

**Advocacy:  
Emerging Competency in Alumni Relations**

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**Environmental Context:  
Alumni Relations 2010 and beyond**

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- Engagement has been the historical objective, but is increasingly competitive and challenging.
- Alignment with key priorities of the academic institution is critical.
- Monitor economic sustainability.
- Relevance is clearly demonstrated with advocacy.

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**Advocacy Initiative Check List for Alumni  
Associations**

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- Is the mission and vision internally and externally congruent with the host institution?
- Can you clearly define your value proposition to your institution and association?
- Is your legal framework conducive to legislative advocacy?
- Do you have a sustainable business model to finance and support your initiative?
- Have you realistically defined success and set expectations?

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Is the mission and vision internally and externally congruent with the host institution?

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- Is the role of your association, as seen by your institution, in alignment with your own view?
- Are priorities aligned?
- Do your members understand the mission and vision and support new initiatives?

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Clearly define the value proposition of advocacy to your institution

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- Powerful PR tool that raises the visibility and awareness of the value of the institution – building a case statement for relevance of the institution.
- Advocacy is engaging people who are strongly in support of your institution. It's one more program that accomplishes goals.
- Dynamic engagement vehicle for an emerging demographic and for your "baby boomers" that is not place-bound

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And why Alumni Relations?

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- Broad-based membership. Advocacy is a "numbers" game. Alums are the primary target.
- To be effective, grassroots lobbying requires independent validation.
- Alumni Associations, as volunteer organizations, maintain some of the "esprit du corps" needed for advocacy.

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Do you have a sustainable business model to finance and support your initiative?

- Identify independent (non-public, if relevant) revenue stream to support activities
- Leverage advocacy activities for future business development
- Construct separate finance and administration processes as needed

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Is your legal framework conducive to legislative advocacy?

- Understand existing legal framework (non-profit, 501.c.3 or other)
- Examine charter documents including Articles of Incorporation, by-laws, institutional operating agreements
- Conduct appropriate and thorough due diligence within your respective environments (i.e. CA vs. WA, grassroots lobbying regulations for public employees)

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How do you realistically define success and set expectations?

- Shared responsibility among the key stakeholders in the advocacy effort – Board, Government Relations, Marketing, Communications, Executive leadership, students
- Establish the metrics and the reporting processes

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### Launch of UWImpact

**UWImpact**, a civic engagement program dedicated to bringing its members into a community that believes in the positive impact of the University of Washington to our local and global societies.

Our goals are to:

- **Improve general understanding** and awareness of the economic and social impacts of the University on our community
- **Engage advocates** through integrated marketing/communications scheduled events, interactive web programs, online forums
- **Provide opportunities** to Take Action through both political and non-political processes.




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### Multi-pronged approach to civic engagement

Several strategic approaches are being developed:

- **Grass tops:** utilizing informed alumni and supporters of the university as spokespersons of the University
- **Grass roots:** connecting the large base of alumni, friends and family to our program and engaging their support
- **State Coalition:** unifying the voice of all supporters of higher education in the State of Washington

**EDUCATION → ADVOCACY**




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### UWImpact Strategic Planning Timeline

- Nov. '09 – Jan '10  
Build internal infrastructure
- Jan Feb '10  
State legislature in session; deploy eAdvocacy tools; test messaging, test communications, etc.
- March '10 – June '10  
Refine mechanics and processes to build content and programs.
- March – Sep '10  
Build statewide coalition of Alumni Association directors.
- June 10-Dec. '10  
Expand additional grassroots and grasstops capacities.  
**Ramp up programs.**



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### Advocacy as an Evolving Competency

- Diagnose your situation thoroughly
- Decide specifically what you want to accomplish
- It's better to do a few things well, as opposed to many things poorly
- Identify and secure required resources: legal, software, consultants, content providers, funding sources, etc.
- Achieve alignment with stakeholders
- Be prepared to take some hits



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*"We must all hang together, or assuredly we will all hang separately."*

- Benjamin Franklin



*"Show me the money!"*

- Cuba Gooding, Jr., as Ron Tidwell in "Jerry McGuire"



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