Meet with Decision Makers

Decision makers are individuals that can help move your project forward by approving it or telling you the steps you need to take in order to make your project successful. For example, if you would like to build a garden near your dorm, you could talk to the Residence Life Sustainability Coordinator to get started.

When setting up a meeting with decision makers, keep in mind that they are taking time away from their regular duties to work on extra projects. Be respectful when it comes to their time, and make sure you are well organized and have a clear idea of what you want to ask them so that the meeting can be efficient for everyone present.

The easiest approach to setting up a meeting is to email the person you want to meet with. If you get no response within a couple of days, call their office to follow up. Being persistent—yet courteous—is always key. See Running a Meeting for more information on setting up the meeting.

Guidelines to follow when meeting with a decision maker:

- Identify the decision maker(s) that you think will tell you “yes” to a project, or can give you information as to how you can complete your project. Sometimes you might have to talk to a few people to find out who this is.
- Have a specific “ask” for the decision maker. What do you want the outcome of the meeting to be? Even if you are just gathering information from the decision maker, make sure the meeting has a purpose, and you know what that purpose is.
- Identify members of your group who would be most valuable to have at the meeting. Be strategic; limit the number of additional attendees so as not to overwhelm the decision maker. For example, if you are a senior about to
graduate, it might be good to bring an underclassman involved in the project so they can experience a meeting with an administrator.

- Strategically think about the questions you will ask, and come prepared with a written list so you do not forget anything.
- Create or share an agenda with anyone from your group that is also going to the meeting so you all have a clear understanding of what needs to be accomplished.
- Dress for the audience. Know the situation and judge your outfit accordingly. If you are going to a meeting with a councilmember, business casual is needed. If you are meeting with university staff or faculty between classes, casual attire is acceptable, but avoid looking sloppy. No sweatpants or flip-flops you would wear in the shower.
- Be responsible, dedicated and professional. If you are having difficulty maintaining your project because you get busy with school or work, you need to let the decision maker know, and connect them with another student that can continue your work. Communication is key. If you let your responsibilities go, it makes you seem irresponsible, which can hinder your relationship with the decision maker and your overall project’s success.