

Working with VIPs

As a student leader on campus, you will find yourself having the opportunity to interact with various campus and community VIPs (Very Important People). To them, you represent the institution, your organization(s), and the student population. No pressure! Taking on the role of a student leader means you have agreed to be a role model and represent your organization and institution well. You can do this!

Consider these tips in an effort to be the best representative you can be when interacting with college VIPs.

- **Remember that impressions are formed from the whole package**—what they hear, see and experience. Always be aware of your language, your attire and your actions. Whether it's fair or not, you are living in a glass house. Represent well!
- **It's okay to say, "I don't know."** One thing you want to avoid is misrepresenting the institution or your organization by answering a question or relaying information you are unsure of. If you don't know the answer to a question being asked, commit to following up later after you have contacted the appropriate personnel. Or, take time to introduce the individual to a staff member who can assist them more readily. Referring an individual is just as helpful as answering a question!
- **Watch your manners.** Pay extra attention to your personal etiquette. You are asked a question over dinner right as you put that bite of food in your mouth. Wait! People will appreciate your response more after you have chewed and swallowed. Refer to VIPs as Dr., Mr. or Ms., practice your handshake, and when speaking look people in the eyes.
- **Follow-up.** If possible send a note or even a quick email to let an individual know how much you enjoyed meeting him/her, or if a VIP agreed to a meeting with you, a thank you is in order.

Table Manners

As a student leader you will more than likely be invited to a variety of special events that include a meal. Make a good impression by remembering some basic table manners:

- Wait until the entire table party is served before taking a bite.
- Always place your napkin on your lap.

Who are Campus VIPs?

- ✓ College Administrators
- ✓ Community Leaders
- ✓ Donors
- ✓ "Friends" of the College
- ✓ Alumni
- ✓ Family Members
- ✓ Board of Trustees
- ✓ Contracted Entertainers

- Keep your elbows off the table.
- Use the appropriate utensils...which usually don't include your fingers.
- Ask to have food passed, rather than grabbing what you want.
- Engage in dinner conversation and show interest in what others are saying.



Netiquette

Just like in "real" life, your virtual manners, especially when communicating with campus VIPs, should be on the up and up. Here are a few ways to check your netiquette when using email:

- ▲ Be descriptive in your subject line so that busy people know what you've sent them right away.
- ▲ Don't shout by using ALL CAPS.
- ▲ Beware of overusing acronyms—not everyone knows them.
- ▲ Don't send anything that you don't want to have on permanent record.
- ▲ Hit the spell check—your written word can reflect upon your intelligence and ability to lead.