

Going to Capitol Hill

Reflections from Advocacy Day 2013



Photo courtesy of K. Sacco

Representing New England

Held every March in Washington, D.C., Advocacy Day offers NAFSA members and interested individuals the chance to learn about and be an advocate for international education. This year, Region XI sent 25 students, staff, and faculty members to represent New England. Members of this delegation shared stories about the impact of international education on their personal lives as well as on their campuses and local communities.

Also, during this year's festivities, Ken Reade of Dartmouth College was presented with the 2013 Advocate of the Year Award. Congrats Ken! To learn more about Ken and his work as an advocate, visit <http://goo.gl/hmcF7>.

Thank you to all who participated and gave a voice to Region XI on Capitol Hill!

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Being an Advocate: Participant Reflections

"I always welcome and cherish the moments of participating with my dynamic, smart and caring colleagues during Advocacy Day. As I reflect, I am truly reminded and inspired of the vital importance of being involved with the legislative process, for the benefit of all, on behalf of our communities within our individual respective states, and ideally, on behalf of our collaborative efforts throughout the country. Each person has a voice, and through advocacy and action, each person can help



R-L: J. Deziel, Sen. Shaheen (NH), K. Reade. Photo courtesy of J. Deziel

shape history—and our collective future—especially as it relates to comprehensive immigration reform (CIR) to create stronger inclusive welcoming communities. We need each other to succeed, as the proverbial spoke on the wheel of change does not turn alone. This year, as with many in the past, we spoke directly with our elected representatives in the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives—and they truly wanted to hear what we had to say about CIR, The Dream Act, I-Squared Act, and more—from these conversations are borne legislative amendments, action and measurable tangible outcomes that lead us to stronger communities. To strategize and enjoy friendships with my beloved colleagues while visiting offices of our elected representatives on "The Hill" during Advocacy Day can only be described as energizing and uplifting—and I would encourage you to be involved; from the most bashful to the most extroverted—and the more diversification with advocacy efforts, the better. If I can do this, so can you—every voice makes a difference, you'll fall in love with advocacy, and the future is now; I look forward to seeing you soon."

John Deziel
University of New Hampshire

"Each person has a voice, and through advocacy and action, each person can help shape history..."

— J. Deziel

"I enjoyed the opportunity...to build connections with colleagues; I was also touched by the power of personal narratives."

— M. Simpson

"There were many highlights to the two-day program. One of the most valuable to me was the challenge of polishing my "story" in a guided step-by-step process. I enjoyed the opportunity to hear the others' perspectives and to build connections with colleagues; I was also touched by the power of personal narratives. Stories I heard addressed on-the-job challenges with funding or institutional structures as well as tales of romance shaped by immigration policies. In addition, I was inspired by a host of speakers, who introduced us to past experiences with advocacy, advocacy strategies, and the key issues. Since Advocacy Day, I have followed up with several aides, using resources provided by NAFSA, and closely followed news and debates on our advocacy issues."

Meghan Simpson
SIT Graduate Institute



Students and staff from Clark University with Sen. G. McGovern. Photo courtesy of P. Doherty

"The highlight for me was meeting with Jim McGovern and asking him if he liked S'mores. Being able to be controversial enabled me to be memorable and hopefully push our cause forward a little more. His reception to my question and story highlight that the Paul Simon Study Abroad Act already has a lot of support. It is up to us to continue to tell our stories. I also enjoyed the training on how to effectively frame an issue to pretty much anyone, whether that be Congressmen, family, or friends. This is invaluable expertise that I am lucky to have received."

Emily Newton
Clark University

“Third time is a charm! Having the opportunity to attend for the third year in a row, I visited with my senator and congresswoman (Connecticut) to learn that both are supportive of immigration reform and would support the reintroduction of the Simon Study Abroad Bill. A nice surprise was finding that all of the staffers I visited with had studied abroad. It was great to be able to have them talk about their experiences and voice how important study abroad was to their development. I left Washington with a renewed sense of purpose and motivation to continue to follow up with my elected officials.”

Vince Schaff
Institute for Shipboard Education

“Third time is a charm...I left Washington with a renewed sense of purpose and motivation...”

— V. Schaff

“I had a wonderful time at Advocacy Day. It is a powerful experience that I wish more people could take advantage of, as I felt truly part of the democratic process. I am from RI—a small state, and I was able to meet with Senator Jack Reed, and Congressman Jim Langevin. Because this was my second time attending Advocacy Day, I have now established a relationship with these offices, which is important, because they know their constituents care about immigration reform and study abroad issues. I really wish more people could take part in this experience.”

Katie Gilbertson
Johnson & Wales University

"In the beginning... I was nervous, completely out of my comfort zone and afraid that I would not be a good representative for international education. At the end... the experience was awesome! I felt well-prepared by NAFSA and gained a new confidence in advocating for International education. It was an additional bonus to be in Washington, D.C. with 25 people from Region XI! I would strongly encourage everyone to get involved in advocacy. It is important to have our voices heard by the people in congress that represent us."

Kate Sacco
Rhode Island School of Design



Photo courtesy of K. Sacco

"I felt well-prepared by NAFSA and gained a new confidence in advocating for international education."

— K. Sacco

"I attended Advocacy Day as a representative from Vermont to lobby for support for education abroad and common-sense immigration reform. It was exciting to be able to share with elected officials why I care so much about international education. Vermont is an important state with two senior Senators (Patrick Leahy and Bernie Sanders) who sit on key committees. It was special to be able to meet with their staffers and connect around these issues."

Emma Swift
University of Vermont

The Region XI Delegation

Thank you again to everyone who gave study abroad and international students a voice on Advocacy Day 2013, especially the following who represented New England:

Nancy Condon UMass—Amherst

Amy Daly Gardner Clark University

John Deziel University of New Hampshire

Patricia Doherty Clark University

David Elwell Brandeis University

Katie Gilbertson Johnson & Wales University

Liz Goss Tocci, Goss, & Lee, PC

Bridget Healy Clark University

Volha Hrystevich Clark University

Mollie Kaubrys CIS Abroad

Jeanne Kelly Boston University

Mary Louton New England Conservatory

Carl Nelson ASC English—Boston

Emily Newton Clark University

Ken Reade Dartmouth College

Dana Riechman Boston College

Kate Sacco Rhode Island School of Design

Vince Schaff Institute for Shipboard Education

Meghan Simpson SIT Graduate Institute

Matthew Smith Johnson & Wales University

Emma Swift University of Vermont

Massiel Tercero-Parker Curran & Berger, LLP

Tom Thomsen Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Constance Whitehead Hanks Clark University

**Become and advocate today!
Learn how to get involved and
what NAFSA is doing at:**

**[http://www.nafsa.org/Get_Involved/
Be_an_Advocate/](http://www.nafsa.org/Get_Involved/Be_an_Advocate/)**