

Issue: Student Trustee Empowerment

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Endorsements: ASWWU Legislative Affairs Council, Western Votes!

1) Describe the Issue (what is the problem & what is the solution).

Each campus has a student representative on their board of trustees/board of regents. These students are appointed to represent the interests of Washington but also serve as a representative of the student body. Currently they are barred from “participation or voting on matters relating to the hiring, discipline, or tenure of faculty members and personnel or any other matters pertaining to collective bargaining agreements.” Additionally, these students are selected by the office of the Governor. What we are proposing is a solution to problems of student representation by removing the second point under RCW 28B.50.102, and instituting a transition to elected student trustees. For reference see the full RCW on student trustees below.

RCW 28B.50.102

Boards of trustees—Student trustee.

(1) Boards of trustees for each college district, by majority vote, may establish a sixth trustee that shall be filled by a student. The governor shall select each student member from a list of candidates, of at least three and not more than five, submitted by the associated student governments or their equivalent of the college district. The student member shall hold his or her office for a term of one year, beginning July 1st and ending June 30th, or until the student member's successor is appointed and qualified, whichever is later. The student member shall be a full-time student in good standing at a college within the college district at the time of appointment and throughout the student's term. If the student member fails to be enrolled at the college full-time or forfeits his or her academic standing, the student member is disqualified and a new student member must be appointed.

(2) A student appointed under this section shall excuse himself or herself from participation or voting on matters relating to the hiring, discipline, or tenure of faculty members and personnel or any other matters pertaining to collective bargaining agreements.

2) Please fill out a strategy chart:

GOALS	ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS	CONSTITUENTS/ALLIES/OPPONENTS	TARGETS	TACTICS/MELINE
Long Term: To have elected student trustees that are in the room and can vote on all issues brought to the trustees.	Haves: Student trustees on each campus that can be connected via WSA, liaisons in Oly to talk to legislators about the issue, allied legislators that could be willing to write legislation	Constituents: Students.	Primary: Sen. Barbara Bailey (Sen. David Frock), Rep. Drew Hansen (Rep. Hans Zeiger), Sen. Pam Roach (Sen. John McCoy), Rep. Sam Hunt (Rep. Jeff Holy)	Educational: Campaign focused on increasing awareness of the impact that decisions made by the BOT have, using one pagers/digital media to elaborate what kinds of decisions they are pushed out of, etc.
Intermediate: To have student trustees that are able to vote on all issues.	Wants: A closer relationship with the trustees on each campus, once an OD is hired the ability to connect them and figure out the ways they are and aren't allowed to advocate to come up with a more developed plan.	Allies: Faculty have been supportive of the issue in the past (both the Council of Faculty Reps and United Faculty of Washington State), Classified staff could potentially support students, some alumni.	Secondary: Speaker Chopp, Gov Inslee.	Power: Coalition of current student trustees tying this legislation to their work, bringing them down to Oly for a specific lobby day, could partner with student autonomy work at the core of other issues we're working on.
Short Term: Raise awareness of the current limits on both power and representation for the student trustee position	Obstacles: Students in these positions do not always align with WSA, while most can hopefully see the benefit to students at large of making these changes some may not. Budget sessions are not usually heavy in policy, and generally not on new issues like this would be.	Opponents: Likely the Association of Washington Trustees, potentially administration, the Governor's office also probably won't be stoked about losing the power to appoint students to these positions.		

3) Please explain briefly how/if this issue meets the following qualifications:

1. Is it winnable?

If we start now. This issue will likely be an uphill battle but one that we believe is well worth it. Trustees and Regents have the final say on almost all issues affecting students at university, by limiting the participation of the student representative we are allowing important decisions to be made with no student representation present. There is also precedent for elected student trustees in systems and states across the country. See their General Laws (Part I. Title II. Chapter 15A. Section 21)

Each student member shall be elected by the student body annually, no later than May fifteenth. The term of office of each elected student member of the board shall be one year and shall commence on July first following their election and terminate on June thirtieth of the following year. The student member shall be eligible for re-election for as long as said student remains a full-time undergraduate student and maintains satisfactory academic progress as determined by the policy of the institution at which the student is enrolled. If at any time during the elected term of office said student member ceases to be a full-time undergraduate student or fails to maintain satisfactory academic progress, the membership of said student on the board shall be terminated and the office of the elected student member shall be deemed vacant, provided, however, that if the elected student member vacates his position upon graduation from the institution prior to July first, the elected successor may assume the position of student member on the board effective from the date of graduation of his predecessor, provided further that the statutory time limit of one year of the successor student trustee shall commence to run on July first notwithstanding any taking of office prior to the commencement of said term. A vacancy in the office of the elected student member prior to the expiration of a term shall be filled for the remainder of the term in the same manner as student elections to full terms.

2. Does it directly impact and improve students' lives?

Yes, the boards in charge of our universities are the final say on decisions that impact students. This is especially true because the decisions we are barred from are personnel decisions about faculty, which we spend the most time with, and collective bargaining, which affects our rights to unionize or to support our faculty in that process.

3. Does it have a clear target?

This could be done through Higher Education in the House and Senate or through the House State Gov. Committee & Senate Gov. Ops and Security, the targets would be the chairs/ranking members on these committees.

4. Does it build a measurable amount of power?

Yep. We would have a student representative in all university decisions and ways to hold them accountable through student government elections.

5. Does it have a clear and realistic time frame?

Because this is the first year we are working on the issue and because it is a budget session it is difficult to predict how the legislature will respond. For legislative purposes it might be better to initially work on full rights for student trustees and use that to gauge the timeline for moving them to elected positions.

6. Does it have a local/state/federal organizing and lobbying angle?

There is definitely a student autonomy angle here that we have used when advocating for S&A decoupling and other student issues, we can carry over the we should have a say in what affects us narrative to this work as well.

7. Could students build a diverse campus coalition around this issue?

To the extent that you can build coalitions around more technical issues this is one I think many students will understand the importance of and would be willing to sign on to, though maybe not run extensive campaigns on, and especially not in a budget year when other issues may be more salient.

8. Is it likely to be debated and acted upon by the Legislature in the next year?

Not without student advocacy to bring the issue to light, however I could see this issue gaining traction once it is brought to light.

9. Will it strengthen and expand efforts within WSA?

Yes, by creating a more transparent trustee process and by institutionalizing their authority we give students more measurable power on campuses across the state. Student power helps to show students that we have the authority to cause change and WSA is one of the main ways that change is coordinated at the state level.

10. Can you provide background information and the current context of the issue?

From the WSA website: “Sometimes obtaining a seat at the table is half the battle. Student participation and input in a number of task forces, blue ribbon committees, and other work groups has also often been driven by the WSA.

- In 1998, after the WSA and its predecessors had been advocating for 17 years, the Legislature approved the creation of the governor-appointed "Student Regent/Trustee" position that is in place today.
- In the 2008 session the WSA began the next step in advocating for student representation for community and technical college students to have a voice and a vote on their Boards of Trustees.
- In the 2012 legislative session, the WSA then won legislation to place voting rights for students on the Board of Trustees for all Community and Technical Colleges. Now, there are no public colleges in Washington that can't have student representation on the largest governing boards.
- The WSA has also successfully advocated for a student member on the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) - appointed by the Governor. The WSA also ensured that the replacement of the HECB, The Washington Student Achievement Council (WS AC), had a student representative.”

<http://www.wastudents.org/victories/>

11. What creative and/or innovative tactics could we employ to engage the media and excite new students around this issue?

We could create a pathway for each of the current student trustees to advocate for or support this issue to the legislature, additionally there could be good visual campaign components attached to the fact that the student is essentially in many cases a token that is not actively listened to or respected in the same way or with the same power.