# STUDENT ACTION TOOLKIT

A practical introduction to university, government, and community relations suited to student leadership at George Mason University.

## LEARN ABOUT

- Lobbying & Advocacy
- University Affairs
- Government Affairs
- Community Affairs

# Lobbying & Advocacy

**Get your facts from credible sources and present them neatly to your audience.**

According to Dr. David Rehr's ebook Cutting Through the Congressional Clutter, "providing credible, reliable information is the top determinant in gaining access and influence."

Consider searching for credible information through GMU University Libraries' databases linked **here**.

**Recognize the unique backgrounds and lived experiences of the legislators and staff you speak with.**

You need to tailor your message to your audience for it to resonate with them.

According to the aforelisted ebook, "we all bring experiences and insights from positions we previously held, shaping how we think and act."

**Leverage the power of the Mason community.**

According to the aforelisted ebook, one of the highest-ranking advocacy tools is bringing in constituent supporters.

Finding or being someone from a legislator's constituency can strengthen your advocacy. George Mason University has **over 40,000 students**. There's always someone.

For more information on lobbying and advocacy best practices, download and read Dr. David Rehr's ebook Cutting through the Congressional Clutter for free **here**.

# University Affairs

**Organize students to create a movement.**

There are **over 300 registered student organizations** at George Mason University and over 40,000 students.

Find or create a registered student organization with other like-minded students to organize and strengthen your message. Learn more about RSOs **here**.

**Create a comprehensive advocacy strategy.**

Strategy is not just a plan to achieve what you want based on your current position, it is one that anticipates and plans around opposition.

Your advocacy should account for opposition for at least the following reasons: cost, time, personnel required, and opportunity cost.

**Persuade the right changemaker to act.**

Every single administrator at George Mason University is responsible for something. To get something done, you need to establish a rapport with your ideal changemaker.

Find an administrator whose job is suited to implementing the changes you're advocating for and lobby them using the best advocacy tools.

To find the right changemaker to advocate to, use the George Mason University directory linked **here**.

# Government Affairs

### Know who represents you at every level.

USA.gov has a tracker you can use to get a list of elected officials at the federal, state, and local levels who represent you based on your physical address. That tracker is linked **here**.

And you can learn more about legislators in and around the George Mason University area **here.**



### Communicate articulately and strategically.

Pages six through nine of Student Government's Civic Action Toolkit outline best practices for contact with representatives at the federal, state, and local levels.

It also includes simple templates for calls and emails. That toolkit is linked below!

### Build relationships and maintain rapport.

"People don't buy from strangers." – David Kennedy

Pages fifteen through eighteen of the aforelisted ebook outline how to build a meaningful relationship with members of Congress and their staff. Dr. Rehr's ebook is linked above!



For more information on how students can meaningfully engage in politics, check out Student Government's Civic Action Toolkit **here**. Since that document was created a few years ago, though, please do your due diligence and double-check specific information as necessary.

# Community Affairs

**Explore the community around you.**

To advocate with the community, you need to get to know that community by exploring it and building relationships.

A great way to start is by checking out George Mason University's **Patriot Perks** and Fairfax City's **Shop Local** listings.

**Bring the community together.**

Once you've built relationships in the community around you, you can call those connections in to participate in public events like **political debates**, **town halls**, and **farmers' markets**.

Communities become stronger when leaders bring people together to develop bonds.

**Give back to the community.**

At the university level, University Sustainability regularly offers environmentalism-oriented volunteer opportunities through its **portal**.

At the community level, Volunteer Fairfax maintains a **database** of volunteer opportunities in and around the Fairfax community.

For more information on community action, you can check out the opportunities listed **here** by George Mason University's Office of Community Engagement and Civic Learning.

# Your Student Government

# About Us

George Mason University's Student Government is a permanent standing entity that is representative of the entire student body.

We advocate for the interests of our fellow peers, meet with the administration on a regular basis to address students' issues and concerns, educate the student body with regard to the state of the institution, and represent the interests of each student.

Our mission is to serve as a liaison to the administration, faculty, and community.

# Contact Us

Throughout the years, we have been an influential agent for change at George Mason University. From enacting a medical amnesty policy to creating pronoun stickers, we affect change. Contact us to learn more and join us!

@masonstudentgov

sg@gmu.edu

sg.gmu.edu

george-mason-student-government