is repealed July 1, 2027.
- (8) Section 53-5-703, Board -- Membership -- Compensation -- Terms -- Duties, is repealed July 1, 2029.
- (9) Section 53-11-104, Board, is repealed July 1, 2029.
- (10) Section 53-22-104.1, School Security Task Force -- Membership -- Duties -- Per diem -- Report -- Expiration, is repealed December 31, 2025.
- (11) Section 53-22-104.2, The School Security Task Force -- Education Advisory Board, is repealed December 31, 2025.
- (12) Subsection 53B-1-301(1)(j), regarding the Higher Education and Corrections Council, is repealed July 1, 2027.
- (13) Section 53B-7-709, Five-year performance goals, is repealed July 1, 2027.
- (14) Title 53B, Chapter 8a, Part 3, Education Savings Incentive Program, is repealed July 1, 2028.
- (15) Title 53B, Chapter 17, Part 11, USTAR Researchers, is repealed July 1, 2028.
- (16) Section 53B-17-1203, SafeUT and School Safety Commission established -- Members, is repealed January 1, 2030.
- (17) Title 53B, Chapter 18, Part 16, USTAR Researchers, is repealed July 1, 2028.

- (18) Title 53B, Chapter 18, Part 17, Food Security Council, is repealed July 1, 2027.
- (19) Title 53B, Chapter 18, Part 18, Electrification of Transportation Infrastructure Research Center, is repealed July 1, 2028.
- (20) Title 53B, Chapter 18, Part 19, Center for Civic Excellence, is repealed July 1, 2030.
- ~~[(20)]~~ (21) Title 53B, Chapter 35, Higher Education and Corrections Council, is repealed July 1, 2027.
- ~~[(21)]~~ (22) Subsection 53C-3-203(4)(b)(vii), regarding the distribution of money from the Land Exchange Distribution Account to the Geological Survey for test wells and other hydrologic studies in the West Desert, is repealed July 1, 2030.
- ~~[(22)]~~ (23) Subsection 53E-1-201(1)(q), regarding the Higher Education and Corrections Council, is repealed July 1, 2027.
- ~~[(23)]~~ (24) Subsection 53E-2-304(6), regarding foreclosing a private right of action or waiver of governmental immunity, is repealed July 1, 2027.
- ~~[(24)]~~ (25) Subsection 53E-3-503(5), regarding coordinating councils for youth in care, is repealed July 1, 2027.
- ~~[(25)]~~ (26) Subsection 53E-3-503(6), regarding coordinating councils for youth in care, is repealed July 1, 2027.
- ~~[(26)]~~ (27) Subsection 53E-4-202(8)(b), regarding a standards review committee, is repealed January 1, 2028.
- ~~[(27)]~~ (28) Section 53E-4-203, Standards review committee, is repealed January 1, 2028.
- ~~[(28)]~~ (29) Title 53E, Chapter 6, Part 5, Utah Professional Practices Advisory Commission, is repealed July 1, 2033.
- ~~[(29)]~~ (30) Subsection 53E-7-207(7), regarding a private right of action or waiver of governmental immunity, is repealed July 1, 2027.
- ~~[(30)]~~ (31) Section 53F-2-420, Intensive Services Special Education Pilot Program, is repealed July 1, 2024.
- ~~[(31)]~~ (32) Section 53F-5-214, Grant for professional learning, is repealed July 1, 2025.
- ~~[(32)]~~ (33) Section 53F-5-215, Elementary teacher preparation grant, is repealed July 1, 2025.
- ~~[(33)]~~ (34) Section 53F-5-219, Local Innovations Civics Education Pilot Program, is repealed July 1, 2025.
- ~~[(34)]~~ (35) Title 53F, Chapter 10, Part 2, Capital Projects Evaluation Panel, is repealed July 1, 2027.
- ~~[(35)]~~ (36) Subsection 53G-4-608(2)(b), regarding the Utah Seismic Safety Commission, is



266 repealed January 1, 2025.  
267 [(36)] (37) Subsection 53G-4-608(4)(b), regarding the Utah Seismic Safety Commission, is  
268 repealed January 1, 2025.  
269 [(37)] (38) Section 53G-9-212, Drinking water quality in schools, is repealed July 1, 2027.  
270 Section 9. **Effective Date.**  
271 This bill takes effect on May 7, 2025.