ENGAGING THE LEGISLATURE

Essentials of Successful Legislative Advocacy

MPA Summer Quarter 2021

SYLLABUS – 2 credit class

Class meetings:

- Friday 5-9pm 13 August
- Saturday 9am-5pm 14 August
- Sunday 9am-5pm 15 August

Instructor: Larry Seaquist
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Phone: 253-225-0616 m
Location: On-line / Olympia Campus

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In our *We the People* democracy, asking the Legislature to meet the needs of your local community is one of the constants of public service leadership. With the goal of developing each student’s own skills in organizing legislative advocacy efforts, the seminar develops an advocacy repertoire for use in a world of competing interests and limited resources.

The seminar examines the many opportunities to influence policy and budget decisions across a full, two-year legislative cycle, surveys an array of methods to exercise that influence, and explores the elements of organizing a grass-roots, community-based campaign to use those techniques and opportunities to practical effect. Case studies and guest practitioners provide real-world illustrations of advocacy and advocates at work today.

Our overall goal is to enable students to prepare themselves to create and lead a major advocacy campaign at a time when rapidly evolving political, economic, and social dynamics are transforming our society and the public sector that serves it. In the years ahead, creative, constructive legislative advocacy will be essential to redress long-standing socio-economic inequities and to navigate the realities of the highly polarized politics which are reshaping public policy priorities and realigning constituent interests.

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Through their active participation, students will develop a personal repertoire for creating and directing grass roots strategic advocacy efforts and for mobilizing multi-organization collaborations around the key safety-net and social needs of local communities. To those ends, seminar participants will:

- Practice the diagnosis of compelling advocacy opportunities and the design and leadership of effective advocacy campaigns,
• Consider the changing socio-economic and political dynamics likely to influence advocacy campaigns in the years ahead,
• Learn from the experiences and advice of public service leaders involved in current advocacy efforts and consider the lessons from recent successes and failures, and
• Explore a variety of advocacy campaigns across a wide range of looming problems of interest to class participants.

CLASS SCHEDULE
In light of the scope of material to be covered in a one-weekend class, students should plan for classes to run the full period and finish promptly each day. Mindful of students’ now-extended experiences with virtual classes, I will invite student advice to tailor the daily schedule for the most effective learning experience.

Our general path for the weekend. We’ll review and adjust each day’s agenda to assure we’re meeting students’ needs.

Day     Themes
5-9pm Friday 13 August
• Student & course introductions
• The biennial influence cycle
• Lobbyists and the lobbied

9-5pm Saturday 14 August
• The advocacy repertoire
• Guests: advocacy experiences
• Clinic: evaluation of current campaigns
• Student teams: near-term campaign action plans

9-5pm Sunday 15 August
• The grass roots community mobilization repertoire
• Guests: community mobilization experiences
• Clinic: survey of compelling new advocacy opportunities
• Student teams: long-term campaign strategic designs

COORDINATION
We will use Email and Canvas for schedules, readings, assignment submissions, etc. Additional Canvas features may be used in consultation with students. Students are welcome to email, phone, or text me: larryseaquist@comcast.net, 253-225-0616 m.
PRE-COURSE PREPARATION

Students are assumed to be generally conversant with the basics of the Legislature’s bill and budget writing processes. The Legislature provides:

1. A citizen’s guide to lawmaking with an overview of the legislature’s overall organization, process, and nomenclature: 

   Note: While interesting, one need not review Reed’s Parliamentary Rules which, along with Joint, House, and Senate Rules, govern procedures in each House.

   (For those interested in outside reading in the general history of the U.S. Congress and legislative procedure, “Mr. Speaker, The Life and Times of Thomas B. Reed, the Man Who Broke the Filibuster” is a fascinating, well-written history of a thoroughly disfunctional U.S. House of Representatives in the late 19th Century and Reed’s successful reforms. The Washington State Legislature is among the few who use Reed’s Rules today.)

   Note also: For a comprehensive manual, see the “Red Book” used by Members; includes the rules adopted by the current, 2021-2022 Legislature:

In addition to the above general knowledge about the legislative process please review these two guides for lobbyists:

3. Familiarize yourself with the formal, legal framework governing lobbying, including grassroots lobbying, in Washington State:
   https://www.pdc.wa.gov/learn/publications/lobbyist-instructions
4. Scan the Washington Nonprofits website for a sense of the range of activities of advocacy groups: https://washingtonnonprofits.org Note their listing of tools and best practices:

WRITING

Each student is asked to arrive at the first class with an initial, rough draft, one-page sketch for an advocacy effort of personal interest. Identify from your own interests and experience at least one step, large or small, you would like the Washington State Legislature to take: to enact a law, create a program, establish a policy, or fund a project or program. It is okay to be a contrarian. Perhaps, for class purposes, you wish to remove a law or stop a program or project.

Briefly survey the problem and how you might organize a campaign to persuade the Legislature to pass a bill or put money in the budget. Keep it short: one page or less, use bullets. You will briefly introduce the problem, your objective, and your preliminary game plan in the first class.

Drawing on your further work in class, you are asked to submit a final version of this one-page plan by COB, Wednesday, 18 August. We’ll review this project in class and I’m available anytime to discuss by email/phone your choice of topic and ideas for action.
EVALUATION

We will follow standard TESC/MPA practices using the Evergreen on-line system.

- Students will be evaluated based on attendance, knowledgeable participation, timely submission of the final one-page advocacy campaign plan, and active engagement with their classmates.

- Students are required to submit a self-evaluation and a faculty evaluation. You can submit these evaluations via the College’s online evaluation system at my.evergreen.edu. Students are not required to submit self-evaluations to their transcripts. An evaluation conference is optional.

PERSONAL CONSULTATION/OFFICE HOURS

As an adjunct, I do not have an office at Evergreen. But I am committed to helping each student succeed; I am available to consult with individual students both on course work and on students’ personal career planning whenever needed. We can confer by email, by phone, or in person by arrangement. My phone: 253-225-0616, email: larryseaquist@comcast.net

INSTRUCTOR:

Larry Seaquist served as a strategist and strategic planning executive in a wide range of local, national, and international public service roles. During his eight years elected service in the Washington State Legislature, four as Chair of the House Higher Ed committee, Larry led strategic planning and advocacy efforts in education, health, operating budgets, environment and transportation.

In his prior career as a U.S. Naval officer, Larry commanded a series of warships including Battleship USS IOWA. Following service in the Navy’s Strategic Studies Group, he led strategy and budget planning efforts for the Navy, the Joint Staff, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense. He directed the OSD Office of Policy Planning and served in the Office of Net Assessment during the transition to the new, post-Cold War world.

Larry followed his Navy career with a decade of peacebuilding in at-war and at-risk countries in the Middle East, South Asia, Central Asia, and Latin America. Sponsored by the Director-General of UNESCO, working with local government and community leaders and with local students, he pioneered the design and demonstration of innovative strategies for locally-led campaigns of conflict prevention and community development. He continued this work in a number of U.S. cities and towns including Washington DC, Colombus OH, Seattle-King County, and Tacoma-Pierce County.

A former Federal Executive Fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington DC, he has led strategic planning seminars with students at universities in the U.S., Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia, and Latin America.

Currently, Larry works on and writes about reforms needed to address our crises of inequity, homelessness, and political dysfunction, and the urgencies of refreshing America’s democracy.
COURSE POLICIES -- THE FINE PRINT

General: We will adhere to the usual procedures and policies of Evergreen and the MPA program. Those include:

1. TESC Statement on Academic Honesty  
   http://www.evergreen.edu/advising/academic-honesty
2. TESC The social contract – College philosophy  
3. TESC Student Conduct Code  

Attendance. Designed to develop personal professional skills, full credit in this highly participatory course assumes full-day participation and engagement. Based on the Covid-induced classroom realities in August, we’ll discuss in class on the first night how best to tailor best practices for virtual classrooms to the weekend’s teaching and learning objectives.

Communicating with Each Other: Email and Canvas are our primary means of communication. You are responsible for checking your Evergreen email and Canvas regularly.

Other Expectations of TESC Students and Faculty: We commit to promoting a cooperative, supportive atmosphere within the community; to give everyone opportunity for self-reflection and expression; to use high standards in reading the texts and preparing our papers, lectures, and comments in seminar; to handle all disputes in a spirit of goodwill; to respect our differences; and to discuss any problems involving others in the learning community directly with the individuals involved.

May 2021