



ASWWU State Legislative Agenda

Proposed Motion: Approve the 2013-2014 AS State Legislative Agenda.

Sponsor: Kaylee Galloway, ASVP for Governmental Affairs

Persons of Contact: Legislative Affairs Council

Attachments: ASWWU State Legislative Priority Agenda, letter from Board

Date: December 6, 2013

Background & Context

AS State Legislative Agenda will be separated into three sections:

1. Legislative Priorities

- Predominately used for Viking Lobby Day and needs to be finalized in content and language before the end of break
- Issues that Western Votes may want to run a campaign on
- A main focus of the AS Legislative Liaison
- Around 2-4 (ideally 3) priorities is my recommendation based on what I think is reasonable and feasible for the purposes

2. Legislative Interests

- Proposals that we deem important but are not quite our priorities
- This is an evolving section of the agenda that students can continue to add proposals too throughout legislative session and if student groups want to go down to Olympia and lobby (for example, environmental groups on environmental issues)

3. Endorsements

- This is predominantly for bills
- It is a way for LAC to stay actively engaged in the issues the Legislature is working on throughout session
- Will also help the AS Legislative Liaison when talking with legislators and testifying
- WS A has a similar structure where students are educated on a bill and then take a stance

The Legislative Affairs Council has been drafting proposals for the agenda. The proposals will serve multiple purposes including being a resource for the respective liaisons, building content for a campaign if students want to run one, and having information relevant to draft a fact sheet for students when they lobby or if they are interested in the topic. The proposal itself is very detailed and not meant to be perfect word for word. This means, that when we are passing a legislative issue, we are passing the idea and the concepts expressed in the proposals, not necessarily every word of every proposal. Since this is the case, I think it is appropriate to allow for the proposals to evolve, grow, and develop over time and as we learn more about the topics. Furthermore, the proposals consider the issues from a short, intermediate, and long term perspective, so that students can benefit from these proposals this year and in years to come. The goal is to build a strong foundation so that action taken towards these issues are well developed and strategic.

The AS Legislative Agendas will be multiple pages and will include the proposals. However, the section of the agenda that we give legislators, staff and other elected officials must be short and must reflect our priorities in a concise and effective manner. Last year, the AS State Legislative Agenda included a cover page with guiding principles, a letter from the AS President and AS VP for Governmental Affairs, and two pages of priorities including graphs and diagrams. As you are thinking about the content of the agendas, also consider the structure and what you think will be most effective.

The attached documents have been passed by the Legislative Affairs Council. The ASWWU State Legislative Priorities Agenda has been discussed at two board work sessions.

ASWWU Legislative Priorities

Dedicated Revenue

Low tuition, fully funded state financial aid, and fully funding state institutions of higher education are priorities for students. We support dedicating existing sources of revenue to higher education by closing tax loopholes or raising existing taxes. Separating higher education funding from the general fund will help protect higher education from severe cuts.

- Dedicated revenue will contribute to stabilizing tuition, allowing Washington State students and families to plan for their financial future. Just as business benefits from a stable tax system, students benefit from stable tuition costs.
- The State Need Grant has been chronically underfunded, affecting thousands of low and middle income students who need dependable state financial support.
- Example revenue sources include: closing tax exemption such as the extracted fuel exemption, revising the estate tax, and allocating revenue from the expiration of the B&O tax incentive for R&D firms.

DREAM Act

We believe that all students should have equal opportunity to attend higher education. There is inherent value in providing access to state financial aid for all students, regardless of their documentation status.

- Students and families residing in Washington State who are undocumented contribute their fair share to state and local taxes and should have access to the benefits funded from those taxes.
- The Washington State economy benefits from engaging the creative potential of an educated work force.
- Students benefit from greater diversity in higher education while preparing to participate in the multicultural society in which we live.

Carver Academic Facility Renovation Project

ASWWU and WWU Administration stand together to recognize that funding the renovation project for Carver Academic Facility is imperative for student safety and provides an opportunity to make WWU's campus more sustainable. Students value Carver as both an academic and an athletic complex that is an integral part of the student experience at WWU. We are asking for \$5 million to start the renovation project.

- Keeping this *project* on the requested timeline is essential. Action has been delayed for several years. Further inaction on this life and safety issue is unacceptable,
- Models show that in the event of seismic activity, significant portions of the Carver Complex are subject to catastrophic failure, which would result in fatalities.
- Existing health and safety concerns include: inadequate ventilation, broken heating pipes, and raw sewage seepage.
- Building is currently not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

- Carver is home to Physical Education, Health, and Recreation (PEHR), which is the largest department at Western. Every year, there are 268 academic classes taught in the Carver Academic Facility that enroll 7,677 students.
- The Carver Gym portion of the facility is the largest enclosed space in Whatcom County and is one of the most visited facilities on campus. It hosts WWU athletic events, graduation ceremonies, and many other WWU functions. In addition, Carver is an important facility to the Whatcom County community, hosting events such as local high school graduation ceremonies and youth athletic programs.

Dear Legislator (will be specialized),

It is with great pride that we present to you our 2014 Legislative Agenda on behalf of the Associated Students of Western Washington University.

This document has been crafted with great care to inclusively and accurately represent the opinions and wishes of all 14,950 Western Washington University students.

This year we have focused on building the future. Our three priorities reflect three different ways of doing this. First, with our Carver Academic complex, we need to physically build up facilities that provide a safe and modern environment in which innovative learning can take place. Second, with our request for dedicated revenue, we need to make financial investments in higher education if we want to see a sustainable model in which current and future generations will have the opportunity acquire the tools necessary to build the future of Washington. Third, with our DREAM Act advocacy, we see the importance of building up the people of Washington State. We need to move into the future together, as a unified populace. We cannot do this if all people do not have equitable access to the resources needed to build up their human capital.

(we'll need to put these in order)

Thank you for taking the time to review our hard work, We appreciate all that you do, and hope you will join us in building the future of Washington State. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely Yours,

The ASWU Board of Directors

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