

Organizing a PHENOM Call-In Day

Organize a Planning Meeting

Hold a planning meeting of interested people—students, staff, and faculty. A preliminary meeting can be a place to figure out logistics – especially if a space needs to be reserved or funds need to be raised for food — and spread tasks and responsibility among a number of people.

When and where

- **Location:** A good location to hold the event. This should be a busy place lots of people pass by, where there is good cell phone reception, and it is not too loud to make phone calls
- **Incentive:** If at all possible, provide food, and advertise this. E.g. Cookies for callers.
- **Visuals:** Good visuals that will both draw people to your event, and be good for media. Tip: having a gimmick helps. Some examples: “Call for Change” and a giant phone for a prop; “ET phone your legislator” with a prop of ET, etc.
- **Grab People:** Have a couple of people nearby to pull people in (“make a phone call, get some pizza”) at the last minute. This may be how you get most of your callers.

Get the word out ahead of time - Getting some visibility and informing people about the event ahead of time will help boost attendance significantly. Some ideas include:

- Articles in Student newspaper
- Ask the SGA to publicize/co-sponsor
- Reach out to campus organizations
- Ask Unions to notify their members
- Facebook events
- Email lists (active list serves on campus)
- Fliers and posters around campus
- Ask faculty union to ask members to announce in class, or, better, have trained students come to classes to announce the call-in day.

Making the Calls - Most people will not know who their state legislators are and may never have done this before.

Ideally, you will want to set up a few “stations:

- Sign in
- One or more computers where people can go to www.wheredoivotema.com and find their Representative and Senator by entering their home address.
- Lists of legislators with their phone numbers
- A place where people can make the calls
- A place where people get their “reward” (food) and have a chat about what else they can do

You will need volunteers to help people find their legislators’ phone numbers, draw in new people, answer questions, and take pictures.

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Tracking Calls - Have everyone sign in with contact information so you can keep them informed as to what happens, other events you or PHENOM plan, etc. Keeping track of the number of people who call is important information. It comes in handy for Press Releases, and for measuring your successes.

Media - We get more bang for the buck when the media reports on the call-in day.

- Before the event compile a list of local papers and contacts to send the press release to.
- PHENOM will provide a sample press advisory and talking points for you to adapt.
- After the call-in day, send out the press release with pictures, the message and the specific number of calls made, and make a second round of calls to media outlets.

DRAFT PHONE SCRIPT (Spring 2015)

Introduce yourself (e.g., I'm a Freshman at Bristol Community College and a resident of Fall River) and ask if your legislator is available (*it is unlikely you'll get to speak to a legislator, but their aides are very important players in the State House and will discuss the call with their boss*).

I am calling because I'm concerned with some of the higher education proposals in the Governor's Fiscal Year 2016 Budget. It is important that we fully fund our public colleges and universities so that they can broaden access, ensure affordability, and improve the quality of the education they offer our residents.

I want to thank you for two years of better budgets, which allowed many of our campuses to freeze tuition and fees while investing in faculty, staff, and facilities. **In order to allow our campuses to maintain those fee freezes, fully fund collective bargaining agreements, and ensure quality public higher education**, each segment asks for the following FY16 budgets:

- Community Colleges - FY15 appropriation + \$25.3M
- State Universities - FY15 appropriation + \$23.6M
- University of Massachusetts
 - without tuition retention FY15 appropriation + \$59.7M (bottom line FY16 \$578.3M)
 - with tuition retention FY15 appropriation + \$33.7M (bottom line FY16 \$547.3M)

I also urge you to provide for the Board of Higher Education's call for **\$4.2 billion bonding capacity, to address the massive deferred maintenance needs of our campuses. Finally, I hope you make a fundamental commitment to affordability and access by making some part of public higher education cost-free to our students.** Still, our MASSGrant program has lost its value to our students. In the late 1980s it covered 80% of tuition and fees at a four-year institution, but now only covers 9%. Please increase funding in the MASSGrant program by \$42 million.

Thank you very much. Investment in higher education is one of the best things states can do to stimulate the economy.