

"A strong University of Washington builds strong communities for all Washington citizens."

## What We Do

UW Impact is your resource for important legislative and policy issues affecting the University of Washington. Our goal is to provide focused, effective opportunities for alumni and friends to take action to support the University of Washington and quality higher education.

## Why Should I Contact My Legislator

First; remember that as a citizen, you are a vital voice to the Legislature. UW Impact helps organize volunteers who are Washington residents, UW alumni, neighbors, parents, and community leaders striving to elevate awareness of policies affecting higher education and the UW while inspiring dialog among our communities.

As a part of the UW Impact efforts, our volunteers are all grassroots volunteers, with a vested interest in the success of our state's higher education institutions.

We want to help you find a voice in higher education advocacy through learning more about the issues and taking positive action to improve policy decisions.

Please visit our website: [www.uwimpact.org](http://www.uwimpact.org) to learn more and get involved in being a civic advocate today. We aim to keep you informed of what's happening with the UW in Olympia.

## How Do I Find My Legislator

Our website, [www.uwimpact.org](http://www.uwimpact.org) provides you with the tools to find your Legislators. By joining our UW Impact effort, we make it very easy for you to enter the information so you have access to your elected officials. The Washington State Legislature also maintains an excellent site with a number of tools for looking up members of the State Senate and State House of Representatives (and other elected officials as well). Visit the site at [www.leg.wa.gov](http://www.leg.wa.gov). In your packet, we have also provided a hard copy list of the most current members of the State Senate and State House of Representatives.

After visiting the website or reviewing enclosed information and you have questions or need information about:

- how to find your legislator,
- send an e-mail message to [support@leg.wa.gov](mailto:support@leg.wa.gov),
- or call 360.786.7573. Please note that the e-mail account cannot accept attachments.

**Fact:** For every \$1 the state invests in UW, \$22 in revenue is generated back to the state by UW.\*

Since 2009, state budget support has dropped **52%**  
Replaced by unsustainable tuition hikes.

## How Do I Contact My Legislator

- Also know that you can contact us at anytime at [admin@uwimpact.org](mailto:admin@uwimpact.org).
- You may send a brief message to your district legislators through the in-state toll-free Hotline number: 800.563.6000. Callers to the Hotline can leave a brief message for their district legislators or for the Governor or Lt. Governor on issues of concern or on questions you may have about bills or laws. During the Legislative session, UW Impact will often send you emails to make these Hotline calls. These messages are forwarded electronically to the appropriate individuals. When leaving a message with the Hotline, please be prepared to give your name and street address. During the Legislative session, the Hotline is open from 8AM to 8PM Monday through Friday and from 9AM to 1PM on Saturday.
- You may send an e-mail message to your legislator at anytime by using the legislator e-mail services at <https://dlr.leg.wa.gov/MemberEmail/Default.aspx>. or of course, use our easy-to-use tools on our website: [www.uwimpact.org](http://www.uwimpact.org). We often ask our UW Impact members to send emails to Legislators and provide appropriate links in our messages.
- The Hearing Impaired can send a brief message to their district legislators through the in-state toll-free TTY Hotline number: 800.635-9993.
- You can also mail letters and/or information to your Legislators. You can access the mail addresses of your Legislators at [www.leg.wa.gov](http://www.leg.wa.gov).

## What Messages Do I Send To My Representative

Whatever message you send, there are tips that help you be the most effective advocate. The following are good tips regarding writing a letter to your Legislator:

- Be brief; never write more than one page.
- Make your letter neat and easy to read (type or print).
- \* Make sure you understand the legislative process. Please contact our staff at UW Impact if we can help you in any way with understanding bills or up-to-date information that will help you in communicating.
- Identify the issue at the top of the letter and cover only one issue per letter. If you have more than one issue that needs to be addressed, write separate letters for each issue.
- Remember; you're the expert; make your letter informative.
- Identify yourself and the reason for your expertise.
- Get right to the point. For example, you may wish to begin your letter like this: "I hope you will support (oppose) HB or SB ####." Give your reasons for supporting or opposing the measure. Tell

## Sample Correspondence

your legislator why you think the bill, if it becomes law, will help or hurt you, your children, your business, or your community. Explain what it means to you.

- Use terms they will understand and avoid using abbreviations.
- Offer to be of assistance. Offer to testify if there is a hearing regarding the issue with which you're concerned.
- Ask for a reply if you want one and be solicitous. Ask, "Will you support higher education? I look forward to hearing your response". However, keep in mind how many meetings and hearings your legislator must attend. They will call or write to you as soon as they are able.
- Be polite and reasonable. Lawmakers can't please everyone. They may disagree with you. Try to respect their views. Don't lose your temper, even on paper or in an email. Tell your legislator what you think and why, but be polite.
- And finally, be sure to say "thanks."

Here is a classic letter to a Legislator using the tips above.

The Honorable.....  
Washington State Senate  
State Capitol  
P. O. Box [find address on website [www.leg.wa](http://www.leg.wa)]  
Olympia, WA 98501

Dear Rep. Smith,

I'm a University of Washington alum and one of your constituents, and I'm extremely proud of our university.

That's why I'm writing you to urge your continued support of UW as you and other members of the state Legislature continue your work on the (fill in the issue).

I know you'll be facing tough decisions in the weeks and months ahead as you work on this issue. And, as do all Washington residents, I am aware of trade-offs in budget discussions and the impacts of taxes. But I also want to see the UW continue to attract and retain the best faculty members, rather than cut staff. I want students to have the same opportunities I had at the UW. Research being conducted at UW attracts a large number of federal research dollars, private gifts and grants. That helps bring new companies and new jobs to our state, providing a strong financial boost that is value added for all citizens.

Thank you for whatever positive actions you can take on behalf of UW.

Sincerely,  
Jane Doe  
Street address  
City, WI 53223

## Sample Thank You Correspondence

Thank-you note - an effective extra that can make a difference!

After you receive an e-mail from or speak or visit with your state representative or senator, UW Impact suggests it is advisable and advantageous to send them a thank-you note. Not only is this a courtesy that is appreciated by legislators, it is also an effective way to re-state your message and establish a good working with relationship with your elected officials.

Month, day, year

The Honorable [representative/senator/governor's first and last name]  
Address  
P.O. Box \_\_\_\_ \*  
[office address]  
Washington City, WA Zip

Dear Representative/Senator/Governor \_\_\_\_\_,

I appreciate you taking the time to (meet with me) (date) (respond to my letter/e-mail), and for listening to (acknowledging) what I had to say about higher education funding.

I realize that the state of Washington is facing some difficult budget decisions, but I truly believe that any decision to cut higher education funding, particularly UW's, would be contrary to the best long-term interest of our state.

Thank you,  
Your name

## Sample Phone Call Scripts

### Phone Calls

A phone call is an effective and convenient way to speak to a legislator directly. Here are a few tips for communicating your issues by phone:

- Identify yourself and ask to speak to a legislator directly: let the person know that you are a constituent, if this is the case. Please be aware that you may not be able to speak with the legislator on your initial call. Most incoming calls are received by legislative aides or the legislator's administrative assistant.
- State your support for the university and how it affects you personally. If you are calling about a particular piece of legislation, be prepared to provide the bill number, title, and subject matter. UW Impact will often provide you with all of

## Personal Visits to Your Elected Officials

this information during the legislative session.

- Respectfully request the legislator's support on the issue and a response stating his/her position.
- Be issue-focused. Keep it short and to the point, summarizing key points.
- Listen politely. If a legislator disagrees with you, don't argue. Be prepared, however, to politely restate your position.
- If the legislator asks questions you are not prepared to answer, express to the legislator your willingness to get more information and refer the questions to the UW Impact staff at [admin@uwimpact.org](mailto:admin@uwimpact.org) or by phone at 206.853.3455.
- If your legislator is not available, state your name, address, and telephone number, the reason for your call, and request a response.
- Once you have had a phone conversation with the legislator, send a follow-up note restating the position you have been advocating and thanking them for his/her consideration.
- Report back to the UW Impact staff on your phone call by completing the contact report form or contacting staff. This information will help the staff keep track of the UW Impact's advocates' progress and about the position of your legislator on the issue you raised.

## Personal Visits to Your Elected Officials

Another effective way of getting your message across is to personally visit your state representatives. Most members of the state Legislature return home on the weekends and during the off-session in the Spring and Summer. Take time to call or visit them and talk about the session events. If they have introduced legislation, show an interest in their efforts.

In order to maximize your effectiveness, we can help you pinpoint the issues you wish to discuss with your representative. Please e-mail us at [admin@uwimpact.org](mailto:admin@uwimpact.org) to discuss how to be the most effective in your personal visits with your legislator

Here are some suggested steps to take before, during and after a meeting with a legislator or a legislator's staff.

- Prepare for the meeting. Check the UW Impact website for the latest Action Updates and issue descriptions.
- Do not be nervous or intimidated. Remember two things: 1) You are a citizen, a taxpayer, and a voter in the legislator's home district and elected officials work for you and with you; and 2) You are active in promoting higher education and can be confident in the information that you have to offer.
- Be respectful. The legislator holds an important office and deserves your respect.

- Be concise. Stick to the issue you want to discuss and do not get technical.
- Remember that all politics are local. If you can illustrate a point by giving an example in your home district, or how higher education has had a positive impact on you or your family, use it.
- Do not argue. If the legislator disagrees with you, state your views, and listen politely to the opposing position. Thank the legislator for his or her time, saying that you hope to work together on another issue in the future.
- Do not overstay your welcome. A meeting usually lasts 15 minutes and no longer than 30 minutes. The length of the meeting is dictated by the legislator's schedule and interest. As a result, be sure to budget time so that you can ask the questions you want or request the action that you want the legislator to take.
- Leave a handwritten note. If you miss your legislator, or he/she is unable to meet with you because of a last-minute vote, be sure to leave a personal note. State legislators' administrators and assistants at the State Capitol will be sure that your note is delivered. Briefly describe your higher education issue and thank them for their support. Always include your home address so they will know that you are from their district.

## Town Hall Meetings

**Town Hall Meetings:** Legislators will often hold “town hall meetings” in their districts providing an opportunity for constituents to discuss issues in a semi-informal setting. Some legislators hold these meetings during the session while others schedule meetings when they are not in Olympia. UW Impact will often let you know of these opportunities to meet with your Legislators, which is an excellent opportunity to talk face-to-face and have a dialogue about higher education issues. Check your newspaper or community blogs for announcements, ask to be on your Legislator's list of constituent contacts, or look to your emails for updates from UW Impact to find out more about town hall meetings.

## Legislative Session Messaging

**Legislative Session Messaging:** During the Legislative session, we will send calls-to-action on specific bills or ask you to send general messages we think will be helpful in supporting higher education and the UW. We know not everyone will have the time to act or even feel comfortable responding due to the actual bill or because you want to know more. We aim to provide information about bills and issues pending before the Legislature so that you can make your best, informed decisions. We appreciate that not all of our advocates will be comfortable with positions 100% of the time; diversity of opinion makes for a robust and responsive democracy!

## Interim Period Between the Legislative Session

**Interim Period Between the Legislative Session:** Between the budget session and the short session is a great time to contact your Legislator. The summer and autumn months are a particularly opportune time to

## Sample Messaging for Off-Session Months

send a message regarding the need to maintain quality higher educational opportunities for Washington students. Legislators have aides who are often more available to receive messages during the off-session months than during the busy law-making times in Olympia. It is also a great time to gather your friends and neighbors to have a Legislator visit a small group of concerned citizens to discuss higher education concerns.

Legislators want to know your heartfelt concern about the need for quality experiences for students who are seeking higher education degrees. Telling legislators that there are constituents who think higher education is a priority for the state of Washington is a vital message for each Legislator to hear. A simple email stating that the UW needs to have the funding to offer quality experiences for Washington students and you believe in the importance of a good college education is all you need to share with your Legislators!

Here is an example of a sample email or voice mail message for the off-session months:

I am a constituent and want to let you know that I am an advocate for higher education. I am a proud graduate of the UW and received a quality education at this fine institution. I want all students in this state to experience the same opportunities I had. I appreciate how very important it is to get a college education and want higher education to be one of the top priorities of the state of Washington.

Thank you, Alice Alumni  
(be sure to include your name, address, and phone number)

Here is another example:

I am one of your constituents and wanted to let you know that I think it is critical to support bills that keep Washington State higher education as the innovation engine for the economy while ensuring that the adverse effects of the current economy on deserving students who want to attend higher education institutions are limited. I appreciate your leadership, especially at this time when investing in the future is not always a popular position, but a needed one.

Thank you,  
Harold Husky (be sure to include your address and phone number)

And, another example for an email or voice mail during the off-session months:

I am a proud graduate of the University of Washington. I received my degree and have a world of opportunities because of what I learned and most importantly, how I learned to keep learning! The UW is a place

where dreams are born, nurtured, and come to reality for many students just as they did for me. I want all students in our state to be able to have a quality education so that students give back to our communities and work place. I hope you join me in this priority.

Thanks, Eunice University  
(be sure to include your address and phone number)

Thank you for your support of the University of Washington and quality higher education!