A Guide to Meeting with Congressional Representatives

Your UC campus, lab and medical center governmental relations office is an excellent resource for information about advocacy and lobbying reporting requirements. You can find the contact information for your campus federal governmental relations representatives online.

CONGRESSIONAL MEETING TIPS

Prior to the Meeting

- Review the member profile for the legislator whose office you are visiting.
- Note the congressional committees on which the member serves.
- Silence your cell phone before your meeting and place it out of view.
- Put away any food or beverages you have in your possession.
- If you are part of a group, while everyone should participate, select a spokesperson to begin and close the meeting.
- Plan what you want to say so you can stay on message.
- Make your points salient by explaining how your issue impacts the legislator’s congressional district and constituents, as well as the region, state and nation.
- If possible, discuss the issue from a personal perspective – share your own experience or that of a family member or friend who has benefited from federally-funded research, student financial aid, college readiness programs and/or UC Health services.

During the Meeting

- Be concise and make your point clearly.
- Engage the member of Congress/staff by sharing your experiences and asking questions.
- Leave time for questions from the member of Congress and/or staff.
- If you are meeting with staff, remember they are responsible for briefing the member of Congress and recommending actions, and can be valuable allies in your advocacy.
- Work to establish long-term relationships with staff. Try to arrange for follow-ups.
- Remember to thank the member and staff for their time.

After the Meeting

- Follow-up with a thank you note and include your business card/contact information.
- Media – social, print and digital – are excellent ways of engaging further with an office. Congressional offices track where and when the legislator appears in media so a well-placed op-ed or social media post that identifies the member and/or staff can lead to change.
- Follow up with your campus governmental relations staff, sharing how the meeting went, feedback and any additional actions with which they can assist you.

SAMPLE SCRIPT FOR CONGRESSIONAL MEETING

Introduction (Team Lead)

- Good morning/afternoon. On behalf of UC [campus], thank you for taking the time to meet with us today.
  - Team members should introduce themselves. If you are a constituent, mention so at this time.
• **We are here today to ask for your support for education, research and health care funding**, including at the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Energy and Health and Human Services, as well as at the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation and other federal agencies that support research and student success across all disciplines and programs.
  
  o *Tailor the message depending on the topics you are there to discuss.*

• Through its partnership with the federal government, UC is an economic engine for California and the nation – educating generations of students and creating new knowledge, technologies, cures, jobs, startup companies and spinoff industries.

• The federal funds that the university receives help UC educate the next-generation, advance scientific breakthroughs and provide world-class medical training.

**Key Messages (All Team Members)**

• The federal government is the university’s single most important source of research funding, accounting more than half of UC’s total research awards. In fiscal year (FY) 2018, UC received more than $2.95 billion in federal agency research funding.

• UC students receive approximately $1.69 billion in federal aid, including Pell Grants, other grants and fellowships, work-study and student loans.

• UC Health – the university’s health care enterprise – is the nation’s largest academic health system. **UC partners with the federal government to train more than 5,500 medical residents and deliver care to a large share of patients who depend upon federally-sponsored health plans for their health care coverage.** More than 60 percent of UC patients are covered by Medicare, Medicaid or lack health insurance, and these programs garnered $4.5 billion in federal support in 2017-18.

• After years of relief from the deep budget cuts prescribed in the Budget Control Act of 2011, budget caps are set to return in fiscal years 2020 and 2021. A legislative change is required to raise the defense and non-defense discretionary sequestration caps currently in place. Without such a fix, there will be draconian cuts to discretionary funding for education, research and health care programs.

**Tell Your Story (All Team Members):**

• If you are a student, talk about your experiences and how the federal government has played a role in your education.

• If you are a researcher, briefly talk about your research, its benefits to society and the nation and the value of federal funding.

• If you are a physician in training, briefly talk about the impact federal dollars have had on your education, and any plans you have to practice in underserved areas.

• If you or someone you know has benefited from federally funded research, student financial aid, college readiness programs and/or UC Health services, briefly share those stories.

**Closing (Team Leader):**

• We urge you to support robust and sustained federal investments in education, research and health care funding.

• Thank you again for meeting with us and for your support of the University of California.

• If you would like more information about the resources the university offers, or if you have any questions, please let us know and we can arrange a follow-up meeting.