

APSCU Congressional Visit Guide



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Overview

Having a Member of Congress tour your college will have a positive impact and will help accomplish both APSCU's goals in Washington and your goals at home. This resource will assist you and provide details on every aspect of the tour and the process for getting started. Below are some general guidelines and recommendations for planning a congressional visit to your campus.

- 1) Plan Ahead:** Having a Member of Congress visit campus is a chance to show off your students and their contributions to the community. It is often good to have a "Welcome Congressman X" banner or a sign in an area with high visibility. Create an agenda to follow, issue based talking points, and other relevant data. Always have a camera to take pictures of the tour.
- 2) Working Together:** APSCU is here to assist you with congressional outreach in any way possible. We have adopted a more direct approach in organizing congressional visits by contacting schedulers in the Member's district on behalf of the school wishing to host a visit. CCA can provide you with pertinent legislative information to increase relevance and productiveness of the visit. Please contact Chris Collins at CCA to begin the Congressional visit process. Contact information can be found on page 15.
- 3) Track the Clock:** Given the demands on the Member's time, it is best to keep the visit concise and on schedule. A walk through the day prior to the event is recommended to ensure that all participants understand their role, know the purpose of the visit, are aware of the route that will be taken in and around the buildings, and know how much time they will be allotted for each portion of the presentation.



Rep. Kenny Marchant (R-TX) visits Lincoln Technical Institute.

- 4) Prepare the College:** In addition to APSCU facilitating the scheduling of your congressional visit, it is important that students, faculty, and staff be informed of the congressional visit and your expectations. The more prepared everyone on campus is, the better the visit.

Student Representatives

Those presenting on behalf of your college should include at least four students who reflect the diversity on campus. Choose students who can articulate their stories in a professional manner.

Local Business Leaders

You should also include a local business leader who has hired your college's graduates and with whom the college has a good track record and positive working relationship. If an employer cannot attend, obtain a letter of support or testimonial to include with materials for the Member of Congress.

- 5) Tour the Facility:** Following a brief introduction by your college's president or director, the tour should commence.

Timeline

Before the Visit

1. Identify your institution's Member of Congress

APSCU can help identify your institution's Member of Congress through our databases. You can view this information through APSCU's political action center at www.career.org.

2. Identify upcoming Congressional recess periods

Know when Members of Congress travel to their districts. These recess periods are the best time for Members to visit constituents. Typical recess periods include:

Most federal holidays, President's Day, Easter, Memorial Day, the 4th of July, and the entire month of August. In election years, Congress tends to adjourn in October, leaving the rest of the fall open for visits. Contact CCA for other times Congress may recess.

3. Invite your Member of Congress to visit

Due to the demands on Members of Congress, their schedules fill up quickly. You, or we, will send the invitation letter on behalf of your institution at least several weeks in advance. A sample letter has been provided for you on page 8, which APSCU will



Interaction between a student and teacher during a tour

personalize with specific information about your college. The letter is typed on APSCU letterhead and signed by Bruce Leftwich, Senior Vice President of Government Relations. The letter is then sent via e-mail to the Member's scheduler who handles events in the Member's home district. E-mail is the preferred method of correspondence due to security concerns with hard mail.

4. Follow up with the Member's scheduler

APSCU can contact the Member's scheduler to make sure they received the invitation.

5. Confirm the date

Try to accommodate a Member's busy schedule. However, if the suggested date will not work, offer several dates/ times as options.

6. Establish dialogue with Member's scheduler

Provide the Member's scheduler with your school's contact information. Offer details of the visit: names, titles, programs, etc.

7. Create a college fact sheet

Your college fact sheet can include the relevant information, including:

- Current enrollment numbers
- Percentage of students by gender, race and age
- List of the percentage of students receiving financial aid and specific types of aid if possible
- List of graduation and placement rates
- Cohort Default Rates
- Positive testimonials of current students, faculty, alumni, or employers
- Highlights of prominent graduates and employers of your graduates
- Interesting facts about your college
- Economic Impact
- Total number of employers
- Some prominent employers of your graduates
- List of programs

A sample fact sheet can be found in the Appendix.

8. Assemble take-away materials

Materials should be reflective of your college. Information should be passed out, as well as APSCU

provided materials if someone from APSCU does not attend the visit.



Rep. Robert "Bob" Goodlatte (R-VA) visits the library on a campus tour

9. Coordinate with the congressional press secretary and APSCU's communications office for press affairs

It is up to the Member's office whether or not the press should be involved. If media coverage is agreeable with the Member of Congress, APSCU will assist you with this outreach. A sample press release can be found in the Appendix on page 12.

The press release should be put on college letterhead and approved by both the Member's office and APSCU. The Member's visit should be featured on your college's and CCA's website if possible.

Always take pictures of the Member of Congress. These photos can be forwarded to the Member of Congress, APSCU, and could be included in a press release.



Rep. Howard P. "Buck" McKeon (R-CA) visits The Art Institute of New York City.

Timeline cont'd

10. Confirm with the Member's scheduler

The Member's office may ask for more information about your college, as well as a schedule of events or a list of who the participants will be during the visit. Offer to provide all of this information. It is best to contact the scheduler 1 to 2 weeks in advance of the visit.

11. Invite the education staffer or district office staff to accompany the Member on the tour

Staff are extremely important to the legislative process and to our advocacy efforts. Treat staff as you would treat the Member of Congress.

12. Perform a walk-through with key staff one day ahead of college visit.

The route should be mapped out so that the event and tour run smoothly and on time.

13. Distribute schedules to everyone that will be involved in the tour

Once the schedule has been finalized, distribute it to all participants and send a copy to the Member's scheduler.

During the Visit

1. Greet the Member of Congress and his/her staff (2-3 min.)

Your institution's president or director should be on hand to greet the Member of Congress and his/her staff when they arrive on site. It is also preferable to have 1 or 2 student representatives accompany the Member and the president or director on the tour. Following brief introductions, the tour should promptly begin.

DON'T debate policy or politics with the Member

Always be respectful and show off your students and the programs. Getting into political or policy debates takes away from the purpose of the visit.

2. Tour your facilities (15-20 min.)

Your college president should lead the tour. This is the best time to show your college "in action" to the Member and his/her staff. It is good to include classrooms where class is in session or have short demonstrations set up with a faculty member and student to demonstrate what they have been learning. If you visit libraries, financial aid or placement offices, be sure to quickly introduce the Member to your staff. Be careful not to get delayed. The Member of Congress will enjoy shaking hands, "exposing" their face and name to potential voters.

Take the Member of Congress and his/her staff wherever they request

Be prepared for the Member to request to visit a classroom not on the agenda. In this case, ensure honoring the request will promote your school and your value to students.

Involve your students, faculty, and employers in the tour

Members of Congress enjoy interacting with students and it personalizes their visit. Members of Congress also like to see the benefits that your college is giving to the district, so invite a few key employers.



Rep. Henry Cuellar (D-TX) visits ITT Technical Institute

3. Meet with students, faculty and staff (30-35 min.)

At the end of the tour, your college should allow the Member of Congress to have open interaction with your students, faculty, and staff. This should allow the Member to make any remarks as well as answer any questions your students may have. A conference room is an ideal location.



Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA) visits Westwood College.

Have a compliance officer, curriculum officer, director of financial aid and recruiter/placement officer present for the Member's visit

Often these staff can answer questions that the Member of Congress or his/her staff may have; this point resonates well with Members of Congress.

DON'T Give any gifts.

Due to the new lobbying and ethics rules on Capitol Hill, do not present the Member or his/her staff with any gifts. The best thing you can give is an informational packet highlighting your institution and the services you provide students.

DON'T Let the site visit run longer than the amount of time that has been allotted

Be respectful of Member's tight schedule and other commitments.

After the Visit

1. Send the Member a thank-you letter from your college's president

A sample thank you letter can be found in the Appendix.

2. Report back to CCA

If a APSCU staff person is unable to participate in the tour, report back to CCA and let us know how the tour went. If any additional requests were made by the Member of Congress, follow up with his/her DC office with the requested information.

Appendix

Sample Letter of Invitation

Date

The Honorable (insert name)	The Honorable (insert name)
U.S. House of Representatives or	United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515	Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representative/Senator (insert last name):

On behalf of (name of college), please join the [chancellor/president] at their institution between (dates of congressional recess) to discuss current education related issues before the Congress and to tour the facility for a firsthand the services provided to students. (Name of college) is one of the Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities' flagship member colleges in your greatstate with an excellent record of graduating students and working with the employers in the community to hire their graduates.

As the 111th Congress (begins/recesses), (name of college) would like to ensure that you have a chance to meet students attending career colleges, hear about the issues they face while obtaining their postsecondary education, and are well-versed on the issues important to students, the institution, and employers in the community.

Again, I would like to encourage you to schedule time to visit (name of college) to interact with their students and faculty, and to observe the educational opportunities available to your constituents.

Please contact me if I can be of any assistance to you. To schedule a visit, please contact Chris Collins at (202)336-6714, or via email at Chris.Collins@career.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Bruce Leftwich

Sample College Fact Sheet

Side 1

(Insert College Logo)

College X
123 Main Street
Las Vegas, NV 11111

FACT SHEET

Fall Enrollment 2010	2,769
<i>Percent by Gender</i>	
Men	33.5%
Women	66.5%
<i>Percent by Age</i>	
Under 21	39%
21 – 30	51%
Over 30	10%
<i>Percent by Race</i>	
White, non-Hispanic	36.0%
Black, non-Hispanic	38.7%
Hispanic	19.9%
Asian or Pacific Islander	4.2%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.5%
Non-resident alien	0.8%
Graduation Rate	X%
Cohort Default Rate	X%
Placement Rate	X%

College X Fun Facts

- The Academy's doors opened at its original location in the Apparel Center in 1978. In 1997, the Academy moved to its current 67,000 square foot location at 123 Main Street.
- College X's annual fashion show, in its 25th year, utilizes all departments for show production, collateral materials, set design, photography, and video production.
- The Interior Design program has the longest FIDER accredited program in Las Vegas.
- 763 students from the 7th Congressional District attend College X.

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education System (IPEDS)

(Insert College Logo)

Featured Employers of College X Graduates Include:

ACME Corporation
ABC Services, Inc.
123 Computer Corporation
Jane's Designs

TESTIMONIALS

"What I like most about College X is that teachers push you to do your very best!"

Jane Smith – BFA Advertising and Design

"At College X I had one of the greatest teachers I have ever had. She has inspired me to be courageous and taught me values."

John Brown – Fashion Design

"What I like best about College X is it is a hands-on learning experience."

Mike Martin – Fashion Design

"What I liked most about this college were the classes that taught good skills with interpersonal relations with diversity groups."

Mary Moore – Merchandising Management

"Some of our best employees have come to us straight from College X."

Bob Jones – Chairman, Acme Corporation

Sample Congressional Visit Schedule

Schedule for Representative Jane Doe (R-NV)

Tour of College X Las Vegas, Nevada

Date

1:30–1:35 p.m. Rep. Doe and staff arrive at College X; greeted outside facility by President/Director Smith

1:35–1:37 p.m. Proceed to CAD lab; discussion with College X students and relevant faculty member

1:37–1:50 p.m. Proceed to Visual Communications lab; discussion with College X students and relevant faculty member

1:50–1:54 p.m. Proceed to Resource Room; discussion of students' hands-on experience

1:54–1:58 p.m. Proceed to Technology Lab; discussion with College X students and relevant faculty member

1:58–2:02 p.m. Proceed to sketch lab

2:02–2:06 p.m. Proceed to Political Science board; 2 minute discussion with evening Dean re: integrated general education courses

2:06–2:10 p.m. Proceed to Library; discussion with relevant faculty member re: resources available to students

2:10–2:14 p.m. Proceed to Career Services board; discussion re: career placement

2:14–2:18 p.m. Proceed to conference room to meet with 4 College X students to discuss college's demographics, programs, and curriculum

2:18–2:22 p.m. Roundtable discussion with President/Director and students

2:22–2:30 p.m. Rep. Doe departs

Sample Press Release

(Insert College Logo)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Insert Date

Contact: Name, Phone, E-mail

Representative Jane Doe Visits College X

Congresswoman Sees Benefits of a Career College First Hand

(Las Vegas, NV) – Congresswoman Jane Doe (R-NV) toured College X today to see the programs and opportunities available at this career college. During the site visit, Congresswoman Doe met with college officials, students, and local employers to discuss the benefits of the college and issues related to higher education.

“We were so pleased to host Congresswoman Doe at our campus,” stated Bill Smith, President of College X. “We appreciate all the work she has done on behalf of our college and for our district. It was a wonderful opportunity for us to share information about our college with her.”

Congresswoman Doe also found the visit to be helpful: “Students are our future workforce. It was great to see first-hand the training they are receiving to make them not only great employees, but also great citizens.”

College X is located in Las Vegas, NV and specializes in design and computer technology. They have an enrollment of X students and have a job placement rate of X% of their graduates in the local workforce. College X is also a member of the Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities (APSCU), an organization that seeks to promote career colleges and universities across the country.

###

Sample Thank-you Letter

Date

The Honorable (insert name)
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

- or -

The Honorable (insert name)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representative/Senator (insert last name):

On behalf of the students and faculty of (insert name of college), I would like to thank you for taking valuable time from your schedule to visit our college last week.

It was an honor and pleasure to meet with you and your staff. I hope you enjoyed the tour. More importantly, I hope you came away with a greater understanding of the kinds of programs (insert name of college) offers, the students who benefit from our interactive approach to teaching, and the local businesses with which we have a dynamic partnership.

Please use us as a resource as you tackle higher education issues this session in Congress. We look forward to working with you and your staff in the coming months. Thank you again!

Warm regards,

President/Director name

Phone: (202)-336-6754

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