



COLLEGE STUDENT ALLIANCE

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A STUDENT LEADER'S GUIDE On Maintaining Good Relations and Constructive Dialogue with College Administration

Having a good working relationship with college administration and faculty is crucial for successful advocacy to produce impactful change, which will enhance students' educational experience. Collaborating with the college can increase the potential of your success and influence through mutual understanding. Developing dialogue, common ground, and trust between students, administration and faculty are key to achieving positive working relationships and win-win solutions.

01

View faculty and administration as partners working with you and not against you for the betterment of students

College administration wants to see students excel just as much as you do. Understanding this will help you work together to find common goals for the benefit of students.

02

Try to have the administration sympathize with the students' concerns

College administration may not always understand the perspectives of students and where they are coming from. This provides an opportunity to present the challenges of students through real-life examples and give your concerns a personal perspective. Where possible, have facts to illustrate your position (such as the number of students impacted and how they are impacted).

03

Schedule regular meetings with administration

Scheduling regular meetings can help develop a relationship with administration, in which there can be open dialogue and you are both on the same page. If administration is routinely aware of your concerns as a student union, and vice versa, this improves their awareness of student concerns so that they will not be caught off guard. COVID-19 has posed challenges to scheduling regular in-person meetings, however it is best practice to keep in touch via email and virtual meetings! Don't be hesitant to ask questions such as why a certain practice or policy is in place.

04

Consultation is key!

Ask to be involved in decisions that affect students, so students can provide their input beforehand, rather than having to respond negatively to decisions after they have been made. Be prepared to listen to your administration's point of view as it may reveal information that you may not have considered. Consultation is key for policies and programs to be effective, and have the intended impact by identifying opportunities and weaknesses in any decision. When all parties are at the table during the decision-making process, things will certainly go a lot smoother! Consultation goes both ways, so involving administration in your advocacy decisions can be important to resolving issues cooperatively.

05

Maintain diplomacy

Optics are very important in the area of advocacy and student governance. Professionalism and cooperativeness are two key characteristics that will help you and your student unions be invited back to the table and be more involved in dialogue.

06

Be open to compromise, but without sacrificing the needs of students

Consider the college's priorities and how change or compromises can be made within them. Finding a win-win solution through open dialogue will be mutually beneficial for both students and college administration. However, if you are not seeing dialogue that is productive towards the change that students need or the administration is not willing to honour your concerns, you may have to consider other directions and focus your advocacy towards the government. Sometimes the change that is needed is at a legislative level.

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