Arizona Lawmakers Learn About UA Impact During Summit in DC

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The University of Arizona federal and state relations teams recently held a Legislative Research Summit for state lawmakers in Washington, D.C., to provide information on the University's expertise in space and defense and an overview of its partnerships with federal agencies and Capitol Hill.

The delegation of lawmakers was welcomed by President Robert C. Robbins, who was joined by U.S. Sen. Martha McSally, U.S. Rep. Paul Gosar and NASA Chief Financial Officer Jeff DeWitt. Also participating were Tanya Wheeless, state director for McSally, and Carmen Frias, chief of staff for U.S. Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick.

During the two-day summit, lawmakers received briefings from Elizabeth "Betsy" Cantwell, senior vice president for research and innovation, and Julia Smith, assistant vice president for federal relations on the University’s federal agenda. Lawmakers then met with top officials at NASA, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and the Department of Defense.

"Lawmakers learned firsthand the importance of federal investment, research grants and opportunities, and how the UA's expert faculty and researchers capitalize on these opportunities," said Steve Voeller, vice president for government and community relations. "Lawmakers learned how these discoveries have benefited our students, the nation and the globe, and why the UA is ranked among the top research universities in the world."

One highlight of the trip, he said, came when lawmakers brainstormed with Cantwell about ways the state of Arizona could better and more effectively partner with the University to solve Arizona's most pressing problems.

Others who spoke to the delegation during the Sept. 11-12 visit were:

- James W. Morhard, Deputy Administrator, NASA
- Kevin Metrocavage, International Space Station Operations Manager, NASA
- Kelvin K. Droegemeier, Director, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy
- Bindu Nair, Interim Director, Basic Research Office, Department of Defense
- Evelyn Kent, Program Manager, Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority-Serving Institutions, Department of Defense
- Tobin Smith, Vice President for Policy, Association of American Universities
- Dave Sackett, Partner, The Tarrance Group