

Western Washington University Associated Students
Legislative Affairs Council
Monday, November 4, 2013 **VU567**

Present: Kaylee Galloway (ASVP for Governmental Affairs), Matthew Bobbink (AS Legislative Liaison), Joseph Levy (AS Local Liaison), Heather Heffelmire (Western Votes Representative), Eileen Pollet, Oscar Aguirre, Nic Doherty, Danny Edgel, Blake Bishop, Daniel Tollefsen, Sydney Kurie, and Theo Bickel

Advisor: Kevin Majkut

Secretary: Amy Kleitsch

Guest: Samantha Goldblatt (Legal Information Center Coordinator)

MOTIONS

LAC-13-F-04 Approve the minutes of October 21, 2013. *Passed.*

LAC-13-F-05 Approve the funding request proposal for travel to the WSA Meeting. *Passed.*

Kaylee Galloway, Chair of Legislative Affairs Council, called the meeting to order at 4:06pm

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ADDITIONS AND CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Galloway realized that Veteran's day is next week and the committee would not have a meeting. She is requesting that the funding request for travel to Washington Student Association (WSA) General Assembly (GA) be moved from an Information Item to an Action Item. Joseph Levy moved to have the Funding Request Proposal be moved from an Information Item to an Action Item. Oscar Aguirre seconded. Passed 10-0-0.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION LAC-13-F-04 by Edgel
Approve the minutes of October 21, 2013.
Second: Levy Vote: 10-0-0 Action: Passed

IV. PUBLIC FORUM

V. REPORTS

A. VP for Governmental Affairs

Galloway spent last week working on the WSA proposals. She is presenting six proposals at the WSA GA on November 13, 2013. She said 11 Western Washington University students, two Central Washington University students, and one student from Washington State University Pullman contributed to the six proposals. Galloway suggested scheduling a LAC meeting some other time next week due to Monday being a holiday. She feels it is important to have a meeting next week because there is a deadline coming up for the legislative agenda.

B. Legislative Liaison

Bobbink is meeting this week with the Environmental and Sustainability Programs (ESP) to go to their President's Council. He is helping the ESP work on their legislative proposals. Bobbink has also been doing research on legislators.

C. Local Liaison

Levy met today with community member, Dave Hopkinson. He discussed rental safety with Dave and a lot of good ideas were presented in their meeting.

D. Western Votes !

Heffelmire said Western Votes! is doing a lot of activities for Get Out the Vote (GOTV). She said Western Votes! did a few of phone banks this weekend and there is one scheduled for tonight. She reminded everyone that the last day to vote is tomorrow by 8pm and hopes everyone turns in their ballot.

VI. Presentations

A. Draft Legislative Proposals

Galloway wanted to spend a majority of this meeting talking through their issue proposals.

Dedicated Revenue through a Carbon Tax

Edgel's proposal was to get new and dedicated revenue through a carbon tax. He said this proposal was going to be hard to get passed, but after British Columbia successfully passed a revenue neutral carbon tax there has been a bigger push for it. Edgel said students used to be able to pay for college for themselves, but now that is not as likely to happen. He proposed the best way to put money towards higher education would be a carbon tax. Edgel's proposal would not only be used to dedicate revenue to solve high education costs, but his proposal would also help cut down on pollution. He explained that the carbon tax would tax the people who contribute to pollution and the revenue would be given to the state. Edgel suggested partnering with the Environmental and Sustainability Programs, investors who are pro-environmental protection and legislators who are friendly to higher education. Pollet said the governor made a statement to not raise any taxes, so she doesn't know if he will be their best ally on this proposal. Galloway said they are needing to find other sources of revenue to fund higher education because it would help in efforts to decrease tuition. Pollet mentioned her and Nie Doherty are also writing a proposal on dedicated revenue pertaining to closing tax loopholes rather than creating new taxes. She wanted everyone to keep in mind there are going to be other dedicated revenue proposals being presented. Heffelmire asked how much funding the carbon tax would create. Edgel said it is estimated that a tax similar to British Columbia in Washington State would generate \$1.7 billion dollars. Pollet suggested looking at their opponents rather than the allies. She said since Edgel is suggesting a new tax on a controversial issue their opponent's may be stronger than their allies. Galloway asked if it would be possible to merge all of the dedicated revenue ideas together because she is brainstorming who they are able mobilize around this issue. Heffelmire asked if there is a way to ensure the revenue made would directly go to higher education. Pollet said it would get saved and placed in a separate account and would not be accessible for other projects.

Rental Safety in Bellingham

Bickel's proposal addressed rental safety laws in Bellingham. His proposal emphasized education, mobilization, and new policy enactments in Bellingham. He wanted people to realize that social activism is possible and has made different proposals for tactics, like an open mic and other events. He brainstormed two primary issues of rental rights. His first issue was students not understanding their rights when renting and his second issue was rental laws for landlords not fully being applied. Samantha Goldblatt said the Legal Information Center gives students advising on legal matters and organizes three programs a quarter for students to learn

about their rights. She sees an overwhelmingly amount of students in her office for rental issues including serious health and safety issues when renting. Doherty suggested renters submitting pictures of the quality of their houses because pictures speak louder than words. Bickel suggested making a Facebook page for students to talk about their experiences while renting. Levy said Dave Hopkinson suggested having a different student everyday send their story to the mayor or City Council. Pollet wondered how much they would be able to work with the Legal Information Center. Goldblatt said there is potential for outreach, but since her office is confidential if students are not willing to share their story then there isn't much she can do. Levy mentioned that the mayor said her number one issue to tackle is public safety. Galloway suggested it would be good to tie together rental licensing and public health and safety. Bickel said there is a strong landlord lobby group in Bellingham called Whatcom County Association of Realtors. He said they are big influence on City Council, but if students and other community members support this issue then politicians may switch their position on this topic. Pollet advocated the importance of saying this is not an education issue, but an issue of regulations in place not being consistently met. Bobbink said the candidates who are likely to win tomorrow are not friendly to this position, which may make this issue harder to win. Doherty wondered if there were state regulations on rental safety and if making changes that route would be easier. Majkut said it will be an uphill battle to get a new state agency established and they should focus their efforts locally. Aguirre suggested looking at this issue as more of a public concern rather than a student concern. Galloway said the AS Board passed a resolution two years ago, but did not think it had ever been acted on. Pollet said the AS Board spoke to City Council a few times about the resolution, but there hasn't been an organized Associated Student effort. Bickel said it is important to make this issue a campus wide campaign so they can talk to and mobilize students.

Pay It Forward

Heffelmire's proposal addresses the Pay It Forward Pilot Project Work Group. She said Pay It Forward defers a student's tuition until they graduate and are working. She said about 3% of the student's income over 20 years would go towards paying their tuition back to the state. Heffelmire wants to put together a research group like Oregon, in order to answer questions on how Pay It Forward works. She believes they can organize a lot of student and community power around this issue because this affects all students. Levy wondered who will cover the cost of tuition before students pay it back. Pollet wondered since Oregon is doing a study group why do they need to organize our own pilot project. She also asked where they get the money to start this project. Heffelmire said Oregon's Pay It Forward system will work differently than Washington's because Oregon has a different tax structure. She said funding this work group will only be an administrative cost. She said once Pay It Forward is implemented they will figure out how it would be funded, which is also what the research group is for. Heffelmire said after the student graduates and is working, it is 3% of the graduate's income no matter where or how much you work. Doherty wondered where the 3% of your pay check would come out of because Washington State doesn't have a state income tax. Bickel asked if any other countries have adopted a Pay It Forward system. Heffelmire said she hasn't researched any, but she would look into this.

DREAM Act

Aguirre presented a proposal for the DREAM Act. This proposal allows students who are undocumented access to state financial aid. He suggested lobbying with WSA, Western Votes, AS, and ESC to mobilize and educate people on this topic. Aguirre thinks this is a winnable issue because it passed in the House with strong bipartisan support. He said this issue was never brought to the Senate floor, but many have said that there might have been enough votes

to pass. He said the DREAM Act promotes diversity and sends a message that the government thinks education is a priority. Aguirre believes this will be passed within the next legislative session. Pollet wondered how many students would benefit from the DREAM Act. Aguirre estimated about 500 students would be affected. Bishop suggested finding people willing to share their motivational stories about this subject. Galloway suggested speaking with the Vice President for Diversity, the Ethnic Student Center, MEChA, and the Latino Student Union to get endorsements. She wanted everyone to keep in mind that some folks may not be comfortable sharing their story and others will be eager to share. Bobbink said if they find a story someone is willing to share it would help persuade legislators.

Waterfront Development

Bishop, Heffelmire, and Tollefsen worked on a proposal for the waterfront development and providing a living wage. Bishop said expanding Western Washington University is needed because our campus is geographically compact and small compared to the amount of students who attend. Heffelmire voiced the importance for Bruce Shepard to take a stance supporting this issue. She said with support from Shepard, this will put pressure on City Council to mandate a living wage. Heffelmire believes if they implement a living wage at the waterfront it could help raise the minimum wage in Bellingham. Pollet said the city of SeaTac is voting on raising their minimum wage. She thinks if another city can effectively raise their minimum wage then Bellingham could also do it. Edgel said an argument that may get brought up is the idea that the waterfront expansion and a living wage contradict each other.

Campus and Community Health and Safety

Kurie created a proposal for campus and community health and safety. She wants to focus on sexual assault prevention, police relationships, lighting in laurel park and south campus, safety buttons, and increasing student counseling services. She suggested starting sexual assault prevention classes in high schools and creating awareness of the free self-defense classes on campus. Bickel suggests addressing traffic dangers and expanding the late night shuttle.

Galloway wants everyone to have a second draft of their proposal by next week and have their final draft ready by November 18th.

VIII. Action Items

A. Funding Request Proposal for Travel to WSA Meeting (Doc. 1)

Galloway is looking to take 20 students to the Washington Student Association General Assembly November 16, 2013. She said this proposal is an estimate and the funds will not exceed the estimate presented. She said that this funding would be for a 12 passenger van and gas. She said that WWU has never had this large of a delegation attend G A, so her operational budget is not able to sustain the 2nd vehicle. She said that they will also be taking an AS vehicle that will be funded from her operational budget.

MOTION LAC- 13-F-05 by Levy

Approve the funding request proposal for travel to the WSA Meeting.

Second: Edgel

Vote: 10-0-0

Action: passed

B. Vice Chair Elections

Heather Heffelmire was elected as Vice Chair of LAC

IX. Other Business

Western Votes Phone Bank- 5-8pm in VU 552

X. Next Meeting Date

November 18, 2013

XI. Adjourn

The Meeting was adjourned at 5:59pm