

Etiquette and Tips
UCEA “Day on the Hill”
November 14, 2007

Here are guiding principles to greatly increase the effectiveness of your visit:

1. **Be on time.** Always be prompt, although you should plan on waiting for Members to return from meetings, the House or Senate floor, etc.
2. **Be prepared.** Proper preparation is essential. Do your homework. Know the issues, personalities, and voting record. Know your key points and anticipate likely questions or reactions.
3. **Be brief.** Don't try to cover too many issues. Decide in advance which are the most important to cover for each particular Member. Make your point and move on. Don't overstay your welcome. Do not “lobby” for issues not cleared ahead of time with the group you represent.
4. **Be Positive.** Accentuate the positive. Look for common ground. Don't retreat from a position, but respect other points of view. Be specific. Make it easy for the Member to vote your way and understand how legislation or issues affect her/his state.
5. **Be professional.** Wear clothing appropriate for a job interview or presenting at a national conference. You may wear comfortable shoes, but be sure to pack “dress shoes” as needed. Sandals, Crocs and sneakers do not achieve a professional image. Speak clearly and concisely. Use please and thank you. Shake hands. Use good eye contact and a pleasing tone of voice.
6. **Select a spokesperson.** Select someone who may be known to the Member or who is the most knowledgeable on the issues or otherwise best able to state your case. If each group member is going to speak, decide in advance who will say what.
7. **Leave something in writing.** Leave “one-pagers” describing your position so that the Member or staff can refer to it after you've gone. Make sure your name and contact information is either imprinted on them or your business card is securely attached.

Check with your university ahead of time for permission to use your usual university business card. You may need to print your own personal cards or utilize UCEA business cards if you have them depending on institutional protocol.

8. **Write a thank-you letter.** Write a note expressing appreciation for the visit and very briefly review your position. Perhaps briefly summarize any understandings reached or review exactly what you would like them to do – e.g. sponsor legislation, write a letter to the Appropriations Committee, etc.