

# ACTIVATE

## YOUR CLUB & COMMUNITY

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In the fight to save tigers, we need all the help we can get. For your T4T clubs, that means taking advantage of the multitude of opportunities and resources that your university offers.

This section underscores the importance of creating partnerships with your administration and provides suggestions and information on potential projects your club can undertake to engage your members, including establishing a Cubs for Cubs education program and partnering with a local AZA zoo.

This section concludes with information on how you can use your voice to advocate for international conservation programs. Our combined voice is one of T4T's most powerful tools to effect change and make a difference on a global scale.

# UTILIZE UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

As a student, you have access to a multitude of resources at your university that you can use to promote your T4T club and its initiatives. Taking advantage of the resources at your disposal is easy to do and does not require much more than simply reaching out and asking for help.

## News Outlets

You university will have several different news outlets that you can take advantage of:

- **Campus Newspapers**
- **Campus Radio Stations**
- **Campus TV Networks**

### Campus Newspapers

The student newspaper is one of the hallmarks associated with college. Even in the age of social media and near-instantaneous information sharing, universities across the country maintain a student-operated newspaper. Student newspapers primarily cover university events from the perspective of the student body, and as such are a great way to reach your target audience of fellow students.

You can utilize your student newspaper to promote an upcoming event or highlight initiatives. Placing an ad in the paper will not be free, but student papers will often provide discounts to registered student organizations on campus. If you want a story written about a club activity, all it usually takes is an email to someone at the paper to set up an interview!

“At Trinity, our campus newspaper staff published an article about our new Tigers for Tigers club to recruit new members and determine interest from



T4T gets a front page feature in The Tiger at Clemson University.

the student body,” said Gabriel Sandigo of Trinity T4T. After the article was published in the newspaper, Trinity T4T received interview requests from all over campus. “We were really proud and thankful to have the university support our cause to save our mascot,” Sandigo said.

## How to Reach Out to Your Campus Newspaper

Identify and contact the Editor-In-Chief of your campus newspaper by phone or email. If you are unable to reach them, reach out to an editor of a particular sub-topic. Your editors are looking for remarkable stories that amplify school pride, tell a personal story and benefit the university community as a whole. If you are hosting an upcoming event or just completed one, always inform your campus newspaper about your accomplishments. They might not write a story for the newspaper, but at least they will be informed.

## Student Radio Station

Just like your student newspaper, your university radio station is another student-led initiative on your campus that produces content primarily for students. Reaching out to the radio station is a good way to advertise for T4T events via Public Service Announcements. They may also be interested in an interview!

## University TV

Another useful campus resource is your University TV station. While it's not as prevalent as a college newspaper or radio station, your university TV station can be helpful tool for promoting Tigers for Tigers.

## Network with Other Student Organizations

Other student organizations are one of your best resources at your university. They are just like you – students of the same school working toward a common goal. Student organizations are helpful for a number of reasons including:

- Partnering for events
- Supporting your club by providing students to participate in your events
- Sharing resources (tables, chairs, etc)
- Sharing contacts with campus administration
- Advertising for upcoming events

Collaborating with other clubs that have similar goals is a great way to broaden the reach of your organization while building relationships with other students. Who knows, you may even gain some new members!

## Collaborate with Greek Life

Greek life has various degrees of influence depending on the culture of your campus. Some universities do not have Greek life while at others, fraternities and sororities constitute more than a quarter of the total student body.

If your university has Greeks, invite their members to attend upcoming events. Fraternities and sororities are built on close friendship and community, so often times, when one member participates in an activity, several friends come along.

At most universities, fraternities and sororities hold weekly chapter meetings to discuss their programs and activities within their organization. They often allow students from different organizations to speak at chapter meetings about upcoming events. If you want to speak you should reach out to the Presidents of the fraternities and sororities and they will introduce you to the secretary to set up the presentation.

If you have T4T members who are brothers or sisters of a Greek organization, ask them to introduce you to their chapter members. Many fraternities and sororities will partner with student organizations for fundraisers or cool events.

# BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR UNIVERSITY

## Why is This Important?

In order for your T4T club to grow and prosper you need to build strong relationships with those who work for your university. Your administration, Marketing Department, and Student Affairs Office can be very useful and influential when it comes to advertising for an upcoming event, getting a press release published, and motivating your student body to join your tiger tribe! There are many student organizations on your campus, yet few ever take the initiative to build relationships with key administrators.

## What Does Your Administration Look for in a Student Club?

- 1 A large group of passionate students supporting a common cause
- 2 A group of students making a difference in their community and for their university

Passion is contagious and you will inspire your university administration. Remember that your university faculty and staff are there for you. They want to help their students succeed; however, they need to see that your club and their efforts are worth their time. When your administration can observe passion, dedication, and success, they will be more willing to work with you. Remain positive, excited, and communicate that the student body cares about your cause and that you are making a difference for your tiger mascot, your school's identity.

"I don't know where Tigers for Tigers at RIT would be without the support of Karie Pine, who is our Interim Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs. She helped us organize our first 5k event which increased our recognition to the rest of the administration and the student body," Matt Miles, RIT T4T.

## Club Faculty Advisor

Your club advisor is your single biggest resource you have on your campus. While graduating seniors and incoming freshmen fuel the yearly turnover of students, your faculty advisor remains the core of your organization from year to year. It is crucial to keep your faculty advisor up to date with your club activities and speak with him or her regarding new initiatives. Never be afraid to ask your advisor for help!

## Department Head and Deans

The department head of your club's academic department will usually be the head of your faculty advisor's academic department. Building a good relationship with your department head is an easy way to begin developing your network of allies in your school's administration. Your department head is always searching for new ways to promote the accomplishments of his or her students, and can open doors for your club by providing unique opportunities through his or her department's resources.

The dean of your faculty advisor's college is an important position at your university. He or she is responsible for the administration of all academic departments in the college including teaching, research, and outreach activities. Your dean will be very well connected to alumni and can be a huge asset to your club when working on specific projects or initiatives.

## Office of Student Affairs

The Office of Student Affairs works to improve the experience of students at your university. They are responsible for a number of student-centered programs on campus designed to enhance the quality of your collegiate experience including campus housing, fresh-



man orientation, Greek life, club sports, and of course, student organizations! This is an excellent office to work with when seeking advice, financial support, or outreach assistance.

The Office of Student Affairs provides many on-campus resources for students including anything from helping organizations schedule a location to host an event to advertising on campus. Reach out to your Director of Student Organizations (or equivalent position) for assistance. Just like the rest of the administration, they are looking to help dedicated, passionate students who are working to make a difference for their community and university. If they can't help you, they will put you in touch with someone who can!

Keeping your Office of Student Affairs up to date on your club's accomplishments will strengthen your relationship and allow them to better assist you with your initiatives.

### University President

The president (or chancellor, for some of you) is the face of your university. He or she has strong ties with all the important people at your school and, as a result of this, wields a lot of power. If you haven't done so already, you should schedule a meeting with your university president. It is not a bad idea to meet with the president once a year to maintain the relationship. Whether the meeting is for five minutes or an hour, anything is better than nothing. Once you schedule a meeting, make sure that you have an "ask" prepared. This can be as simple as, "Would you be willing to put us in touch with the university's marketing staff to help us advertise for an event?" Tigers for Tigers has a lot to offer your university, and it will be easy for your president to fall in love with your club! A good first impression is important, so be sure to go into the meeting excited and show your pride for saving our mascot!

### Marketing and Communications

The people working in your university's marketing and communications office can be very valuable for your club. They are responsible for your university's social media pages, website, and all other forms of outreach and communication to your school's students, alumni, and fans. They have the ability to reach large audiences and can be very helpful when developing a social media campaign, writing a press release, creating a short video, etc. You need to explain to your marketing department how the passion and identity of your students, fans, and alumni can be used to support real tiger conservation efforts through philanthropy, awareness, and advocacy. Building a good relationship with your university's marketing and communications staff will allow them to put you in touch with the right people to increase the reach and effectiveness of your club's initiatives.

#### Tips to Stay Connected with Your Administration

**Communicate on social media**

**Utilize your faculty advisor to keep your department head and dean up to date on our activities**

**Meet in person! A face-to-face meeting is always the best way to communicate**



# WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR & OP-ED

Not only does getting published raise awareness about the issues facing tigers in the wild, but it also raises awareness for Tigers for Tigers and what students just like you are doing to make a difference!

## Letter to the Editor

If you stumble across an article in a local publication that strikes your interest, feel free to write a letter to the editor! Below are a few tips on how to do so:

Check for a word limit on their website/newspaper. If it doesn't say, the shorter the better (as long as you include all pertinent information); 250 words should suffice.

Make sure you have the correct email for the contact and get it in ASAP.

Address your piece as a "Letter to the Editor" to avoid any confusion.

Include your contact info: name, title, email, and phone number in case they need to get in touch with you.

Your piece may or may not get published. Sometimes things get overlooked, or there is simply a more relevant/relatable letter to the editor that is chosen. Don't get discouraged and continue to contact your local publications!

## Op-ed

Op-eds are usually published due to relevance, the points made, and originality. These will need to be strong, stand out, and be relevant to current day issues. Below you will find a few tips on how to write an Op-ed:

Stay up-to-date with the news and write when you get the opportunity. If someone in your community recently made the news for owning exotic animals, take this opportunity to make a point.

Be clear in your stance on whatever issue you choose to write about.

Try not to exceed 700 words.

Why should your audience care? Let them know.

Use your T4T experience/personal voice.

Be sure to acknowledge the opposing point of view. This shows that you understand there is more to the issue than just what you think.

End your piece strong & have fun writing the op-ed!

Find the guidelines on how and who to submit it to.



# START A CUBS FOR CUBS PROGRAM

## What is Cubs for Cubs?

Cubs for Cubs is an educational program designed to educate elementary and middle school students about wild tiger conservation and their treatment in captivity.

### How to Start Cubs for Cubs

- 1 Develop and organize a team of T4T members who are interested in starting Cubs for Cubs.
- 2 Research and identify local elementary and middle schools within your area.
- 3 Contact the principals, staff, teachers, and after-school program directors at the local schools and ask them if they would be interested in having T4T visit their class and teach their students about tigers.
- 4 Create a presentation that outlines the topics you wish to discuss.
- 5 Develop a script to send out to local schools, after-school programs, camps etc.

### Are you not Receiving Responses from the Local Schools?

If you do not receive immediate responses from the local schools, do not get discouraged. Be persistent and determine another route to reach a particular teacher or principal. Have you called the school? Have you identified another email address? Do you have a T4T member whose parent is a school teacher? You can reach out to your education department at your university and ask for advice. Utilize your resources on campus.

### Now that You Have a Teacher Who is Interested in T4T, Here is What You Can Do:

- 1 Set up a phone call with the teacher to discuss the following:
  - A. It is best to gain a good understanding of the students' previous education so you can cater the presentation to their level. You may wish to research and incorporate the state's academic requirements/competencies for that particular grade in your presentation. The competencies will compliment the teacher's lesson plans.
  - B. Ask the teacher what you can bring to class. Can you show a video? Can you bring props or create arts and crafts? Can you bring candy? What about T4T flyers? Will you have access to a projector? It is best to ask prior to giving the presentation.
  - C. Determine the dates and times when the teacher can be available for your T4T members to come and visit.

### Do You Want to Take Photos?

You will need permission from the students' parents or guardians to take photos. Make sure that you coordinate this with the teacher prior to the event. You should develop a simple permission slip that includes the intended use and location where pictures will be published.

## How to Develop the Presentation for the Correct Audience

Be sure to pick the activities appropriate for the age group. Keep in mind that children are more observant and eager to learn than you would imagine. It is essential that you prepare yourself! Children always ask great questions, and you need to have great answers.

You want to engage the students throughout the presentation. Consider fun games, quizzes, and prizes for the students.

It is always best to practice the presentation prior to attending!

## Pre-K to 3rd grade

For children Pre-K to 3rd grade, a game of charades of endangered species will get them excited!

An important tip is to create a list of keywords, some of which may include: habitat, endangered, extinct, and poaching. Use the classroom whiteboard to write them down as they come up, and you can even have the children make their own list. Use pictures to describe complex words.

For other grades, we recommend that you discuss the complexity of your presentation with their teacher.

“Every time I work with the Cubs for Cubs program, I am reminded of how much of an impact T4T makes. Poaching and deforestation can seem like distant issues. Working with kids and seeing how much they care brings it back home.

*Eileen Mahoney, Clemson T4T*



Clemson T4T at their local elementary school talking to students about tigers in 2014.



### What should you Bring with you?

- Large tote bag to hold all your goodies
- Laptop and projector equipment, even if the teacher says you can use their computer
- Take-home sheet with a coloring page for kids and website on back for parents
- Tiger stuffed animals (if you have them)
- A camera for photos (You will need to receive permission from each parental guardian of every student within a photo if it is going to be used for marketing purposes. Please coordinate this with your teacher.)
- Tigers for Tigers merchandise
- A good attitude; you're changing the world one kid at a time so be excited!
- A flash-drive

### Key Points to Mention During Your Cubs for Cubs Program

- Why you care: Tigers are your mascot and someday will be their mascot too!
- Basic tiger biology facts
- Where tigers live
- Habitat loss
- Poaching
- Tigers in captivity
- How students can help save tigers

### Some Things to Keep in Mind

It is important to remember that young elementary and/or middle school students are your audience. The purpose of Cubs for Cubs is to get kids excited about tigers and teach them about tiger conservation. It is important not to get too bogged down in the negative aspects of tiger conservation (poaching, habitat loss, illegal trade, etc) or dwell too much on cub petting issues. These students may have gone to a cub petting exhibitor with their family not understanding the problems associated with these places (as is the case with most people who attend these attractions). You do not want to embarrass or shame any student who may have participated in cub petting. As you know, it is a complicated issue that can be difficult for adults to understand, much less young students. That being said, do not underestimate the students. They are very smart and truly listen to what you teach them.

### Follow up

Be sure to follow up and thank the teacher for allowing Tigers for Tigers to give a presentation in his or her classroom. Determine future times to visit. Ask for feedback from the teacher to obtain their thoughts on how you can improve your Cubs for Cubs program.

Tell us about your story! We want to hear from you! Send us an email at [t4coalition@gmail.com](mailto:t4coalition@gmail.com) describing your activities and event. Include a few photos and we would be thrilled to share your great success.

### Common Questions Raised by the Students

The students you educate through Cubs for Cubs often become very excited about the program. They will ask a ton of questions, many of which can be surprisingly difficult to answer. Here are some common questions students may ask:

- How fast can a tiger run?
- How loud is a tiger?
- Do tigers make good pets?
- Do tigers live in Africa?
- Are Siberian tigers white because they live in the snow?
- Why can't we pet tigers?
- How can we help save tigers?

# PARTNER WITH A LOCAL AZA ZOO

## AZA Zoo Partnerships

Partnering with an AZA-accredited zoo (Association of Zoos and Aquariums) is a great way to not only provide your club members with an up-close-and-personal tiger experience, but also to involve your club in local tiger conservation efforts.

## What Zoos Want in a Partnership

AZA zoos love involvement. Zoo keepers do not just care for the animals in the zoo; they also give educational behind-the-scenes tours of exhibits, and really enjoy doing so. Many zoos would love to provide an opportunity for your club to have access to such an experience at a discounted price. Your local zoo may even have or be willing to create internships for interested members.

Besides having a great experience with tigers at the zoo, your club can also volunteer to assist the zoo with their tiger exhibit. They may have an opportunity for your club to:

- Raise money for a new display within their tiger exhibit
- Create an enrichment toy for the tigers
- Conduct seminars about tigers to visitors in front of the exhibits
- Help clean out an exhibit before the zoo opens
- Write an article about tigers for their magazine or website

Zoos want to work with a group that is dedicated. If you are planning a trip to the zoo, make sure that you get enough members to go. If they ask you to assist with them, take advantage of it. The more they see that you are willing to do, the more they will trust your partnership and provide future opportunities for your club.



A group from Clemson T4T visiting Zoo Atlanta.

## How to Start a Partnership with Your Local AZA Zoo

Check out the zoo's website to find a contact page to help you determine who you need to talk to. Start by finding someone who can give you a behind-the-scenes tour. If you cannot find a specific number, call the general number and explain a little about your club and that you are looking for a behind-the-scenes tour. Ask if they could provide you with a contact number or email of someone who might be willing to provide a tour. This is often conducted for groups, so it should be relatively easy to schedule. Wait until you have attended the tour before discussing the possibility of partnering with the tiger exhibit. Zoos want to make sure they are partnering with an authentic group who is responsible and willing to work; they don't want to waste their time with an empty lead. When talking to them, you may gain a better understanding of their current needs, and you can suggest that through your partnership your club



Clemson T4T poses in front of a tiger statue at the Riverbanks Zoo in Columbia, SC.

can provide them with that. Be sure to thank them for their time and for giving you a tour, along with their willingness to allow you to help them. Ask them when they would like your assistance, so that you can plan in advance. You can contact them later to figure out the specific details.

A zoo may not immediately agree to partner with your club; they may want to see more evidence that your organization works hard and is responsible. Do not be discouraged – continue to assist them, and you will develop a partnership over time.

### **Maintaining a Relationship**

The closer your university is to the zoo, the easier this will be. If you are close, try to go on a tour or volunteer at least twice a semester. If you are farther away, once a semester or once a year is good. Don't just take behind-the-scenes tours of their exhibits; help the zoo out. This should not be a one-way relationship, and volunteering is a great way to show your appreciation and maintain the relationship between the zoo and your club.



# PARTNER WITH A SANCTUARY

Partnering with a tiger Sanctuary is a great way to not only provide your club members with an up-close-and-personal tiger experience, but allows your club to become a part of the solution to the captive bred tiger problem in this country. The big cat Sanctuaries take in abused and abandoned tigers and provide them with proper care and medical treatment.

These Sanctuaries provide lifetime care for tigers and other big cats and receive no funding from cities, or municipalities. They rely entirely on donations and volunteers.

## Tigers in America

There are 5,000 tigers in this country, more than exist in the wild in the rest of the world. They are outside the AZA zoo system and the product of unregulated breeding for amusement by exhibitors that let you pet, hold, run, walk or swim with a tiger for a fee. When no longer of any commercial value they wind up in roadside zoos or pseudo-sanctuaries. While many facilities call themselves sanctuaries and advertise their rescue or conservation activities most are not. True sanctuaries do not buy, sell, breed or permit public handling of tigers. Our mascots deserve a better life. Tigers are not only our mascot but they are the product of 2 million years of evolution and the largest cat on the planet. Our care and treatment of them in the wild and in captivity will determine whether or not they will survive for another generation and how future generations will treat all animals.

## How you Can Help a Sanctuary

There are a number of ways for your club to help a Sanctuary. They are always willing to work with support groups who are genuinely interested and who are willing to work to help the cats.

Sanctuaries want to work with groups that are dedicated. If you are planning a trip, make sure you get enough members to go. The more they see you are willing to do, the more they will trust your partnership and provide future opportunities for your club.

Besides having a great experience, your club can:

- Participate in fundraising events
- Adopt a tiger (symbolically)
- Create enrichment for tigers
- Participate in awareness and advocacy programs
- Help with enclosure and den maintenance
- Write tiger article for their magazine

## How to Select a Sanctuary

Go to [Tigers in America.org](http://TigersinAmerica.org) home page and click on Sanctuaries. It will display a map of the U.S. with a star identifying the location of each Sanctuary. Clicking the star will bring you to the Sanctuary's website. After you have selected a Sanctuary, contact Tigers in America ([contact@tigersinamerica.org](mailto:contact@tigersinamerica.org)) and they will make arrangements for a private tour.



Jeremy, rescued white tiger, enjoys his first snowfall within one of Tigers in America's listed Sanctuaries.

### **Maintain A Relationship**

The closer your university is to the Sanctuary, the easier this will be. If you are close, try to go on a tour or volunteer at least twice a semester. If you are farther away, once a semester or once a year is good. Don't just take behind-the-scenes tours.

This should not be a one-way relationship, and volunteering is a great way to show your appreciation and maintain the relationship between the Sanctuary and your club.

If anyone in your club is interested, these Sanctuaries have education, outreach, vet and intern programs.

# WORKING WITH YOUR ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

This section will apply differently for each club depending on the type of college you attend, the population of your student body, and the size of your athletic department. This section provides tips and suggestions for helpful ways to build a positive, mutually beneficial relationship with your athletic department. If you decide to pursue a T4T venture with your school's athletic department and need assistance, please reach out to the National T4T Coalition for assistance.

The athletic department cares about school spirit and pride. They want their tigers to win on and off the field. Tigers for Tigers provides an opportunity to connect the dots between school spirit and meaningful tiger conservation through positive messaging. When you are working with the athletic department, lead your conversations with school spirit and then talk about tiger conservation.”

## LARGE ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

### ADVANTAGES

- + Lots of money
- + Lots of resources
- + Lots of contacts
- + Large reach
- + Intense school spirit

### DISADVANTAGES

- Difficult to contact
- Wary of partnering or working with unfamiliar groups
- Stringent rules and regulations on what they, the athletes, or you can do

## SMALL ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

### ADVANTAGES

- + Easier to contact
- + Easier to work with and build positive relationships
- + More willing to work with students

### DISADVANTAGES

- Less money
- Less resources
- Smaller reach



## Contacting your Athletic Department

Often times making initial contact and entering into a first conversation with your Athletic Department is the most difficult step in building the relationship. This step can take a significant amount of time, so it is important that whenever you want to work with athletics, you do not wait until the last minute. Contact them early and incorporate them in the planning process. It is always worth sending an initial email to your school's Athletic Director. You may not receive a response from him or her; however, their secretary may forward your email to the appropriate staff member.

Use the directory on the Athletic Department website to determine who will be the best person to contact for your request. For example, if you are trying to advertise in a stadium, contact someone from their marketing or advertising department. If you are asking them to provide personnel or facilities to support your project, contact someone from their external affairs department.

If emails are getting you no-where, pick up the phone and give them a call. If this is also unsuccessful, visit the Athletic Department offices in person and request a meeting at a later date; however, you should be prepared when you visit in case the person you are trying to reach is willing to meet with you right then and there.

## Develop a Clear Ask

Once you have reached the necessary staff member who can assist you with your initiative, it is extremely important that you are prepared with a clear, well-thought-out plan. Your Athletic Department wants to know that they are dealing with responsible, young professionals who have the competence to complete a successful project.

Meet with your Athletic Department as soon as you can once your idea has been fully developed. As previously mentioned, it can take time to reach them and scheduling can be difficult as they are extremely busy year-round.

You must be willing to work as a team with your Athletic Department. Do not go into a meeting with “demands.” Once you have explained your idea, ask for their input and advice. Include them in the planning process and be willing to work together. This does not mean you should allow anyone to significantly change your vision or goals. However, compromises are often critical to achieve progress.

## Be Enthusiastic

Whenever you meet or speak with your partners in the Athletic Department, be enthusiastic about your project. Your enthusiasm and passion will be reciprocated by the Athletic Department staff, and will reinforce your confidence.

## Thank-Yous

Once your project with the Athletic Department has been completed, send a thank-you note to everyone with whom you worked with. Do not wait too long to do this. A simple thank-you note goes a long way in expressing your gratitude for their assistance and strengthens your relationship. Maintaining a positive relationship with your Athletic Department will make it easier to work with them on future projects.



# ADVOCATE FOR TIGERS IN CONGRESS

## Why is This Important?

As T4T members, we will do whatever we can to save our mascot. This can be challenging when our mascot lives in Asia. Spreading awareness, educating fellow students and tiger fans, and donating to worthwhile causes are all excellent methods to help conserve tigers. However, one of the most effective, and arguably easiest, methods to help save tigers is by supporting good conservation policy.

By supporting policy initiatives in Washington, D.C., we can make a tremendous impact for tigers. When the United States takes a stand on an issue, especially international issues like conservation of endangered species, other countries look to the United States as a leader and take action.

## Who are Your Congressmen?

Each state has Congressmen representing their citizen's interests in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. Two Senators represent each state, while the number of Representatives varies by each state's population. Visit the links below to determine who your Congressional leaders are:

[www.senate.gov/general/  
contact\\_information\\_senators\\_cfm.cfm](http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information_senators_cfm.cfm)

[www.house.gov/representatives/find/](http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/)

## Do We Actually Make a Difference by Supporting Effective Policies in D.C.?

Yes, we do! As constituents to your respective Congressmen, they are very much interested in your opinions and concerns. Additionally, because you represent your college, whose students, alumni, and fans constitute a significant portion of his or her constituents, your voice is powerful!

## Causes We Support

Because legislation in Congress changes frequently, we have not included a list of current policy initiatives that we currently support. Please contact us directly for more information or visit our website at [tigersfortigers.org](http://tigersfortigers.org).

## Contact Us First to Determine the Approach & Best Practices

Every Senator and Representative has a different role and approach in the political world based upon their previous voting history, standing committees, and personal interests. We ask that you contact us directly to determine how to develop an appropriate “ask” to direct the conversation. You can schedule a meeting with the us anytime to discuss this further.

## Write an Effective Letter to Congress

Writing to your Congressional leaders, via email or a physical letter, is a very powerful way to show your support. Personal letters from constituents inform Congressional leaders about particular issues, demonstrate that you care, and allows them to make informed decisions when considering pieces of legislation. On average, your Congressmen receive nine physical letters of support from their constituents on a particular issue. That’s it! So while sending an email is effective, mailing a hand-written letter can be a more impactful way to contact your Congressmen. Address the letter to your Congressman’s Washington, D.C., office, which can be found on his or her website.

Please visit our website at [www.tigersfortigers.org](http://www.tigersfortigers.org) to send a letter directly to your congressional leaders.

## Keep the Letter Simple

The National Tigers for Tigers Coalition has designed letters of support for particular pieces of legislation. We are happy to provide you with these templates so that you may incorporate your own personal thoughts into the letter. It is very important that your contact information is included on the physical letter if the Congressman or staffer wishes to respond to you.

## Components of a Great Letter

**Introduction** – Identify who you are, where you are from, and that you represent your individual T4T club

**“The Ask”** – What are you asking of the Congressman? What bill are you supporting?

**Supporting Details** – Provide supporting details and evidence of your ask and explain why it is important to you and for tigers

**Thank You** – Thank them for taking the time to read your letter

**Contact Information** – Provide your contact information in case they wish to respond to you

\*Include your club’s letter-head

## Call your Congressional Leaders

In a day and age when many students resort to ordering pizza online for fear of talking with someone on the telephone, calling up your Congressmen may seem intimidating. You shouldn’t be intimidated! The staffers who will answer the phone are your age, and many of them attended your school. Part of their job description is answering phone calls to listen to the concerns of constituents like you!

## Where Do You Find their Number?

Visit the Senator or Representative’s website to find their contact information. You may call their Washington D.C., or District Office to reach their staffers. If you need help, please do contact us.

## Who Will Answer the Phone?

When you call your Congressman’s D.C. office, one of his or her staffers will answer the phone and speak with you. Remember he or she is most likely fresh out of college and around your age, so you should not feel intimidated.

## Important Points to Mention on your Call

- First mention where you are from; Congressmen want to hear from their constituents. You should also mention that you attend a particular tiger mascot school of that state.
- Mention that you represent Tigers for Tigers at your school and that you wish to speak to a staff about tiger conservation related issues .
- The staffer on the phone will then direct you to another staffer in the office who handles that particular issue.
- Deliver your “ask”; what are you asking of your Congressman?
- Talk about why this issue is important to you, as a constituent, as a student at your college, and as a member of Tigers for tigers; don’t worry if you aren’t an expert on the issue, odds are they are not either!
- Reiterate your ask!
- Thank them for their time and ask for their email address to follow up!



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Being able to verbalize our concerns about tigers to our Senators and Representatives is exhilarating. Feelings of nervousness and excitement occupy your entire being from start to finish. My confidence grew throughout the trip in representing Tigers for Tigers as a national organization. The Senators and Representatives' staff were kind and willing to hear us out. It felt good to know that I was able to contribute to the conservation of my mascot.

*Chelsea Connor, Towson University*



National Tigers for Tigers Coalition posing for a photo with South Carolina Senator Tim Scott in 2013.

### Follow Up

It is always a good idea to send a follow up email to the staffer with whom you spoke. Thank them for their time and reiterate your ask; this shows that you really care about the issue and they will sincerely appreciate it.

### How to Get Members Involved

Some people may be intimidated by the thought of calling staffers and representatives. If you take the first step, others will follow. Empower others to make a difference! Here are a few great ideas that you can implement. If you have any other ideas, please email us at [t4tcoalition@gmail.com](mailto:t4tcoalition@gmail.com).

### Host a Call Party at a Club Meeting

At a club meeting, make it an objective to contact the D.C. office. Review this document with your members, take action, and lead the way. You can call the office in front of the group and place the phone on speaker so that everyone in the room can hear the call. Feel free to have talking points in front of you. After you finish the conversation with the staffer, reflect on the conversation with the group and challenge them to call a staffer right then and there! It is one of the most empowering experiences that you will have, and you are making a tremendous impact. Raise your voice, and get others to follow!



National Tigers for Tigers Coalition meeting with staff from Congresswoman Vicky Hartzler's (R-MO) office.

### Provide An Incentive For A Phone Call

You can provide an incentive for your members or friends to make a call. If they make contact with a staffer, give something away to recognize them for their efforts.

### How to Set Up a Meeting with Your Senators/Representatives

- 1 Be clear on your “ask”
- 2 Be persistent
- 3 Follow up

Face-to-face conversations with a staffer or Congressman are more effective than a letter or phone call. It is a great resume-building experience for your members, and it is extremely empowering!

### Determine Where to Have the Meeting

If you are near Washington, D.C., it is best to try to set up a meeting in their D.C. office during the week. If you are not in Washington D.C. to host a meeting with a staffer, visit a local district office.

### Set Up a Meeting with a Congressional Leader or Staffer

When you call the office, a staffer will answer the phone and will wait for your response. Start the conversation by saying “Hello, how are you?” These staffers are people just like us, and it is always good to build rapport when you can. Always be polite.

Every congressional leader has a chief scheduler who is responsible for setting up meetings. Your first step will be to explain who you are, determine the best way to reach the scheduler, and get their contact information.

The scheduler usually has a preference for setting up meetings, via email, phone call, or fax. Determine their preference and contact that person with your ask.

### Follow Up with the Scheduler with a Meeting Request

When you reach out to schedule a meeting, address the following in a very concise manner:

- Who you are
- Your “ask”
- The date and time you wish to meet with the congressional leader or staffer

Please see the Appendix for a draft script that you can use when scheduling a meeting with your congressional leaders.

### Follow Up to Schedule the Meeting

If you do not hear back from the scheduler within a week, call the office and ask if the scheduler is around the office to see if they received your email. These staffers are very busy and will get back to you shortly. This is okay, just be persistent!

### Get Prepared for Your Meeting

- Gather a group of T4T members who will attend the meeting with you.
- Be prepared: Conduct research on the congressional leader and staffer. What are they interested in? Where are they from? Did they attend your school? Find ways to connect with that individual.
- Bring a packet of information with you and include the following:
  - Your Tigers for Tigers club flyer, National Tigers for Tigers Coalition brochure
  - A one pager explaining your “ask” and a support letter from the National T4T Coalition
- Dress up
  - For men, wear a suit jacket and tie
  - For females, wear an appropriate dress or suit
- Review your plan with your T4T members prior to the meeting.

### Introductions

- Have all of your members introduce themselves to the staffer; tell them who you are.
- Ask the staffer how much time they have so that you can determine what you have time to cover in your talking points. It is a good idea to prioritize your talking points before the meeting so that you can be sure to cover your most important points even if you’re pressed for time.

### Make the Ask

- Contact us for talking points that align with the priorities of the National T4T Coalition. Go over the talking points with the staffer.
- Incorporate why you care and why this is important to you as T4T members or for your school.
- If you receive questions that you do not know the answers to, do not make them up! Admit that you do not know and that you will follow up with them with the correct answer.
- Provide them with your letters of support.
- Get a photo with the staffer!

### Follow Up with Your Congressman’s Office

Always thank them for their time and follow up with them via email. It is best to reinforce your ask and talking points to reiterate that this issue is important to you, and it shows that you care!

### Follow Up with Us

Follow up with us about your meeting! We want to hear how it went for you and to determine a game plan for future meetings. Send us photos too! This will provide us with extremely valuable insight for future conversation!



## SPOTLIGHT

# T4T Tackles Wildlife Trafficking in D.C.

In June 2015, we had students, alumni, and faculty from four of our Coalition Schools make the trip to Washington, D.C., to speak to their Congressmen about supporting international conservation efforts. T4T's objective was to gain an increase in funding for the Multinational Species Conservation Fund (MSCF) and to obtain co-sponsors for bills in the Senate (Wildlife Trafficking Enforcement Act) and the House (Global Anti-Poaching Act).

The MSCF is used by the US Fish and Wildlife Service to provide grants for on the ground conservation projects that benefit not only tigers, but also elephants, rhinos, great apes, and sea turtles. Additionally, the two bills we were looking for supporters for are incredibly important in the United States' effort to combat illegal wildlife trafficking.

I had the privilege of working toward our goals on the Hill with Sean Carnell, our National Coordinator, Robin Lloyd of Auburn University, Sienna Fisher of the Rochester Institute of Technology, Pete Stone of Clemson University, and Dr. David Baker of LSU.

For most this was their first time meeting with their Congressmen to discuss issues important to them. "I was very surprised on how accessible people in Congress really are," remarked Robin of Auburn University.

In our meetings, we communicated to the Congressmen and their staffers the importance of protecting our mascot in the wild, and exactly how the initiatives we were asking them to support would do so.

Dr. Baker, Director of Laboratory Animal Medicine at LSU and in charge of the care for their live mascot Mike, mentioned, "It was interesting to see how much the legislators have to 'juggle' at one time. It's understandable that their personal knowledge of Acts might be minimal...if it is not in an area in which they have particular interest." This is exactly why our voice on the Hill is so important, and as constituents to these Congressmen protecting our mascot is of importance to them. They are well aware of the tiger schools that so many of their constituents identify with, and many times are alumni or fans of those very same universities. In fact, when we walked into Representative Duncan's (R-SC) office, he and Pete were wearing the exact same Clemson lapel pin!

These types of experiences are also great bonding experiences among Coalition members and strengthen relationships between schools that can be turned into great collaborative work throughout the academic year. When asked what he enjoyed most about the trip, Dr. Baker said, "Spending time with and getting to know the students and the T4T staff, and visiting with legislators and their aides."

When asked what he enjoyed most about the trip, Robin said, "Meeting with Senators and Representatives on the Hill was very insightful and it felt good to be doing some real political conservation and using my voice for tigers in the wild." As a Coalition, our strength is in our numbers. So many students, faculty, alumni, and fans from across the country working toward a common goal can make a tremendous difference for tigers. Even in the current political climate, where it is difficult to make forward progress on any issue, we can still make great strides for conservation as Sienna from RIT so excellently pointed out:

**"I have hope though, for the legislation that we were supporting. It is certainly of bipartisan interest to protect species such as tigers from poaching, as it is certainly a very broad scope as far as the impact it has on the US. Some may see the environmental implications as enough reason to act, but not everybody is willing to throw resources into conservation simply to preserve a species and an ecosystem. National security may be the primary concern of others when tackling the issue of poaching and wildlife trafficking. Still, no matter the true motive, by reauthorizing and continuing to raise the amount of money allocated to the MSCF and supporting bills that increase the enforcement of trafficking laws and further incentivize anti-poaching stances around the world, we are all helping save tigers."**

If you want to build on the work T4T does in DC, write to your Congressmen asking for their support on these pieces of legislation to help ensure the continued survival of our mascot.

### GO TIGERS!

*Taylor Tench, Policy Intern*