

A Guide to Virtual Meetings with Your Legislators

Requesting a Meeting

- If you've never coordinated or conducted a congressional meeting before, consider reaching out to your UC campus, lab or medical center governmental relations office to help you coordinate the meeting. They are an excellent resource. You can find the contact information for your campus federal governmental relations representatives [online](#).
- Before you request a virtual meeting with your legislator's office, make sure you have access to a virtual meeting platform (i.e. Microsoft Teams, Zoom) and are comfortable navigating it.
- Once a meeting date/time is confirmed, offer to "host" the meeting, but recognize the legislator's office might have a preferred platform that you will need to use.

Prior to the Meeting

- If you are new to virtual meetings, practice with the platform. Test your Internet connection and/or phone signal by video chatting a family member or friend.
- Review the [member profile](#) for the legislator whose office you are speaking with and note the congressional committees on which the member serves.
- Make sure your background is not distracting. If you are taking the meeting in front of a window, if possible, cover the window so you do not appear as a silhouette on screen.
- If you live with others, notify them to give you privacy within the timeframe of your meeting.
- Write down what you want to say so you can stay on message.
- Make your points clear by explaining how your issue impacts the legislator's congressional district and constituents, as well as the region, state and nation.
- When possible, discuss the issue from a personal perspective – share your own experience or that of a family member or friend who has benefited from federally-funded research, student financial aid, college readiness programs and/or UC Health services.
- If multiple advocates plan to join the call, assign a leader who will open and close the meeting and keep things running on time.
- Before the meeting begins, silence your cell phone and place it out of view.

During the Meeting

- Introduce yourself and how you are connected to the University of California.
- Engage the member of Congress/staff by sharing your experiences and asking questions.
- Leave time for questions from the member of Congress and/or staff.
- If you are meeting with staff, remember they are responsible for briefing the member of Congress and recommending actions, and can be valuable allies in your advocacy.
- Work to establish long-term relationships with staff. Try to arrange for follow-ups.
- Remember to thank again member/ staff for meeting with you.

After the Meeting

- Follow up with a thank you note and include your business card/contact information.
- Media – social, print and digital – are excellent ways of engaging further with an office. Congressional offices track where and when the legislator appears in media so a well-placed op-ed or social media post that identifies the member and/or staff can lead to change.
- Follow up with your campus governmental relations staff, sharing how the meeting went, feedback and any additional actions with which they can assist you.

SAMPLE SCRIPT FOR VIRTUAL CONGRESSIONAL MEETINGS RELATED TO THE FY 2021 FEDERAL BUDGET PROCESS

Introduction

- Good morning/afternoon. On behalf of UC [campus/lab/health center], thank you for taking the time to meet with us today.
 - *If you are a constituent, mention so at this time.*
- **I am here today to ask for your support for education, research and health care funding**, including at the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Energy and Health and Human Services, as well as at the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation and other federal agencies that support research and student success across all disciplines and programs.
 - *Tailor the message depending on the topics you are there to discuss.*
- Through its partnership with the federal government, UC is an economic engine for California and the nation – educating generations of students and creating new knowledge, technologies, cures, jobs, startup companies and spinoff industries.
- The federal funds that the university receives help UC educate our nation's workforce, advance scientific and technological breakthroughs, and provide world-class medical training and patient care.

Key Messages

- The federal government is the university's single most important source of research funding, accounting more than half of UC's total research awards. In fiscal year (FY) 2019, **UC received \$3.48 billion in federal agency research funding.**
- **UC students receive approximately \$1.7 billion in federal aid**, including Pell Grants, other grants and fellowships, work-study and student loans.
- UC Health – the university's health care enterprise – is the nation's largest academic health system. **UC partners with the federal government to train more than 5,600 medical residents and deliver care to a large share of patients who depend upon federally-sponsored health plans for their health care coverage.** Nearly 70 percent of UC patients are covered by Medicare or Medicaid and these programs garnered more than \$4.7 billion in federal support in UC FY 2019-2020.

Tell Your Story (All Team Members):

- *If you are a student, talk about your experiences and how the federal government has played a role in your education.*
- *If you are a researcher, briefly talk about your research, its benefits to society and the nation and the value of federal funding.*
- *If you are a physician in training, briefly talk about the impact federal dollars have had on your education, and any plans you have to practice in underserved areas.*
- *If you or someone you know has benefited from federally funded research, student financial aid, college readiness programs and/or UC Health services, briefly share those stories.*

Closing:

- I urge you to support robust and sustained federal investments in education, research and health care funding.
- Thank you again for meeting with me and for your support of the University of California.
- If you would like more information about the resources the university offers, or if you have any questions, please let me know and we can arrange a follow-up meeting.