

General Talking Points for CASE Participants Capitol Hill Meetings

The goal of the CASE advocacy meetings is to introduce yourself to the Congressman and his/her staff, discuss your research and its impact locally and nationally, and share with them your thoughts on the importance of federal support for R&D and education. Below are some meetings tips and talking points for your use.

Make an Appointment

- Contact the Appointment Secretary/Scheduler to set up a meeting with your elected officials or ask to speak with the Legislative Assistant (LA) for Science and Technology. Go to www.house.gov/ and www.senate.gov to find information on your elected officials.
- When speaking with either the Scheduler or the LA, identify yourself including the name of the university you represent.
- Specify that the purpose of your meeting is to discuss “federal support for research and education and its importance for graduate students.”

Meeting Tips

- Be on time and be flexible. Changes in the legislative calendar and office activity often mean Members and staff must juggle multiple priorities and changes happen.
- Be prepared and succinct. If you do not know the answer, be honest! Always commit to finding out the answer and follow up.
- Explain how federal research funding affects the Senator’s or Representative’s state or district with a short anecdote or facts about the district. (e.g., how many people work for your university and its economic impact).
- Limit the presentation; do not expect to get more than 15-30 minutes of a staff members time, make sure there is adequate time for Q&A.
- Never be negative about politicians; do not whine or lecture to Members or staffers; do not imply that R&D funding is or should be an entitlement. Remember that members have to make difficult decisions every day about federal priorities.
- Have a clear “ask” for the member, and thank the member for their past support (ask your government relations rep. for guidance on this before the meeting).
- Always follow up with a thank you note!

Innovation and Entrepreneurship

- America’s innovation depends on both funding of scientific research and technology development and developing a talented workforce that is well-educated across all science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) disciplines.
- Since the 1950s, more than half of America’s economic growth has been tied to scientific discovery and technological innovation. Our nation has fostered a highly creative environment that pioneers new markets. American innovation has been highly entrepreneurial, spawning start-up businesses and allowing larger companies to revitalize their product lines via acquisition of smaller firms’ technology and talent.
- One of the reasons the bulk of basic R&D in the United States is conducted at universities or national labs, and supported by the federal government, is because it takes time, often a long time and therefore does not have a short-term demonstrated return on investment.
- While there is no way to predict which piece of research will yield a discovery with enormous import for our health, safety, environment, economy or quality of life, it is almost

certain that the loss of innovation that results from the depressed science funding of the past decade will be immeasurable and impossible to recoup.

Funding of Science and Technology

- Federal funding for R&D has been on a downward trend for the past decade and has not exceeded 5 percent of the total federal budget since 1990. Funding for R&D in FY 2017 accounted for just 3.5 percent of the total federal budget, which is a historic low point.
- The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 sets a discretionary spending cap for FY 2017 that would leave the budget essentially flat before taking into account inflation. The discretionary budget contains virtually all R&D and represents a “center of gravity” around which science agency budgets tend to cluster, so constrained discretionary spending means limited room for growth in science budgets.
- An early review of the FY2017 proposed budget request would rely on mandatory spending to achieve the increases proposed by the Administration. The entire \$4.2 billion proposed increase in new mandatory spending is entirely on the nondefense side of the budget, thus the base discretionary budgets for many major nondefense research agencies would remain flat or decrease in FY 2017.
- We urge you to support predictable and sustained support for federal R&D funding in FY 2017 and beyond.

Graduate Education

- Well-educated scientists and engineers drive the technological development that fuels America’s competitive edge in the global marketplace. Robust education in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) must occur at all levels from elementary to graduate, via formal and informal opportunities to create the talented workforce we need.
- Graduate programs in the United States are respected and emulated worldwide, and are an international magnet for talented students. At a time when American leadership and prosperity depend increasingly on the creation and use of knowledge, graduate education provides our country with an important competitive advantage.
- Our system of combining graduate education with cutting-edge research strengthens American research, while also producing highly educated individuals who will become the next generation’s scientists, teachers, and leaders in government and industry.
- Doctoral students are young adults with many competing opportunities before them, from immediate employment to professional school programs that may lead to lucrative professional or business careers. Just as with the federal investment in basic research, the federal investment in graduate and doctoral education serves the nation by filling a critical gap that the private-sector cannot fill.