

1/20/2010

Dear Huskers For Higher Education Volunteer,

Thank you for being a part of our Huskers for Higher Education program – and welcome to those who are new to HHE. This volunteer program is invaluable for the University that we all have come to love.

With the legislative session beginning, here are a few tips and reminders about the Huskers for Higher Education program and your role as an advocate:

1. Contact me via e-mail or with the postage-paid postcards (available on request) after you contact your senator.
2. When contacting senators, don't forget the little things. Small efforts, like sending a thank you note after they vote the way you like on a bill, or general appreciation for their willingness to serve, will help you build a relationship and be an effective advocate for the university.
3. Visit the official HHE Web site at <http://www.huskeralum.org/getinvolved/hhe> to connect to the unicameral Web site for legislative updates.
4. Let me know what you're hearing about public policy, the university, particular bills or issues in your community. Your "man on the street" perspective is invaluable! With your help, we can act quickly to make clarifications and correct misinformation.
5. **Please review the [Advocacy Guide](#)** and contact me if you have any questions. You can also contact me to talk about an issue. Information that we have sent to you in the past will also be on our Web site at [www.huskeralum.org/getinvolved/hhe](http://www.huskeralum.org/getinvolved/hhe)

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Sincerely,

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## **Huskers for Higher Education Advocacy Guide**

### **Calls to Action**

The process begins with a call to action, which we receive from the university system through Chancellor Perlman's office. Calls to action are carefully timed around issues in the Unicameral and require immediate attention. The most important part of this program is your participation. Calls to action are issued by e-mail or other method if you don't have e-mail. It will describe the issue at hand and the university's position, give clear instructions for contacting your legislator and include a feedback reminder.

Unless otherwise requested, use the communication method you are most comfortable with to communicate quickly and effectively. Although it may not be feasible to schedule a meeting with a legislator on short notice, face-to-face contact is the most effective means of communication.

Please e-mail Logan at [lwaite@huskeralum.org](mailto:lwaite@huskeralum.org) once you have made contact. Postage-paid postcards are available to report your contact. If interested, please contact Logan for a supply of the postcards.

Any feedback that you receive from your legislator is greatly appreciated.

### **Connecting With Your Unicameral\***

- **Face-to-Face Meetings**

Face-to-face meetings work well because they allow senators to put faces with names. The best way to set up a meeting with a senator is to contact his or her legislative office and work with the staff member that handles the senator's schedule. When preparing for a meeting with a legislator, remember that his or her time may be limited. Try to have your thoughts gathered ahead of time so you can communicate your needs and positions clearly and concisely. If you cannot visit with the senator, it is also appropriate to visit with staff who have direct contact and influence with their respective senator. Always be respectful to staff.

- **Phone Calls**

Phone calls are effective because they allow for direct contact between constituents and legislators and are often easier to schedule than face-to-face meetings. Having your thoughts prepared ahead of time is still a good idea. If it is not possible to talk directly with the legislator, communicate your thoughts to a member of the legislator's staff. Staff will see to it that your comments are forwarded to the senator.

- **Letters**

Written letters are effective because they allow constituents to be complete and precise about their needs and positions. It is best to keep the letter focused on the main points you wish to make and to avoid rambling. Taking a constructive

approach to the issue is more likely to receive attention. Letters that are written by you in your own words are much more effective than form letters.

- **Electronic Mail:**

The senators have public e-mail addresses available on the legislature's Web site. Because of the large volume of e-mail a senator's office receives, one should not expect to automatically receive a response to every message sent. It is best when contacting your senator by e-mail to treat it like a regular letter. You will have more credibility if you place your name and contact information at the bottom of the note. This will also allow the legislator the flexibility of responding either electronically or by regular mail.

\*Information taken from "Connecting With Your Unicameral"  
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#### **Additional Tips**

- Once you have had a face-to-face meeting, phone conversation or e-mail exchange with the legislator, send a follow-up note restating the university's position and thanking them for their consideration.
- Express gratitude of the senator's staff because they do the most work with research, setting the agenda and relaying messages sent to the Senator.
- For additional impact, tell the senator how the university affects you.
- Ask to be placed on the senator's mailing list, if you are not already.
- If meeting with your senator at the Capitol isn't possible because you live outside of Lincoln, arrange to meet with them when they're home or attend an event where the senator will be in attendance such as a townhall meeting, etc.
- Be brief and to the point with your communications.
- Be candid and personal. Use your own words.
- Identify yourself as a constituent or supporter.
- Discuss only one issue per communication.
- Be appreciative and supportive. Acknowledge any support he or she has given for higher education.
- Agree to disagree. If you and your senator have opposing views, respectfully refute the senator's arguments and restate strong points to back up your view.
- Use facts and numbers that you are sure are correct, in order to garner more credibility.
- If the senator doesn't contact you, send a follow-up seeking assistance and information on a certain issue.
- If a senator asks you a question and you don't know the answer, offer to get back to them with the correct information. Never pretend you know the information or purposely give false information.

## **Huskers for Higher Education Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. What is the general purpose of the program?**

The purpose of Huskers for Higher Education (HHE) is to inform alumni from across the state about legislative bills affecting the University of Nebraska–Lincoln or the university system. We understand that not everyone is going to agree with the university’s position. However, we do ask that if you support the university’s position that you contact your senator.

### **2. How can I get information during the legislative session?**

The Huskers for Higher Education page at the Nebraska Alumni Association Web site provides a link to the Unicameral’s Web site where you can stream live video of daily legislative sessions and public hearings, review the daily hearing schedule and legislative agenda, your senator’s voting record and other information. The page can be accessed through the alumni association Web site at <http://www.huskeralum.org/getinvolved/hhe/>

### **3. Is it possible to receive the information further in advance of the bill being discussed?**

Because of the unpredictable nature of the Unicameral, bills can move through the legislative process quickly and it may be impossible to give you information weeks in advance. We try to provide the information to you as soon as it is available to us. If you have given us an e-mail address or fax number, you will receive the information on the same day it was received. If you have not given us an e-mail address or fax number (if you don’t have an e-mail address), please do so to facilitate your notification of issues. Your e-mail address will only be used for HHE purposes. Quite often, little notice is given prior to voting on issues related to the university. The ability to send you requests to contact your senator in a timely fashion, such as an e-mail, is appreciated.

### **4. Where does the information we receive originate?**

All four university campuses work together to raise awareness regarding the potential impact a legislative measure may have on the university system. As a University of Nebraska–Lincoln supporter, I provide you with information (received from the Chancellor’s Office) on how these issues affect the Lincoln campus. All of the information you receive represents the university’s official position on issues.

### **5. I would like to participate in other volunteer activities beyond legislative advocacy. How can I become more involved in these programs?**

The alumni association is happy to have you involved in many of our programs. We have specific programs designed to help with student recruitment, career networking and more. Visit the alumni association Web site [www.huskeralum.org/getinvolved](http://www.huskeralum.org/getinvolved) for more information.