

Western Washington University Associated Students
Legislative Affairs Council
Friday, May 3, 2013 **VU 567**

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

Advisor: Kevin Majkut

Secretary: Kaylee Galloway

Guest: Katie Barnard (Western Votes! President)

MOTIONS

LAC-13-S- 07 Approve the minutes from April 26, 2013. *Passed.*

LAC-13-S- 08 Recommend direct membership with the USSA and have LAC look at the issue again next year regardless. *Failed.*

Patrick Stickney, Chair of Legislative Affairs Council, called the meeting to order at 3:06pm
I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ADDITIONS AND CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION LAC-13-S -07 by Christenson

Approve the minutes from April 26, 2013.

Second: Oommen

Vote: 6-0-0

Action: Passed

IV. PUBLIC FORUM

V. REPORTS

A. VP for Governmental Affairs

Stickney said that he met with Rick Larsen who is not the most supportive of the Student Loan Forgiveness Act so there is more work to be done. He said the special session is starting and may not end until June 13th.

B. Legislative Liaison

Crowther said that it was found out the Tyler Clementi Act is back.

C. Western Votes

Taylor said that there is another day of action next week. He said that Western Votes representatives have been going around to residence halls and that has been successful.

D. Student Senate

Christenson said that he chaired the meeting. He said that there was a resolution to end the Student Senate sine die. He said that senators will want to table for the issue of the quarter. He said that the senators are in general support of the dead week policy, which ensures that professors do not have exams during dead week. Taylor suggested contacting Rachel Cochran regarding rental safety.

VI. INFORMATION ITEMS

VII. ACTION ITEMS

A. Establishing Direct Membership with the United States Student Association.

Stickney said that more information has been talked about. He said that the conversation regarding USSA direct membership has been framed in terms of direct benefits, but that it is important to consider direct membership in terms of contributing to the student movement. He said the AS is not just a service model, but rather a student movement and provides resources in advocacy. Barnard said that Western Votes discussed this issue at their last meeting. She said that it would be better to postpone direct membership to wait for USSA to be more of a solidified group. She said that direct membership will be more beneficial to Western Votes when the foundation will be strengthened. She said that it is important to make sure the Western Votes will be able to utilize the resources. Christenson said that Western should utilize the resources that are currently available and to see where the efforts lead federally with what is available. Crowther said that it is odd to have double membership and that it is unnecessary. Barnard said that it might be better to restructure the LAF before direct membership is purchased. Crowther said that LAC is about to make a recommendation and wondered if it would be taken to the board regardless. Majkut said the LAC can take a vote and decide to recommend to the board and if LAC does not want to, then they do not have to bring it to the board. He said that if LAC voted against, then it would be appealed to the board. Taylor said that it might be worth discussing after WSA General Assembly. Christenson said that it is unlikely that WSA will pull out of USSA. Galloway said that she prepared a document with talking points, but that she did not put it in the binders because she wanted to respect the process and didn't think that it was appropriate given her current capacity. She said that maybe the committee could pass USSA direct membership for a year with a stipulation such as fee restructuring, short and long term goals, or legacy document created. She said that it would basically be a pilot program to see if it would help Western Votes, help with local and federal legislative advocacy efforts, help provide resources for get out the vote efforts and voter registration, and if having Chirag as a resource would be of benefit. She said that the conversation can be hypothetical, such that it might work or it might not work, but that Western will not know until it is tried. Galloway said that there was concern over \$6,000 being a lot of money. She said that if the cost is broken down per students, then \$.50 does not seem so intimidating and that there will still be money left over in the LAF which would provide for the opportunity to fund additional lobby trips or other advocacy efforts. Taylor said that maybe some stipulations could be one day of action through USSA per quarter or having a certain number of trainings per quarter or increasing the LAF fee. Crowther said that it should not be a stipulation because membership is membership and Western would be paying the same regardless of the outcome. He said that this would also impose a burden on future LACs. He said that there is money left over but that is not necessarily a reason to spend it. Christenson dittoed. Crowther said that he would like to have proposals on how to spend the money. Stickney said that currently, the WSA Organizing Director can only come up once a month and that Chirag could be made more accessible. He said that with the WSA fee, every LAC is the one that approves the funding. He said that Board could reverse, but there are already conditions placed on the committee. Barnard said that more trainings would strain Western Votes and that Western Votes does not have the capacity. She said the use of the LAF was expanded this year and those efforts can be improved. She said that Western Votes does not utilize Mara Ventura, WSA Organizing Director, fully because Western Votes is still developing. Majkut said that changing the fee is a political issue, and with regards to the mandatory refundable, the Board of Trustees has already taken a stance against it and that it is an uphill battle. Pollet said that she is the longest member of Western Votes and that Western Votes is not where it needs to be. She said that it does not make sense to spend money in that way. She said that it would be more beneficial to build a student base and that a structure

needs to be institutionalized. Stickney said that he does not view direct membership as expanding, but rather doing what we are already doing better. He said that the funding for the rally was there, but the structure was not and that the expertise would be helpful in improving efforts. He said that there might be a federal campaign, Western Votes can decide not to participate in, but that USSA could support on campus efforts and have resources to make it most effective. He said that it could help grow advocacy efforts. Galloway said that there is the service end of the AS and the investment and that there is also a student movement component. She said that one is not better than the other and that there should be a balance. She said that the service component can help in determining direct benefits, estimating the cost-benefit analysis, and determining if direct membership is worth the investment. She said there is also the social movement component that shows that Western supports USSA because USSA supports issues that are important to students and affect students. She said they are advocating for the same things Western is advocating for. Galloway also noted that investing in USSA is not just because they have something to offer us, but that Western has something to offer them. She said that Western has a unique opportunity to put both Washington State and Western Washington University on the map federally because Western is a strong school and has strong advocacy efforts. Galloway also talked about Western Votes. She said that she respects that Western Votes has been evolving as an organization, that there room for improvement, and that the student base needs to be expanded, but she asked how those issues will be solved. She said it can be recognized that Western Votes needs to grow, but then a plan needs to be determined. She said people seem to think that USSA will be placing more work on Western Votes and that Western Votes is not ready for that. She said that the framè of conversation should be switched to ask how can USSA help Western Votes structure, help institutionalize processes, and help build. She said that then Western Votes can get to the point where it is strong enough to do larger student movements like some of the larger schools are able to do. Crowther said that at the end of the day, we are paying the membership. He said that we should not be helping USSA, they should be helping us. He said that Western is already putting Washington on the map by having people on the board and attending Congress and Legcon. He said that supporting the movement should not be associated with a cost. He said that LAC is spending student dollars and that LAC needs to justify using those dollars. He said that service based is the ideal approach to take because it has a dollar amount. He said that he does not see the justification in direct membership. Barnard said that asking how to improve Western Votes is a good question, but that membership with WSA can help and that there is no need for direct membership of the USSA is not needed. She said that Western needs to use all of the resources available now and then this conversation can be reconsidered.

MOTION LAC-13-S -08 by Christenson

Recommend direct membership with the USSA and have LAC look at the issue again next year regardless.
Second: Pollet Vote: 1-6-0 Action:Failed.

VIII. NEXT MEETING DATE

May 17, 2013

IX. ADJOURN

X. OUTSIDE OF COMMITTEE WORK

The Meeting was adjourned at 3:37pm