

## **What is Your Policy Goal?**

(or What issue are you interested in or What problem are you trying to solve?)

If you joining an already raging policy debate, stay on this side. If you trying to raise a new policy issue turn this page over and start there.

### *Joining a Public Policy Debate*

(terms and sometimes strategies have been determined and infrastructure in place)

1. Who in the country and locally is leading this effort? And do you want to join them?
2. If so, what are the gaps in in their current efforts and how can you fill them? Most organizing efforts can really use the skill set of faculty members or college university affiliations: the “objective” voice of the college professor to build public will, unbiased research, mediator function, grant-writing or editorial writing or even help with other communications needs (compelling narratives, metaphors to communicate)
3. Who is opposing these efforts? How do you stay up on their efforts and understand their concerns?
4. Who does this policy affect most and how are their viewpoints and stories being continuously considered?
5. How much time do I want to put in? Don't over-promise. (Colleges/Universities have reputations for coming in strong then fading.)
6. How can I create common ground or foster consensus-building for long-term sticky change. There can be other opportunities to course-correct.
7. What is the local history of this policy issue.

*Creating a New Policy Initiative*  
*(setting the terms and building the infrastructure)*

1. Legislatively Controlled?

- a. Identify an elected official as your champion. Someone to use their bully pulpit and know when the legislative openings happen. Who is yours?
- b. With every legislative change there is a loser. Find out who it is early on and get to know them and their concerns. Who loses and how can you really understand their concerns? Set your terms/stories etc to minimize their concerns as much as possible. Neutralize as many others confrontational players as possible. If you can't get key support, sometimes just getting their commitment to stay on the sidelines is a win.
- c. Provide your champion and others she recommends with high-quality materials outlining your story and your solution. (background materials, any supporting research with visuals like graphs, AND stories and metaphors AND proposed legislative language.) Provide these things at different levels. Sets of materials for the well-informed staff and sets for quick reads by others.
- d. Your goal should be to get yourself to be on legislators speed-dial as "expert on-call." They need real-time interpreters of research and others materials on your subject.

2. Institutionally-Controlled?

- a. Survey the policy landscape -Is there currently any written policy related to my concern?
- b. What do you need to change exactly - Handbook, CBA, Budget, etc
- c. Who else on campus do you need to talk to to understand if there is a current "common sense" understanding on this issue?
- d. Who are the winners and losers with your policy? Get to know the "losers" early and keep their concerns in mind and stay up on their concerns.
- e. What data can you collect to make your case and who should see it and in what order should those people see it? If you can incorporate their suggested changes so they too can feel ownership of the issue.
- f. Policy enacted quickly can usually be overturned quickly. Take the time to build broad-based support so that when the policy is considered it seems like common sense.

