

ENGAGING THE LEGISLATURE

Essentials of Successful Legislative Advocacy

MPA Winter Quarter 2025

SYLLABUS – 2 credit class

Class meetings:

Friday	6-8:50pm	17 January
Saturday	9am-3:50pm	18 January
Sunday	9am-3:50pm	19 January

Instructor: Larry Seaquist
E-mail: larryseaquist@comcast.net
Phone: 253-225-0616 m

Location: Olympia Campus (Classroom TBA)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

One of the hallmarks of *We the People* citizen leadership in our representative democracy is asking the Legislature to meet the needs of your local community. With the goal of developing each student's own skills in organizing legislative advocacy efforts, the seminar develops an advocacy repertoire for use in a world of competing interests and limited resources.

The seminar examines the many opportunities to influence policy and budget decisions across a full, two-year legislative cycle, surveys an array of methods to exercise that influence, and explores the elements of grassroots, community-based campaigns which organize those techniques and opportunities to practical effect. Case studies and guest practitioners provide real-world illustrations of advocacy and advocates at work today.

Our overall goal is to enable students to prepare themselves to create and lead major advocacy campaigns at a time when rapidly evolving political, economic, and social dynamics are transforming our society and the public sector that serves it. In the years ahead, creative, constructive legislative advocacy will be essential to redress long-standing socio-economic inequities and to navigate the realities of the highly polarized politics which are reshaping public policy priorities and realigning constituent interests.

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Through their active participation, students will develop a personal repertoire for creating and directing grass roots strategic advocacy efforts and for mobilizing multi-organization collaborations.

- Practice the design and leadership of effective legislative advocacy campaigns,
- Examine the impact on the legislature of changes in policy and agency organizations brought by the newly-elected Governor,
- Consider the changing socio-economic and political dynamics likely to influence advocacy campaigns in the years ahead,
- Appreciate the varied legislative priorities of different constituencies across different regions of Washington state.

- Learn from the experiences and advice of public service leaders involved in current advocacy efforts and consider the lessons from recent successes and failures, and
- Explore a variety of advocacy campaigns across a wide range of looming problems of interest to class participants.

CLASS SCHEDULE

In light of the scope of material to be covered in a one-weekend class, students should plan for classes to run the full period and finish promptly. Our general path for the weekend:

Day Themes

6-9pm Friday 17 January

- Student & course introductions
- The biennial influence cycles
- Guest: lobbyists and the lobbied

9-4pm Saturday 18 January

- AM: policy advocacy repertoire
- PM: budget advocacy repertoire
- Guest: effective advocacy
- Student presentations

9-4pm Sunday 19 January

- AM: community mobilization repertoire
- PM: public service agency repertoire
- Guest: effective community mobilization
- Student presentations

COORDINATION

We will use email for schedules, readings, assignment submissions, etc. Students are welcome to email, phone, or text me: larryseaquist@comcast.net, 253-225-0616 m.

PRE-COURSE PREPARATION

Students are asked to be generally conversant with the basics of the Legislature's bill and budget writing processes. Here's a toolkit of websites you will find useful in an advocacy campaign:

1. **WA LEGISLATURE'S WEB SITE.** This is your "go-to" page for all things legislature. There is a huge amount of information, kept live and current by an outstanding staff and excellent IT system. We'll use the site in class several times.

<https://leg.wa.gov>

2. **OVERVIEW OF THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS.** This is a comprehensive summary of the whole process. You need not master every facet of the journey from idea to Gov's signature. We'll focus on several key points where the advocate can weigh in to effect.

<https://leg.wa.gov/legislature/Pages/Overview.aspx>

3. Here's the short version:

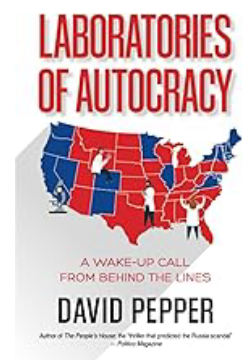
<https://leg.wa.gov/legislature/Pages/Bill2Law.aspx>

4. Here's a short guide to reading a bill. Note the different types of bills on p.2.
<https://leg.wa.gov/LIC/Documents/EducationAndInformation/Guide%20to%20Reading%20a%20Bill.pdf>
5. **LOBBYING AND LOBBYISTS.** In addition to the above general knowledge about the legislative process, please familiarize yourself with the formal, legal framework governing lobbying, including grassroots lobbying, in Washington State. We won't spend much time on this, but you'll need to be very careful with the laws and ethics when you go to work.
<https://www.pdc.wa.gov/learn/publications/lobbyist-instructions>
6. **GRASS ROOTS ORGANIZATIONS.** Successful advocacy is built on successful organizing. Scan the Nonprofit Association of Washington website for a sense of the range of activities of advocacy groups. Scan their roster of members and member directories for friends and resources.
<https://nonprofitwa.org>
 Note this national listing of tools and best practices:
<https://www.501commons.org/resources/tools-and-best-practices>

TWO READING ASSIGNMENTS

While our WA State Legislature is notably well-organized and expertly staffed, that may not be the case in other states. Two brand new publications have stirred immediate national attention:

7. **ARTICLE:** Prompted by the Pepper book, this article by Jane Mayer in the 15 August 2022 *New Yorker* describes the descent of the Ohio Legislature into gerrymandered disfunction – a growing nationwide problem. As a subscriber, I've printed out the article for your use here: [State Legislatures are Torching Democracy](#). I'll also email the article to you and put it on Canvas.
8. **BOOK:** [Laboratories of Autocracy](#), by David Pepper, is 2022 book which fueled the Jane Mayer's article. Pepper describes the political-legislative wreckage of extreme gerrymandering in Ohio and the factors which set the stage. Other legislatures are on this path; a key test is coming next year in a case now before the U.S. Supreme Court. With our state Constitution, our independent redistricting commission, and our Public Disclosure Commission, we are not yet in this fix. But as we'll discuss in class, the increasing number of "safe" seats is beginning to affect even us here in WA state.



TWO-STEP WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Each student is asked to arrive at the first class with an initial draft of a **one-page** sketch of a plan for an advocacy effort of personal interest. Consulting your own interests and experience, propose at least one step, large or small, you would like the Washington State Legislature to take: enact a law, create a program, establish a policy, or fund a project or program. It is okay to be a contrarian. You may wish to remove a law, stop a program, or redirect funding in a different direction.

Briefly survey the problem and outline your initial plan to organize a campaign to persuade the Legislature to pass a bill or put money in the budget. Keep it short: one page or less, use bullets. You'll make two presentations in class:

- In a two minute "elevator speech," in the first class on Friday evening you will briefly introduce yourself, your rationale, and your preliminary game plan.
- Per a schedule of "volunteers" as arranged with each student, you'll have 15 minutes on Saturday or Sunday to outline your (evolving) ideas and invite class discussion. You may use PowerPoint slides should you wish.

Drawing on your work in class, you will be asked to submit a final version of your advocacy plan by COB, Wednesday, 22 January. I'm ready to discuss by email/phone your choice of topic, your ideas for a plan of action, and to consult as you proceed.

EVALUATION

We will follow standard TESC/MPA practices using the Evergreen on-line system.

- Students will be evaluated based on attendance, knowledgeable participation, timely submission of the final advocacy campaign plan, and active engagement with their classmates.
- Students are required to submit a self-evaluation and a faculty evaluation. You can submit these evaluations via the College's online evaluation system at my.evergreen.edu. Students are not required to submit self-evaluations to their transcripts. An evaluation conference is optional.

PERSONAL CONSULTATION/OFFICE HOURS

As an adjunct, I do not have an office at Evergreen. But I am committed to helping each student succeed; I am available to consult with individual students both on course work and on students' personal career planning. We can confer by email, by phone, or in person by arrangement. My phone: 253-225-0616, email: larryseaquist@comcast.net

INSTRUCTOR:

Larry Seaquist served as a strategist and strategic planning executive in a wide range of local, national, and international public service roles. During his eight years as elected State Representative (26th Legislative District/Gig Harbor) in the Washington State Legislature, four as Chair of the House Higher Ed committee, Larry led strategic planning and advocacy efforts in education, health, operating budgets, environment and transportation.

In his prior career as a U.S. Naval officer, Larry commanded a series of four warships including Battleship USS IOWA. His duty ashore in the Pentagon focused on political-military strategy and budget making. Following service in the Navy's Strategic Studies Group, he led strategy and budget planning efforts for the Navy, the Joint Staff, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense. He directed the Secretary of Defense Office of Policy Planning and served in the Office of Net Assessment during the transition to the post-Cold War world.

Larry followed his Navy career with a decade of peacebuilding in at-war and at-risk countries in the Middle East, South Asia, Central Asia, and Latin America. Advising the Director-General of UNESCO, working with local government and community leaders and with local students, he pioneered the design and demonstration of innovative strategies for locally led campaigns of conflict prevention and

community development. He continued this work in a number of U.S. cities and towns including Washington DC, Columbus OH, Seattle-King County, and Tacoma-Pierce County.

A former Federal Executive Fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington DC, he has led strategic planning seminars with students at universities in the U.S., Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia, and Latin America. Early in his career, Larry wintered over both in the Arctic and the Antarctic taking weather and ice observations for a year at Barter Island in the Arctic Ocean and for fourteen months as American rep to the Argentine Expedition to Ellsworth Station on the Antarctic ice shelf on the Weddell Sea from where he went to the South Pole.

Larry's wife, Carla, was a writer and playwright. Her new book, *Across the Kitchen Table: A Mother and Daughter Turn Tragedy into Peace*, will be published in January 2025.

Larry is at work on a book, "Doing Democracy," which outlines the work ahead if our *We the People* democracy is to achieve our founding ideals in a changed and changing world. With the League of Women Voters, YMCA, and other groups, Larry also works with local students and citizen leaders to address our crises of inequity, homelessness, and civility.

COURSE POLICIES -- THE FINE PRINT

General: We will adhere to the usual procedures and policies of Evergreen and the MPA program. Those include:

1. TESC Statement on Academic Honesty
<http://www.evergreen.edu/advising/academic-honesty>
2. TESC The social contract – College philosophy
<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=174-121-010>
3. TESC Student Conduct Code
<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=174-123>

Attendance. Designed to develop personal professional skills, full credit in this highly participatory course assumes full participation and engagement.

Communicating with each other: Email is our primary means of communication outside class. Generally, I'll email direct from and invite your emails to my personal account, larryseaquist@comcast.net.

Other Expectations of TESC Students and Faculty: We commit to promoting a cooperative, supportive atmosphere within the community; to give everyone opportunity for self-reflection and expression; to use high standards in reading the texts and preparing our papers, lectures, and comments in seminar; to handle all disputes in a spirit of goodwill; to respect our differences; and to discuss any problems involving others in the learning community directly with the individuals involved.

LS 2.2 – 18 Nov 24