



A College Education Provides a Lifetime of Value

Advocacy at The University of Arizona

In connecting with their congressional delegation, consisting of 11 members of Congress, The University of Arizona's (UA) federal relations team begins crafting its advocacy efforts with a focus on how best to meet both institutional interest and congressional member need.

Kristen Douglas, senior director of congressional affairs, reaches out to Hill staff members to determine what issues are topping their interests and what areas of need their office may have. From there, she builds a series of on-campus briefings, town halls, and tours during the month of August that are centered on the issues that Hill staffers care about most.

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— Kristen Douglas,
senior director of congressional affairs

Through traditional briefings, both on campus in Tucson and simultaneously in Washington, D.C., Douglas likes to highlight for Hill staff the valuable resource of UA professors and academics. She also does this in a more casual setting, such as in her weekly "Professor on Tap" series. The idea is to connect members of Congress and their staffs with academic subject matter experts in an informal setting over pizza, allowing everyone to break from the more formal constraints of Capitol Hill and academia.



The series also serves to build relationships between the university and its delegation, while giving UA's federal relations team great insight into what issues their state's members of Congress are most interested in.

Beyond working with the congressional delegation, Douglas also makes a point to reach out to Capitol Hill committee staffers. "I want them to be aware of the University of Arizona's great resources as well," she says. Given the frequent flow of Hill staffers between congressional committees and the individual offices of members of Congress, this outreach enables UA to make connections far beyond the state of Arizona.

It is important to Douglas to engage all members of the Arizona congressional delegation for multiple reasons. Primarily, she cites the fact that the vote of any congressional member from the state of Arizona has the potential to impact the university, but also that "we have students at UA from across the state; I want them to feel like we're connecting with their congressional representatives, too."

The political divide between Arizona's seven Republicans and four Democrats doesn't at all impact Douglas's outreach decisions. She notes, "The University of Arizona has strengths that can be an asset to all members, regardless of political party." *