Lewis-Burke and ASEE

- Lewis-Burke began representing ASEE on October 1, 2017

- As federal consultants, Lewis-Burke promotes the policy agenda of scientific organizations to a diverse set of audiences, including:
  - United States Congress
  - White House/Administration and the Federal Agencies
  - Like-minded organizations and the advocacy community in Washington, DC

- 28 policy experts with range of expertise/backgrounds allow multi-layered issue teams with deep expertise in agencies and scientific/education areas
- 40 clients exclusively composed of non-profit entities: universities, scientific societies, managers of large federal facilities

- **Goals of ASEE Advocacy**
  - Conducting outreach to Congress to support funding and sound policy for engineering research and education
  - Supporting ASEE Councils to enhance advocacy goals of deans and other constituencies
  - Engaging the Administration and federal agency officials to inform future programs and create new opportunities
  - Elevating the role of ASEE within the Washington, DC-based scientific, STEM, and higher education advocacy communities and ensuring community advocacy reflects ASEE priorities

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Why Advocate?

- Advocacy:

  The process by which ordinary citizens make their interests known to Congress

- You can help Members of Congress make informed decisions on key policies impacting engineering research and education

- Your schools and colleges have great connections to your states and congressional districts through employment, education, and research
  - You have a unique position and expertise to share with federal policymakers

- Advocacy puts engineering issues on the map – offices cannot pay attention to every issue and rely on hearing from constituents to prioritize

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ASEE/EDC Congressional Priorities

- Advocate for Funding at Critical Agencies
  - National Science Foundation research and education funding
  - Department of Defense basic and applied research
  - Specific research accounts for other mission agencies (e.g. DOE, NASA, NIH)
  - Pell and other student aid

- Protect against Threats to Engineering Schools and Colleges
  - Immigration – high-skilled immigration and student talent pipeline (e.g. H1B visas, OPT, DACA)
  - Research infrastructure costs

- Inform Education, Research, and STEM Policy
  - Higher Education Act (HEA) reauthorization – student impacts, teacher training
  - Research agency reauthorizations (e.g. DOE, NASA)

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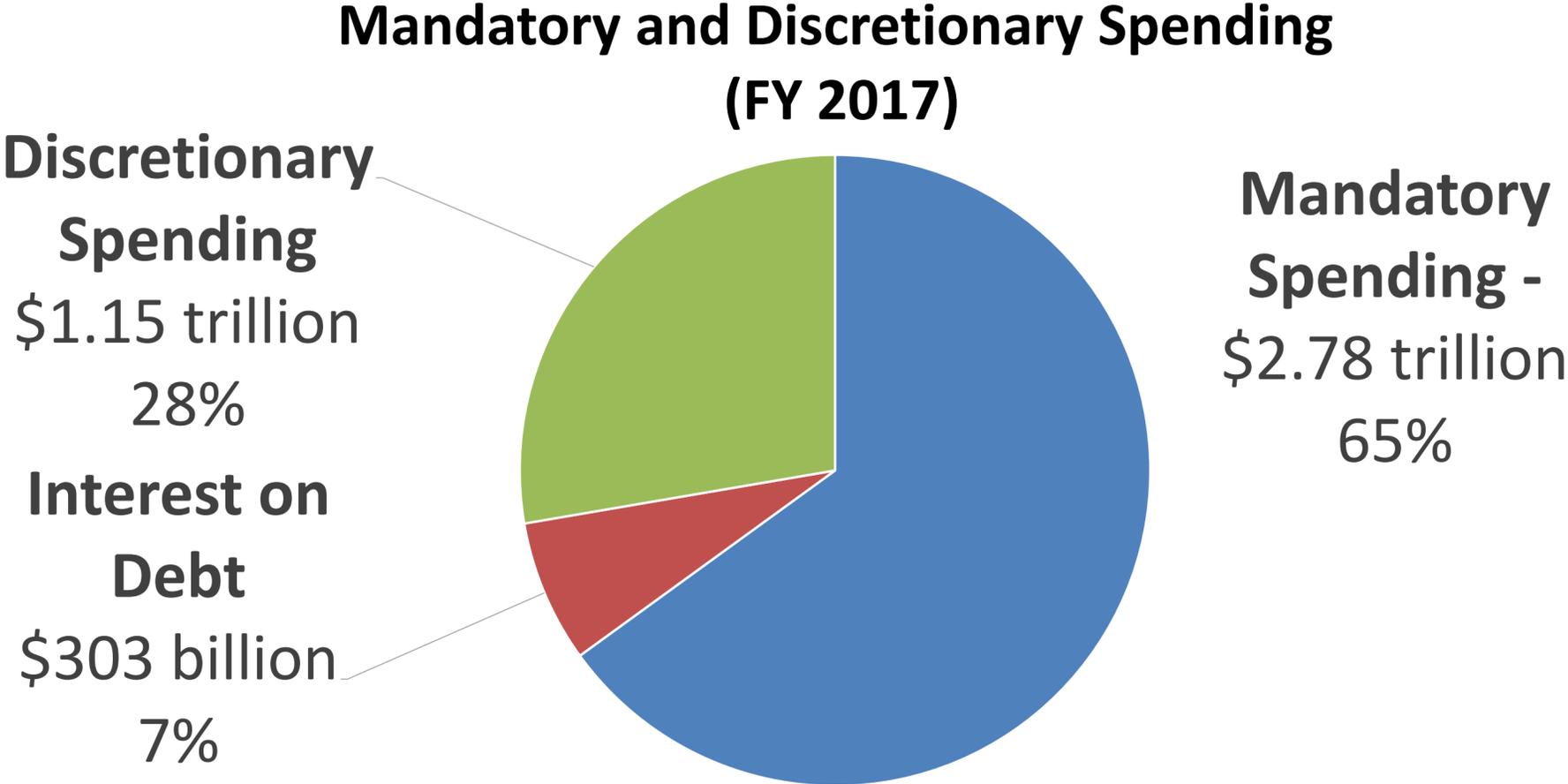
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Federal Budget

- Most of the budget goes to Mandatory Spending – Social Security, Medicare/Medicaid, etc. and interest on the debt.

- Congress uses the annual appropriations process to decide funding for everything else - education, R&D, housing, transportation, energy, environmental protection, national parks, defense, homeland security, law enforcement

Mandatory and Discretionary Spending (FY 2017)

Discretionary Spending
$1.15 trillion
28%

Interest on Debt
$303 billion
7%

Mandatory Spending -
$2.78 trillion
65%

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Executive and Congressional Roles

- President proposes overall priorities, major initiatives, and specific funding for agency programs through the annual budget request
  - Developed by federal agencies in concert with the White House Office of Management and Budget
- Congress determines overall spending levels through the Budget Committees
- Appropriations Committees decide how money is spent on individual agencies and programs
  - 12 subcommittees write individual appropriations bills covering different parts of the government
    - E.g. Commerce, Justice, Science (NSF, NASA, NIST); Defense (DOD); Energy and Water (DOE); Labor, Health and Human Services, Education (NIH, ED)
- Full House and Senate vote on bills and President signs to become law

"Regular" Timeline

- February:
  - President submits budget request to Congress
- March – April:
  - Congress adopts budget resolution (overall budget blueprint)
  - Individual Members able to weigh in on their priorities
  - Appropriations subcommittees hold hearings to review agency budget requests
- May – July:
  - Appropriations subcommittees and then full committees "mark-up" (review/amend) and approve individual bills
  - Individual bills are debated/amended and passed by full House and Senate
- September – ???:
  - Conference committees resolve differences between House and Senate bills
  - Conference agreements approved by House and Senate
  - Bills sent to President for signature/veto

The Real Process

- Budget resolutions have been passed mostly to access reconciliation instructions for healthcare/tax priorities, budget deals have been used to set overall spending levels

  - Congress has been operating under the Budget Control Act (aka sequestration) that limits spending and supersedes any budget resolution

  - 2 budget laws restored some funding for FY 2014-2015 and FY 2016-2017

  - Currently negotiating a third budget deal to cover FY 2018-2019

- The House and Senate rarely complete individual bills but often package all bills into an Omnibus to enable just one vote on final deals

  - Sometimes individual bills do not receive floor consideration or even full committee mark-up before being rolled into this process

What Does it Mean for Advocacy

- There are multiple points to inform the appropriations process

- Individual members have most impact in early Spring when bills are being drafted

- Appropriations Committees have incredible power but need to hear from all Members about their priorities
  - Members need to hear from their constituents!

- Don't get too invested in budget request or early committee draft funding levels – overall levels can change based on final budget deal

- Appropriations is not just about money – appropriators can also push back on administration proposals or put in place new requirements for agencies

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Education, Research, and STEM Policy

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Authorization Committees

- Authorizing Committees have oversight over agencies and set policies through reauthorizations
- Some also control mandatory funding
- Example Relevant Committees to Engineering
  - House Science, Space, and Technology (NSF, NASA, NIST, STEM, research parts of DOE and DOT)
  - House and Senate Armed Services (DOD)
  - Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation (NSF, NASA, NIST, DOT)
  - House Transportation and Infrastructure (DOT)
  - House and Senate Judiciary (Immigration)
  - House Education and Workforce (ED)
  - Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (ED and NIH)
- Some reauthorizations happen every year (i.e. National Defense Authorization), but most are multi-year (COMPETES/AICA, higher education, surface transportation)
  - Committees can still impact agencies even when not doing reauthorizations through oversight functions – hearings, letters, etc.

What Does it Mean for Advocacy

- Important to understand what Committees your Member is on and what bills that Committee is working on (e.g. HELP currently drafting HEA)

- Committees can be helpful when you have a concern about an agency, but they can also create a lot of distraction

- Authorizing Committees tend to have more hearings – chance to ask questions, highlight important programs, and find out info from agencies

- Pay attention to mandatory changes; otherwise, don't get distracted by funding levels – Discretionary authorization levels are just suggestions (that appropriators usually ignore!)

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Higher Education Act Reauthorization

- HEA is only reauthorized about once a decade (last time was 2008)

- HEA is extremely broad, covering financial aid, ED grant programs, teacher training, sexual assault, free speech, accreditation, and education regulations

- HEA sets mandatory spending on federal student aid:
  - Part of Pell, loan limits/types of loans, forgiveness programs

- HEA sets framework, ED maintains broad authority to set specific policies through regulations

- Congress is working on HEA right now - this is a key time for advocacy!

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Immigration

- Judiciary Committees officially oversee immigration, but policy is often discussed by congressional leadership, "Senate gangs," other congressional groups

- Much of immigration policy is set by Administration regulatory actions
  - Members of Congress can raise concerns or otherwise these actions

- Broad congressional interest in supporting high-skilled immigration, disagreement is typically about other issues
  - High tech industry tends to be loudest advocates on this issue

- Advocacy can spur interest in under the radar issues and help push for broader deals

How You Can Get Involved

Advocacy Basics

- Congress has its own culture and pace

- It's not just about the money

- Knowledge is power

- Face-to-face contact matters

What Do Policymakers Care About?

- The needs of their districts and states
- The local economy
- Concerns about the negative impact of specific legislation
- Developing relationships with influential groups and interests
- Elevating leadership on key issues
- Positive attention from the media
- Issues of personal importance to the Member
- Getting re-elected or their legacy if retiring

Information, anecdotes, accurate data, and local stories are useful for policymakers

What Does Success Look Like?

- Know that success can take many forms

- The opportunity to inform an office about engineering and engineering education is a win

- Providing valuable information to the policymaker or their office is a win

- Becoming a resource is a win

- Advocacy is about long-term relationships – meetings this week are just the first step

Preparing for the Meeting

- Familiarize yourself with basic information to prepare
- Federal relations representatives are a huge asset – if you don't have one we can help
  - They can help you know a lot about a Member:
    - Political affiliation
    - Committee assignments
    - Relevant biography points
    - What's in the district
    - Priorities to connect to and things to AVOID in conversation
  - Can also get info on priorities from press releases/Twitter feeds
- Look over ASEE advocacy documents (talking points/handouts):
  - Ask questions if you don't understand something
  - Think of relevant research, partnership, and student success examples connected to Member priorities and their district

Conducting the Congressional Meeting

- Your meetings will likely last 15-30 minutes.
- Follow the talking points – they provide a flow for meeting and more specific points you can make on relevant topics
- **<u>Before</u>** each meeting be sure to:
  - Discuss who will lead/talk first and who will deliver the leave-behind documents.
- **<u>Begin</u>** the meeting:
  - Thank the staffer or Member for taking the time to meet with you.
  - Introduce yourself and explain why you are meeting.
  - Discuss what you are advocating for.
- **<u>During</u>** the meeting stick to your message and articulate your asks clearly.
  - Don't be afraid to refer to your handout.
  - Answer questions (if any) and offer to be a resource.
- **<u>End</u>** your meeting the way you started it – by saying thank you.
  - Be sure to exchange business cards or get contact information for the staff.

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Example of Meeting Outcomes

Good Outcome

The staffer:

–Takes the meeting, listens to your message, and thanks you for coming to visit.

–Listens to your message, but does not commit to taking any action on your "ask."

–Listens to your message, asks questions, and requests additional information to help them make an informed decision.

–Listens to your message, says they will take action on your "ask," and requests to stay in touch on a regular basis.

Great Outcome

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Dos and Don'ts

DO

- Be courteous to all
- Arrive on time
- Listen, even if you disagree
- Offer specifics when possible (e.g., bill names, numbers)
- Offer to provide further information following the meeting
- Send a thank-you email

DO NOT

- Prolong the meeting beyond its timed or natural conclusion
- Be discouraged if your meeting contact appears young
- Be surprised if you are asked to wait or meet in an unusual location
- Bring gifts or sealed envelopes

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Following Up

- Decide who in your group will follow-up
  - Thank staff again via email and send any information they requested (that the group agreed to share)
  - If you meet with Members consider sending a formal thank you letter from all the deans participating

- Keep abreast of Member activity related to the issues you discussed with staff (legislation introduced, letters signed, etc.)

- Thank staff for any policy activities undertaken by the Member in support of your "ask"

- Send updates periodically if staff had a major point of interest (e.g. exciting research news or new partnership in district) – try to establish ongoing relationship

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Other Ways to Engage

- **Letters, Emails & Phone Calls** – Effective for requesting immediate action (e.g. "Vote yes on H.R. XX this week.")

- **Social Media** – Twitter, Facebook, etc.

- **Attending Town Hall Meetings** – Be an active participant in government.

- **Media Placements** – Op-Eds, trade magazines/newsletters, etc.

- **Elevator** – Have your "elevator message" ready in the event you only have a few seconds to deliver it.