

# SESSION IX – PANEL: AVOIDING INTERIM DROP-OFF

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## PANELISTS



JP Peterson  
Phone2Action  
@Phone2Action



Adam Yust, University of  
Minnesota Alumni Association  
@UMNAdam



Tom Bull, Portland State  
University Alumni Association  
@PSU\_Alums



Beth Bell, Clemson University  
Office of Gov't Affairs  
@CUattheCapitol



Mike Miller, University of  
Minnesota, Office of Gov't &  
Comm Relations  
@UMNAdvocates



Director of Partnerships  
Phone2Action  
@Phone2Action

JP joined Phone2Action in 2015 as the company's fifth employee. Since then, he has consulted hundreds of organizations, helping them think critically about the technology they use to better engage supporters in advocacy. His execution of business development systems and marketing programs have fueled Phone2Action's growth.

Now with over 70 employees, Phone2Action is widely regarded as America's preeminent advocacy technology. Prior to Phone2Action, JP worked in the office of Congressman Joe Kennedy III.



Alumni Advocacy Director  
University of Minnesota  
Alumni Association  
@UMNAdam

Since joining the University of Minnesota Alumni Association in December of 2015, Adam Yust has helped alumni advocate for the University of Minnesota through expanded grassroots organizing and formalized grassroots relationships.

Adam previously lived in Washington, D.C. where he worked in the United States Senate for a former comedian. After returning to the land of 10,000 lakes, Adam worked as a consultant for the Pew Charitable Trusts and various Minnesota foundations. Adam has also worked on statewide clean energy and transportation infrastructure campaigns.

A native of Minnesota, Adam earned a B.A. degree from the Morris campus of the U of M. Adam currently resides in Saint Paul with his four urban chickens, and can see the Minnesota State Capitol from his house.



Director of Advocacy  
Clemson University  
Office of Gov't Affairs  
@CUattheCapitol

Beth Bell has served as Director of Advocacy in Clemson University's governmental affairs office in Columbia since July 2005.

Bell, a native of Laurinburg, N.C., graduated from Clemson in 1994. She began her career at CBS Sports in New York. During her time at CBS, she covered such events as the NCAA men's basketball tournament Final Four, the 1998 Winter Olympic Games, the PGA tour and the U.S. Open Tennis Championships.

In 1998, she returned to South Carolina to work for the Family Circle Cup tennis tournament in Hilton Head as director of corporate hospitality and sponsorship sales and fulfillment. In 2000, she joined the executive staff of South Carolina Governor Jim Hodges as Director of Scheduling. Prior to coming to Clemson, she worked as a national corporate lobbyist and public affairs specialist for Advance America Inc. in Spartanburg.

As Director of Advocacy, Bell oversees and manages Clemson's legislative grassroots advocacy program, recruits and trains new advocates and manages a database of 4300 active Clemson alumni and student advocates who are called upon to communicate with members of the South Carolina General Assembly and the U.S. Congress about issues of importance to Clemson and higher education.



Legislative Advocacy  
Coordinator  
University of Minnesota  
@UMNAdvocates

Mike Miller is the Legislative Advocacy Coordinator at the University of Minnesota.

He works with students, faculty, staff, and any supporters to introduce them to political advocacy, helping them learn that a deep knowledge of legislative issues is not necessary to achieve results. Simply telling lawmakers why a person feels a connection to the University of Minnesota is often enough.

Mike is married to Nikki and has two children, Owen, 12, and Abby, 9.

TOM BULL



Portland State University  
Alumni Association  
@PSU\_Alums

Bull came to PSU from Bastyr University, a private university of natural medicine in Seattle, where he built the alumni engagement office from the ground up, developing a strong base of support for the campus through innovative programming and effective communication.

Prior to joining Bastyr, Bull served in progressively responsible roles in alumni relations and development at Loyola, DePaul and Northwestern Universities in Chicago, Illinois. Tom holds a B.S. in organization development from Loyola University and an M.S. in strategic communications and business development from Northwestern.



MINNESOTA  
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# Lessons Learned with GA Legislature

## Tony Roberts



- Georgia's Unique Legislative Landscape
  - Short Sessions
  - Importance of Sine Die and Last Day
- Importance of Strategic Communications Between Sessions
  - Reaching New Officials: Building Influence
  - Keeping the Fires Burning: Maintaining Support through Updates
  - Extending Appreciation: Saying "Thanks" Matters
- Challenges of Keeping Linked
  - Maximizing Impact: Short and Sweet but Specific
  - Message Personalization: Sincerity
  - Appropriate Messengers: Constituency
  - Balancing Modality of Contacts



# CLEMSON ADVOCATES PROGRAM

The Clemson Advocates program currently has over 4300 volunteer members nationwide. Advocates are called upon during the legislative session to communicate with elected officials in support of Clemson and public higher education when the need arises.

## GRASSTOPS

- Are often members of key University constituency boards (Board of Visitors, Alumni Association, CU Foundation Board, IPTAY)
- Engaged at a high level
- Communication strategy off session = More is More
- Off session engagement strategy = Opportunities are everywhere
- Challenge: Continuing engagement when their service concludes
  - Invest them in the process
  - Social Media

## GRASSROOTS

- Are foot soldiers and community ambassadors for Clemson
- Engaged at an informational level
- Communication strategy off session = Less is More
- Off session engagement strategy = Information is power and all politics are local
  - Not all legislative activity is seasonal
- Challenge: Keeping them hooked
  - Invest them in the process
  - Social Media

# PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION VOLUNTEER ADVOCACY PROGRAM



## **Mission:**

To promote the goals and legislative priorities of the University with policy-makers and community leaders.

## **History:**

Originally organized in 1989 to combat a threat to PSU's existence. PSU Advocates is now a standing committee of the PSU Alumni Association.

## **Budget:**

The activities of the Advocates are largely funded by the PSU Alumni Association.

## PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION VOLUNTEER ADVOCACY PROGRAM



- **Knowledge** – Information is shared with our committee throughout the year from the University President’s Office, Government Relations, and guest presenters. Our meetings are held monthly.
- **Skills** – Committee members are equipped with the tools to mobilize any efforts to support our University. (Be clear to your volunteers about their role. Be EXTRA clear to your volunteers about what is NOT their role.)
- **Relationships** – It is important to develop strong relationships/trust with all aspects of the University, legislators, student leadership, and key decision makers. Relationships are difficult to establish; even more difficult to maintain.
- **Organization** – Critical to any functioning committee. Be thorough while being mindful of a volunteer’s time. Develop procedures that enable the committee to function efficiently.
- **Communication** – Engagement is often obtained through the sharing of consistent and pertinent information. Ongoing communication is a challenge to maintain.
- **Value** – Advocacy provides an opportunity for alumni to add value to their University. While volunteers need to be appreciated, it is more important that they feel their efforts are valued by the University.
- **Maintenance** – Maintaining the components of any volunteer advocacy program are difficult. When developing and implementing new activities, be thoughtful of how those activities will be in place years later.