**Congressional Meeting Overview (Personal Lessons Learned)**

National Space Grant Alliance

Revised: 2/15/2022

**PREPARATION.** Do your homework. Be knowledgeable about your legislator’s background and their work on similar interests to forge connections. For example, know their involvement with STEM, education, workforce, science, space and defense. Try and learn their passions and then focus your pitch to those passions.

**INITIAL INTRODUCTIONS.** Thank them for meeting (virtually) with you. Ask the Legislator (or staffer) if they are aware of Space Grant and what we do. They may know of Space Grant or they may not. Typically the last time they heard of Space Grant is when we visited last year. Ask them if they would like a full briefing or just focus on the State and their District.

**PRESENTATION:** Divide your presentation into 6 parts.

1.) **NATIONAL OVERVIEW.** Stress national numbers and successes. Show one side of infographic stress the statistics and national companies. Discuss our nationwide science and STEM activities. EX: We lead in integration of STEM activities across the country. Add local statewide companies that interact with Space Grant.

2) **STATE OVERVIEW.** Be enthusiastic, be specific. Tell them of the great Space Grant things going on in the state using both Congressional money and any cost-sharing money. These activities are supporting both the national interests as well as the state interests. Focus on STEM training for retention and workforce development. This will benefit the country and the state. You need to know your state STEM workforce needs based upon sector (aerospace, automotive, energy, computers) and have local company names as examples. Discuss state companies hiring space grant graduates. Provide specific examples. If NASA Office of Education (OE) is funding EPSCoR/MUREP/SEAP activities in your state, mention them as they benefit our activities. SEAP examples, NASA center activities that support our NASA Center summer interns. (Provide State Handouts)

3) **DISTRICT OVERVIEW.** What are you doing in their district? If nothing then talk about adjacent districts or discuss what you might do in their district. Ask if they have any community colleges or K-12 or companies that could benefit from Space Grant. This gets them involved and a partner. Talk about adjacent districts, since it is likely that our activities indirectly benefit their district (funding companies for universities in nearby districts). Are local companies hiring space grant graduates? (Provide district handouts to key representatives, if possible).

4) **CURRENT AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES.** What great things are underway in your state or multi-state collaborations and planned for the upcoming year. Listen to their thoughts and recommendations. They may have suggestions of partnerships.

5) **ASK.** Show other side of infographic and support letters. Discuss the “ask” and what we are requesting and why. They may request for the “ask” as a letter or a request form. They may ask you to complete a form so that they can submit to Congress. An example of a completed form is available on the VSA sharepoint portal. If you need any help, please contact Laurie Katz ([lkata@vsadc.com](mailto:lkata@vsadc.com)) or Leslee Gilbert ([lgilbert@vsadc.com](mailto:lgilbert@vsadc.com)) You may hear the staffer ask about a “Dear Colleague” letter. We are currently working on this.

The “ask” discussion is not easy, but everything you discussed up to this point is really just an introduction and justification for the “ask.” We have seen slight increases in the program over the last few years and we are asking for an increase from $60 million to **$65 million**. This added $5M will most likely bring an additional $95K to each jurisdiction. Our efforts will talk about the overarching national theme, but we leave it to the states to have the freedom to implement the best plan for their state or teaming with other states. With this added funding we will:

a) Train more STEM students and expand the state high-tech workforce. During the pandemic (state shutdown) it was clear that there are many outstanding students and regions that we could not reach. In addition, education costs have increased significantly so added funding is needed just to maintain the status quo. **We will broaden our diversity efforts focusing on underrepresented minorities, women, rural, low-income, first-generation and nontraditional (working, veterans, technicians) students**.

b) Advance the nation’s STEM literacy, education, and workforce pipeline to advance the progress of **space science (Artemis), earth science, and green/renewal engineering** that transforms our future and sustains our national leadership. Topics related to COVID, Artemis, earth science, and green/renewal engineering will be popular.

c) **Complete the academic pipeline**. Our focus to this point has been on K-12 to undergraduate connection. It is time to have an effort focusing on graduate student fellowships for our diversity efforts. These fellowships will increase the numbers of diversity students going into academic positions, government (NASA) research positions, and starting new high-tech companies in your state.

Dollar for dollar cost matching further grows the money. Focus on growing the STEM workforce in your state. Stay away from any negatives, especially related to NASA program administration.

6) **THANK YOU AND GOODBYE.** Thank them for the meeting and invite them to your campus to see Space Grant activities. More importantly, offer to arrange a tour and photo opportunity for the Representative to see Space Grant activities in their District

**SEND AHEAD OF THE CALL:**

* National Space Grant Infographic (1-pager)
* Any Support Letters
* State Space Grant materials (statistics and activities)
* District Space Grant materials

**FOLLOW-UP.** Email them a thank you message (within 48 hours) and ask them if there is anything you can provide them.