

## **Tips for Having a Successful Capitol Hill Visit**

The goal of the CASE advocacy meetings is to introduce yourself to the Member of Congress 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.

### ***How to make an Appointment***

- Contact the Appointment Secretary/Scheduler to set up a meeting with your elected officials via email or ask to visit with the Legislative Assistant (LA) for Science and Technology. Go to [www.house.gov/](http://www.house.gov/) and [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) to find information on your elected officials.
- When emailing a request for a meeting, the student should send an email to the Scheduler and the S&T LA. Students should identify themselves including the name of the university they represent. The goal is to visit with the Member of Congress, but be prepared to only meet with the S&T LA.
- Specify that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss “federal support for research and education and its importance for graduate student education” and that they are part of a group of graduate students visiting Congress

### ***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). Check the CASE Workshop Resources page for links to reports that show 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.
- Tell a story! Data and graphs can be good visuals, but pairing it with stories helps to resonate the message and can be easier to remember.
- Never be negative about politicians or political parties; 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 must 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 representative for guidance on this before the meeting).
- Always follow up with a thank you note!