

Western Washington University Associated Students
Student Senate
Tuesday, May 21, 2013 **VU 567**

Senators: Christian Correa (Chair) *Present:* Bill Campbell, Neil Christenson, Sarah Kohout, Marc Oommen, Matthew Hilliard, Glen Tokola, and Kehla Jefferson-Champion.
Absent: Evan Fowler, Joseph Levy, and Andrew Entrikin

Advisors: Lisa Rosenberg, Assistant Director of Student Activities;
Victor Celis (AS VP for Academic Affairs)

Secretary: Kaylee Galloway

Guests: Deng Duot and Annika Wolters

MOTIONS

S-13-S-11 Approve the minutes of Tuesday, May 7, 2013. *Passed.*

The meeting was called to order by Christian Correa, Chair at 6:06 pm

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION S-13-S-11 by Tokola
Approve the minutes of Tuesday, May 7, 2013.
Second: Kohout Vote: 6-0-0 Action: Passed

II. REVISIONS TO THE AGENDA

Hilliard moved to add ACC Calendar Committee as Discussion Item B. Seconded by Kohout. 6-0-0. Passed. Campbell moved to add discussion item C regarding the Senate resolution. *Christenson entered 6:09pm.* Campbell apologized on any confusion with the Western Front article and the public hearing. Motion seconded by Christenson. 6-0-0. Passed.

III. PUBLIC FORUM

IV. INFORMATION ITEMS

V. ACTION ITEMS

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. General Education Reframing

Celis said that he passed out documents last week on the GUR restructuring. He said there is discussion on reframing the GUR system. He said that every several years, Western goes under reaccreditation, which is to help better assess and understand the undergraduate program. He said the GUR would be adopted as competencies and there are 11 of them and that a class has to meet at least 2 of those competencies to count as a GUR. Celis said that most students do not understand the different competencies. He said the current issue is that the 6 categories do not correspond with the 11 competencies. He said that all too often students see GURs as a check box and so it is assumed that the core values have not been communicated. Celis said that students do not seem to understand the relationship between GURs and a liberal arts education. He said that there needs to be better communication on the values of GURs and liberal arts education. He said that a fundamental structure problem has been realized and that people are approaching it with an instrumental mentality. Celis said the Committee on Undergraduate Education (CUE) has brought in a faculty person from Stanford who discussed restructuring, which has inspired CUE to create a task force with different focuses. He said that

CUE has been in the process of creating a new process that should be approved at the next and final meeting. He said that this is a major process with a couple years as the timeline. He said that campus needs to buy into this process. He said that they want input from the students. Celis said that he would like senator feedback on this process of revising the GUR system. Christenson said that this is a great conversation to have and the students are interested in the topic. He said the problem is that it is an intellectual exercise for those who want to get involved. He said that a lot of students will still just view it as a check box and that it will be a challenge to get students to realize. Kohout said that she sees GURs as a checkbox, but thought this is a great idea. Campbell said that he is graduating this quarter and he is taking a GUR. He said that it is a checkbox and that he is just trying to get through it. He said that there were other courses that he would have preferred to take but that those courses were not included as a GUR. He said that every class that could possibly meet GUR standards should be a GUR. He said that Western has no 300 or 400 level courses as GUR. Celis agreed and that there are a couple categories that struggle more. He said that there has been conversation about increasing the number of 300 level courses but not necessarily 400 due to prerequisites. Campbell said that there is only one political science class that counts as an ACGM. He said that some people might not want to take that course. Celis said that there is a balance that needs to be found. Tokola said that having higher level courses would be great but that students need to consider prerequisites. He also noted that there are courses currently being discussed being made into a GUR and that there is a rising demand for classes due to budget cuts. He said that it is helpful to have an advisor to help students understand the importance of GURs. Celis said that it is up to the faculty member or the department as a whole whether those courses should be identified as a GUR. Christenson wondered how this would help with graduation because students have been struggling to finish in 4 years. Celis said that it has not been a part of the conversation. He said that the struggle of graduating on time is more related to course accessibility. Jefferson-Champion said that she was at first frustrated with GURs. She said that after taking those courses, she changed her mind and ended up changing majors a few times. She said that it was not clear how important GURs are in shaping the college experience. Christenson dittoed. Celis said the process of faculty choosing the courses that qualify as a GUR would not change. He said that all courses and curriculum need to start with the faculty. Hilliard said it is important to help students realize how to apply the knowledge they acquire. Tokola dittoed. Hilliard said that it is important to see how it can benefit their future as opposed to seeing it as a check box. Campbell said that there are many political science courses that do not meet the WP3 credit because professors do not submit the paper work. He said that there is a process to appeal that. He said that there should be a way to petition courses to be qualified as GUR. He said that GURs have value and to help develop the first year experience. He said that development of a first year seminar would be helpful. Celis said that he has been discussing with Carly Roberts about the potential of having a University 101 course and relaying those values. Tokola said that having GURs helps make students more employable. He said that the interdisciplinary nature of a degree is beneficial to students. Duot said that it is about how many GURs are applicable to the future. He said that it would be best to find a common ground. Campbell said that accessibility is an issue and that students are struggling to graduate on time. He said that some of the math majors are higher credit loads but that more students are graduating on time. He said that most of the math introduction classes are very accessible and that there are an abundance of options for the quantitative GUR requirement.

B. ACC Committee Calendar

Hilliard said that in the ACC, the ad hoc calendar committee is discussing ways to revamp Western's calendar. He said the goal is to optimize student learning, to make it more inclusive to different religious holidays, days of observance, and significant days, and to make it more

consistent, predictable, and supporting health and well-being of faculty and staff. He said the ACC is considering when each quarter should start. He said that the start of the next two fall quarters conflict with Yom Kippur. He said the committee is wondering if that should be a consideration for the future. He said that changing it now would be too short notice, but that it is being considered for 2016 and beyond. Celis said that it would be possible to change fall 2015 calendar. He said that the university should have four years of calendars up, but they do not. Christenson said that there is a slippery slope about if one religious holiday is being considered then all of them do. He said that this is not necessarily a bad thing. He said that faculty and staff need to be advised on religious holidays so that students can be accommodated. Celis said that for past conflicts, students and faculty were told they could choose to not start on that day. Christenson said that compared to other universities, Western starts late and that he would prefer it to start earlier in September. *Kohout left.* Campbell thanked Hilliard for this presentation. He said that he is surprised to see the bullet on not recognizing Veterans day. He said that it is really important for a lot of people. He said that it is a slippery slope and that the number of students impacted needs to be considered. He said that it would be a good idea to observe religious holidays that affect students. Campbell said that some universities have the entire week off for Thanksgiving due to a financial burden to travel home. He saw the merit of not having school the whole week. He said that most private universities have a reading day during dead week or finals to give students time to study and catch up. He said that it could also be Monday and have finals Tuesday through Friday. Campbell was also interested in starting the quarters on Monday. He said that there are reasons for the quarter to start on Tuesday or Wednesday. Celis said that with Thanksgiving will reflect what happens with Yom Kippur. He said that it would require that school is needed on Monday and Tuesday of Thanksgiving week. Hilliard said that Yom Kippur would be situational. Celis said that discussion about the finals week is a huge conversation and can happen more next year. Tokola wondered what other universities do about federal holidays. He said that there are certain days of observance that are different for different states or communities. He said Governor Jay Inslee just passed something. He suggested having a pilot program for different departments to see what works best. Duot said that this is a question of separation of church and state. He said that there will be some people who will want to observe certain days. He said he is in favor of this, but that the separation of church and state needs to be considered. He said that it might just mean standing in solidarity with people. Hilliard said that it wouldn't be decided soon, but wanted to know people's thoughts on quarter versus semester. Christenson said that quarters are easier, more flexibility with courses, and that he prefers variety. He said that a three quarter system is easier for most students coming out of high school and transfer students. Tokola said that this issue was talked about at WSA and that Eastern Washington University is considering it. He said that he prefers the quarter and a diversity of courses that can be taken. Campbell said that he is in support of semesters. He said that he has gone to five different schools and that two of them have been semesters and three have been quarters. He said that he learned more in a semester system and that there is some information that cannot be taught in the course of a quarter. He said that Western competes more with public universities because of size. He said that most private schools are based on semesters and that there is a value to having semesters. He said that there would be fewer classes and less choice, but those need to be considered. He said that most of the high schools in Whatcom county are semesters. Celis said that this would not be a serious conversation unless University of Washington was to implement. He said that this conversation is very far down the line. He said that this is a premature conversation. Christenson dittoed. Celis said that the legislature bases a lot of things off of the University of Washington.

C. Senate Resolution- Board meeting and next steps

Campbell said that the Senate passed a resolution last week. He said that the Board did not

discuss it at the last meeting. He said that there is concern over what the Board will do with the resolution. He said that it is important to pursue to Board listening to what the Senate passed. He said that there has been a lot of students who have been concerned about this issue. He said that last Saturday, he spoke with some of the individuals who attended the last Senate meeting and the last Board meeting. He said that many of them saw the Board not wanting to take any action on the issue and they were wondering what the next step was. Campbell said there is a responsibility to follow up on what the students are asking for. He said that time needs to be considered and he is suggesting that a subcommittee be created to see this issue through and so that something can still be accomplished. Christenson said that this would have to be a non-official committee and rather just a group of Senators. He said that in the Rules of Order, there states that a written motion submitted beforehand with a purpose, membership and chair. He said that making a motion on this issue would be out of order. Correa said that there is no meeting scheduled for next week. He said that Committee Recognition is next Tuesday and then after that, he will be gone. He said that Hilliard would need to chair the meeting. Rosenberg said the Committee Recognition is from 6-7:30pm. The Senators talked about having another meeting. Celis wondered what the Senators would hope to accomplish. He said that if no other meeting is scheduled, then this would be the final meeting. Christenson is in favor of another meeting and be able to wrap everything else. He said that a number of students should follow this issue through. He said that it would be better to keep it as an informal group. He said that there is no point in forming an official committee. Oommen said that the Board said the resolution was made out of order and wondered if the resolution would ever be seen. Celis said that he is still trying to figure out the process and doesn't have an answer for Oommen. Tokola said that if Hilliard chairs the meeting, then he should be at the Board meeting to give the report. Hilliard said that should be fine. Campbell said that he is for having the meeting. He said that things do come up. He said that rescheduling can be a challenge, but that students need to have answers. He said that he is fine having it as an informal group, but would have preferred to have it as a formal one. He said that it is important to have Senators meet and then show up to the Board meeting. He said that there should be no question if the resolution should be brought. He said that if the Senate passes something, then the advisor should take it to the Board. Oommen said that the resolution is important. He thought the prerogative of putting the item on the agenda was up to the AS President. He wondered what it would mean for future Senate meetings. He said that the Senate was talking about the process. He said that he did not read the letter before he signed and that he was disappointed at the language of the legal and ethical accusations. He said that the process was not followed and that should be the point that is focused on. He said that the Board should be given good faith and that they tried to follow the rules but did not succeed in doing so. He encouraged an open forum to happen. Tokola said that student values need to be expressed. He said that the Board has a responsibility. He said that it is not about morality. Oommen said the process was not followed and that is wrong. He said that the decision was wrong but that it can be assumed the board members had good faith. He said that transparency and a fair process are the focus. Campbell said that he sought feedback from everyone and made sure that he contacted everyone regarding the letter. He said that this is an ethical issue because the board was brought a resolution and they didn't see it which is irresponsible. He said that students want to see a solution and to have people learn from the mistakes and not repeat them. He said that there is the responsibility to follow that through. Oommen agreed with Campbell's sentiments but takes blame for having his name on the Senate letter. Christenson dittoed. Oommen said that he does not want to condemn people morally with the limited facts that are known. He said that more open and transparent policies should be considered especially for elected positions. He said that he hopes the board will see it as an agenda item.

VII. SENATOR REPORTS/CONCERNS

A. Kehla Jefferson-Champion

Jefferson-Champion reported that the diversity committee that she is on will be meeting on Wednesday.

B. Matthew Hilliard

Hilliard said ACC discussed online classes and how they are becoming more sophisticated to meet student needs.

C. Bill Campbell

Campbell had nothing to report.

D. Glen Tokola

Tokola reported that he was hired as the Senate Reform personnel. He said that he would like to meet with each of the senators for his internship since Correa is leaving.

E. Marc Oommen

Oommen had nothing to report.

F. Neil Christenson

Christenson had nothing to report.

VIII. BOARD REPORT/CONCERNS

Celis said that he has some ideas for the future of the Senate having served with the body for three years. He said he would like to have a meeting with Tokola and will probably put together a legacy document with opinions and ideas. He said the Board is looking at the Employment Policy. He said that a lot of his position is wrapping up and he is interning with Josie Ellison. He said the Board is reviewing the reserve policy and practices. He said that there might be some big changes coming up.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Thank You Letters

Correa said that this should be postponed until next meeting or it can also be accomplished over email. He said that this is his last Student Senate meeting and thanked everyone for being a great Senate. Christenson moved to thank Correa for his excellent service as chair. Everybody seconds. Passed 6-0-0.

The Meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Approved by Victor Celis, AS VP for Academic Affairs