

**Western Washington University Associated Students
Legislative Affairs Council Meeting**

Monday, November 14, 2011

VU567

Present: Patrick Stickney (Vice Chair), Joe Meyer (Legislative Liaison), Fiona Yau-Luu, Ben Crowther, Jared McCardle, Ean Olsen (Student Senate Representative), Carmen Winquist, Julia Kelley, Chris Brown, Chris Savage, Kevin Majkut (advisor)

Absent: Iris Maute-Gibson (AS VP Governmental Affairs, Chair), Katherine Barnard

Secretary: Katie Savinski

MOTIONS

L-II-F-04 Approval of the minutes of Monday, November 7, 2011 *Passed*

Patrick Stickney, Vice-Chair for Legislative Affairs Council, called the meeting to order at 4:03p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. REVISIONS TO AGENDA

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION L-II-F-04 by Olsen

Seconded by McCardle

Approval of the minutes of Monday, October 31, 2011

Vote: 9 - 0 - 0 Action: Passed

IV. REPORTS

A. AS VP for Governmental Affairs

(Absent)

B. AS Legislative Liaison

Meyers reported that he is trying to see if it would be useful to create a trip to Olympia over winter break. He also reported that he is uncertain of the availability left on seats to attend the WSA General Assembly conference. He urged those interested to contact him anyway, in case there is an open spot.

C. Western Votes

Stickney reported that 621 community members and students turned in their ballots to the ballot box on campus. This was a high turnout for an off year. There was no Western Votes meeting held due to Election Day.

D. Student Senate

Olsen reported that senate voted down the resolution regarding internet information. The language for the issue of the quarter on the Higher One card was created and posted.

VI. COMMITTEE INFORMATION

V. ACTION ITEMS

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Introduction of the Legislative Action Fund

Majkut passed out a sheet that included “practice proposals” for the committee to look over and complete. He used this exercise to demonstrate the requirements of choosing proposals for the Legislative Action Fund (LAF); . . .to “more directly represent WWU students in legislative matters. . . ,” no partial funding, and allocation of \$5,000 for example. The committee discussed and worked through their reasoning for choosing or not choosing specific proposals from Majkut’s practice list. He then spoke about the \$2 opt-in quarterly fee presented to students upon registration, explaining that this fee supports the LAF. Last year the fee collected approximately \$14,678. This means that approximately 7,300 selected “yes” upon registering, out of approximately 42,000 opportunities to do so. The fund now has approximately \$24,000. Assuming \$5,000 goes towards WSA fees, there is about \$19,000 available in the fund for projects right now. He said that if this rate continues, the committee will see collect about \$22,000 this year. At the end of the year, the LAF budget stays the same and builds on itself because the fund is for one purpose, unlike many other Associated Student funds. The fund as intended has not involved as many projects as originally hoped, so far. Stickney asked what the guidelines are on the fund through the university. Majkut explained that the LAF follows the rules of all other funds, but what can’t be paid for is unclear. He explained that the fee is more appropriate for more generalized topics. He said that as the advisor he is in charge of helping discuss with the committee what proposals would be a problem. He asked the committee to consider what they value in regards to legislative matters, and how the committee can work together to meet their goals.

B. Discussion on Ideas for Values Based Agenda

Stickney directed the committee to their proposals for the values based agenda. Under the headline of diversity, Brown stated that that he thought the committee should say something along the lines of “we are a diverse state in a diverse nation, and we believe the laws and policies of the state should reflect that diversity.” Crowther said that he looked at previous agenda statements on diversity, and copied some of those points while adding a few of his own. The points he added were to support measures that keep tuition accessible to a diverse student body. He also added ‘to support legislation that fully allows students to fully participate in government institutions’ as applied to higher education. Yau-Luu agreed with Crowther’s point. Stickney asked if tuition can be included in values based agenda. Majkut explained that it would still be appropriate to include because the Board of Trustees won’t have “free reign” over tuition numbers, and their decisions will still reflect legislative expectations. Kelley was absent, so the discussion on the environment was tabled until the next meeting. Meyers read a previous agenda statement under the environment heading that asked for all state institutions become carbon neutral. Crowther supported the statement but he explained that he thought the idea was ahead of its time in face of the current crisis. He suggested language that leaned towards renewable and sustainability energy progression. McCardle suggested adding a section which would ask legislators to support measures that promote improvements on public transportation as many students at Western use the bus system. Crowther said he would like to include a statement from the 2009 agenda about buying local food. Under the section of faculty, Winquist approved of the language of the 2009 agenda. She would like to support legislation for teacher review and would like to see this added, with the addition of “student and peer review.” Under student representation, Meyer said he wanted to promote direct student involvement within the two new institutions replacing the Higher Education Coordinating Board as these bodies will manifest the decisions on financial aid and policies. Under Student Life, McCardle said maintaining buildings, improving affordability and quality of campus healthcare, and disability accommodations were all on previous agendas and he would like to see similar wording in the 2012 agenda. Crowther suggested adding a component on campus safety. He said that Western has been ranked fairly low on safety for Queer identifying students. He wants to look into implementing training systems of some sort. Majkut said that Crowther’s comment is relevant to past proposals that

have been made regarding requests for more campus police services, counselors for support, increased blue phone services, etc. Meyer said he wanted to include maintaining the levels of childcare provided for students. McCardle dittoed. Under student loan debt, Olsen explained that it is necessary for the repayment of student loans be kept accessible and flexible for diverse arrays of students. He said that they could focus on increasing the grace period for loan repayment after graduation and even addressing loan forgiveness. He wants to do more research. Stickney said he wants to also keep in mind that a focus on pushing for more grants and scholarships is important. Brown was in favor of arguing for loan reduction, but not for complete forgiveness. Olsen said that he agreed with advocating for complete loan forgiveness. Stickney asked if there were any additional comments that the committee wished to make. Meyer said that he wants to check up on the financial aid process and how it is keeping pace with university deadlines on tuition. Crowther said that he would like increased student representation in the values statement.

VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS

XI. OUTSIDE OF COMMITTEE WORK

X. NEXT MEETING DATE: November 21, 2011 4:00pm VU 567

XI. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED BY ACCLAMATION AT 05:05 P.M.