



## IN DISTRICT/CAPITOL LEGISLATIVE VISITS

### Four Steps to Legislative Visits

Find the names and contact information of your legislators at <http://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov/> by entering your campus zip code.

#### **STEP ONE: Make an appointment with your State Legislators**

1. Call the District or Capitol Office and ask to speak to the Member's scheduler. Be clear about the topic you want to discuss and the number of people who will be attending (no more than five).
2. Try to call at least a few weeks before you'd like to have the meeting—the earlier the better. Be prepared to be flexible with times, especially if you want to meet with your Member directly.
3. Take note of the scheduler's name and email address. Once you are finished with the call, send an email to the scheduler thanking him/her for his/her time and summarize the details you discussed on the phone.
4. Give the scheduler 2-3 days to get back to you about the meeting. After 3 days, call or email the scheduler again to follow-up and confirm a time and date for the meeting.

#### **STEP TWO: Prepare your delegation for the meeting**

Before the lobby visit, schedule a meeting for all students who will be attending. Everyone should agree on the agenda for the meeting. Make sure that everyone is dressed professionally and that they have notepads and business cards to leave with the Member.

Before the meeting, it is **crucial** to understand some general information about your legislators. Such as, their educational backgrounds, their votes on important education issues, know if s/he is a member of an education or fiscal committee and/or subcommittee in the Legislature. These details highlight the role s/he can play in supporting the progress of your issue. Upon request CSSA can send out biographies of your respective legislators.

#### **STEP THREE: Meeting Procedure**

##### **1. Be Prepared to Control the Meeting**

Before your appointment, select a student in your delegation to be the facilitator. This is an important role, as Members may shift the conversation to a subject of their preference. Have the facilitator decide each person's role for the meeting. Remember, you may only have 10-15 minutes to present your case, so you will need to be efficient and prepared.

##### **2. Identify Yourself and the Group You Represent**



“Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a student at CSU \_\_\_\_\_ here in/near your district. Thank you so much for meeting with us today. We’re here today to talk to you about \_\_\_\_ (local issues/campus issues/state-wide issues, etc.)\_\_\_\_\_.

### **3. State Your Position Clearly**

Once you have introduced your delegation, explain your issues of concern clearly. Whether you are discussing campus/community relations or tuition increases, be sure to use clear arguments and relevant statistics to bolster your argument. Also, personalize the issue and draw on your own experiences, and those of students on your campus, to illustrate your points.

### **4. Ask Informed Questions**

It is important that you are prepared to ask appropriate questions of the member. This meeting is a unique opportunity for you to ask thoughtful and substantive questions. If you don’t think your member’s answer to a question is sufficient, respectfully push back or ask a follow-up question.

### **5. Provide Information**

Always leave behind tangible information that summarizes the meeting’s topics and your priorities for the year, both on-campus and legislatively. This ensures that the member and staff will understand your positions when you leave.

## **STEP FOUR: Follow-up.**

### **1. Immediately Debrief and Submit a *Legislator Contact Report* to CSSA**

After the meeting, sit down as a group to debrief. This is a good opportunity to reflect on the successes of the meeting, areas upon which to improve, and discuss next steps. Also, please complete a *Legislator Contact Report* (see attached) for each legislator after each visit and email it to Meredith at [mvivian@calstate.edu](mailto:mvivian@calstate.edu).

### **2. Maintain Your New Relationship**

After the lobby visit, it is important to send a thank you note or a letter highlighting the main takeaways from the meeting and thanking the member for his/her time. Also, include any information that you promised to follow-up on in the meeting. After you send a follow up letter, think of ways that you can continue to build a relationship with the Member and staff. Make plans to invite the member to your campus for a tour or an event within 1-2 months of your visit.



## DO'S AND DON'T OF LOBBYING

### **DO'S**

- *Establish a Goal or Purpose* – Focus on a specific theme for your visit and plan your agenda accordingly. Make sure that everyone in your group understands the purpose of the visits.
- *Be Prepared* – Do your homework. Providing legislators with organized, useful, clear and concise information will assist them in making informed decisions.
- *Select a Spokesperson and Assign Roles* – Appoint a member of your group to introduce everyone and begin the conversation. Give everyone in the group an opportunity to speak, if desired. It is also important for each person in your group to take notes for debriefing.
- *Give Anecdotes* – Share specific examples pertinent to your campus regarding your chosen topic.
- *Dress Appropriately* – A suit with a matching jacket is appropriate for both men and women. Men may also wear a dress shirt and slacks while women can wear slacks, a skirt, or a dress. Wear comfortable shoes if a lot of walking is involved.
- *Leave Something Tangible With Your Legislator* – A fact sheet or a copy of a bill (if applicable) – anything that will visually remind your legislator of your visit and your position on the issues.
- *Send a Thank You Letter* – It is important to send a thank you note or a letter highlighting the main takeaways from the meeting and thanking the member for his/her time.

### **DON'T**

- *Do Not Be Late* – Members are often on a tight schedule, be respectful of their time and arrive at least 5 minutes early.
- *Do Not Be Unprepared* – This is your opportunity to educate the member on the important issues facing your campus and the students in their district. The better you understand your member, the better the meeting will be. Present your points from the perspective of your campus and its needs.
- *Do Not Be Disrespectful* – Always address legislators respectfully (Assemblyman/woman or Senator). During discussions, if you disagree, say so in a polite way. Remember that legislators are privy to much more information than the average person and, whether you agree with them or not, made the decision based on what they thought best. **Focus your arguments on facts and reasons behind disagreements – not personalities.**



## Legislator Contact Form

Name/Campus of Person Reporting \_\_\_\_\_

Legislator and/or Staff name (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Topics Covered \_\_\_\_\_

Issues Raised by Legislator/Staff \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-up Suggested by your Delegation \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Notes or Directions \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE RETURN TO:**

CSSA – Office of Governmental Relations

1107 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 840

Sacramento, CA 95814

Fax: 916.441.6350

Email: [mturner@calstate.edu](mailto:mturner@calstate.edu) or [adiaz@calstate.edu](mailto:adiaz@calstate.edu)