

Communicating with Policymakers

GENERAL GUIDELINES AND TIPS FOR FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUDENTS



Each policy engagement scenario is unique. Please consult with Eileen Kostanecki, IHPI Director of Policy Engagement & External Relations, at ekostan@umich.edu or 248-894-3143 for questions and input.

As private citizens, U-M faculty and staff should feel free to participate in policy and political activities. Please be clear that you are acting in your personal capacity (not on behalf of U-M)

- If your goal is to communicate personal positions on issues (“I think the Governor’s budget is great…” or “I oppose ACA repeal”), contact government officials as a private citizen.
- If you mention your U-M affiliation, please make it clear that you are expressing your views as a private citizen or expert in your field (and that these views are not on behalf of U-M).
- It is typically most effective to interact with elected officials who represent the area where you live because they prioritize their constituent’s interactions. Include your postal address in written communications.
 - To locate your congressional representatives: www.house.gov and www.senate.gov
 - To locate your state legislators: www.house.mi.gov and www.senate.mi.gov
- If you attend a “Hill Day” on behalf of another organization, such as a professional society:
 - Reference the organization on whose behalf you are attending (not your U-M title).
 - If you use your U-M title, include a disclaimer, such as “I am here in my personal capacity”.
 - Consider letting U-M Government Relations know: www.govrel.umich.edu/index.php/staff/

Coordinate with U-M’s Government Relations staff if you wish to connect with government officials to inform them about your research or findings

- If your goal is to inform, educate, and share your expertise with government officials, coordinate with a U-M Government Relations representative, as this type of activity requires a nuanced strategy.
 - Strategy varies based on topic, timing, legislative/administrative/agency interest, and external policy group interest (professional societies, associations, etc.).
 - U-M government relations professionals interact with government officials on topics important to the University and work diligently to prioritize and manage official U-M messaging.
 - At times, U-M Government Relations will advise that a faculty member serves as the University voice on an issue, but most frequently, an individual will be directed to undertake the activity in their personal capacity.

U-M resources regarding advocacy and lobbying activities

www.provost.umich.edu/faculty/handbook/9/9.F.html • www.govrel.umich.edu/index.php/federal/lobbying

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