GOVERNMENT RELATIONS 101

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY
The Role of the Office of Federal Relations

Among the many areas on which the Office of Federal Relations focuses are funding for research in science, engineering, education and the humanities; higher education policy; federal student aid; tax policy; health care; graduate medical education; immigration; international student and scholar access; and intellectual property rights.

Much of our effort, therefore, involves direct contact with Congress and the Executive Branch on legislative and regulatory matters. We make officials aware of Vanderbilt’s expertise in key areas of concern and, when appropriate, advocate positions that promote the interests of Vanderbilt within the broader higher education

Vanderbilt maintains a strong presence in all levels of government. The Office of Federal Relations carries out our work in Washington; on campus, Vanderbilt’s interaction with state and local government is overseen by the Office of Community, Neighborhood, and Government Relations. Both offices report to the Division of Public Affairs.

As one of the nation’s top research universities, Vanderbilt University is significantly involved in federal, state, and local policy making. Vanderbilt received nearly $500 million in federal grant money last year alone. As an expert resource of cutting-edge research and analysis, Vanderbilt has faculty and staff who serve on federal advisory boards and commissions. The university serves citizens in all ninety-five counties. Vanderbilt’s voice is vital to the consideration of national, state, and local policy issues.
community. We work in tandem with other research universities and play a leadership role in numerous national associations and coalitions that address these issues.

Vanderbilt also takes on an even broader role in Washington, the home of policymakers and opinion leaders. Our office works with a wide range of non-governmental organizations, major think tanks, the National Academies, and numerous scientific societies. Our well-integrated presence in Washington gives us a “seat at the table” when many important policy issues are being deliberated.

The Office of Federal Relations facilitates and directly supports the university’s academic mission by furnishing Vanderbilt’s faculty and students with excellent opportunities to engage in the national policymaking process. We offer office space and conference room facilities to faculty members who find themselves in Washington to provide congressional testimony, to meet with members of Congress and their staffs, to visit executive branch agencies and federal agencies, and to attend sessions of various national associations and societies that represent higher education and various research disciplines.

Our office collaborates with the Vanderbilt Internship Experience in Washington during the summer and hosts a summer intern in the office each year. The office also hosts a class for students majoring in Human and Organizational Development.

The Role of the Office of Community, Neighborhood, and Government Relations

The Office of Community, Neighborhood, and Government Relations sustains Vanderbilt’s relationships with the people in our local and state communities. We work with students, faculty, staff, and members of the administration throughout the university to promote policy initiatives and to leverage Vanderbilt’s resources in a beneficial way. As a public access point for the community, we are both assertive and responsive in supporting Vanderbilt’s mission of teaching, research, public service, and health care.

The government relations staff facilitates interaction with government officials and oversees a broad range of state and local issues and regulations. Issues that come before the state legislature and regulatory bodies are of critical importance to Vanderbilt. The Office of Community, Neighborhood and Government Relations is tasked with assigning expert witness testimony on legislation pending before the Tennessee General Assembly; advising the state’s executive, constitutional officers, and departments of the potential effect of proposed rules, laws, policies and regulations; and sharing the interests of state leaders with the leaders of the university.

At the local level, the government relations staff works closely with officials elected and appointed to the local government to negotiate issues such as growth, zoning, utilities, services, and quality of life, that affect not only Vanderbilt, but also our neighbors and community.

Advocacy and Lobbying: The Role of Lobbying in American Government

American democracy is a grand experiment. America is built on the foundational idea that the people are supreme: that they are the organic and sustainable source of democratic principles, values, ideals, beliefs, and institutions. The Constitution includes institutional limits and checks and balances to ensure that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are cherished, protected, and advanced. Democracy does not mean that the majority is always right, but the will of the majority is ignored.
at one’s peril. Lobbying is how individuals and groups promote, protect, and advance the interests of the American people.

Lobbying is, above all, the advocacy of a point of view. Although the action of lobbying was originally defined in relation to the British House of Commons, coinage of the word “lobbyist” is attributed to President Ulysses S. Grant (1869–1877).

Lobbying is so inextricable from the operation of our government that it is commonly referred to as “The Third House.” Lobbying requires organization, information, preparation, and communication. Lobbyists research and analyze proposed laws, rules, policies, or regulations; monitor developments; attend hearings; furnish periodic updates; educate policymakers, staff, and colleagues; and work with other interested parties. Effective lobbyists build healthy relationships, respect different perspectives, and manage the exposure and expectations of delicate, complex political processes.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS PROTOCOL

Testifying before public officials

Testifying before public officials is critical to shaping public policy.

At some point, you may be called upon to furnish expert testimony at the local, state, or federal level. If so, you must first inform your superiors and internal government relations officials. Be in touch with the Office of Federal Relations or the Office of Community, Neighborhood, and Government Relations, so that they know you have been invited to testify and can assist you in preparing for the hearing. In some cases, they may have information you need to know before you testify.

When you testify, be very clear about whom you represent. When representing an institution or professional organization other than Vanderbilt, be clear: “Madame Chair, members of the committee, I work at Vanderbilt University as a __________, but today I am testifying on behalf of The American Society of __________.”

Know the prior testimony on the subject.

Be truthful, friendly, logical, clear, and concise when you answer the committee’s questions. If asked for your position on an issue, defer to the committee: “Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I appreciate your interest in my opinion, but you shape policy, and I am here to inform the discussion. I defer to the opinion and will of the committee.” Consult counsel to determine a potential conflict of interest. If you have a conflict of interest, or anything that might be perceived as a conflict of interest, inform the committee prior to testifying.

Be truthful. As in any profession, your word is your bond. If you don’t know the answer to a question, be ready to report that you will get the answer and offer it to the record as soon as possible following the hearing. You should consider that any time you are asked a question by a legislator, you are under oath.

Be aware of what you, your predecessor, or your superior has said on the topic in the past. The committee will know this—and will be looking for any contradictions.

Be logical, clear, and to the point. If the hearing is open, remember that your comments will likely be excerpted by the press and are part of the public record.

Christina West, Zack Marshall, and Congressman Jim Cooper at a Vanderbilt congressional reception.
Do not use jargon or acronyms, wiring diagrams, or jokes. The point is to be clear and forthright. These elements tend to distract, or worse, annoy.

Be aware of administrative concerns. Your testimony will have a time limit, and your comments for the record will have to align with a requested format. The Office of Federal Relations and the Office of Community, Neighborhood, and Government Relations can assist you with these observances. Be aware that hard copies of your testimony will be distributed to the press and posted on the committee’s website. Arrive a half hour before the hearing to acquaint yourself with the atmosphere. Familiarize yourself with the House and Senate floor schedules for the day, so you are prepared for possible interruptions due to voting.

Communicating with public officials

*Face-to-face meetings*
Always address elected and government officials in a respectful way fitting the office he or she holds. In a meeting, use their titles such as “Senator ________, it is a pleasure to meet you.” For members of the U.S. House of Representatives, use Congressman or Congresswoman ________. For members of the President’s cabinet, it would be Secretary ________. On the state level, use Governor ________, Senator ________, Representative ________, and Commissioner ________. At the local level the appropriate way to address officials is as Mayor ________, and Councilmember ________. If a member of Congress or the Tennessee General Assembly holds a leadership role, you would refer to him or her as Speaker or Leader ________; and if she or he is a chair of a committee or subcommittee then you would refer to her or him as Madame Chair or Chairman _________.

Do your research prior to your testimony, so you will know the appropriate titles for those you will be addressing.

*Written correspondence*
The appropriate way to address a letter or an email to an elected or government official is as follows (real addresses are available on the lists in the back of this pamphlet):

The Honorable D.C. Ectoplasm, Chairwoman Northwest Statehood Committee
The State Senate
12345 New Street
Ecopsychopolydynamic, XT 54321
Continued heightened security at the U.S. Capitol screens all incoming U.S. postal mail to congressional offices. We recommend that you communicate with congressional offices by fax or email to ensure timely arrival.

Correspondence to state and local officials may be sent via U.S. Postal Service or by fax or email. In order to better assist members of the Vanderbilt community, we ask when you invite members of Congress or members of the state legislature to events on campus or submit requests for DC-based meetings that you copy the appropriate Vanderbilt government relations staff on all correspondence to federal, state, and local officials.

**Invitations to elected officials**

Please notify the appropriate Vanderbilt government relations official prior to issuing an invitation to ensure compliance with appropriate ethics rules, and copy the appropriate government relations official on all invitations. The government relations staff is available to assist you with creating the invitation and can offer guidance on to whom the invitation should be addressed. All invitations to elected or government officials should be in written form. If you want an official or staff member to speak at or attend an event, the written correspondence will need to be followed up with a personal phone call to a staff member (legislative assistant or scheduler).

If you invite a public official to speak at a meeting or class, please remember to be respectful of his or her time by starting and finishing on time.

**Visiting policymakers**

*How does one lobby?*

Whether you are attempting influence at the local, state, or federal level, any effort to affect policy, legislation, or regulation must be focused and should incorporate the following guidelines:

- Identify your goal.
- Notify the appropriate Vanderbilt government relations official.
- Plan. Make the request early.

- Do not wait for a legislative session to cultivate your relationships or begin your education on important issues. Lobbying is a year-round activity.
- Keep communication precise.
- Ask for what you want.
- Know the context in which you are working.
- Understand the policy process (executive or legislative). Know your policymakers.
- Enlist the support of your base of stakeholders.

**What to expect in a typical lobbying meeting**

Preparation, consideration, and clarity are required for a successful lobbying experience at whatever level of government you are working. Find a model “normal” sequence of events at the congressional level at vanderbilt.edu/cngr/government-relations.php. A similar, but not identical, approach applies at the state legislature and Metro Council level.

**Ethics and Vanderbilt policies**

All levels of government—federal, state, and local—have ethics laws regulating not only their interactions with lobbyists, but also the appropriate receipt of gifts, trips, meals, etc. The laws vary for each level of government. Further complicating matters is the fact that the federal level has different ethics policies for the U.S. Senate and the

Vanderbilt faculty and staff meet with Tennessee legislators during Day on the Hill at Legislative Plaza.
U.S. House of Representatives. Metro Council’s ethics policy subjects Vanderbilt to a greater level of restrictions than other organizations or institutions because we have had and will have legislation before the council. However, all bodies are consistent in their enforcement of ethics policies. Vanderbilt takes additional steps to ensure that anyone who occasionally interacts with a government official does not intentionally or unintentionally violate an ethics law. To assist in this effort, the best policy is to speak to the appropriate Vanderbilt government relations professional or a member of Vanderbilt’s Office of the General Counsel before contacting a government official. In general, gifts for members of Congress are not permitted.

**TRACKING LEGISLATION**

*To research legislation pending in the United States Congress:*

Go to the legislative information from the Library of Congress website: congress.gov
- Click on links to search for pending legislation, current public law, or other options listed at this site.

*To research bills pending before the Tennessee General Assembly:*

Go to Tennessee General Assembly website: capitol.tn.gov
- Click on “Find Legislation.”
- Enter bill number in box labeled “Type Bill Number to Look Up,” e.g., SB0220.
- Click “Search.”

**To research how a bill would affect current Tennessee law:**

Go to Tennessee General Assembly web site: capitol.tn.gov
- Click on “Tennessee Code.”
- Enter the number of the section of code, which is referenced within the bill, e.g., 71-5-1401.
- Click “Enter.”

**To learn more about how a bill becomes a state law in Tennessee:**

Go to capitol.tn.gov/about/billtolaw.html

**To view Tennessee General Assembly hearings on the web:**

Go to Tennessee General Assembly website: capitol.tn.gov
- Click on “Live Video.”
- Click on “Schedules.”
- Click on the camera icon next to the event you wish to view.

Mayor Karl Dean
Executive Branch
The White House: whitehouse.gov
Department of Defense: defense.gov
Department of Education: ed.gov
Department of Energy: doe.gov
Department of Homeland Security: dhs.gov
Institute of Museum and Library Services: imls.gov
National Aeronautics and Space Administration: nasa.gov
National Endowment for the Arts: nea.gov
National Endowment for the Humanities: neh.gov
National Institutes of Health: nih.gov
National Science Foundation: nsf.gov
Office of Science and Technology Policy: ostp.gov

Legislative Branch
Congressional Budget Office: cbo.gov
House of Representatives: house.gov
Senate: senate.gov
Thomas (Website of the Library of Congress): congress.gov
[This website provides the public access to searches for legislation pending before Congress as well as legislation introduced in past Congresses.]

Tennessee’s Delegation in the 111th United States Congress
Senator Lamar Alexander
Tel: (202) 224-4944 Fax: (202) 228-3398 alexander.senate.gov
Chief of Staff: Ryan Loskarn
Legislative Director: David Cleary

Senator Bob Corker
Tel: (202) 224-3344 Fax: (202) 228-0566 corker.senate.gov
Chief of Staff: Todd Womack
Legislative Director: Rob Strayer

Representative Phil Roe (Tenn. - 1st District)
Tel: (202) 225-6356 Fax: (202) 225-5714 roe.house.gov
Chief of Staff: Matt Meyer
Legislative Director: John Martin

Representative John Duncan (Tenn. - 2nd)
Tel: (202) 225-5435 Fax: (202) 225-6440 duncan.house.gov
Chief of Staff: Bob Griffitts
Legislative Director: David Black

Representative Chuck Fleischmann (Tenn. - 3rd)
Tel: (202) 225-3271 Fax: (202) 225-3494 fleischmann.house.gov
Chief of Staff: Jim Hippe
Legislative Director: Alek Vey

Representative Scott DesJarlais (Tenn. - 4th)
Tel: (202) 225-6831 Fax: (202) 226-5172 desjarlais.house.gov
Chief of Staff: Richard Vaughn
Legislative Director: Dayne Cutrell

Representative Jim Cooper (Tenn. - 5th)
Tel: (202) 225-4311 Fax: (202) 226-1035 cooper.house.gov
Chief of Staff: Lisa Quigley
Deputy Chief of Staff: Jason Lumia

Representative Diane Black (Tenn. - 6th)
Tel: (202) 225-4231 Fax: (202) 225-6887 black.house.gov
Chief of Staff: Teresa Koerberlein
Legislative Director: Robert Cogan

Representative Marsha Blackburn (Tenn. - 7th)
Tel: (202) 225-2811 Fax: (202) 225-3004 blackburn.house.gov
Chief of Staff: Mike Platt
Deputy Chief of Staff: Mike Reynard
Legislative Director: Keith Studdard
Representative Stephen Fincher (Tenn. - 8th)
Tel: (202) 225-4714   Fax: (202) 225-1765
fincher.house.gov
Chief of Staff: Jessica Carter
Legislative Director: Jim Hall
Representative Steve Cohen (Tenn. - 9th)
Tel: (202) 225-3265   Fax: (202) 225-5663
cohen.house.gov
Chief of Staff: Marilyn Dillihay
Legislative Director: David Greengrass

Select U.S. Congressional Committees
House Appropriations Committee: appropriations.house.gov
Senate Appropriations Committee: appropriations.senate.gov
House Education and Workforce Committee: edworkforce.house.gov
Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee: help.senate.gov
House Energy and Commerce Committee: energycommerce.house.gov
Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee: commerce.senate.gov
House Ways and Means Committee: waysandmeans.house.gov
Senate Finance Committee: finance.senate.gov
House Science, Space, and Technology Committee: house.gov/science

Representative Higher Education and Research Community in Washington
American Association for the Advancement of Science: aias.org
American Council on Education: acenet.edu
American Institute of Physics: aip.org
American Libraries Association: ala.org
Association of American Medical Colleges: aamc.org
Association of American Universities: aau.edu
Association of Research Libraries: arl.org
Coalition for National Science Funding: cnsfweb.org
Council for Higher Education Accreditation: chea.org
Council of Graduate Schools: cgnet.org
Council on Governmental Relations: cogr.edu
National Academy of Sciences: nationalacademies.org
National Association of College and University Business Officers: nacubo.org
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities: naicu.edu
National Association of International Educators: nafia.org
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators: nasfaa.org
Task Force on American Innovation: innovationtaskforce.org
United for Medical Research: unitedformedicalresearch.com

LINKS
Tennessee General Assembly
Davidson County Delegation

The Honorable Steven Dickerson
dsen.steven.dickerson@capitol.tn.gov

The Honorable Ferrell Haile
sen.ferrell.haile@capitol.tn.gov

The Honorable Thelma Harper
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The Honorable Douglas Henry
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The Honorable Beth Harwell
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The Honorable Brenda Gilmore
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The Honorable Harold M. Love, Jr.
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The Honorable Bo Mitchell
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The Honorable Gary Odom
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The Honorable Jason Powell
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The Honorable Mike Stewart
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The Honorable Mike Turner
rep.mike.turner@capitol.tn.gov

Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County

Karl Dean, Mayor
Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County
100 Metro Courthouse
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Tel: (615) 862-6000
Fax: (615) 862-6040
mayor@nashville.gov

Wendy Tucker, Senior Advisor in Education
Mayor’s Office of Children and Youth
Metropolitan Courthouse
Nashville, TN 37201
Tel: (615) 862-6013
Fax: (615) 880-1813
wendy.tucker@nashville.gov

Greg Hinote, Deputy Mayor
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greg.hinote@nashville.gov

Charles L. Shannon
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2060 15th Avenue, South
Nashville, TN 37212
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Metropolitan Courthouse
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courtney.wheeler@nashville.gov
Metropolitan Council of Nashville and Davidson County
Diane Neighbors, Vice Mayor
Metropolitan Council of Nashville and Davidson County
One Public Square, Suite 204
P.O. Box 196300
Nashville, TN 37219
Tel: 880-3357 (business)
Tel: 226-6073 (residence)
diane.neighbors@nashville.gov

The roster of the Metropolitan Council of Nashville and Davidson County:
nashville.gov/metro-council/metro-council-members

In Davidson County (to find out which district you reside in and where you vote):
nashville.gov/election-commission

To find out who represents you on the federal, state, and local levels
For federal and state officials:
www.usa.gov/Contact/Elected.shtml
or capwiz.com/ticua

Vanderbilt’s Government Relations
Staff Members and Contact Information

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