ABOUT THE OFFICE OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Office of External Relations and Communications (ERC) builds, broadens and protects the University of Illinois System’s brand and reputation and advances its priorities, fostering broad-based understanding, engagement, support, advocacy, and investment to enable the transformative power of the system to grow and positively impact lives at scale.

As part of External Relations and Communications, state relations staff and advocacy staff work closely with the Illinois General Assembly and local officials to promote the education, research, health, and economic development missions of the University of Illinois System. Part of this engagement employs alumni, students, faculty, staff, and supporters to advocate for greater governmental support in coordination with governmental relations staff across the system, as well as the alumni networks for the three universities. Through the Illinois Connection legislative advocacy network, these constituents are rallied to help increase awareness and understanding of the U of I System’s positive impact on the state, nation and world and advocate on the system’s behalf to secure necessary resources and help ensure the system’s legacy and longevity.
MEETINGS WITH
LEGISLATORS & STAFF

When you meet with a legislator

• **Be flexible.** Meetings are often affected by committee hearings and votes. Meetings may need to be relocated to accommodate the changing legislative schedule or the size of a group.

• **Have a prepared story.** Know what you’re going to say before you meet. Tell your legislator about your experience with the University of Illinois and what your education means to you.

• **Try to incorporate the key messages outlined for the day.** Be brief and to the point. If the conversation veers off topic, try to gently steer it back to what you’d like to discuss while making sure to be responsive to any comments or questions.

• **Answer questions only if you are certain.** Legislators may ask you all kinds of questions about the policies you are advocating for, or about unrelated topics. It’s okay to tell your legislator you don’t know the answer, but will relay their questions to the U of I System government relations staff.

• **Be courteous.** Sometimes, a legislator may have a different opinion than you. Please remember to be respectful despite any disagreements, both in-person and on social media.

After your meeting

Debrief with your group about your conversation. Each group lead will be responsible for submitting your feedback form for each meeting. Please make note of any promised actions, unanswered questions and responses to the items you discussed with the legislator.
BY THE NUMBERS

52% of all students attending Illinois public universities are enrolled in U of I System universities.

1 in 46 Illinois jobs are connected to the U of I System.

77% graduation rate for the system compared to the national average of 64%.

94,000+ students educated annually.

$1.8B+ in annual student aid awarded.

88% first-year retention rate.

79% of undergrads are Illinois residents.

$1,890,000,000 total research portfolio.

$19B yearly contribution to the Illinois economy.

88% in annual student aid awarded.

Top 25 Reuters Most Innovative Universities.
UI SYSTEM FAST FACTS

• **U of I System universities educate more than half of all students enrolled in Illinois’ public universities.** System universities enrolled more than 94,800 students in fall 2022. In-state undergraduate enrollment, a priority for the U of I System, remains strong at 46,815 students – 79 percent of all system undergraduates.

• **The U of I System pumps $19 billion into the Illinois economy annually.** The system supports 164,000 Illinois jobs, one of every 46 jobs across the state. Through spending by its universities, employees and students, and the increased earning power of its graduates, the U of I System accounts for 2.1 percent of Illinois’ gross state product.

• **The U of I System consistently ranks in the top 20 universities worldwide for number of U.S. patents.** Our universities are among the most innovative in the world and together receive more National Science Foundation funding than any other research institution. The work doesn’t stop after the research is done; we also transform the research into sustainable businesses and global solutions.

• **When students graduate from U of I System universities, they stay in Illinois.** The U of I System produces the state’s workforce of tomorrow, with nearly 75 percent of our students staying in Illinois after graduating.

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## SCHEDULE

### REGISTRATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11:00 – 11:30 AM</td>
<td>Atrium- Illinois State Library Gwendolyn Brooks Building</td>
<td>The entrance to the State Library is through the first floor north door (Monroe Street Entrance). ERC staff and members of the Student Advocacy Coalition will greet you upon entering. Check in for your name tag, group assignment, lobbying materials and briefing materials.</td>
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### LUNCH WITH PRESIDENT KILLEEN & ADVOCACY PREP

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11:30 AM – 12:30 PM</td>
<td>Atrium- Illinois State Library Gwendolyn Brooks Building</td>
<td>Hear from University of Illinois leadership about the importance of alumni and student advocacy. Receive a briefing on talking points and best practices for lobbying.</td>
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### 12:45 PM

**GROUP PHOTO ON EAST CAPITOL STEPS**

### LEGISLATOR MEETINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:00 PM - 4:00 PM</td>
<td>Illinois State Capitol</td>
<td>Advocates will break into their legislative groups and meet with their state legislators. Assigned group leads will help guide you through the Capitol building and coordinate your team’s strategy for the meetings.</td>
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