

## Campus It's Up to US



The UP to US team with Deadpool. Photo by Fredrick Black Tremble.

Fredrick Black Tremble  
Contributing Writer

On Thursday, February 2, 2017, students learned about the national debt at Governors State University. Brendan and his team of friends organized an event for awareness of our government's debt. The program is "Up To US: The Pledge."

Up to US is a program that empowers students and people to educate others on our long term national debt. It educates students on how it can affect their economic opportunities, and how their generation can have a voice in raising awareness of our hard fiscal situation.

Surprisingly, about 80% of students signed the pledge to "Up to US." But most students didn't know that the national debt is 19 trillion dollars. To many, the national debt is like nothing. But our generation has to worry about the debt made by our parents. Our policy will affect our economic opportunities.

...earning power, chance to pay off student loans, by a home, start a family, or even start a business.

According to [treasury.gov](http://treasury.gov), our federal government has a running deficit, consistently spending more than it receives. To make

up for this, the U.S. borrows money, adding to federal debt. The U.S. government's debt held by the public is currently over 14 trillion, which is about 75 percent of GDP.

The Congressional Budget Office projects that if current laws are maintained

federal debt held by the public will climb to 141 percent of GDP within 30 years—more than our country's entire economic output. These are dangerously high levels of debt.

If we fail to address our long-term debt, the federal

government will have a much harder time investing in priorities for economic growth, the education, research and development, and infrastructure. Through Up to US, the people can get involved and get heard about our nation.

By Brenda T.  
Editor-in-Chief

The Black Rock is scheduled for Feb. 18 at Performance Center and will celebrate the anniversary of the event.

with Life to the D.

Free Stuff

By Dave Schick  
Staff Writer

# AMPLIFY YOUR VOICE USING MEDIA

Influence your community and speak your mind without the jitters of speaking in public.

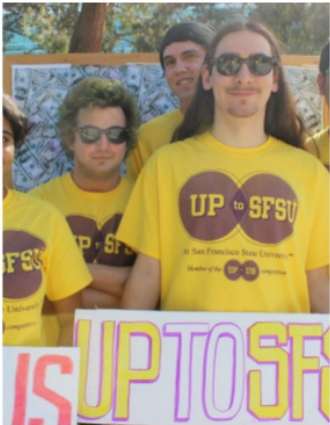
# Introduction



For any campaign, securing media coverage is critical to getting your message out. This toolkit equips you with helpful tips and best practices that will help you either promote an event you're planning or raise general awareness for the long-term national debt. Whatever your goals are, use this toolkit as your guide to prepare, pursue, and interact with media outlets at the campus and local level.

To increase general awareness of the long-term national debt by writing a letter to the editor or writing an op-ed piece. If this interests you, please refer to the GET PUBLISHED track.

To generate buzz or secure coverage for your existing Up to Us event, please refer to the SECURE MEDIA COVERAGE track.





# TAKE ACTION



00 The Perks of Hosting



Get Published Track

01 Publish an Op-ed



02 Write a Letter to the Editor



Secure Media Coverage Track



03 Get Media Coverage at your Event

04 Get an Interview with the Press



# Perks of Hosting



## Funding for your event and a bonus stipend when you hit your goals!

1.

### Receive Media Coverage Stipend

Everyone who secures media coverage receives a media coverage stipend. This stipend should be used for transportation or any other costs associated with executing these tactics

2.

### Media Coverage Goals

For each piece of media coverage you produce, there is a goal for the number of readers/viewers you should reach. You can find out the daily readership/viewership from the media source with whom you are working.

3.

### Earn Extra Cash!

If you reach your media coverage goal, you earn an extra bonus of \$150!

Tactic	Media Coverage Stipend	Media Coverage Goal	Bonus Stipend
Get Published	\$ 25	500	\$ 150
Secure Media Coverage	\$ 25	500	\$ 150

Don't forget to boost your event while also boosting the perks you receive!

In conjunction with your media, gather Up to Us pledges by providing a link in your article or media mention. When you hit 200 pledges, you earn an extra \$100. .



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# Get Published Track

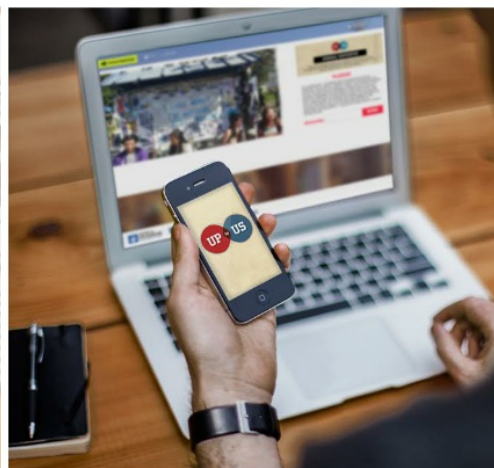
Increase general awareness of the long-term national debt and the Up to Us movement by writing a letter to the editor or writing an op-ed piece.

For both Op-Eds and Letters to the Editor, it is important to check the specific word count guidelines of the newspapers you are writing to. Some newspapers may only allow a 500 word Letter to the Editor while other newspapers may allow it to be 700 words

It is important to review these guidelines before you submit because if you do not follow them, your submission will likely be rejected

To check specific guidelines, go to the website of the newspaper you are writing to and search for submission guidelines

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## Demonstrate your results!

In order to receive your Bonus Stipend (see page 3 for "Perks of Hosting") you need to turn in two pieces of information via Crew 2030

1. The web link to the published article/interview/video
2. The daily readership/viewership of the media outlet with whom you are working

# 01. Publish an Op-Ed



Publish an Op-Ed in your campus or local newspaper about why the long-term national debt matters to you and impacts the issues you care about most. Use your voice to connect the long-term national debt to issues that affect your future and your generation's future. Make sure you check out the Know Your Stuff section on page 14.

## Get Inspired

Op-eds are a powerful and underutilized way to share your ideas with a huge audience. What's more, newspapers are hungry to have more diverse perspectives in their op-ed pages. You might be surprised at how easy it is to get your piece published!

We so often overlook opportunities that are right under our noses. Before you write off this option as "not for you," ask yourself: Have you ever written a thesis paper? Do you enjoy persuasive writing? Do you enjoy reading op-eds? If you answered yes to any of these questions, consider writing an op-ed piece on the long-term national debt and get published! Remember to include a "call to action" at the end of your letter or op-ed and encourage readers to sign the Up to Us Pledge.

## How to Write an Op-Ed

### Step 1: Research and Gather Information

Start with the basics. Think about the basic question "why do you care about the long-term national debt?" For inspiration, see the National Debt 101 Toolkit and the Marketing Toolkit, or follow the hashtags #UptoUs and #MTCD to see what other students are saying about the issue.

### Step 2: Draft an Outline

- ✓ Thesis (Statement of argument -- either explicit or implied)
- ✓ Evidence: For each point in your argument, provide two pieces of evidence followed by a conclusion. Evidence can include stats, news, reports from credible organizations, expert quotes, scholarship, history, first-hand experience. Each of these points will be a paragraph in the body of your op-ed.
- ✓ "To Be Sure" Paragraph: Here, pre-empt your potential critics by acknowledging any flaws in your argument, and address any obvious counter-arguments.
- ✓ Conclusion: Include a call to action to sign the Up to Us pledge

### Step 3: Write, Revise, and Send!

- ✓ Start writing freely and don't think about grammatical or spelling errors at the moment. Then, read it over (more than once, ideally) and start to revise, edit, and rearrange. Make any necessary changes and send it to your local or campus newspaper with a quick email pitch. See the appendix for how to craft a persuasive pitch.



### Timing

Give yourself one week to write and revise your op-ed

Allow a second week to identify the news outlets you will send your op-ed to and to formulate and revise your pitch.

**Resource:** The Op-Ed Project provides helpful resources and tips on how to get your Op-Ed published.

# 02. Write a Letter to the Editor



Writing a letter to the editors is a relatively simple method to communicate with your community and campus leaders.

Letters should respond to a recent article published in the paper, so keep an eye on the paper for articles about related topics such as national debt fiscal issues, debt, or the financial forecast for young Americans, but don't stop there! You can tie in the long-term national debt to non-fiscal issues like infrastructure, education, and healthcare.

### Typical Guidelines

- ✓ No more than 250 words.
- ✓ No attachments.
- ✓ Include your name and contact information.
- ✓ In your email to the editor, include your letter directly in the body of the mail, not as an attachment. See example below:



### Sample Letter to the Editor:

#### Heading:

To the Editor: (If writing directly to the writer, substitute Dear Mr./Ms.\_\_\_\_)  
Re: "Title of the article you are referencing" and date of article

#### Body: 1-3 paragraphs

The body of the letter should be concise and to the point. Speak in first-person and think of your three paragraphs as "thought levels." Begin by stating the value or overall message that you want to convey. Tie it into a recent event such as a hike in interest rates from the Federal Reserve or increasing the debt ceiling. In the second and third paragraphs, go into more detail explaining how the long-term national debt not only affects you but the entire campus/ local community and in light of the current event or news article to which you're responding. Conclude with your call to action. Make sure you check out the Know Your Stuff section on page 14.

#### Closing:

Your Full Name  
City, State  
Your Phone #

Source: National Communication Association

TIP: No matter what your tactic is, always include a call to action in your media. This is a concrete, actionable activity that your audience can immediately take. If you're holding an event, link to the event details. Or provide a link for people to sign the Up to Us Pledge at <https://www.netimpact.org/programs/up-to-us-pledge>

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# Secure Media Coverage Track

Whether you are hosting an Up to Us event, connecting to an existing event, or meeting with an elected official, you should generate buzz by trying to get the media to cover your event or interview you in order to plug your event.

Avoid working with online-only media, which can have uneven journalistic standards.

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## Demonstrate your results!

In order to receive your Bonus Stipend (see page 3 for "Perks of Hosting") you need to turn in two pieces of information via Crew 2030

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# 03. Secure Media Coverage at your Up to Us Event

Reach out to your local or campus newspaper, TV, or radio station and ask them to cover your upcoming Up to Us event.

## Timing

- ✓ Give yourself two weeks to pitch and hear back from local media outlets and a third week to prepare.

## Prep, Prep, Prep!

- ✓ Check out the Crafting your Pitch and Write a Press Release sections on page 11 to create and send your pitch to your local and campus media affiliates.
- ✓ Follow-up with your media contact a few days before your event to confirm their attendance. Ask if they are bringing a photographer.
- ✓ Give your media contact your day-of contact information (cell phone number).

*Tip: If you expect to be away from your phone during your event, send your media contact one of your teammate's cell phone numbers, so they can get in touch if you're unavailable.*



## During Your Event

- ✓ When the reporter arrives, introduce yourself and direct them to their seat. Remember that everything you say to them is on the record so speak and act professionally.
- ✓ After the event is over, check in with the reporter to see if there are any questions you can answer. Remember the elevator pitch you prepared. You got this!
- ✓ Ask when you can expect the article to be published.



TIP: Make sure you are totally confident in the event you are asking the media to cover. Do you have your event location locked down? How many people do you expect? Check out the Marketing Toolkit for tips on how to host a successful event.

# 04. Get an Interview with the Press to Promote your Up to Us Event

Getting interviewed prior to your Up to Us event it is a fantastic way to generate buzz and draw attendees to your event. Reach out to your local or campus newspaper, TV, or radio station for an interview. Use the Crafting your Pitch tips on page 11 when reaching out to the media.

## Timing

Give yourself two weeks to pitch and hear back from local media outlets and a third week to prepare and schedule the interview.

## Prep, Prep, Prep!

- ✓ Check out the Crafting your Pitch and Write a Press Release section on page 11 to create and send your pitch to your local and campus media affiliates.

*Tip: Make sure you are totally confident in the event you are asking the media to cover. Do you have your event location locked down? How many people do you expect? Check out the Marketing Toolkit for tips on how to host a successful event.*

- ✓ Check out the Know Your Stuff section on page 14 to be sure you know why the long-term national debt matters to you.
- ✓ Once you have secured your interview, check out the Create and Practice your Elevator Pitch on page 11. It is important you have your pitch down and practiced before your interview.
- ✓ Follow-up with your media contact a few days before your interview to confirm. Ask if they are bringing a photographer.

## During Your Interview

- ✓ Check out the General Tips When Being Interviewed section in the resources, on page 13. It includes all the information you need to know to give a great interview.
- ✓ Remember, everything you say is on the record! So speak and act professionally.



# RESOURCES

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Crafting your Pitch

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Write a Press Release

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Working with the Press

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General Resources

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Below are some general rules of thumb to frame your pitch and get the media's attention:

## Crafting your Pitch

- ✓ **KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE.** Make a list of your local and campus newspapers, radio channels, blog sites, and any other unique media platforms that your community might have. But before you try to schedule a meeting with a journalist or reporter, be sure to do your research on material that they've covered in the past. Do they typically cover campus events? Why would they be interested in your story?
- ✓ **BE SHORT AND SWEET.** Writers get a lot of pitches so they appreciate when yours is concise and direct. Cut formalities and get to the pitch in the first sentence to spike their interest. Think of your email subject line as a potential news line. Be sure to answer these questions in a short way: What's the story? Why should the writer care? Why should the writer care now?
- ✓ **BE COMPELLING.** Every story has an angle, something that makes it unique and interesting. What is that special sauce for your pitch? Use numbers when they are relevant such as how many you engaged in your pledge or a certain event.
- ✓ **BE AUTHENTIC.** Don't sound like a salesperson. If you're being yourself and speaking from your own passion for your story it will come across and you won't have to feel like you're selling your idea. Some other points to keep in mind: Don't capitalize, underline, or bold any of the writing. Don't use exclamation points. Don't stuff the pitch with buzzwords.
- ✓ **BE CLEAR.** Include the event details in your pitch. Make them very clear and obvious. Include your contact information and follow-up to ask if they will be covering your event/interviewing you.

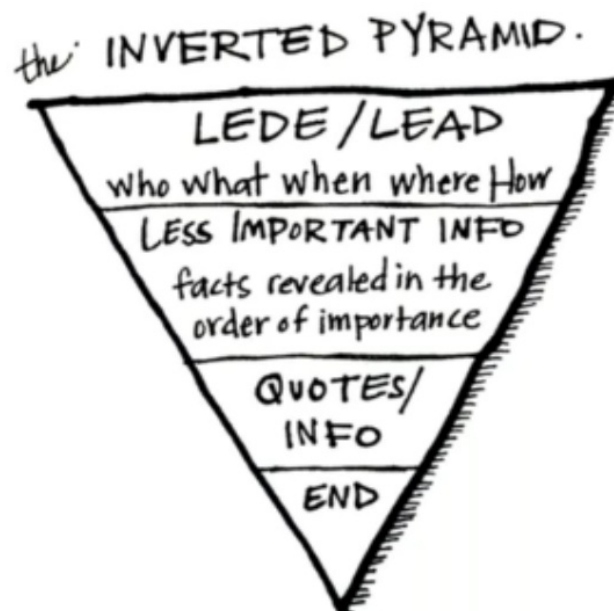
## Create and Practice your Elevator Pitch

- ✓ Take the time to sit down and write out an "elevator pitch." An elevator pitch is a 60-90-second, succinct, and persuasive speech that informs your audience of the basic concept of your project/event/idea in a way that sparks their interest. A good elevator pitch will leave your audience wanting to know more. (Check out the Know Your Stuff on page 14 to make sure you know everything you need to know about the long-term national debt)
- ✓ The key to delivery is practice! Practice with your roommates, your friends, your family, and get comfortable with it. Practice in front of a camera and record yourself saying it. Observe your body language. Review and improve
- ✓ Encourage your friends and family to ask you questions at the end of your pitch so you can familiarize yourself with answering common (or sometimes uncommon) questions
- ✓ With some dedicated effort to perfecting your pitch, you'll be on your way to becoming a media relations expert-- for Up to Us and beyond!

# Write a Press Release



- ✓ A press release is a longer form document that you can send to the media ahead of your event
- ✓ Your headline should be succinct, eye catching and straight to the point
- ✓ Your release should include a quote or two from your team leader and/or team spokesperson
- ✓ The quote should restate the key messages that you want the reporter to include in her or her story
- ✓ Follow a simple, inverted pyramid writing style



## The Do's and Don'ts

### DO

- ✓ Research the journalist before reaching out to him or her to see what types of stories/ events they typically cover. This will result in a more targeted pitch
- ✓ Follow up and be persistent. You will get many "No's" before you get a "Yes!"
- ✓ Ask if the interview will be live, taped, over the phone, or in-person
- ✓ Ask if the interview will be edited or used in entirety
- ✓ Practice your pitch and describing what your goals, intentions, and aspirations are with Up to Us

### DON'T

- ✓ Interrupt the journalist
- ✓ Persist in following up after they've said "No"
- ✓ Ask to see their questions in advance
- ✓ Ask to change your quotes or edit the story
- ✓ Expect your view to be the only one presented

## General Tips When Being Interviewed

- ✓ Write out the key messages you want to convey. Key messages are the points you want to make to the public
- ✓ Speak clearly and avoid using jargon or slang. Avoid saying "You know" or "Yeah"
- ✓ Speak in "sound bites" and practice them
- ✓ Be engaging, enthusiastic, and smile
- ✓ Let the interviewer completely finish the question before you start to answer
- ✓ Don't be afraid to pause or allow a few seconds of silence!
- ✓ If you don't know the answer, don't speculate and don't fake it. Saying "I'm not sure" is a very mature response
- ✓ If necessary/appropriate, offer to connect them with others who might know the answer or have more information
- ✓ Remember to speak slowly
- ✓ Ask the reporter how an interview will be used, the direction of the story or and when it will run
- ✓ Make your statements concise and clear
- ✓ Always plug your upcoming events
- ✓ Avoid fidgeting or swaying

Source: 1776, November 2016



## Get Up to Us Pledges

At any event you hold, you want to get as many attendees as possible to sign the Up to Us pledge. The pledge is attendees' way of taking action to let their representatives know that they care about the long-term national debt. In May, student representatives of Up to Us will deliver signed pledges to U.S. Congressional legislators.

At your event (no matter which you choose), set up a table with 2-3 laptops or tablets with internet connection so that students can sign the pledge online, or distribute flyers with the link to the pledge

**Make sure that students are choosing your school when they sign the pledge**

Reminder: If you get 200 pledges, you will earn an extra \$100 and the overall top pledge gatherer will win a prize of \$500!



## Know Your Stuff

It's important to know your stuff before you do any presentation. If you don't know why the long-term national debt is important to you, how can you expect to persuade others?

Read the National Debt 101 Toolkit and play the Fiscal Ship on Crew2030 to learn more about the impacts of long-term national debt.



For more information or to sign-up today, please contact:

[uptous@netimpact.org](mailto:uptous@netimpact.org)



### Campus It's Up to US



UP to US team with Deadpool. Photo by Fredrick Black Tremble.

**Fredrick Black Tremble**  
Contributing Writer

On Thursday, January 2, 2017, students were informed about the national debt at Governors State University. Brendan and his team of friends organized an event for awareness about our government's national debt. The program was titled "Up To US: The Pledge."

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### Free Stuff!

By Dave Schutte  
Staff Reporter

By Brenda To  
Editor-in-Chief

The fall Black Book (B) is scheduled for Feb. 15 at the Performance show when celebration of Alicia in the Co... comm...

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