Lewis-Burke Associates LLC

TALKING POINTS AND COMMUNICATION TIPS

Tailoring your message to fit your audience will improve your effectiveness in communicating science and delivering your message. Below are general communication tips as well as general talking points for meeting with Members of Congress and their staff.

GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS TIPS

- Know your audience and tailor your message accordingly.
- Create an "elevator speech" that you can expand upon for longer discussions.
    - Avoid using acronyms, jargon, or abbreviations.
    - Below is a diagram that represents the differences between how to structure a scientific paper and how to structure your "elevator speech" for effective communication.

Structure of a Scientific Paper	Structure of an "Elevator Speech"

- Discuss the broader impacts of your research; be sure to connect your research to the district/state if possible.
    - Ask yourself: "Why would my grandparents care?"
- Be sure to include your "ask" (that is, what you want). For example, you may want a Member of Congress to support a particular bill, support specific funding levels for various federal agencies, sign letters of support (often referred to as a "Dear Colleague" letter), etc.

GENERAL TALKING POINTS

Introduce Yourself

- State your name, title, and affiliation.

Set the Tone

- *"We understand the difficult fiscal environment our nation faces and that hard choices need to be made; however, it is also necessary to make strategic investments, such as in scientific research. Such investments help address national priorities, foster economic growth, and create jobs."*
- *"We urge Congress to work toward a balanced, long-term deficit reduction plan that avoids the devastating impacts of the across-the-board spending reductions (sequester). Critical investments in scientific research and education need to be sustained for the U.S. to remain competitive in a rapidly changing global economy. Fundamental discovery science, such as High-Energy Physics, makes significant contributions to technology development and innovation."*
- *"For example, high-energy physics makes contributions to numerous different areas of national interest, such as producing cleaner energy, fighting cancer, reducing nuclear waste, designing new drugs, and discovering the secrets of the universe."* (NOTE: Make it personal; tell them about your research; tell a story with a good outcome.)
- Discuss your own research, partnerships with Fermilab and DOE, and any connections you can make between your research and positive impacts to your state/district.

Retrieved from http://standupforamerica.wordpress.com/2009/08/25/defining-the-greater-good/facts-are-coming-cartoon/ .

State Your "Ask"

- "Please sustain funding for High-Energy Physics through the Department of Energy's Office of Science and the National Science Foundation to continue the process of innovation and discovery."
- Be sure to thank the staff when you leave and follow-up with a thank you email.