



# A College Education Provides a Lifetime of Value

## Advocacy at Emory University

**E**mory University's federal relations team has mastered something that many colleges and universities have not: cross-institutional advocacy coordination. Emory partners with Georgia Tech University and Georgia State University, both located in Atlanta, to create a weeklong series of campus visits and briefings for the Georgia congressional delegation and their staffs.

Georgia institutions of higher education have found that because members of their entire congressional delegation often work in conjunction with each other, it benefits the state's colleges and universities to do the same, Jessica Davis, Emory's director of federal affairs, says.

As part of this coordinated advocacy effort, Davis works with federal relations staff at the other institutions to ensure that Hill staffers are getting valuable insights into the different subject matter areas at each school. Tackling issues related to health-care policy is a natural fit for Emory, with its 10 affiliated hospitals, and Davis strives to make these visits as "PowerPoint-free and hands-on as possible."

Hill staff have toured new hospital facilities, visited the serious medical disease unit where Emory helped tackle the Ebola virus, and met with Emory hospital leadership to discuss Medicaid and Medicare funding and the complications present in providing health care to the uninsured.

Davis says the biggest challenge with this event is ensuring that different material is covered every year so that even returning Hill staff get to see something new. In conjunction with her advocacy agenda, Davis also holds briefings for Georgia-based congressional staff to highlight Emory resources that may be of use in congressional district offices. \*

### 5 Tips for Advocacy



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- **Learn about the things that make your institution unique. At Emory, one focus is on emergency preparedness. We work with countries across the world to help them set up public health institutes, train hospitals across the country on how to prepare for highly contagious patients, treat such individuals in our Serious Communicable Diseases Unit, and have researchers on campus working on discovering cures for the next unknown pathogen.**
- **Help colleagues at your institution to understand what congressional staff are looking for. We could not do all tours solo, and we have a great network within Emory that we can call on for touring or briefing staff.**
- **Talk to congressional staff about what questions they have about higher education as whole. One question we get a lot is, "How do different students pay for school?" We are in the process of setting up a roundtable for congressional staff and our financial aid office and graduate students to talk about the options available at Emory.**
- **Facilitate networking. Realize this is also a great opportunity for staff to network with each other. We try to schedule in some breaks so they can catch up on things outside of the office.**
- **Take feedback honestly. We ask and incorporate new ideas after each visit.**