

How to speak persuasively about the U's value

Use these tips to help you plan your advocacy message. You only need a few key points to tell a powerful personal story about the value of the U in your life.

Your message should have three parts.

Part 1: I am the U of M in my community

- Establish your connections to the U of M and your legislative district.
- If your U of M tie has local significance (examples include business owner, third-generation graduate in the district, locally employed), include it.

Part 2: The value of the U

- State one or two points about the unique value of the U to you. It can be personal or professional, so long as it speaks to a concrete difference the U made in your life.
- If possible, refer to the U's economic impact. Legislators need examples of why the U makes a difference in constituents' pocketbooks.
- If your district has farms, a vet clinic, a dentist or doctor's office, a 4-H club, a tech firm, or a newspaper, the U has probably made it a better place to live, work, and grow.

Part 3: Ask your legislator to help (examples)

- Especially in these times, please support a state budget that keeps the U's cutting-edge degree programs strong and accessible for students.
- Please vote for a state budget that sustains the U's ability to improve Minnesota's bottom line through research and innovation.
- The U's teaching and research programs give Minnesota a global edge. Please pass a plan that keeps the U and Minnesota ahead of the curve.
- The U is our state's best job-creation resource—please ensure our next state budget keeps the U healthy when we need it most.

Three things you can do between now and May 18 to help the U

1. Follow up on your contact

Legislators care about your stories, but they also hear from a lot of people every day. Once you've made a contact, call or write again and cement your point. Restate your concerns, ask what your legislator is doing to make things better, and (if you feel it is applicable) offer your help as a constituent who has expertise on this issue or perhaps others.

Taking this next step lets them know you really care about the U, and helps you build a better relationship with someone you may need to contact again on any number of issues.

2. Tell your U story to other people

Let your friends and communities know why they should care about the well-being of the U of M. A good letter to the editor is likely to be published in a hometown paper, and it doesn't have to be much different than your basic message. Likewise, you can invite friends, coworkers, and family to join the Legislative Network (supporttheu.umn.edu) or to look for the Legislative Network on Facebook or LinkedIn.

3. Get more out of the Legislative Network

The Legislative Network has even more tools you can use to improve your advocacy efforts:

- Receive updates and action alerts
- Recruit friends to join the Network
- Keep us posted on your contacts with elected officials
- Learn about upcoming district meetings

For tips on these and other advocacy resources, contact us at legnet@umn.edu or 612-624-4596.