



Student Representative **Advocacy Guide**

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Step-by-Step Student Advocacy

Step 1: Discover the issue, and its scope.

When an issue arises that affects your constituents, collect as many details as you can, figure out who has direct power in relation to the issue, and how you can interact with them, make a list of potential other stakeholders and/or allies, and determine potential courses the issue may take in the future so you can be prepared.

Uncovering potential issues before they blow up can make all the difference in your advocacy efforts.

<i>Keep in contact with...</i>			
<i>Your constituents</i>	<i>Students' Council</i>	<i>Your Faculty Association</i>	<i>Department Associations</i>
<i>Board of Governors Representative</i>	<i>GFC Representatives</i>	<i>Faculty Council Representatives</i>	<i>Department Council Representatives</i>

State your issue in one sentence:

Who are the most important stakeholders in making decisions on the issue?

•	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	<input type="checkbox"/>

Rank the Stakeholders based on the power they have to bring change to or affect your issue.

What methods can you use to interact with your highest ranked stakeholder?

•	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	<input type="checkbox"/>

Step 2: Consult constituents to fairly represent them.

Get feedback from your constituents through social media, tabling in faculty buildings, sending out feedback forms, holding town halls, or attending the meetings of clubs and associations in your faculty. The feedback you collect should be incorporated into your advocacy activities as much as possible.

Informing your constituents about an issue:

Media – Quickest way to get word out to many people. You can also use this as a tool to put public pressure on someone. Easy, but not always effective.

- Social Media and online videos (Twitter, Facebook, etc.)
- Newspaper Articles (The Gateway, Metro, Local Newspapers)
- Television or other interviews (CJSR, TV, etc.)

Advertising – Less urgent way to get word out to people. Can be used to direct constituents to more information about an issue.

- Paid Ads (Gateway, SUTV, etc.)
- Newsletters
- Posters and handbills
- Tabling
- Class Talks

In Person – Explains issues more thoroughly to fewer constituents but in an impactful way.

Describe your information plan:

Consulting constituents on an issue:

Petitions – Used to show quantifiable support/opposition to a particular issue, change or question.

- Paper
- Online
- Email

Consultations – Shows what you should be advocating for and gives you material to use.

- Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Collaborative Projects
- AGMs
- Town Halls

Describe your consultation plan:

Step 3: Formulate possible outcomes for the issue.

Determine what your ideal outcome would be so that you have a clear goal in mind, but also think about other possible outcomes and plan how you will respond should that scenario arise.

•		
•		
•		
•		
•		
•		

Use the right-hand columns to rank your top three results for this issue, and your constituents top three results for this issue.

What is the most realistic outcome you can achieve that satisfies your constituents' position while maintaining your organization's integrity?

Complete a SWOT analysis on your preferred outcome:

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

Step 4: Convince decision makers and combat opposition.

Figure out the best way to convince each of the decision makers related to the issue to act how you want them to, and the best way to counter any opposition you face, and put that plan into action through lobbying, awareness campaigns, petitions, and any other methods of advocacy at your disposal.

What will opposition say about the preferred outcome you determined in the previous section?

Their argument	Your Counter-argument

How can your preferred outcome benefit the decision-maker and/or opposition?

What method will you use to reach the decision-maker?

Lobbying – Direct communication with the decision maker intended to influence a decision being made. Direct and powerful but can be difficult and intimidating

- Meetings
- Phone Calls
- Emails and Letters

Protests – Used to visually show wider community support for or against a current issue and to publicly pressure for an outcome.

- Marches
- Sit Ins or Walkouts
- Boycotts

Media – Can put public pressure on someone quickly.

- Social Media
- Newspaper articles
- Television
- Interviews

Describe your plan:

Step 5: Evaluate.

Did you achieve the outcome you wanted? Why or why not? What would you do differently in the future? Evaluate your success, keep a record to help future advocates, and advertise your results (good or bad) to your constituents.

Reflection Questions

Was the issue's outcome what you wanted?

Is there any way you can change the outcome moving forward?

How have your relationships with stakeholders changed from the process?

Has your organization's integrity been maintained in the process?

Is the chosen stakeholder the best-suited person to advocate to in the future?

What were some of the barriers in using the advocacy methods you used, and how can you overcome them in the future?

Advocacy Planning Template

1. What is the issue I am advocating on?

2. Who is the most important decision-maker involved in this issue?

3. What is the best way to interact with this decision-maker?

4. How will I spread knowledge of this issue?

5. How will I consult my constituents on this issue? Do they even see it as an issue?

6. What advocacy position will maintain my organization's integrity while still reflecting my constituents' opinions?

7. What will my opposition say about my advocacy position?

<i>Their Argument</i>	<i>My Argument</i>

8. How can my advocacy position benefit stakeholders? How can I “sell” it?

9. How will I get my point across to decision makers on this issue?

Asking Effective Questions

Before you ask a question

Preparation is key. Take a moment to reflect before you ask.

- Are you sure your question hasn't been answered in the meeting materials?
- Why are you asking it?
 - You may discover you don't actually have a good reason.
 - If you have a clear idea of what you want to accomplish it will help you structure your question to get a better answer.
- What kind of answer do you want?
 - Yes or no answer
 - Clarification of facts
 - Presenter's opinion
- Would it be better to email your question?

Strategies for asking effective questions

<i>Come prepared</i>	Read the materials in advance and understand your role as a representative.
<i>Ask questions respectfully</i>	You will be more successful if you treat others with the respect you wish to be treated with yourself.
<i>Draw from your own expertise</i>	Draw from skills you're learning in your studies to structure coherent, meaningful questions.
<i>Listen carefully</i>	Don't cause repetition, and listen to others to learn how to say what you want and get the best reaction.
<i>Practice</i>	Ask lots of questions, learn by trial and error.

Basic Question Theory

How do you get the kind of answer you're looking for?

<p>Open Question Deeper, more complex answers.</p> <p>Closed Question Specific answers.</p>	<p>Factual Question Data or clarification.</p> <p>Evaluative Question Assessment of strengths, weaknesses, or progress.</p> <p>Interpretive Question Opinion or speculation.</p>	<p>Hypothesis Testing You think you already know the answer but want to test it.</p> <p>Leading Question Lead the respondent to a particular answer.</p>	<p>Convergent Question Has one answer.</p> <p>Divergent Question Has multiple answers.</p>
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Planning a Protest

Preparing the Basics

What will I be protesting?

Who am I protesting to?

Specifically what am I asking them to change?

What is the intended tone of the protest?

Who else would be interested in participating?

Who is my base of support?

How will I reach out to support, or create it if I do not have it?

What kind of protest will I hold? (picket line, march, sit in, etc.)

When/where will I hold the protest?

Checklist

Make sure these are covered before you begin:

- Check for legality of protesting in your location. (Do you need permits? Will you be disrupting traffic?)
- Do we need a planned security or police presence?
- Have I assigned responsibilities to core participants (eg: Emcee, media coordinator)
- Is the protest inclusive and does it maintain an atmosphere of peace?
- Have I prepared signs and information handouts?
- Have I created an advertising strategy?
- Do I have people to speak at my protest?
- Have I considered slogans or chants?
- Have I invited the press/media and created a press packet for them?

