

**A RESOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATED STUDENTS
OF WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
Sen. J.Res. 2023/24-02**

“Recognize and Negotiate with WAWU Operational Student Employees”

WHEREAS, operational student employees – custodians, clerks, program support staff, resident advisors, photographers, laborers, and others who do similar jobs – do critical work across Western Washington University (Western) including keeping students safe, keeping facilities running, and maintaining programs and services; and

WHEREAS, a majority of operational student employees (OSEs) working for Western Washington University have authorized Western Academic Workers United / United Auto Workers (WAWU-UAW) to represent them in collective bargaining [1]; and

WHEREAS, WAWU-UAW has filed a representation petition with the Public Employment Relations Commission [2]; and

WHEREAS, WAWU-UAW has requested that Western voluntarily recognize the OSE bargaining unit [1]; and

WHEREAS, every on-campus union – WFSE Local 1381, PSE of WWU / SEIU Local 1948, UFWW / WEA/AFT Local 2084, and WAWU / UAW Local 4121 – has demanded that Western recognize the OSE bargaining unit [3]; and

WHEREAS, within Western’s 2018–2025 strategic plan, the Board of Trustees asserts its plan to advance Western by “Improving climate and working conditions for student employees, staff, and faculty at all locations” and “Providing competitive compensation and professional development for student employees, staff, and faculty” [4]; and

WHEREAS, historical improvements to the compensation and working conditions for employees have been spearheaded by collective bargaining [5, 6]; and

WHEREAS, collective bargaining would bring clarity to the rights and responsibilities of OSEs and Western; and

WHEREAS, Western already has a working collective bargaining and union-management relationship with WAWU-UAW; and

WHEREAS, Western asserts that it is “unable to formally recognize or negotiate with any [OSE] bargaining unit” without “an authorizing statute” that “provide(s) a uniform structure, as well as orderly and clearly defined procedures for collective bargaining and dispute resolution” [7]; and

WHEREAS, Western *is* able to formally recognize and negotiate with the OSE bargaining unit; and

WHEREAS, regardless, Western’s concerns are addressed by Washington State Senate Bill 5895, which would provide a uniform structure, as well as orderly and clearly defined procedures for collective bargaining and dispute resolution [8].

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

THAT, the voluntary recognition of the OSE bargaining unit is in the best interest of Western, OSEs, the membership of the ASWWU, and the public; and

THAT, the ASWWU supports SB 5895; and

THAT, the ASWWU requests that Western

1. also clearly, and publicly support SB 5895,
2. respects the wishes of its faculty and staff,
3. acts in accordance with its strategic plan,
4. immediately recognizes the OSE bargaining unit,
5. begins negotiating with WAWU-UAW OSEs, and
6. formally responds to the ASWWU’s above requests.

Introduced Jan. 10, 2024, in the Student Senate.

Introduced Jan 18, 2024, in the Executive Board, with amendment.

Agreed to Jan 24, 2024, in the Student Senate, with amendments.

Agreed to Jan 25, 2024, in the Executive Board, with the Senate amendments.

cc: Marcy Hammer, Director of Employee and Labor Relations
Sabah Randhawa, President
Kerena Higgins, Assistant Attorney General
WWU Students, Staff, and Faculty

- [1] K. Thomas, E. Magarro, L. McAteer, M. Nichols, I. Houston, E. Kessler, M. Schaffer, A. Mathews, N. Ramos, S. Tello, E. Newborn, A. Knapp, E. Martez, K. Bacon, Z. Cowan, E. Ehrhart, A. Miller and Coll, "Letter from WAWU OSEs to Sabah Randhawa and Liz Parkes," 13 December 2023. [Online].
- [2] WAWU/International Union United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, "Representation Petition," 13 December 2023. [Online].
- [3] WFSE Local 1381, PSE of WWU-SEIU, UFWW-AFT, and WAWU-UAW, "Letter from Campus Unions to Sabah Randhawa and the Board of Trustees," 13 December 2023. [Online].
- [4] Western Washington University, "Strategic Plan 2018-2025," 13 April 2018. [Online]. Available: <https://provost.wwu.edu/strategic-plan-2018-2025>.
- [5] M. Walters and L. Mishel, "How unions help all workers," Economic Policy Institute, 26 August 2003. [Online]. Available: https://www.epi.org/publication/briefingpapers_bp143/.
- [6] D. Baker, "Labor Unions: The Folks Who Gave You the Weekend," Huffpost, 7 September 2015. [Online]. Available: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/labor-unions-the-folks-wh_b_8101242.
- [7] M. Hammer, "Letter Responding to WAWU-UAW," 27 December 2023. [Online].
- [8] Senators Nobles, Stanford, Conway, Dhingra, Frame, Hasegawa, Hunt,, " Concerning collective bargaining for certain employees who are enrolled in academic programs at public institutions of higher education.," 21 December 2023. [Online]. Available: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=5895&Chamber=Senate&Year=2023>. [Accessed 18 January 2024].