Welcome to Federal Relations

How to Connect with Policymakers and Funding Agencies to Get Your Message Heard and Deliver Impact
Why Engage with an Elected Official?

- Funding for your scientific discipline
- A policy change
- The opportunity to share new information
- Becoming a resource for a policymaker
Congressional Basics

- Congress has its own culture and pace
- It’s not just about the money
- Knowledge is power
- Face-to-face contact matters
- Repetition is key
What Do Policymakers Care About?

- The needs of their districts and states
- The local economy
- The negative impact of specific legislation
- Developing relationships with influential groups and interests
- Elevating their profile on key issues
- Positive attention from the media
- Issues of personal importance to their family
- Getting re-elected

Anecdotes, accurate data, and local stories conveyed in non-technical language are useful for policymakers.
How Can You Prepare?

- **Review the Member of Congress’s web site to find:**
  - Biography
  - Political affiliation
  - Key information about the state or Congressional district
  - Press releases, letters, and reports
  - Social media posts
  - Committee assignments and legislation introduced

- **Decide what you will ask the Member of Congress to do**

- **Look for relevant legislation or hearings to help identify your “ask,” using** [www.congress.gov](http://www.congress.gov)
Rules of the Road

Be brief.
Be polite.
Listen.
Meet the staff.
Say thank you.
Leave something behind.
Stay in touch.
What Are Your Options?

- Social Media
- Letters, Emails, & Phone Calls
- Attend a Town Hall Meeting
- In-Person
- Media
What Are Your Options?

- **Social Media** – Twitter, Facebook, etc.

- Tips:
  - Government account vs. campaign account
  - #FindaGoodHashtag
  - Reply vs. post
  - Share!

- Examples:
  - Bad: @MikeCapuano, why don’t you care about science?
  - Good: Thanks @RepMikeCapuano for supporting @NSF
  - Better: Big thanks to @RepMikeCapuano, who voted to increase the @NSF budget. #NSFfunded research keeps #lobsters from dying off #CapeCod.
What Are Your Options?

- **Letters, Emails & Phone Calls**
  - Tips:
    - Effective for requesting immediate action
    - Find contact information at [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) or [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)
    - Use a template from your scientific society

- **Attend Town Hall Meetings**
  - Tips:
    - Check the elected official’s web site and/or sign up for their newsletters.
    - Virtual townhalls are effective, too.
What Are Your Options?

- **In-Person**

  - **Tips:**
    - **Before** the meeting:
      - Send an email to the scheduler briefly requesting a meeting regarding a specific topic on a specific date.
    - **Begin** the meeting:
      - Thank the staffer or Member of Congress for taking the time to meet.
      - Introduce yourself and explain what you are advocating for.
    - **During** the meeting:
      - Stick to your message and articulate your requests clearly.
      - Refer to the materials you will leave behind.
      - Be conversational: leave room to answer questions and offer to be a resource.
    - **End** your meeting:
      - Say thank you (again).
      - Exchange business cards and/or contact information.
What Are Your Options?

- **In-Person** (continued)

  **DO**
  
  - Be courteous to all
  - Arrive on time
  - Listen, even if you disagree
  - Offer specifics when possible (e.g., bill names, numbers)
  - Offer to provide further information following the meeting
  - Send a thank-you email

  **DO NOT**
  
  - Prolong the meeting beyond its timed or natural conclusion
  - Be discouraged if your meeting contact appears young
  - Be surprised if you are asked to wait or meet in an unusual location
  - Bring gifts or sealed envelopes
What Are Your Options?

- **In-Person** (continued)

Tips:
- **After** your meeting:
  - Promptly send your contact any information they requested.
  - Keep abreast of Member activity related to the issues you discussed (legislation introduced, letters signed, etc.).
  - Thank staff for any activities undertaken by the Member in support of your “ask.”
- **Elevator** pitch: Have a 30-second message ready if you get an unexpected chance.
What Are Your Options?

- **Media**

  - **Tips:**
    - Work with Marketing & Communications, or your scientific society.
    - Publish an op-ed, write a letter to the editor, pay for an advertisement.
    - Share!
Welcome to Federal Relations: How to Connect with Policymakers and Funding Agencies to Get Your Message Heard and Deliver Impact

Lewis-Burke Associates, LLC
April 4, 2018
About Lewis-Burke

• Twenty-eight policy experts with range of expertise/backgrounds allow multi-layered issue teams with deep expertise in agencies and scientific/education areas
• Support federal relations activities to develop and implement federal strategies to pursue, shape, and create new sources of funding to increase and diversify research portfolio
• Able to engage on multiple levels:
  — Individual faculty (including early career faculty)
  — Teams of faculty
  — Associate Deans for Research
  — Deans and Center Directors
  — University leadership and campus-wide priorities
• Began working with BU in 2012

LEWIS–BURKE
ASSOCIATES LLC

www.lewis-burke.com
Types of Agency Engagement

• Meeting with agency staff
• Requests for Information (RFIs)
• Workshops
• Federal advisory committees
• Convening events
Meeting with Program Officers

• Make initial contact via email to schedule a meeting and specify your research area
• Review information on the program officer and their portfolio
• Provide tailored one-page description of your research
• Dress appropriately – business attire
• Allow program officer to talk about their program and issues of concern
• Prepare questions, listen to answers, and take notes
• Offer to serve as a reviewer where appropriate
• Send thank you emails following meeting and highlight next steps or follow-up actions
RFIs

• Influence the nature, scope, and format of future research proposal solicitations
• Shape future research directions and federal investments (and possibly prevent bad ideas)
• Highlight the importance of an issue, sub-issue, or discipline
• Raise the profile of your research area within the broader field to ensure representation in future solicitations
• Raise your profile as an expert/resource to be consulted
• Enhance relationship with funding agency by demonstrating interest
Workshops / Proposer Days

• Gain inside information to agency thinking and others in field
• Demonstrate your expertise and interest in topic
• Help shape future programmatic thrusts
• Get involved in potentially competitive teams / team building
• Networking with community leaders
• Raise profile of the university’s strengths
• Build relationship with agency staff
Federal Advisory Committees

• Provide advice and feedback to agencies
• Help shape future research, innovation, and education agendas and guide priorities
• Gain early intel on agency thinking and directions
• Network with peers and agency officials
• Raise profile of individual and institution
• Professional advancement
Convening Events

• Profile-raising
• Establish third party validators e.g. industry, congressional, international, students
• Build allies on campus, within research community, and with agencies
• Develop teams
• Identify strategic thrusts
• Networking