



2010

ESPC applauds UW action addressing improper political email messages

The Equality State Policy Center (ESPC) today applauded actions taken by the University of Wyoming to deter inappropriate use of UW's email system to promote political candidates.

"We received several complaints from members about partisan political emails they received over the UW system," said Robert Spencer, ESPC chair. "While it was clear that the University was not sending these emails, it was less clear that UW was doing all it could to prevent use of its taxpayer-funded system for this purpose."

The ESPC sent a letter to UW President Tom Buchanan expressing concern about the emails. The letter was referred to UW Vice President for Information Technology, Robert Aylward, who looked into the matter.

The Office of Information Technology subsequently sent a reminder to all UW employees that it is inappropriate to use access to the UW system to originate or to forward messages promoting political candidates.

While UW email addresses are publicly available from UW's website and printed directory, these "... are intended to be used primarily for University related work ... homework, class projects, sanctioned research projects, business operations of the University, or use directed by a University administrator, faculty, or staff member." (UniReg 3-690)

Further, the State of Wyoming's Electronic Mail Management Policy – recognizing that all state agency email systems are taxpayer-funded – states that "...using the system for promotion of religion or political causes or endorsement of candidates is prohibited."

"We appreciate the University's prompt response to our letter and hope that the reminder will be sufficient to discourage misuse of state resources for partisan political activity," Spencer said.

The Equality State Policy Center, a broad-based coalition of Wyoming interests, works through research, public education and advocacy to hold Wyoming state and local governments accountable to the people they represent, and to encourage and assist state residents to participate effectively in public policy decision-making.

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