

Communicating With Your Legislators

Talking the Talk to Help our State Leaders Walk the Walk

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- **Why** reach out to your local delegation?
- **How** do you make contact?
- What **do** I say or do?
- What **do** I **NOT** say or do?

Why Reach Out?

- You are the subject-matter expert – No one can tell your story better than YOU!
- You are a voting constituent.
- If they don't hear from the community, they will assume that everything is fine and dandy.
- You can personalize the issues and impacts of policy and budget.
- Establish a relationship with your legislator(s).

How to Make Contact?

- By telephone
- By mail
- By email
- Schedule a meeting in Raleigh or in the district
- Testify before a committee

What to Say or Do?

- Identify yourself and the organization you represent.
- State the bill number or issue you wish to discuss with your legislator.
- Be specific and direct – a clear, concise, AND consistent message is critical.
- Explain how the bill or policy change impacts you and/or your college. **PERSONALIZE IT!**
- Brevity is key – your time will be limited, and it's important for them to know exactly what your position is.

What to Say or Do?

- Make sure you understand and acknowledge arguments both for and against your position.
- Ask for your legislator's position on the issue at hand.
- Leave a 1-page information sheet about your issue and position, with your contact information for follow up.
- Track the issue as it goes through committee and follow up with your member.
- And **ALWAYS** thank them for their time and service!

What NOT to Say or Do?

- Don't be combative.
- Don't use form letters. Although this can be a time saver, it often diminishes the impact and leads members to believe you took a short cut.
- Don't assume that your member is well-versed in your issue.
- Avoid "TMI".
- Communicate often but not too often. Timing is everything!

Other Helpful Hints

- Get to know the member' staff.
- Acknowledge yourself as a resource to your elected officials.
- Share your success stories.
- Involve your students as much as possible!
The legislators want to know how their work in Raleigh impacts folks back home.
- Engage your business community and highlight successful partnerships.
- Treat all members of your delegation equally.

Helpful Links

For general information:

- <http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/>

For House and Senate contact information:

- <http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/House/House.html>
- <http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/Senate/Senate.html>

Updates from NCCCFA:

- <http://www.ncccfa.org/>

Questions???

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