

## Guide to meeting an elected official

**Notify the UNMC Government Relations office at 402-559-5768 or email [mdbowen@unmc.edu](mailto:mdbowen@unmc.edu). The UNMC Government Relations office can assist you in making the appointments and providing background about other issues to be aware of around the time of your appointment.**

### Tips for Meeting with Elected Officials and Staff:

- Be on time for the appointment. Most appointments are 15-20 minutes. Be friendly and keep introductions brief to allow enough time to talk about your topic. Be prepared to present your topic within 5-10 minutes. If you are a group, decide ahead of time who will lead the conversation for the group.
- State the topic and the 1-2 main points you want to make. Be specific. Use local examples. It is good to know the national impact, but your elected official needs to know the state or local impact to know why the topic is important to Nebraska or UNMC. Local examples or personal stories help make it meaningful.
- It is a conversation so give the elected official/staff person time to talk after you've presented the topic. Know with whom you are meeting and be generally aware of public comments they may have made about the topic. Let them explain their thinking and give them time to ask questions. Be aware there may be opposition to the topic and be prepared to answer questions, if asked.
- If you are asking the elected official to do something (cosponsor a bill, support a program, etc.) make sure you ask, otherwise it is just an informational meeting for the elected official.
- If you have handouts make sure they summarize the primary points and do not exceed 2 pages.

### UNMC Policy on Politically Related Activities

Many times when you attend an association meeting or conference you will be asked to visit the office of your elected official. If you do you are there speaking for yourself as an individual. You can explain the impact you believe an issue will have on UNMC, but you are speaking from personal perspective. Here is the UNMC policy on politically related activities.

#### 5.2 Politically Related Activities:

1. UNMC cannot and does not place any limit on the rights of UNMC employees to enjoy full exercise of their rights to speak and act as citizens of the United States and the state of Nebraska. However, public accountability demands that employees refrain from using state resources (telephone, work time, UNMC stationary, staff time, etc.) to lobby on legislative or other policy issues. Responsibility to one's colleagues requires that employees refrain from using their position at UNMC for lobbying and make clear that political expression is personal and does not represent a position of UNMC or any of its units.
2. Employees of UNMC are free to testify or otherwise publicly comment on any issue of interest to them so long as they do so as an individual and not as a representative of UNMC.
3. When speaking at a public forum, one must indicate explicitly that the comments to be made are of a personal nature and so not represent a policy decision on the part of UNMC.
4. If written correspondence is used to advocate a personal position on public policy issues, it must be done on personal time without use of staff resources and on stationary that does not identify UNMC in any way. As with the public forum, the letter should indicate that the individual is not speaking on behalf of UNMC, but as an individual.