

**Western Washington University Associated Students
Legislative Affairs Council
Monday, January 14, 2013**

VU567

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

MOTIONS

LAC-13-W-01 Approve the minutes from November 26, 2012. *Passed.*
LAC-13-W-02 Approve the minutes from December 11, 2012. *Passed.*
LAC-13-W-03 Direct Crowther, the Legislative Liaison, to investigate the traction tuition reduction has with key allies. *Passed.*
LAC-13-W-04 Approve the funding request for \$1145 for the charter buses for President's Day Lobby with the Human Services Program. *Passed.*

Patrick Stickney, Chair of Legislative Affairs Council, called the meeting to order at 4:09pm

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ADDITIONS AND CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION LAC-13- W-01 by Christenson

Approve the minutes from November 26, 2012

Second: Marmion Vote: No Dissent Action: Passed

MOTION LAC-13- W-02 by Christenson

Approve the minutes from December 11, 2012

Second: Marmion Vote: No Dissent Action: Passed

IV. PUBLIC FORUM

V. REPORTS

A. VP for Governmental Affairs

Stickney said he and others have been working on Viking Lobby Day. He said that legislators are being called to set up meetings. He said that there will be a second dinner at Evergreen.

B. Legislative Liaison

Crowther reported that the Legislature officially convened today. He said the Senate voted 25-23 to adopt the rules of the Majority Coalition Caucus, cementing a 25-24 majority for Republicans. The rules were passed but opposed by the Democrats. He said that Six Senate committees will be chaired by Republicans (including Rules and Ways and Means) and six by Democrats (which will be weaker committees), and three will be co-chaired. Republicans are expected to take the chairmanship of Higher Ed committee. He said that all bills will have to go through Ways and Means and Rules committee. He said that the Republicans have given themselves a large majority. He said that he and other liaisons were split into groups and tasked with WSA issues. He is in the group working on DREAM Act and Revenue (priority items), and Western Governors University Accountability and Shared Governance (legislative action items). On Wednesday, he met with

representatives from the Washington Student Achievement Council to discuss the new organization, their role, and how we can utilize them throughout session. He and other liaisons will be attending their meeting on January 23rd at Highline Community College to speak about our legislative agenda, with special attention paid to the DREAM Act. He said that Governor Gregoire has recommended tuition freezes. Universities have come out and said they will accept tuition freezes, but only if the state provides additional funding of \$225 million. The concern is that there is a rising cost of running a university and they need more revenue. He said that the universities plan to use the funding to cover carry-forward expenses (i.e., higher rent and utility expenses), and to give faculty a 4% raise. Crowther said Inslee has not provided a budget plan, but that Inslee is against raising revenue. The council of university presidents are hesitant to support the DREAM Act. He said they do not expect to get the \$225 mil but that it is accounting for what the tuition would be going up. He is requesting a directive from LAC so that he can take action on the issue. Representative Buys (R-42) from Northern Bellingham will be on the House Higher Education Committee. He is the only one of our legislators that will directly serve on the Higher Education committee. He said that Barbara Bailey would be chairing the Higher Ed committee.

C. Western Votes

Meeting tomorrow 5-6pm.

D. Student Senate

Nothing to report

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Council of President's Plan: 50/50 by 2020

Stickney said that he is against the proposal. He said that this measure would freeze tuition, but in reality, the legislature could raise it. He said that university administration doesn't want to reduce tuition costs because universities need the revenue. Marmion said that if it doesn't pass, then tuition would increase. Stickney said that the funding goes towards programs that should be funded, but that tuition also needs to be reduced. Taylor is supportive of new programs, but doesn't see how it links to supporting a tuition reduction. Stickney said that this measure would freeze tuition rates. Majkut said that the informal opinion is that tuition would be included under the initiative and so that the schools do not have the authority to raise tuition. Stickney said that in Seaquist's shared governance bill, it expands local control in that the university and Board of Trustees have tuition setting authority until 2019. Crowther said that universities still successfully set tuition because even if they do not have the authority, they still recommend and negotiate with the legislature to get the numbers they need. Majkut said that the legislature will sometimes tell universities that they can raise tuition to a certain limit. Stickney said that lower tuition is not in the 50/50 plan. Christenson thought that something is better than nothing. He said that even though this plan is not ideal, Western should still support this measure because it is better than tuition increasing. Crowther said that the Council of Presidents is asking for \$225 million because they feel that is what universities need in order to not raise tuition. He said that universities need the revenue to pay for carry over costs and the costs of raising professor salaries by 4%. He said that they would have to raise tuition to account for the additional costs if the funding was not provided. He said there are not many legislators that approve of reducing tuition. Crowther also mentioned that the Council of Presidents are not sure they can get the \$225 million to freeze tuition. He noted that even the strong voices representing the UW are skeptical about the possibility of tuition reduction. Crowther said that Western needs to focus on something that is achievable. Christenson dittoed. Marmion also agreed and said that students should view this as preemptively reducing tuition because if the plan was not passed, then tuition would increase. He is in favor of supporting this proposal. Stickney said that Western has the ability to organize and that the relationship between students and legislators need to be strengthened. He said that whatever Western agrees with, it will be negotiated down. He said that we should support tuition reduction, which means that we can support 50/50 by 2020 later on. He said that it is important to advocate for what students need, which is tuition reduction. Crowther said there has not been a firm stance taken by other universities and WSA. He said that liaisons are focusing on individual legislative agendas. Taylor said that it seems that people are taking the wait

and see approach, and that Western should too. Marmion dittoed. Crowther noted that the legislature moves very quickly and he said it would help Western advocacy to take a position sooner. Pollet said that students should take a stance on something that the legislators are talking about right now and in time for Viking Lobby Day. Crowther said that Western has been a leader in pushing these issues at WSA. He said that the sooner Western takes a position, the sooner he can have meetings and taking a stance on the issue. He said that Western shouldn't wait to see what everyone else is doing. He would like a stance now. Stickney said as Western, students should be talking about what needs to be done. He said that it tied up with tuition reduction. He said that having that affordability aspect is imperative and that there is a responsibility to talk about that. He said that if this issue doesn't work, then LAC can take the stance on a tuition freeze. That way we are focusing on the issues that will help more students to attend college. Pollet wondered why Western couldn't support both. Stickney said that it was thought that 50/50 by 2020 was a good plan, but that Western can advocate for something better is a good way to message it. Crowther said that Western and students will not get more than what the Council of Presidents is asking for. He said that students can ask for more, but that it will fall onto deaf ears because legislators are already hesitant about the \$225 million. He said that legislators are requesting that there be some accountability before any funding is provided. He said there is a lot of resistance and that legislators are looking for more efficiency. He said the legislator barely wants to provide funding for the tuition freeze, so a tuition reduction is not feasible. Stickney said that if students ask for more, then \$225 million seems more reasonable. He thought that it is important to establish a different way of presenting the idea. He said that there are alternatives to 50/50 by 2020 and different ways to organize. Christenson said that there have been attempted reforms for decades. He thought that given the political reality, that Western should support the proposal. Christenson moved to support proposal by Council of Presidents at this time, but encourage the Legislative Liaison, to push for more lasting solutions for reducing tuition. Marmion seconded. Crowther noted that the Council of Presidents' proposal is adding \$225 million in funding to the 50/50 by 2020 plan. Stickney requested that if LAC is going to provide direction, then it needs to be specific. Crowther said he would like specific direction. Christenson said he would be willing to amend the motion. Stickney said that setting a base can cause concern. He said that this plan is good, but that students want better. Pollet said it is not the best option, but it will take effort from students. She said that even if Western pushes for something better, the reality is that it would not be achieved. She said that if a better proposal comes up, then Western should support it. She said that even progressives are not talking about tuition reduction. She said that if Western cannot find allies, then Western needs to start with something that is more achievable. Christenson dittoed. Stickney said there is nothing saying that Western can't play an integral role. He said that it is important that students are not marginalized. He said it is imperative to get more people involved rather than just compromising. It is not to say that Western cannot support this proposal later on. He said Western should push forward with its current way, so that way, the proposal is negotiated closer to \$225 million with tuition freeze rather than having that as the starting point and then drive the deal down even further. Christenson said that tuition reduction is not a short-term goal. He said that not suffering a tuition increase by freezing tuition is a great short-term goal. He said that Western can come back and advocate for tuition reduction when there is a new legislature. Crowther said that it is important to appreciate the fact that a tuition freeze would be monumental. Christenson dittoed. Crowther said to stop the trend of tuition increases would be a remarkable victory. He said that it would break the upward trend of tuition increases since the 1980's. Pollet said that this proposal is one that legislators know about and Western will want to know if the legislators support it. She said that if we just go in saying we want tuition reduction, the meetings during Viking Lobby Day will not go well because student would be advocating for something that is not politically feasible. She said it would be powerful to go into Viking Lobby day and have a powerful message and ask for legislators to support this proposal. Taylor said that he doesn't want this issue to become an issue like the debt ceiling. He doesn't want to get caught in a negotiation trap. He said that we should be supporting this as a floor. Stavig said that it would be more powerful if Western were to take a stance from the very beginning as opposed to taking a stance part way through it. Christenson trusts Crowther to make a good

judgment. He said that if Western supports this proposal, then there is a better chance that it will succeed. Majkut said that it is important to go to Viking Lobby Day with a strong and unified message. He said, however, this might be the most important issue the LAC takes a stance on and that there is limited information at this point and that more information be acquired before a decision is decided. Stickney thought that it would be better to wait to commit to this issue until the LAC is provided with more information. He said that students have the ability to advocate and that Western needs understand its influence. He said that students need to ask for more and plan strategically. Taylor wondered if LAC should hold an emergency meeting at the end of the week to make this decision. Crowther said that he would acquire additional information in the next couple days and bring it back to the committee. Crowther said that it will not make a huge difference whether LAC makes the decision tonight or later this week. He said that it would make a difference if LAC would pass something before Viking Lobby Day. Taylor amended the motion. Christenson accepted as friendly motion. Crowther emphasized that students are political actors and that students have the ability to influence the conversation. He said that this issue would be better utilized if Western were to support the proposal the Council of Presidents are advocating for. Taylor agreed with Crowther that students have an influence that should be fully utilized. He said that students should always advocate for what is wanted, not just what students think they can get. Stickney dittoed. Taylor said that a freeze would be fine, but that Western should advocate for what is really wanted, which is lowering tuition, and therefore, Western should continue to advocate for what is in the legislative agenda.

MOTION LAC-13- W-03 by Christenson

Direct Crowther, the Legislative Liaison, to investigate the traction tuition reduction has with key allies.

Second: Marmion Vote: 6-0-0

Action: Passed

VI. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. USSA LegCon Funding for 2 people

Stickney said that this funding would be for Ben and possible Taylor who as posed interest in it. He said that WSA will be funding Jered McCardle to go to LegCon.

VH. ACTION ITEMS

A. President's Day Lobby Request with HSP

Stickney has been working with the HSP to get a bus that can be taken down to the WSA Lobby Day on President's Day. He said it would cost about \$1100 to have it for the whole day. Marmion suggested including gratuity. Majkut said that he is not sure if we can include gratuity. Christenson said that we can vote on the amendment later.

MOTION LAC-13-W-04 by Christenson

Approve the funding request for \$1145 for the charter buses for President's Day Lobby with the Human Services Program.

Second: Marmion Vote: 6-0-0

Action: Passed

VIII. NEXT MEETING DATE

There will be a follow-up meeting later this week. Committee will send schedules to Galloway and meeting will be announced within the next couple days. Next regular meeting will be held January 28, 2013

X. OUTSIDE OF COMMITTEE WORK

The Meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 5:21