A campaign approach for making impact

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Trends in Higher Education – Washington State

Students Are Paying Over Half of Higher Education Costs Through Tuition at 4-year Institutions

Share of funding by source

Source: Budget & Policy Center calculations; data from LEAP; reflects tuition in fund 149-B
Strong External Affairs/Government Relations Model

• Creation of a Chief Legislative Officer to bring discipline and “campaign” style focus to issue prioritization and building a “permanent field approach.”

• Development of an engagement model that builds and feeds the permanent field approach: External coalitions, grasstops and grassroots.

• Development of an internal engagement model that is highly collaborative, but dependent on campaign styled focus and defining clear wins.
The results were dramatic:

*Campaign Style results in victories*

- Washington is the only state in the country to reduce tuition in 2015 – by a whopping 15% and funded M/O
- WSU received funding and support for the launch of a new medical school in Spokane
- WSU received funding for growing new academic degree programs on the west side of the state (WSU Everett)
- WSU received $$ for two major capital projects, receiving more state funding than any other public institution.

**WSU STATEWIDE NETWORK & REACH**
Why A Political Campaign Style?  
Students, dollars, votes

• Discipline and regular engagement strengthens the standing of your university with elected officials, strategic coalition, influencers, and alumni/donors – builds **credibility**

• Engages internal and external constituency groups – **establishes relevance**

• Advances priorities – repetition of your brand promise, value proposition - **inculcate values**
What are key elements of a political campaign

- Define ‘the win’ – win the election or legislative agenda; internal and external

- Target strategic influencers (voters & those who influence voters) – know who strongly support higher education, public education (know your demographics, define your base, feed your base with knowledge they care about)

- Polling to gauge opinions, ID messages that resonate with your base

- Direct communications and contacts with your base – owned media (social media, web), direct mail, paid media

- Develop a ‘field’ effort – build thru owned media assets, events, alumni advocacy efforts, speaker bureaus, etc.

- Earned media – strategic, deliberate, intentional relationship building and targeted to your base and swing supporters
Building the Permanent Field Campaign

• Good field efforts wins a campaign, every time

• Connects you with your base (know your demographics – ours? Women in their 50s, urban based, educated)

• Links with organizations and coalitions that will support you

• Mobilizes your base (alumni advocacy, donors, opinion leaders, influencers, etc)

• Validates your campaign messaging with media, opinion leaders/influencers, identified ‘swing voters’

• Opens doors and new avenues to influence others (build and feed the base to build a wider base)

• Provides an “early warning” and rapid response team, if and as needed

• Provides multiple pathways for reaching out to critics, skeptics, un-decideds
What do we know about elected officials

- Universities have unique assets that lawmakers and influencers really like (students, donors, voters)
Permanent Field Campaign Effort

Build your easy base – your alumni, donors

• Engage your ‘easy fruit’ organizations – identify, cultivate, and feed, feed, feed some more

• Build your base – educate, motivate, activate (alumni, supporters)
Permanent Field Campaign Effort

Build a base of higher ed supporters – grow your pie

A BETTER WASHINGTON STARTS WITH BETTER EDUCATION

GROWING A $4.8 BILLION INDUSTRY, GLASS BY GLASS

Washington State University and the Pacific Northwest wine industry celebrated a new partnership with the dedication last June of the EEI-Michael E.TRACKS Center at the WSU Tri-Cities campus. Ground breaking was celebrated in a ceremony attended by WSU President Kirk Schulz and WSU-Regional President James Liske. The center, supported by Washington’s expanding wine industry, whose annual economic impact is $4.8 billion in 2019, is a $15 million project that will provide leadership in research, teaching and extension of grape and wine science and technology.

The center, known as EEI (Environmental, Economic, and Institutional), will be a national leader in training future wine and grape scientists and leaders. WSU’s vision is to create a world-class research and education center for grape and wine science and technology.

Washington, home of the world’s largest wine industry, is one of the top 10 wine-producing states in terms of dollars. WSU is the only university in the nation that offers a complete graduate program in grape and wine science.

An investment in education in Washington can change the future for the greater good.
Permanent Field Campaign Effort
Feed a base through stakeholder engagement & support
Permanent Campaign: build strategically & implement collaboratively ... our results

- WSU continues to gain stature
- WSU is more top of mind for thought leaders
- WSU is viewed as a quality academic, research University in service to state, nation, world
- WSU students are making a difference, well prepared
- WSU continues to build more students, donors, and votes