

Western Washington University Associated Students  
Legislative Affairs Council  
Monday, October 29, 2012

VU567

Present: Patrick Stickney (AS VP Governmental Affairs, Chair), Andrew Taylor, Ben Crowther (Legislative Liaison), Evan Fowler, Graham Marmion, Joseph Levy, Tom Durham, and Neil Christenson  
Absent: Amy Stavig, Nathan Haugen  
Advisor: Kevin Majkut  
Secretary: Kaylee Galloway  
Guest:

*Patrick Stickney, Chair of Legislative Affairs Council, called the meeting to order at 2:02pm*

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ADDITIONS AND CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

IV. PUBLIC FORUM

V. REPORTS

A. VP for Governmental Affairs

Stickney had a meeting with Representative Rick Larsen to discuss student veteran issues, which seems to be a priority with the Washington Student Association (WSA). The discussion involved changing residency status so veterans can receive in-state tuition. He is trying to set a meeting with Senator Patty Murray because the United States Student Association (USSA) has targeted her as one of the top five people to talk to before legislative session. The goal is to re-affirm her support for higher education and more specifically on the topic of student loans. She will be in town this Thursday, November 1<sup>st</sup>.

B. Legislative Liaison

Stickney and Crowther talked about the AS messaging plan when down in Olympia. Both want to emphasize the moral imperative behind higher education, not just focus on the economic aspects. What does higher education look like for jobs, what does funding look like, and talk about why higher education has value beyond the money it brings to the state.

C. Western Votes

Taylor mentioned a phone bank tonight at 6pm in VU 460. It is important to encourage everyone to vote. It is important to say that all the people Western registered are also voting.

D. Student Senate

Fowler said that the Senate just started up last week, so there is not much to report on yet.

VI. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Discussion on the outside of committee work

Discussion started with the Higher Education Coordinating Board's "Key Facts about Higher Education in Washington" document. Taylor pointed out that information has been well discussed and noted the focus on University of Washington, which is expected since they are a research institution. Crowther mentioned the economic focus of the report. It highlighted higher education's monetary return on investment, but it fails to recognize the social and moral investments of higher education. Crowther said higher education is valuable because it invests in a well-informed public that is necessary for society to function. Stickney asked what people thought about the cuts from funding reductions. Durham said it is disappointing but not surprising and everyone seemed to agree. Taylor noted the recurrence of Science,

Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). Stickney reassured that STEM will be a very big issue and it was what Ross Hunter, the chairman of the House Ways and Means, focused on when he presented to WSA. Taylor confirmed that article 9 of the Washington State Constitution covers some education, but that it does not cover higher education. He said that there has been talk of an amendment or interpretation that includes higher education. Crowther said that higher education is now the baseline because 67% of the jobs in WA are going to require some sort of higher education. Stickney said that the constitutional amendment has been an interesting discussion in the past. He said that some people believe that if it happens, then it separates students from people who are looking for healthcare, social services, and who are in equally marginalized positions. Taylor wanted people to think about what should be included in higher education such as community colleges, technical schools, and private universities. Stickney said Michael Baumgartner, who is running for Senate against Maria Cantwell, introduced a bill last session that would make an amendment for higher education. Taylor said that \$1.4 billion needs to be found to balance the state budget. Crowther wants the amendment to include both K-12 and higher education. Human services and higher education are the two largest in the discretionary funds and everything else is mandated by contracts or constitutional amendments. So when congress looks to cut, they do so from the discretionary funds. Stickney brought up the 2/3 super majority vote which has prevented new revenue sources and closing tax loopholes. Fowler said that they are now including fees and that it is an endless circle of debate. Crowther said there is a supreme court challenge currently being considered regarding the 2/3 majority requirement. If that is ruled unconstitutional, then it will be repealed. Stickney said that the legislature operates on a biennium schedule where this year is budget and next year will be policy. In the past years, they have focused more on budget because there has been a deficit. The Legislature has held special session.

*Neil Christensen joined the meeting.*

B. Legislative agendas from previous years

Taylor noticed that there are many similarities between the agendas but there are also differences in the values. Taylor mentioned raising financial aid and noted that it keeps showing up in the legislative agendas, but that it still has not been done. Crowther said that the best and most successful financial aid is keeping tuition low. Durham noted that it decreases debt. Stickney mentioned looking at how family income is reported. Taylor said that several of the agendas opposed increases to full time equivalency (FTE). Stickney said that Western is over enrolled by 1,000 FTEs. He explained that FTE is a standard with number of credits students are taking and making sure they are creating a standardized program. Taylor added that the state of WA funds 13,000 full time students and Western have 14,000; therefore, there are 1,000 students not receiving funding from the state. There is more demand than there is supply. Marmion confirmed that the Stafford loan is federal financial aid and that Washington doesn't have any financial aid loans. Stickney said the state has work study and the state need grant which have been cut significantly. Marmion confirmed that LAC is encouraging an increase in financial aid not the production of debt. Stickney said that the WSA is advocating for need based aid in the form of grants rather than loans. Durham suggested building off of last year's legislative agenda because it was such a success. Stickney asked if the committee would like to use the same format as last year, that is with a priority agenda and a value based agenda. Fowler said in reviewing the agendas and looking for a theme or progress, it seems that as time goes on things are getting more precarious in regards to financial support from the state. He suggested that financial support be first priority. Levy asked how successful this format was compared to other years. Stickney said that the legislative agenda a year before last was a single page compared to last year's which was longer and more detailed. He said that some legislators thought that last year's agenda was too long while others thought it was very useful. The agenda was especially useful to the Legislative Liaison because it was in effect an authorization of certain issues. Stickney said legislators could be given the priority document

during Viking Lobby Day and only be given the values if requested. Durham noted that the graph on the second page is a great tool for legislators to see the trends. Crowther said that the formatting, graphs, and student testimony were all effective aspects of the agenda. He said that it is important to have a priority legislative agenda to hand to legislators, but then to also have the student values based agenda which is helpful to the Legislative Liaison. He further noted that these issues do affect students and it is important that students have their voices being heard. Crowther gave the example of transportation as an important issue to so many students, especially to those who live off campus. Fowler thinks the format from last year can really capitalize on the bipartisanship and find common values. Taylor suggested giving the values based agenda to known supporters. Stickney confirmed that there is a consensus to keep same format as last year. Committee members will be assigned issues and put together a document that will be presented to the Board of Directors by the end of November.

#### C. WSA Dues Invoice

Stickney said the funding responsibilities of the LAC are to authorize money from the Legislative Action Fund (LAF). He said that about \$11,000-\$12,000 goes towards Western's WSA membership and that the first half of the fee is due in the fall and the second half is due in the spring. Stickney said that the WSA is a coalition of all of the public universities in the state and will be the office that Crowther will be working with as the Legislative Liaison. WSA also puts together a statewide legislative agenda, which will be set during the General Assembly, November 17<sup>th</sup>. Fowler noted that the WSA helps the schools in WA coordinate a group voice in Olympia. Stickney said that there has been a push to include community colleges in the association and that a long term goal is to become more like the Oregon Student Association. Taylor added that the WSA provides trainings for free through our dues.

#### D. Funding request for the Washington State Budget and Policy Center Conference

Stickney said the conference will be held on Thursday, December 13<sup>th</sup>. He said the Washington State Budget and Policy Center does a lot of reports on the problems facing the state and comes up with missions. They will be discussing these issues at the conference including revenue, higher education, and messaging. Please send an email by Thursday if you want to attend. It will cost \$400 for 6 people and \$50 more for 2 more people so at maximum 8 people can go.

### VII. ACTION ITEMS

#### A. Vice Chair

Crowther nominated Evan Fowler, Fowler accepts. Stickney discussed some of the duties of the Vice Chair, such as chairing the meetings in the event that he cannot make it. No further nominations. Fowler voted Vice Chair by acclamation.

### VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

Stickney encouraged committee members to review the legislative agendas outside of committee, determine important issues, and collect testimony via events, Red Square tabling, Western Votes t-shirt tie-dyeing activity, etc. Levy mentioned Residence Hall Councils. Durham would like to better promote and advertise Viking Lobby Day. Stickney said that there will be a funding request soon for publicity, but that class raps can also be used. Taylor asked about if anything values based was being done with city council. Stickney said that is something that can be looked into if people are interested. Marmion asked about work study, its effectiveness, and whether it is being utilized. Stickney said he didn't have exact information but knows that it has become a lot harder because employers are now required to pay more. He said that there may be more people than positions to fill.

### VIII. NEXT MEETING DATE- November 5th

*The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 2:49pm*