California Community Colleges

Tips for Successful Legislative Meetings

✓ **Be on time, flexible, friendly and brief.** Make sure you arrive before your meeting is scheduled, but if the member is running late, be patient and flexible. If you are with a team, and a prior meeting is running late, contact the legislator’s office or send part of your team ahead.

✓ **Select a team spokesperson to start the meeting.** The spokesperson should begin by making introductions, making a personal connection, if possible, and summarizing the purpose of the meeting. Others can jump into the discussion once the meeting gets started. Prior to stepping into the meeting, coordinate the various points members of the group will make in the meeting.

✓ **Make a personal connection with the Legislator.** Prior to meeting with the member, review the legislator’s biography and familiarize yourself with his or her committee assignments and legislative package, especially those bills dealing with community colleges. Be aware of the member’s legislative accomplishments and thank them for their help on any issues where they have been of assistance to the community colleges.

✓ **Don’t be disappointed if you meet with staff!** A meeting with staff can be just as productive. Legislators rely on their staff for advice and details about an issue. Staff are critical to making sure a bill is passed and key amendments go into a bill. They are also a good source of information for you.

✓ **Ask about the legislator’s priorities for this year.** Ask about what the member’s priorities are this legislative session, particularly in light of the current budget deficit. This is a chance to develop a relationship and find out more about how you and your campus or organization can work with the legislator.

✓ **Ask for their support.** Your legislator and or their staff should be able to give you an indication of the member’s support for community college priorities. Ask for their assessment of the budget, and what their advice would be for mitigating the impact of potential funding cuts.

✓ **Offer your assistance.** Legislators and their staff often have questions throughout the year and look to the Chancellor’s Office, advocacy organizations, and their local district for help in addressing community college issues. If you are in their district, reinforce that you are available to help them address local community college issues and continue the relationship with them back home.

✓ **Business cards and photo opportunities.** Ask for and distribute business cards. This will help you when sending your thank you letters for the meeting. Try to bring a camera for pictures that you can use in a press release.

✓ **Thank Yous.** Please send a personal Thank You note to the member and staff you met with. Provide the legislators office a copy of the press release along with your thank you.