

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

Friday, February 8, 2013

YU 567

Present: Patrick Stickney (ASVP Governmental Affairs, Chair), Andrew Taylor, Ben Crowther (Legislative Liaison), Graham Marmion, Neil Christenson, Eileen Pollet, and Marc Oommen. *Absent:* Amy Stavig, Evan Fowler Tom Durham Joseph Levy

Advisor: Kevin Majkut

Secretary: Kaylee Galloway

Patrick Stickney, Chair of Legislative Affairs Council, called the meeting to order at 5:32pm

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ADDITIONS AND CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

IV. PUBLIC FORUM

V. REPORTS

VI. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Federal Agenda

Stickney said that the purpose of this meeting is to work on the federal agenda. He said that it will be voted on Monday because the Administration wanted the agenda a week earlier.

Access and Attainment: Christenson said that S 114 and HR 357 are the two bills he found. He said that he was having difficulty distinguishing Access from Financial Aid. Taylor mentioned HR 12, which deals with voter accessibility on a federal level. H said that it tries to modernize voter access including online voting and same day voting. Marmion didn't know if voting was relevant to access and attainment. Taylor said that Western supported voting measures in the past because students tend to be discriminated against. Pollet said that she likes the bill. She said that Western has to be careful about including items that are not directly related to higher education. Stickney said that the meetings he will be having in DC will be short. Christenson said the Fairness for Struggling Students bill forgives student loans in bankruptcy. Pollet said that it should go under the financial section. Stickney said that this bill doesn't really need to be included in the agenda. Pollet said there should be a paragraph as a value statement, then a list of bills, and a bullet point to why Western supports it. Stickney said that topics without bill numbers should also be included. Christenson said that access and attainment are going to be superfluous because many of the bills can be included in either the financial or wellness section. Pollet said that the GI bill is very relevant in this section. Stickney said that the DREAM Act has not been formally presented in this session. He said that space should be left in the agenda where the DREAM Act can be inserted when a bill number is presented. Taylor said that HR 12 does mention students in that schools should be encouraged to register people to vote in federal elections. Pollet said that it should not be included. Marmion suggested supporting it but not as a priority.

Funding and Accountability: Pollet said that she included several bills, knowing that the committee could edit some out. She said that she included a sentence for each, describing what each bill does. Stickney noted that the pieces of legislations included are: S. 113 Know Before You Owe Student Loan Act, H.R. 86 Cybersecurity Education Enhancement Act, H.R. 340 Protecting Financial Aid for Students and Taxpayers Act, and the Fairness for Struggling Students Act. Pollet said that the Protecting Financial Aid for Students and Taxpayers Act prevents federal aid being spent on advertising, marketing, and recruiting. She said 90% of the

federal aid needs to be spent not on those issues. She said that this bill mostly deals with private schools. Marmion was concerned about subsidizing money for tuition. Pollet said that federal provided tuition money should be spent on professors, programs, and administration not towards marketing for the campus. Pollet also mentioned HR 86 and that it grants the Homeland Security the ability to establish a program to award grants. Christenson said that there is a lack of time and that it should be killed. Pollet said that Fowler was in favor of this and that it is good to include a bill that a Republican proposes so the agenda looks more balanced. Stickney said that the institutions focus is energy policy and not cybersecurity. The committee decided to remove it. Pollet said that she doubts that it would affect Western. With regards to S **113**, Know Before You Own Student Loan Act, Pollet said this sends students more statements so that they can know where they stand with their loan. Marmion said that it seems to be helping with transparency. Pollet said that it requires more communication between the person who is giving the loan and the institution. Stickney said that Western can focus on other bills. Christenson said that it increased transparency, but that it increases stress because students would be reminded of how much they owe. Pollet said that it is important for students to know how much they are in debt. Taylor looked at S **114** about exceptions to discharge in bankruptcy. He said that it basically says that the loan will be forgiven if bankruptcy is filed. Pollet said that there should be something about loans. Taylor said that S **113** is better thought out, but S **114** is broader. He said that the bills are in committee. He said S **114** has more co-sponsors. With regards to Pell grants, Pollet said that she took the language from last year. Stickney said things have changed in that they are looking to make the grants mandatory rather than discretionary. Pollet said that this language can be removed and the information and language can be updated. She suggested making the section more of an “other” category. It was decided to be titled Policy To Be Introduced As Legislation. Stickney added EFC to clarify the automatic zero. He also added a bullet point to read: increase Pell Grant funding. He added another bullet point to read: Make the Pell Grant mandatory spending item. Pollet noted that this section is long. She suggested having a legislative priorities section and another section for a wish list. She suggested having three bills and three other points. **Student Wellness:** Taylor said that he added a values statement. He said that this section includes **3** bills and a wish list item. He said the wish list item is the Tyler Clementi bill. He said for the bills, he included the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (S **47**), Campus sexual Violence and Elimination Act (S **128**), and Student Support Act (HR **320**). He said the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act is more general, but mentions campuses as a haven from violence. Taylor and Pollet suggested adding amend to expand HR **320** to include higher education. The committee added that financial aid received through the GI bill as part of the **90/10** rule. Stickney said that for-profit colleges target veterans. Taylor also mentioned HR **274**. He said that it would give people in the workplace the opportunity to be trained. He also discussed Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act and the benefits included. Stickney said that it should be included. He said that Rick Larson co-sponsored the House bill. Stickney said that the board last year passed a resolution on the War On Women. He said that to be consistent, Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act should be kept on the federal legislative agenda. He also noted that income passed repayment, Pell grant as mandatory spending item, and the public-private loan are the issues that USSA has prioritized. The committee agreed on the draft agenda as prepared.

VH. ACTION ITEMS

vni. NEXT MEETING DATE—February 11, 2013

IX. ADJOURN

The Meeting was adjourned at 6:22pm