

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

Friday, April 26, 2013

VU 567

Present: Patrick Stickney (AS VP Governmental Affairs, Chair), Andrew Taylor, Ben Crowther (Legislative Liaison), Joseph Levy, Neil Christenson, and Tully Smith
Absent: Tom Durham, Eileen Pollet, Marc Oommen, Amy Stavig, and Evan Fowler

Advisor: Kevin Majkut

Secretary: Kaylee Galloway

Guest: Sophie Zaman (USSA Vice President) and Jered McCardle

MOTIONS

LAC-13-S- 06 Approve the minutes from April 12, 2013. *Passed*

LAC-13-S- 07 Approve the minutes from April 19, 2013. *Passed*

Patrick Stickney, Chair of Legislative Affairs Council, called the meeting to order at 3:31pm

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ADDITIONS AND CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION LAC-13-S - 01 by Christenson

Approve the minutes from April 12, 2013.

Second: Taylor Vote: No objections Action: Passed

MOTION LAC-13-S - 02 by Christenson

Approve the minutes from April 19, 2013.

Second: Taylor Vote: No objections Action: Passed

IV. PUBLIC FORUM

V. REPORTS

A. VP for Governmental Affairs

Stickney skipped his report.

B. Legislative Liaison

Crowther had nothing to report.

C. Western Votes

Taylor reported getting Western Votes representatives at all of the resident halls.

D. Student Senate

Christenson reported that the issue of the quarter is rental safety.

VI. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Establishing Direct Membership with the United States Student Association

Stickney said that he was looking at the LAF and that there is enough money to invest in direct membership with USSA this year. He said that the council can submit a recommendation to the Board who will then decide. Sophie Zaman, Vice President of the USSA, was on the conference call. She said that USSA is very excited for the possibility of Western to be a direct member. She acknowledged that Western led the state in voter registration. She said the USSA

is the largest and oldest student led group. Zaman said that there is a summer conference and that USSA is running several campaigns. She said that membership provides vision and guidance. She said the organization is overseen by a group of students and the executive board and has a great foundation with the president overseeing the budget. Zaman said the main mission of USSA is that education is a right and that everyone should be able to access higher education. She said that it is important that students have an influence in federal issues and that the USSA is recognized by the White House, Department of Education, and Congress. She said that the goal is to establish a student movement, which USSA accomplishes through training and building effective campaigns and making sure that students have the right tools. Zaman said that there are many skills that are transferable to build effective campus, state, and federal movements and that the USSA offers a lot of training. She said that USSA also offers a leadership pipeline to facilitate advocacy, an influence on policy, and a great national network. She said there are many benefits including access to a national network of students who can work together because the USSA is committed to student power. Zaman gave some examples of when USSA was able to rally behind an issue and have a real influence. She said that there are a lot of little benefits of direct membership including giving Western the opportunity to represent Washington at the federal level. Zaman said that historically, Washington has not been that involved, but that Washington students are great leaders and that she would love to see more involvement from Washington. Stickney wondered about the difference between Western direct membership and WS A membership. Zaman said that with membership through the state student association, the USSA works more with the staff of that association and not directly with campuses. She said that direct members would have direct access to trainings and direct votes in national congress. She said that as a direct member campus, there is more direct support and field support to help with the campaigns being faced on campus. Levy was wondering about the cost. Zaman said that it is \$.50 per student. Stickney wondered if it would be actual enrollment or FTE. Zaman said that USSA charges like WSA. She said that membership would be around \$6,000 and to contact her if there are any questions. Taylor said that the funding request needs to be amended to FTE. He wondered if the LAC fee would be increased. Stickney said that if LAC votes to approve the recommendation and the Board approves, a budget would be established with the additional expenditures. He said that there has been about \$6,000 spent this year and that all of those expenditures did not necessarily come from the LAF in the past. Crowther said that he has a lot of experience with the USSA and has been to several large events. He said that the USSA is a great organization, a great network, and provides great trainings. He said that those benefits can be accessed through the WSA. He said that there is not enough benefit to justify the cost. He said that a lot more could be done with that \$6,000. Crowther said that it would create weird dynamic to have a WWU and a WSA vote. He said that Western already has a voice because Western is already involved. He said if Western wants an increased voice, then more students need to go to congress in the summer where the legislative agenda is set. He does not support direct membership. Taylor said the only benefit apparent to him is the additional vote at congress, which is not that necessary. He said that it would be nice to be the first direct campus member in Washington, but said that a lot could be done with the \$6,000 such as lobby trips or funding another student employee. Galloway said that there is a possibility that WSA might not want to invest in the USSA as much as Western would like them to. She said that at the General Assembly last spring there was discussion of cutting USSA, which was something that Western came out against. She said that if the AS is looking to expand advocacy efforts, then expanding Western's federal impact is a great option and investing in direct membership would be one way of going about that. Stickney said that direct membership would be beneficial because currently, Western is paying a non-membership cost. He said that Western could send more students for less and that the direct support from Chirag could be beneficial for running

campaigns on campus. Christenson said he is on the fence about the issue. He said that if WSA decides to cut back the investment in USSA, then Western can cross the bridge at that time. He said that if Western is not utilizing what is currently available, then why would Western want to spend \$6,000 more unless it was for the bragging rights, which would not be worth it. He said that it needs to be determined specifically how the USSA would increase effectiveness on campus. Taylor said that if WSA backs out, then Western should definitely invest. Christenson and Smith dittoed. Taylor said that USSA direct membership should be determined at a later date and that the WSA general assemble is next weekend. McCardle said that he has learned a lot from going to USSA events. He said the meetings are resourceful, but also boring. He said that it is not accurate to assume that membership through WSA is the same as direct membership, because with direct membership, Western is able to send a solidified delegate to events. He said that USSA offers a huge amount of benefits for students. Crowther said that if WSA pulls membership, then Western should revisit direct membership. He said that Western direct membership would mean one more vote on the board, more access to Chirag and workshops (which Western doesn't utilize), and a vote at congress. He is concerned about the dynamic with WSA and Western membership. McCardle said that Univeristy of Oregon has three votes: one on the executive board, one from their campus, and one through OSA. He said that University of Oregon spends \$20,000 on USSA. Taylor moved to suspend the bylaws to continue the meeting without quorum. Christenson seconded. No dissent. *Taylor left at 3:58pm.* Stickney said that there are opportunities for utilizing Chirag's support. He said that if Western waits until after WSA GA, then direct membership would have to wait until next year. He said that is why he is proposing it now. He said that given the organizing capacity of WSA, Western might be looking for more support and capacity. He said that WSA is in the process of hiring a new OD. He said that Western is always pushing the boundaries and needs the support. McCardle said that Chirag works out of Olympia and would be very accessible to Western. Christenson would like the cost difference of LegCon conference fee. Stickney said that it is about \$100 per person. Christenson wondered if the cost is worth the vote on the board and the increase access to Chirag. McCardle said that calculating out the cost benefits would be really difficult to do. He said when it comes to the direct cost benefit analysis, Western would have to send a lot of people in order for it to be profitable. He said that there is a lot of benefits just by going to the board meetings and being able to bring back to campus what is learned. McCardle said that Western has a really good change of securing the WSA VP of Federal Affairs position, but that will not always be the case. He said that to ensure that Western has a voice, Western needs to have direct membership. Levy said that he has not been swayed to vote for this. He wondered what the detriments of waiting. Stickney said that Western would have to wait until after vote work to reconsider direct membership and that USSA can help with vote work. He said that it also affects the support that USSA could provide for legislative session and local issues. He also said that Western would miss a vote in congress. Levy asked McCardle for examples of what he has implemented from USSA to Western Votes. McCardle could not think of anything off the top of his head. Levy said that he is not swayed and that benefits through WSA are sufficient. Crowther said that Western can still invest in representation at Congress through sending people there. He said that he would be willing to contest with USSA to charge Western membership costs because of involvement with WSA. He does not think WSA will be cutting ties with USSA because of the recent investment in the VP of Federal Affairs position. He said that there was only one opportunity to use Chirag and that Western could have received that support through WSA membership. Galloway said that she is a proponent of direct membership. She said that she had a wonderful experience at LegCon and that there is a lot of potential that can be made of direct membership. She said that direct membership is the first step in a long process of investment. Galloway said that if the AS is looking to expand in advocacy efforts, then doing so at the

federal level is a great option. She said that there are things that are going to have to change in order for this to be a worthwhile investment. She said that the numbers might not balance right now because there is some institutional structure that is going to have to change. She said that it might require another AS employee such as a Federal Legislative Liaison who spends a quarter in Washington DC. Galloway said that it will require some sort of legacy from the individuals who do attend USSA events and being able to work with attendees and developing a way to adequately implement the skills and knowledge acquired. She said that currently, there is a disconnect. She said that it needs to be determined how she can sit in a workshop on effective student movements and then figure out a way to relay that information back to Western Votes. She said that there might not be an answer now, but that it can be figured out. Galloway said in terms of trainings on campus, just because Western has not utilized them in the past, does not mean that it won't be used in the future. She said that if Western Votes wants a larger rally next year, then they might reach out to Chirag, which maybe was not considered because it was not a resource made available. Galloway said that USSA offers more than just on campus support, they also offer resources, tools, and trainings in federal student issues and lobbying efforts. She said that USSA can provide additional perspective and knowledge that can be beneficial. *Christenson left at 4:10pm.* Tully said that he would like to support direct membership in USSA, and that it would be cool to be the first campus in the state, but that the amount of money is iffy. He said that Western would be paying membership for WSA and USSA and that would add up to a lot of money. Patrick said that WSA is effective at the state level and that using USSA can be used for more local and federal level issues. He said that current WSA OD capacity is limited and that being direct members of USSA gives Western a higher priority for support. Crowther said that the additional capacity is noted, but that Western is not utilizing the capacity that is already provided. He said that McCardle noted the value of being on the board, but that the benefits come from attending the board meetings, not necessarily having the vote. He said that the value can still be achieved by sending someone even if they do not have a vote. Galloway said the cost as a whole might seem like a lot, but that it does not seem too intimidating when broken down per student. She said she is looking at the long term thinkers and that it is important to not be short term thinkers. She said that the benefits need to be considered 5 and 10 years out. She said that a short term goal would be to restructure the fee for LAF contributions which would help increase revenue. She said that the budget would not be as tight if the restructuring was implemented. Stickney said that he has had discussions with others about fee restructure and that would lead to more revenue. He said Western currently asks students to donate \$2 to the LAF before they register for classes. He said that other states have a fee that is assessed and reimbursed if requested. He said that he was not able to work on fee restructuring this year, but that it is something that can be worked on next year. Levy understood where Galloway was coming from, but said that money should not be spent in places where it is not needed and saved for when needed. Stickney suggested the meeting be adjourned and that this discussion be continued at the next meeting. Motion to adjourn. No objections.

VII. ACTION ITEMS

VIII. NEXT MEETING DATE

May 3, 2013

IX. ADJOURN

X. OUTSIDE OF COMMITTEE WORK

The Meeting was adjourned at 4:16pm