**Congressional Meeting Road Map**

Outline for a Successful Meeting

1. **Before the Meeting:**

Decide among your group who will take which role(s), depending on group size, i.e., team lead, storyteller, stats/fact keeper, “ask-maker,” etc. Someone should also be designated to put a link to the issue briefs in the Zoom chat and to complete the Meeting Report Form (one for each meeting).

1. **Make the Opening:**
	1. Individual introductions. Be sure the first advocate to speak (your team lead, if you have one) references association with NAFSA and identifies those who are constituents. NOTE: If more than three participants, have the team lead make an introduction on behalf of the group for expediency.
		1. *Ex. “My name is and I’m (a constituent) from X. We’re here today on behalf of NAFSA, the world’s largest nonprofit professional association dedicated to international education with nearly 10,000 members based at colleges and universities across the U.S. and abroad. Together we work to advance policies and practices that equip students and scholars with the global knowledge and skills they need to succeed in today’s interconnected world.”*
	2. Make a personal connection with the staffer and gauge their awareness of international education through questions such as:
		1. *“Do you have any personal connection to international education--did you study abroad or know someone who has? Did you have classes with international students in college?”*
		2. “*Are you from the state/district?”*
	3. Set the intention for the meeting and flag the asks upfront.
		1. *Ex. “Our goal for this meeting is to convey why international education is so important to U.S. students, society, and the economy, and urge your support for policy solutions that would make the U.S. more welcoming to global talent and create more opportunities for U.S. students to gain a global education. Specifically, we are asking for your support for important visa and immigration policy changes, growing and diversifying the number of U.S. college students who pursue study abroad prior to graduation, and funding for federal international education and exchange programs.*
2. **Transition to Welcoming International Student Issues:**
	1. Ex. “*Let me begin by sharing with you why the presence of international students and scholars is so valuable to U.S. higher education and the education of U.S. students specifically, and why the U.S. should do more to attract and retain them.*
3. **Welcoming International Students Talking Points, Data & Stories:**
	1. International students, scholars, and their families bring SIGNIFICANT ACADEMIC, CULTURAL, and ECONOMIC BENEFITS to the United States.
	2. They enrich the perspectives of U.S. students, drive innovation in our workplaces, and contribute to their local communities.
	3. [Insert story demonstrating how international students enrich U.S. students’ learning environment]
	4. Though international student enrollment increased by a significant amount in academic year 2021-2022 compared to the prior year, ENROLLMENT NUMBERS ARE STILL WELL BELOW THE HIGH-WATER MARK REACHED BEFORE THE PANDEMIC.
	5. Meanwhile, OTHER COUNTRIES including Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia, have CHANGED THEIR LAWS TO ATTRACT THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST and are seeing positive results.
	6. International student enrollment HAS IMPORTANT IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. RESEARCH, INNOVATION, AND THE ECONOMY:
		1. International students contributed $33.8 BILLION to our economy in 2021-22 academic year and supported MORE THAN 335,000 JOBS.
		2. [REFERENCE JOBS/ECON VALUE DATA FOR YOUR STATE OR DISTRICT at [www.nafsa.org/economicvalue](http://www.nafsa.org/economicvalue); Note ‘Trends & Report’ for 10-year trend info].
		3. International students are a driving force behind U.S. leadership in research and innovation. SINCE 2000, MORE THAN A QUARTER OF AMERICA’S START-UP COMPANIES VALUED AT $1 BILLION OR MORE HAVE A FOUNDER WHO FIRST CAME TO THE U.S. AS AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT.
4. **Transition to U.S. Students’ Access to Study Abroad Issues:**
	1. *Ex. In addition to international students bringing diverse viewpoints to U.S. classrooms and communities, U.S. students also greatly benefit from access to study abroad experiences.”*
5. **U.S. Students’ Access to Study Abroad Talking Points, Data & Stories:**
	1. Study abroad provides U.S. students the GLOBAL SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, AND EXPERIENCES necessary to compete in today’s global workforce.
	2. Students who study abroad are MORE LIKELY to HAVE A HIGHER GPA and COMPLETE THEIR DEGREE FASTER than students who don’t study abroad.
	3. 86 percent of American business leaders believe THEIR BUSINESS WOULD INCREASE if their employees had international experience.
	4. Research by NAFSA in 2020 revealed a strong connection between the skills gained from a study abroad experience and the SKILLS EMPLOYERS ARE LOOKING FOR in filling their management and leadership positions.
	5. [Insert story of how study abroad helps students thrive in their studies and careers]
	6. Despite these proven benefits, ONLY 10 PERCENT OF U.S. COLLEGE STUDENTS STUDY ABROAD BEFORE THEY GRADUATE.
	7. In our state for example, [insert [data on study abroad participation](https://www.nafsa.org/sites/default/files/media/document/State-by-State-19-20-study-abroad-statistics.pdf)]
	8. The pandemic significantly impacted study abroad participation (DOWN 91 PERCENT in the 2020-2021 ACADEMIC YEAR, for example), limiting students’ access to the associated CAREER ENHANCING BENEFITS of study abroad.
	9. A larger and more diverse number of students should have this opportunity.
	10. [Insert story of how diversifying study abroad would be beneficial or how new/additional federal funding for study abroad would benefit students]
6. **Transition to the “Asks”:**
	1. *Ex. “Which leads us to make these specific asks of (you/your boss). I have three issue brief documents that I’d like to share with you that go into more detail about these asks. We’ll put links in the chat now, and will email them to you after our meeting, but we’d like to highlight for you now some of the solutions that NAFSA has identified.”*
7. **The Asks:**
	1. Update immigration law to attract and retain international student talent:
		1. CREATE A PATH TO A GREEN CARD for all advanced degree graduates (master’s level and higher) in all fields.
		2. EXPAND DUAL INTENT for F-1 students.
	2. Cosponsor the SENATOR PAUL SIMON STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM ACT when it is introduced. The bill would EXPAND AND DIVERSIFY ACCESS TO STUDY ABROAD by establishing a COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM for colleges and universities to help them fund these programs and defray the cost to students.
	3. Support increasing CONGRESSIONAL APPROPRIATIONS IN FY 2024 to help restore international education and exchange programming impacted by the pandemic. Specifically:
		1. Robust funding to support critical programs under the State Department’s BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS, including:
			1. EducationUSA Overseas Advising Centers that help ATTRACT INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS to study in the U.S;
			2. The IDEAS grant program to BUILD STUDY ABROAD CAPACITY on U.S. campuses;
			3. VIRTUAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS, such as the Stevens Initiative.
		2. Increased funding for the Education Department’s Title VI and FULBRIGHT-HAYS programs.
8. **Thank You and Follow-Up:**
	1. Send a thank you email to the staff as a follow up, either from all of you, or individually.
	2. Some offices may request that advocates submit an appropriations form. If so, please note that in the Meeting Report Form and we will provide guidance on a case-by-case basis.
	3. Complete the Advocacy Day evaluation survey and the Meeting Report Form for each meeting. Those links are available in the Advocacy Associates online portal.