

Meeting with Your Legislators

Request the meeting

Once you have determined which Assembly Member and Senator represent you, request a meeting by writing a letter, sending an e-mail or fax. Be sure to follow up with a phone call. Often legislators proscribe how they would like to receive meeting requests on their websites, but always follow-up with a phone call.

Work together

Legislators are more responsive to requests from small groups of their constituents who would like to meet together—an ideal group of UC Berkeley advocates could include a combination of students, alumni, and/or parents. A small group of individuals can provide multiple perspectives that provide meaningful context to the message that UC Berkeley needs and deserves state support.

Plan your meeting in advance

You will have limited time—maybe only 15 minutes—so it is important to be prepared. Review the materials about the UC Berkeley budget. Make an outline of what you want to present. This outline should include:

- An introduction and a statement of your relation to UC Berkeley;
- A statement of the purpose of meeting with the legislator;
- A brief description of the UC Berkeley budget situation that you find most compelling (eg: fee increases; retaining faculty; disinvestment in research; etc.) and how it impacts you;
- A request of the legislator to support higher education;
- An offer to help the legislators as they commit to support UC;
- A thank you

Personalize your message

Tell *your* story to your legislator. Be sure to emphasize how the budget cuts to UC have impacted you personally, and why you believe the state should invest in higher education.

Be prompt and patient

Arrive early for your appointment. Legislators' schedules are challenging—expect last minute changes and be respectful of his or her time. Try to understand if the legislator asks you to meet with staff; legislative staff often have specific policy expertise and will also deliver your message to the legislator.

Be Professional

Avoid mentioning your personal political beliefs; stick to policy considerations. Legislators are more inclined to listen to constituents who have a well-honed message about funding for higher education and call upon their own personal experiences to describe why UC Berkeley is so important to you. Legislators appreciate constituents who are courteous; thank the legislator for his or her time and consideration.

Follow up

Be sure to send a thank you letter to your legislator. Consider this meeting a first step in a continuing relationship and continue to communicate with them.

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