

**Western Washington University Associated Students
Student Senate Meeting
Wednesday, January 11, 2012 VU 567**

Student Senators: *Present:* Kendall Bull (Chair), Jered McCardle, Ean Olsen, Ethan Glemaker, Amy Stavig, Katie Vainikka, Evan Fowler, Victor Celis, Felipe Espinoza, Jamie Hamilton, Mason Luvera, Jacquelyn Gratias
Absent: Christopher Brown

Advisor: Lisa Rosenberg

Secretary: Marissa Jaksich

ASVP for Academic Affairs: Fabiola Arvizu

Guest(s): *Western Front:* Preston VanSorden

Kendal Bull, Student Senate Chair called the meeting to order at 6:30pm

S-12-W-04 Approval of the minutes of Wednesday, November 16th, 2011. *Passed*

S-12-W-05 Approval of the minutes of Wednesday, January 4th, 2012. *Passed*

I. Approval of Minutes

MOTION S-12-W-04 by Fowler

Approval of minutes November 16th, 2011

Second: Hamilton Vote: 11- 0 - 0 Action: **Passed**

MOTION S-12-W-05 by Celis

Table approval of minutes January 4th, 2012

Second: Olsen Vote: 11- 0 - 0 Action: **Passed**

II. Revisions to the Agenda

III. Public Forum

IV. Information Items

A. Parliamentary Elections

The Chair opened the floor for any other Parliamentary nominations, but no one responded, and by default Fowler, who was nominated in the previous week, was elected Parliamentary.

V. Action Items

VI. Discussion Items

A. Issue of the Quarter

The Chair began discussion of Issue of the Quarter by presenting his idea of senate reform. He brought up that a meeting would be taking place Friday at 1pm in Viking Union 714 to discuss Student Senate reform, and he extended the invitation to any senator who would be interested in going. Celis brought up an issue of the quarter that he had previously discussed with the chair, about Academic Coordinating Commission's (ACC) work on revising academic grievance and academic honesty

appeal processes. He would like more student input on this issue and thinks it would be a good issue of the quarter. Next week, Tuesday, he should get the proper documents and will be able to more concretely write this up as an issue of the quarter. McCardle reiterated his idea of the Occupy movement as issue of the quarter with *“Whether or not you agree with any of the positions articulated by any of the protesters or their critics, what is painfully obvious is that American education is not only torn by divisions of ideology, but is also experiencing a crisis of confidence. When a significant number of people across the country are so disenchanting, so alienated, and so despondent over the current state of affairs that they take to the streets and parks to protest, it is important to pay attention and ask what such actions reveal about the state of mind of the American people—and what that means about the health of our society.”* McCardle believed it would be a good and popular topic for a forum.

Glemaker presented the issue of the coal train terminal with *“In light of the ASBOD recent opposition to the proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal (GPT), we have a lot to consider. The BNSF (Burlington Northern and Santa Fe) Railway Company hopes to transport 48 million tons of coal through Bellingham each year regardless of whether or not the terminal is constructed at Cherry Point. Canadian ports have nowhere near the export capacity as will the proposed GPT, so SSA marine and BNSF Railway may look to expanding those facilities in Canada. We are concerned with the environmental affects and the health risks the terminal may pose, which will impact us either way. What can do as a privileged community to lessen these affects, rather than taking on a "not in my backyard" mindset?”*

Espinoza spoke up saying that he also wrote an issue of the quarter on the Occupy movement. Fowler seconds the idea of the Occupy movement because he believes it to be a valid issue. However he is also in favor of restructuring the senate. He wanted to evaluate which issue would be most applicable for which quarter. He thinks the Occupy is really center stage right now, but acknowledges the importance of senate reform. He liked both issues equally but wanted to pin point which one would be best for the quarter at hand. The Chair suggested that this quarter would be the best opportunity to have the forum because there are fewer events that take place winter quarter. McCardle thinks that the issue regarding senate reform is a good issue for us, but in terms of getting student input on the matter, he feels many of them are unaware of what Senate does and that their input would not be as useful. He thinks it would be better to present a broader issue that would make for a more popular forum. Fowler thinks we should internalize the senate reform issue within and make it an information item for Senate. Many senators seconded this idea. Glemaker also brought up the issue of changing bathroom designations from men and women presenting the question, *“How do you feel about changing the language surrounding restroom facilities from "Men" and "Women" to "Male-Bodied" and "Female-Bodied"?”* He stated that people are legally required to use the bathroom on which reproductive parts they have, even if the person does not recognize himself/herself as that gender. Glemaker believed this was an interesting inclusion issue that he found students showed passion for and thought it would make a great issue of the quarter. The Chair encouraged all senators to submit their issue of the quarter via email and that Issue of the Quarter would be voted on the following week.

B. Student Senate Reform Committee

The Chair proposed the question to the senators of what they thought Student Senate should do and be. Celis replied saying that Senate is supposed to be acting as an advisory board to the AS Board of Directors, but he sees a clear disconnect between our body of the senate and the board of directors. He would like to see the senate become more involved with board issues. He explained that with the coal train issue the board voted on last quarter, it ended up being a very popular issue for the student body, and he feels that it would have been beneficial for the board to have the senate's perspective and another opinion for them to base their decision on. He suggested we have more relations like the previous week when senators were able to recommend that the Board pass Instant Runoff Voting before they voted on it. This he felt helped senate achieve more of its role as an advisory body and that this is more how our relationship should function between the board and Senate.

Fowler asked what senators' thoughts or ideas were to increase connection between the board and the senate whether senate would have some accountability or if there would be more of an overlay of communication between the two groups. Hamilton suggested inviting board members to come to senate meetings. Glemaker replied saying that senate should reciprocate this by going to more of the board meetings since they are open to the public. McCardle brought up the difficulty that exists for most board of directors to attend senate because they have busy schedules and commitments with other committees. The Chair let them know that board meetings take place Fridays at 3:00pm in the room they are currently in, which is VU 567, if any senator ever wanted to attend. Fowler directed a question to Fabiola on her board perspective on this issue. She agreed that there needed to be more connectivity between the two groups, but does not quite know yet what this would look like and what the steps would be to put something in place. She mentioned that in past discussions with the Chair, Senate Secretary and Lisa, they brought up the idea of making the senate chair elected, but whether this would increase the connectivity was an issue she thought still needed to be further evaluated. She thought that they needed to be strategic in the decision process and hopes that senate can generate some good ideas that would help it be more strategic.

Fowler suggested that senate should forward the senate agendas to the board to give them a better look at what Senate is doing, and then that the board agenda could come to the Senate as a discussion item before the Board's Friday meeting, so that senate could provide opinion on any matter that would be voted on. McCardle directed a question to the chair in how University of Washington did their student senate. The chair responded saying that if UW's AS Board passed something that was disliked by the student body, after a certain waiting period, the senate with a two-thirds majority vote could recommend that the board reconsider. He said that senate acted as a sort of check and balance to the Board. Fabiola liked the idea, but since UW's senate has about 100 senators, where Western's only has fifteen, she would like to see a more tailored and modified model to match Western's unique situation. She thinks with this proposed senate reform ad hoc committee that this would be possible.

Vainikka thought that Senate represented an interesting position in that they are supposed to be representing the student body, but also be advising the board of directors. She feels that Senate needs to strengthen the lines between the student body, by talking to them and seeing what ideas they have so that senate can better represent student needs by writing resolutions and advisement for the Board of Directors. The Chair definitely encouraged any senator to take up issues and write up resolutions. Celis agreed with Vainikka. Espinoza felt strongly that Senate should be far more involved with the

students than they are and thought it strange that they are not. Hamilton thought we should advertise senate more on campus to make students more aware of Senate's existence and role.

McCardle wanted to see how UW attracts student opinion. Chair replied that UW has various representatives from the fraternities and clubs system as a way to reach out to more of the diverse student body. McCardle believed having more senators like UW would help Senate be more representative of the student body and that Senate should explore ways in which to attract more senators. Fowler agreed with McCardle adding that more student senators would help add legitimacy to the senate. He also thought that Senators should be chatting up with students more frequently. He also mentioned that if Senate was exploring senate reform and the possibility of giving itself more power that adding more senators would help diffuse the possibility of any problems with senators gaining too much power. Celis wanted to know more from the chair about what electing a senate chair would mean for the senate. The chair explained that it would give senate more of a binding voice. He said that if resolutions were passed up to the board an elected senate chair would have a vested interest as opposed being to being both a non-voting member on senate and the AS Board. The chair also pointed out that if the senate chair were elected, it would not be able to happen until the next year. Fabiola stated that the role change would need to be more clearly defined and what it would mean to ensure that the change would be the right decision. Chair mentioned how there are time limits involved in making these kind of changes. McCardle asked Fabiola when the deadline would be to make a change. She replied that if it involved changing voting members, it would have to be done in time with the election code revisions, and would need to be finalized this quarter. Lisa told senators that since voting members are specified in the AS Bylaws, if that wanted to change, it would require a vote of the entire student body and would need to be put on the ballot for Spring elections. She said that other substantive changes that did not involve changing the AS Bylaws could be finalized at any time throughout the year.

VII. Board Reports/Concerns

Fabiola reported that she is getting back in to the swing of things with university committees. She mentioned one of the big things committees had been working on is GUR reform and that the university was getting tough on how GURs should be offered at the university. She said they are trying to put in place GUR clusters or strands, where students could take 3 specific GURs, or you a FIG, Freshman Interest Group where they take a group of classes that go together and give students an interdisciplinary education. Students would still be getting the GUR components while maintaining the liberal education Western is known for. She mentioned to senators that if this issue was something they were interested in that ACC could always use more students to serve on it. She also stated that they are still reviewing the student grievance policy for students. In the past there had been many student concerns that students did not get as much say in the process as staff and administrators would. She said that they are looking to update the policy so that it is more representative to students and that they would feel is a fairer process where they would feel listened to.

VIII. Senator Reports/Concerns

Espinoza reported that their temporary replacement for the Ethnic Student Center, got a job in Alaska so he would be leaving, but that they should have a replacement by the end of March.

He then said that the people who oversee the state of the Ethnic Student center will be seeking student input in a more formal way and reaching out to the entire student body.

Stavig reported that Election Code Review finalized the funding they raised and the refunds involved. She said that they will be having their last meeting the following week and that they would be talking a lot about referendums and how students can go about making them.

MCcardle reported that SPAC is continuing to review offices under assessment.

Celis stated that ACC will meet the following week.

Glemaker reported that AS Facilities and Services committee finally met for the first time and that they went over a general overview of the committee.

Fowler reported that GEF was supposed to meet on the 18th but that a student dropped out and that the replacement cannot meet until February 1st, so it will reconvene then. He also reported that AS Budget Committee is getting started up.

Olsen reported LAC had a brief meeting about Viking Lobby Day the sign-ups. For Viking Lobby Day, they would be leaving at 1pm on Sunday and returning at 7 or 8pm on Monday He mentioned transportation and lodging was all paid for and encouraged everyone to go.

Hamilton stated that Senate library committee was where professors and faculty members discuss the direction of where they want the library to go and what to do with student funds. She reported that it had not met yet this quarter.

IV. Other Business:

Olsen reported that he and Ben Crowther wrote a resolution on marriage equality for the senate and told the senators that the resolution would be an information item at the next senate meeting.

Fabiola reported that all Green Energy Fee (GEF) projects that were funded last year are on schedule and about half of them have been put in place. She said that for a pilot program things were going much more smoothly than imagined.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED BY ACCLAMATION AT 7:14 P.M.