USE YOUR VOICE TO SHAPE THE FUTURE

Guide to In-District Meetups

Speaking Guide and Talking Points

In district meetups will be very similar to the legislative meetings. You may have more than 15 minutes, depending on the time agreed upon through the email invitation. Meetups can be in person at a central location or virtual. Having more than one student may help the meeting feel more comfortable, but is not necessary. Meetups are a great way to build relationships with elected officials for professional opportunities.

Be respectful, on time, and always say thank you.

Logistics

- Arrive early if you can.
- Try not to radically change the topic if others are still commenting on a topic.
- Write out what you would like to say and practice it beforehand. It is alright to be reading from your paper! **TIP:** use the storytelling worksheet to prepare your comments
- Research your representative to see if they've supported your cause in the past. If they have, this is a great opportunity to thank them! If they haven't, it is a great opportunity to ask them to!

Email Request Template:

Subject: Student-Legislative Meet and Greet Request

Dear Representative/Senator xxx,

Congratulations on a successful legislative session. My name is xxxxxxxxx, and I am a current student at xxxxxxxxxxx College or University. We are planning to establish meet-and-greet opportunities for students to engage in dialogue with elected officials.

We are proposing that our students create venues to continue our communications. This might include virtual meetings such as ZOOM or meeting in person with students like me who aspire to be further engaged in our legislative process.

In the coming weeks, student leaders will send invitations to our legislative representatives seeking time to have these discussions. We are hopeful that you will take the time to meet with our students.

We look forward to connecting with you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Name of student (pronoun)

College and Major

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Meeting Script Template:

Senator/Representative _____,

"Thank you for holding this meeting. This is the first time I have attended one and did not know what to expect but it is great that you are giving folks in your district a chance to speak to you and express their concerns as well as hear important information on what is happening in Olympia."

Introduce yourself and your college or university – "I am a student at ***state college or university*** majoring in ***state major*** and on campus I am involved in ***name clubs, sports, or activities***, which have led me to get involved in the legislative process."

Tell a bit of your story **or** express support for your cause **and** ask a question (see suggested questions you can ask on the next page):

Examples of your story

- To pay for my college I receive scholarships and state financial aid and my parents help; or I would not be able to go to college if it were not for my scholarships;
- I am the first in my family to go to college, my mom and or dad insisted that I go to college and they are right because I know I will be thankful as my life goes on;
- I absolutely love what I am taking in school and I love the university I attend, it is the right fit for me and what I want to accomplish;
- I can't imagine not getting a college degree because what it gives you for the rest of your life;

Example of cause Key Messages and Priorities

- Expand state financial aid programs so more students can receive support to complete their postsecondary programs.
- Invest in support initiatives like State Work Study, childcare, and navigation supports like career guidance, advising programs, and tutoring.
- Offer more help completing financial aid applications like FAFSA/WASFA.
- Break down barriers, especially financial ones, that allow more students attending public and independent not-for-profit colleges to earn high school and college credit at the same time, such as Dual Credit, Running Start, and College in the High School.
- Offer more access to training that leads to jobs in health care, STEM, and other in-demand fields.
- Without education after high school, it's difficult to get a job in our state with opportunities to grow and earn enough to live without constantly worrying about money.

Example of a goal for your cause

That's why WA-SEN and the College Promise Coalition set a goal that 70% of Washington students can start and complete education beyond high school by 2030. Now, we need to make sure students know this grant and other resources are there to help **and** make accessing them easier. ***insert question***

Suggested Questions/Comments

- Can you tell us what your approach has been to addressing the need of students pursuing education or training after high school that leads to good-paying jobs?
- With all the everyday pressures out there, what advice or suggestions do you have for current or aspiring college students who may be struggling to stick with it?

Thank you (again)

- Thanks again for holding this meeting and for listening. I hope you will continue to support the Washington College Grant and other student supports.
- Thank you again for creating the Washington College Grant, a life-changing financial aid program for students and families!

Note: This is meant to be a guide to help you to think about what to share. Keep in mind that your stories will be most impactful if you put them into your own words.

Post Meetup

- Use photos to let people know about your town hall experience on social media. This builds momentum for your cause.
- Send a thank-you note to the legislator

Connect with Legislators throughout the Year

Using the toolkit information above, keep your story and higher education funding in front of your legislators by:

- Attending their town hall meetings. Follow them on social media and sign up for their email list so you know when these are happening.
- Writing op-ed' s in your school paper or other print mediums.
- Activate social media by sharing and/or creating content that captures the importance of your cause.
- Write letters, email, thank you cards, etc. to your legislators.