



Prince George's Community College

Student Governance: Lobbying to Make Your Voice Heard

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Lobbying: the act of attempting to influence decisions made by officials in the government, most often legislators or members of regulatory agencies. Lobbying is done by many different types of people, associations and organized groups, including individuals in the private sector, corporations, fellow legislators or government officials, or advocacy groups (interest groups). Lobbyists may be among a legislator's constituencies, meaning a voter or block of voters within his or her electoral district, or not; they may engage in lobbying as a business, or not.

The ethics and morality of lobbying are dual-edged. Lobbying is often spoken of with contempt, when the implication is that people with inordinate socioeconomic power are corrupting the law (twisting it away from fairness) in order to serve their own conflict of interest. But another side of lobbying is making sure that others' interests are duly defended against others' corruption, or even simply making sure that minority interests are fairly defended against mere tyranny of the majority. (Source: *www.Wikipedia.com*)

A. Potential individuals, entities, or bodies that your student government may need to lobby:

B. Current Hot Issues:

C. Demands

1. Leave no room for negotiation, moderation, collaboration, adjustment, etc.
They are _____ propositions.

2. Instead, offer “suggestions of _____” or “opportunities for _____”.
3. Don’t _____.

D. Civil Discourse

American Social Psychologist and Professor at Swarthmore College (PA) Kenneth J. Gergen describes it as the “language of dispassionate objectivity”. Key components include:

1. Requires _____ of the other participants
2. Does not diminish the other’s _____ worth nor questions their good _____.
3. Avoids _____, direct _____, or excessive _____.
4. Keep _____ in check and _____!
5. Requires _____ and an appreciation of the other participant’s _____.

E. Visionary Leadership

1. A visionary leader sees _____ for change, how the world could be, and courses of _____ to make change.
2. Seek to change culture from _____ to _____.
3. Have _____ on what the result you want.
4. Engage in _____.

F. Working with Decision Makers

1. Never _____. Integrity is all you have. Know your _____ and support and promote it even in the face of _____ from a decision maker.
2. Know what your position is, _____, and support it with facts, _____ evidence, and data. Be concise and focused.

You usually only get a few moments of _____
 _____ with representatives and decision makers.

3. Search social media, _____, Wikipedia, and other sources to know what is being said about your issue. Decision makers and the opposition may _____ you while you are talking!
4. Why should the representative listen to you? Their favorite radio station: _____!
5. Make sure your representatives and decision makers know who you are all of the time, not just when you have a _____ - _____ issue. Do you know people who only come around when they need something? Don't be that to your reps. _____ a relationship with them. Offer on-campus office hours, for example.
6. _____ and help your decision makers any way you can. You may have a solution to a constituent problem. However, do not expect this to mean they are now " _____ _____", this is relationship building.
7. Don't _____, _____, or lose your _____ with decision makers! They have the power to get you what you _____!

G. The Opposition

1. _____ with members of the opposition is of little benefit: they have their constituencies to represent, just as you do. Learn their positions so you can _____ them, but don't hope to sway them to your side.
2. Work your side, but be _____ of those on the other. Your adversary on one issue may be your _____ on another.
3. If someone on the opposition side chooses to make a _____ of themselves, get out of their way and let them!

H. Lobbying Realities

1. Be prepared to start _____ in the day. Representatives are usually in their office before the session is called to order for the day, and it is hard to gain access to once they start on the scheduled business.
2. Part of the function of lobbying is to _____ representatives on an issue. Know both sides of it – because they will ask you to _____ your position to the opposition and/or ask about _____ of the other side’s position.
3. Lobbying is a process that should be _____, but understand that representatives are only going to get really interested in it when it is going to come before them in _____ or on the _____. Then they will have a sense of urgency.
4. Find a member of the body who is considered to be an _____ on the topic and provide them with info, talking points, etc. to support your position, even if they are not your representative. The other members will defer to their _____, whether real or only _____.
5. _____ to _____ is better than a handwritten or typed _____, a handwritten or typed letter is better than an _____, an email is better than a post on _____, social media is better than a _____, a phone call is better than doing _____ at all.
6. Understand that sometimes things move forward out of _____, to give the “_____” to someone else.
7. Just because your side did not _____ does not mean you were not heard. Take defeat _____ to preserve relationships for future issues. Calling _____ is never productive.