

Conversations that matter: How to talk effectively with policy makers and legislators

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State of the Art in Postsecondary Education
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Let's Get Acquainted!

- Who are We?
- Who are You?

Lobbying, Educating and Advocacy

- **Lobbying:** to specifically ask for an action related to a piece of legislation or regulation;
 - To support or oppose a specific piece of legislation
- **Educating:** providing unbiased, evidence based data about a specific topic or policy
- **Advocacy:** to share information and experiences related to an issue
 - To identify a need or solution to a problem
 - To share data!

For Lobbying, Ask these Questions...

- Is your program federally funded? **No lobbying.**
 - Is your position federally funded? **No lobbying.**
- Are you employed by a nonprofit? **Maybe lobbying.**
 - What are their requirements? (Nonprofits CAN lobby according to the IRS, but must follow specific guidelines...)
- Are you employed by a university? What do they say? **Maybe lobbying**
- Are you acting on your own time and on your own behalf?
Lobbying, educating and advocating...

**Check before you act; but
there is *ALWAYS* something
you can do!**



↑ Visit Washington, DC, or local offices. →



↑ Engage Government Relations



← Schedule online
Gather info from associations →



What government relations helped with...

- They made the initial contacts with the House and Senate Offices.
- They knew who (specifically) to set the appointments with, they know what committees the members sit on.
- They created a schedule and attended when possible.
- We reviewed the talking points and asked for their feedback.

And this...

- They reviewed the materials that we were going to bring, and those we were going to leave behind and made suggestions.
- They know **WHERE** the offices are and how to get there.
- They know whether it's an educational visit or lobbying and helped report the lobbying.



What can you DO?

- Invite them to visit your program
 - Graduation? Shadow a student? Special event? Speaker?
- You visit them in their office
 - DC? State?
- Get to know their staff
- Introduce them to a student
- Tell them YOUR story and why YOU are engaged
- Provide them with information, research, OUTCOMES
- Make yourself available for questions or problems
 - Introduce them to others if you don't have the answer
- Follow them on social media
- Thank them for their work

Build a Relationship



- Tell YOUR story!
- YOU are the Expert!
- You want to make them look good.
- Find a champion –
 - Someone with a sibling, a son or daughter or someone they know with ID
 - Someone who is interested in higher education
 - Someone you know personally (or tangentially)
 - Find YOUR members – you are a constituent
- Make yourself available

What to say?

... as few words as possible!

- Thank them!
 - For meeting
 - For their Senator/Member's past votes on related issues
- Make it short (10 min max)
- Bring materials to leave behind

- Hit the key points-What really matters?
 - Clearly state **reason/purpose** for visit first.
 - Why does this matter to **their constituents?**
 - Craft a message that is **meaningful** to their interest areas.
 - Provide them with the **sound bites** and **meaningful data** bites that they need.
 - Provide a **resource** if possible
 - Make the **‘ask’** clear if you are lobbying.

Now let's try it out!

- Decide who you want to talk to.
- Select the main topic for your conversation.
- Identify your top 3 talking points.
- Decide who will attend with you.
- Decide who else may need know/advise.
- Identify materials or ideas to create them.

Where to find more info...

- Elected officials' web pages
- Think College www.thinkcollege.net
- Association of University Centers on Disabilities
www.AUCD.org
- National Down Syndrome Congress
<http://www.ndsccenter.org>

Questions and Discussion



Thank You!

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What comes next?

- Look for resources on the Think College web site – comment, improve upon, contribute
- Join Public Policy Affinity Group – next call November 30, 2:00 Eastern – invite others!
- What is YOUR vision??
 - How can we help??



Public Policy Affinity Group



- Peer to Peer problem solving and celebrating
- Share resources – no need to “reinvent the wheel”
- Share legislative ideas and models – already proven success
- Go to Think College web site – online form to sign up, check in on what is happening, connect to others, find and share resources; links to existing sources
- Brainstorm issues, particularly during session

Top 10 Things You Need to Know When You Start Your Advocating for IPSE (with apologies to David Letterman)

10. Do you have inclusive post secondary education programs in your state?
9. Where are they located?
8. Which ones are TPSIDs? Which ones are not?
7. How many students attend each program? (data over time if you have it)
6. Which ones are Comprehensive Transition Programs (CTP) for Financial Aid?

4. How many of the students are or have been employed during the program?
5. How many students had a job upon exiting the program? What is their average wage and what are their hours worked? (if you have them)
3. How many students are or have been in competitive integrated employment?
2. How many transition age youth with intellectual disabilities are in your state?
1. Gather pictures, stories, videos of your students.

Now go educate your policymakers about what you do!

The Importance of Inclusive Higher Education in the State of _____.

1. Put your success story about a student here

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2. Put your picture here

--

3. Put 3 important statistics from your state here

1.

2.

3.

Inclusive post-secondary education provides opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities to access higher education. This education prepares them to live increasingly independent lives and pursue careers of their choice. Individuals with intellectual disabilities who receive post-secondary education are more likely to find paid employment than those who don't and their earnings are 73% higher than peers who do not receive post-secondary education. All individuals have the capacity to do great things, and to continue learning, to work and to contribute to their communities. Higher education helps everyone realize their potential. (Miglione, Battenworth, & Hart (2009); Think College Fast Facts No. 1 www.thinkcollege.net/publications/fast-facts).

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What do you say?

- **Postsecondary education (PSE) programs provide opportunities for youth with intellectual disability to develop employment skills and become less dependent on family and public supports.**
 - Youth with intellectual disability who participate in PSE and vocational rehabilitation are 26% more likely to exit with paid jobs than those who don't pursue PSE.
- **PSE programs are effective at helping students with intellectual disability find meaningful, competitive employment.**
 - 76% of students who completed a Transition and Postsecondary Program for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) in 2015 had a paid job, had participated in career development, or had done both by the time they graduated.
 - 40% of students exiting TPSID programs in 2015 had a paid job with 90 days of completion.

- **PSE programs increase people's wages and help them achieve financial stability.**
 - Youth with intellectual disability who complete PSE programs earn 73% more income than those who do not.
 - 78% of youth with intellectual disability who have completed PSE programs and found employment are paid at or above the minimum wage.
- **PSE programs offer a path to productivity and self-sufficiency for many people who've never had opportunities for employment before.**
 - 56% of employed TPSID graduates never had a paid job before enrolling in their program.
- **PSE programs promote inclusion of people with intellectual disability in society.**
 - 90% of TPSID students who are employed upon graduation enter jobs that are fully integrated and in the competitive labor market.
 - PSE programs with residential campuses expose students with intellectual disability and individuals without intellectual disability to each other, helping to build personal and professional connections.