Advocacy Training

Advocating at the Faculty Level
What is Advocacy?

“A broad set of tactics used to influence a decision often political in nature.”
It can involve…

- Gaining support for a cause
- Raising public awareness
- Lobbying Executives or fellow Councilors
- Changing attitudes or practices
- Maintaining the status quo
- Putting a new decision on the table

Tip: Advocacy should always reflect your goals and resources.
Types of Advocacy

and when to use them
Lobbying

• Direct communication intended to influence decisions or put new decisions on the table.

• Can be done through:
  • Meetings
  • Phone calls
  • E-mails
  • Letters
Media

• Use with caution.
• Contact with external media like news outlets should be done in conjunction with Executives.
• Types
  • Social Media
  • Interviews
  • Online Videos
Advertising

• Use for finding participants for focus groups or committees, or to direct constituents to more information about an issue.

• Types
  • Newsletters
  • Posters
  • Handbills
  • Tabling
  • Class talks
Petitions

• Use to show quantifiable support or opposition to a particular issue, change, or question.

• Types
  • Paper
  • Online
  • Email
Consultation

• Consultation can **simultaneously show** you what you should be **advocating for** and give you materials with which to advocate or lobby.

• **Types**
  • Surveys
  • Plebiscites/Referenda
  • Focus Groups
  • Collaborative Projects
  • Town Halls
How to Advocate?
Determine your Position

• Having a carefully thought out position right from the beginning will make your advocacy efforts simpler and more consistent.
What is best for your constituents?

- Use your existing knowledge of your constituents’ needs and concerns
- Conduct additional consultation whenever possible
- Your first job is to determine the needs of your constituents and represent them

Tip: Make a list of needs vs. wants and prioritize.
What is best for your organization?

• Consider your organization’s reputation, legitimacy, and external relationships
• Follow the rules - this includes SU bylaw, political policy, and any relevant Standing Orders

Tip: Try not to damage relationships or reputation.
Engage Members

• When your advocacy position is backed by member feedback, and your membership is involved and passionate about it, you gain legitimacy.
Education

An informed membership will be more involved, and will help you make better decisions on their behalf

- **Online**: mass e-mail and social media
- **In person**: class talks, tabling, and town halls
- **Advertising**: posters, handbills, and paid ads
Online

- Your Faculty Association may have access to a mailing list
- Use social media like Facebook or Twitter to spread the word quickly
- Fast and easy, but not always effective

Tip: Keep information as concise as possible.
In Person

- Explain issues more thoroughly
- Get feedback while explaining issues
- Reaches fewer constituents, but in a more impactful way

Tip: Be prepared and willing to answer questions.
Advertising

• Inform constituents of upcoming events or decisions they can participate in
• A wider public audience can increase support and put pressure on decision-makers

*Tip: Ads should be simple and eye-catching*
Consultation

This is a crucial part of advocacy:

- **Prioritize** and direct your advocacy efforts
- **Determine** the most pressing issues
- **Accurately** represent your members
- **Legitimize** your position
Surveys

• Get **consistent, measurable** data
• Gather **feedback** from a lot of people at once
• More quantitative than qualitative
• Regular surveys can track long-term trends

**Tip:** *Keep questions as neutral as possible.*
Plebiscites and Referenda

- More official than a survey
- Provides a clear mandate from students, broken down by vote
- Referenda are binding, plebiscites are not
- Not always practical outside of election season

Note: Advertise extremely well.
Focus Groups

- More qualitative than quantitative
- Get in-depth analysis or feedback
- Directly represent opinions of members at large
- Make focus group participants as diverse as possible

Tip: Discover Governance can help you organize, advertise, and conduct focus groups.
Collaborative Projects

- More qualitative than quantitative
- Often more anonymous than focus groups
- More fun and engaging
- Provides a visual representation of member opinion

Tip: Rope in as many random people as you can.
Engage Sub-Groups

- Meet with DAs, PAs, and clubs
- Meet with international students
- More compartmentalized feedback
- Understand sub-communities
- Take advantage of smaller groups’ more cohesive membership

Tip: Consult with sub-groups before making any advocacy decisions.
General Meetings

- Hold at least one per fall and winter semester
- Share annual plans and budgets
- Disseminate important information
- Get early feedback on upcoming issues
- Hold formal votes to gauge member support

Tip: Have an agenda planned well in advance.
Town Halls

- Disseminate information
- Get *feedback*
- Very *public* show of consultative effort
- Can be done in *collaboration* with others
- Can discourage members if handled badly

**Tip:** Include votes and discussions periods to engage attendees.
Lobbying

Directly reach decision-makers:

● **Articulate** your needs more thoroughly and precisely

● **Get immediate feedback** on your concerns

● **Negotiate** for better decisions
Lobbying Methods

● Two Main Methods of Lobbying
● 1. Topic Expert: build a reputation of being able to provide information and insight. This is built over time through planning, data management, and good transitions.
● 2. Sales Pitch: focus on demonstrating something the person is missing or should consider and sell them the solution.

Tip: Change methods to reflect who you’re talking too...
Meetings

• Know the issue and your objectives
• Be neat, presentable, polite, and personal
• Arrive early
• Directly ask for what you want, listen carefully to their response, and take notes
• Leave information and follow up afterwards

Tip: Send a thank-you note after the meeting.
Phone Calls

• Shorter and less personal
• A good way to set up meetings, gather information quickly, or follow up after meetings
• Less effective than in-person meetings for actual lobbying efforts

Tip: When e-mail fails, try the phone.
Letters and E-Mails

• A form of lobbying that any student can participate in
• As a representative, e-mails or letters should only be used to set up meetings, or follow up after a meeting, whenever in-person meetings are possible

Tip: Use this to compliment your lobbying efforts.
Protest

Raise awareness and create public pressure:
• A large number of people shows public support for your cause
• Publicizes issues and draws media attention
• Can include non-member supporters
• Might damage reputation if handled poorly
Preparation

• Know what your goals are, and communicate them to other protesters
• Ensure protest demands reflect advocacy goals
• Be smart about when/where you hold the protest

Tip: Protests with clear goals are more effective.
Advertising a Protest

- Social media and word of mouth are the best ways to engage people in an upcoming protest.
- Contact media outlets and let them know when you’re protesting and why.
- Don’t forget to send out a reminder on the day of the protest.

Tip: Ads should be simple and straightforward.
Holding a Protest

• Communicating clear, simple goals will help a protest stay on track
• Provide signs and other materials
• Stay safe: ask people behaving inappropriately to leave, and arrange for a security or police presence if necessary

Tip: Have volunteers to handle crowd control.
Representation

Automatic, easy access to decision-makers:

● Ex-officio seats on Faculty Councils and other committees
● Town-halls and similar events
● Show FA engagement and create public pressure
Faculties Councils and Other Committees

Automatic, easy access to decision-makers:

● Ex-officio seats on Faculty Councils and other committees
● Town-halls and similar events
● Show FA engagement and create public pressure

Tip: Don’t underestimate the power of a good question.
Town Halls

• Always attend faculty-run town halls and participate in them
• This is an opportunity to educate members and administrators on the student side of an issue and gather feedback at the same time

Tip: Focus on giving and receiving information.
Advertise Yourself!

Advertise issues and successes via:
• E-Mail
• Social Media
• Posters
• Paid Ads
• Tabling and Class Talks
Keep Records

Well organized records will help future executives advocate better on similar issues:

- File important correspondence
- Outline the issue, who was involved, what you did, what was effective/not, and update it as you go along