

Building Advocacy Position Papers



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Session Objective

Creation of advocacy position documents that can be used to promote the quality of teacher education programs on their campus and across the state.

Basics of Policy Position Papers

What should a policy position paper do?

- Structure a problem facing a decision-maker
- Present the basic, relevant information known
- Make a recommendation

Basics of Policy Position Papers

Establishing “credibility”

- Convincing the audience/policy-maker you have something worth listening to
- Convincing the audience/policy-maker you know what you are talking about
- Convince the audience/policy-maker your position makes the most sense

Basics of Policy Position Papers

- Your job is to SHAPE perceptions
- Your job is to give to staffers the research they need to write their memos (they are busy and use the words given to them)
- Know who on the staff is charged to research your area (i.e. who is looking at teacher preparation?)
- Staffers look to build “useable” relationships

Basics of Policy Position Papers

You will want the staffers you are working with to come away with answers to these two questions:

1. Why is the current situation untenable?
2. How can the current situation be fixed?

Basics of Policy Position Papers

Handout

1. Executive Summary/Purpose Statement (most times this is all that is read)
2. Body: background, analysis, policy options, recommendation
3. Conclusion
4. Appendix (data, charts, quick visuals)

Writing Positions – Outlining the Frame

- I. Concise Executive Summary
- II. Establishment of Problem
 - a. history
 - b. current status
 - c. importance
- III. Problem Definition
- IV. Recommendations
- V. Appendices: references/data/visuals

Overview: Defining Strengths - Telling our Story

- Distinguishing features
 - Internal – Curriculum, delivery models, special initiatives, etc.
 - External - Ongoing involvement with/and service to the public schools, community/agency engagement, etc.
- Outcomes
 - Graduates of distinction, etc.

Overview: Defining Strengths - Telling our Story

- Location
- Brief history of program
- Define distinguishing features of the program
 - Internal
 - Program rigor
 - Curriculum – what we teach and how we teach it is dynamic and responsive to needs of PK-partners
 - Delivery models for degree programs, special initiatives, etc.
 - External
 - Ongoing involvement with/and service to the public schools by faculty and students
 - Community/agency engagement

Example – Internal Features

- With a 100-year tradition of excellence and educational leadership, the College of Education and Human Services offers several advantages for those pursuing an undergraduate or graduate education:
 - Outstanding and innovative programs in the education and human services fields with nationally-recognized faculty and accreditation;
 - Program faculty and staff dedicated to meeting the unique needs of our student population;
 - Flexible study for graduate students, including weekend, accelerated and Web-enhanced course options;
 - Facilities that are on the cutting edge of learning and technology, including University Hall, the College's home, and the largest and most sophisticated building in the University's history.

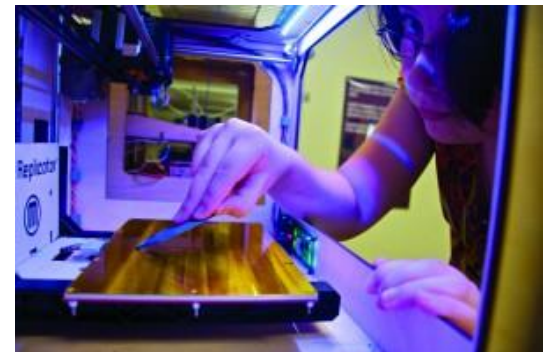
Spotlight Innovation

- What makes the program/initiative innovative or unique?
- Who does it benefit and how?
 - Weave into the narrative how it breaks educator preparation stereotypes.
- Other relevant details
 - Reference news articles, funding, data that defines significance, etc.



Example - Innovation

- LearnerSpace is an experimental lab created to foster collaborations between K12 students and educators. This space is designed to encourage the use of emerging technology tools that support creativity, innovation, and personal engagement within STEM fields.



Turning Strengths into Policy Positions

- Be brief but concise
- Avoid education jargon
- Remind policymakers of program strengths



Turning Strengths into Policy Positions

KEY ADVICE:

1. Give specific policy recommendations
2. Show how the policy will impact the reader, their constituents, and the image of their boss
3. Don't argue for ideology—argue for a specific course of action that catches attentions

Defining Policy Positions

Use current rigor and program framework to write position statements about pending:

- Federal and/or state legislation, or
- Policy proposals presented to the State Board of Education for action

Remind the policymakers:

- Standards for entering and completing our education programs are rigorous.
- Our faculty and students are actively engaged in PK-12 schools.
- What we teach and how we teach it is dynamic and responsive to the needs of our PK- partners.

Defining Policy Positions

How will you frame a statement about a current issue that will have direct impact on your program?

- How will/does federal and state legislation impact educator preparation program delivery/sustainability?
- How will/do policy decisions of the Virginia Board of Education impact educator preparation program delivery/sustainability?

Questions and Next Steps

Where to next?