

USSA LegCon 2014 WSA Delegation

Western's Delegation

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Meetings Scheduled:

Friday March 14th	Monday March 17th
12: 15 pm Rick Larsen- Caroline Williams 2113 Rayburn Office Building	10:00- Doc Hastings (1203 Longworth HOB) Whitney Riggs
1:30 Cathy McMorris Rodgers (203 Cannon HOB) Mike Lanza	11:00- Derek Kilmer (Longworth 4th Floor #1429)
2:30- Suzan DelBene (318 Cannon HOB) Casey's number: (202) 225-6311	3:00PM-Rep. Beutler (Jessie)

<http://www.usstudents.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/45th-LegCon-Agenda-Overview.pdf>

TB A—9:00 PM SSA Summit

9:15 PM—10:00PM Dinner

Friday, March 14

9:00 AM—10:00 AM Breakfast on your Own

10:00 AM—2:00 PM SS A Summit

12:00 PM—2:00 PM Board Meeting

2:00 PM—5:30 PM Registration

4:30 PM—5:15 PM Delegation Leader Meeting

6:00 PM—7:30 PM Dinner & Opening Remarks

7:40 PM—9:10 PM Regional Meeting Breakouts

Saturday, March 15

8:00 AM—9:00 AM Breakfast on Your Own

9:00 AM—10:00 AM USSA Overview

10:00 AM—11:30 AM Workshop Session I

11:50 AM—1:20 PM Lunch on your own

1:30 PM—3:30 PM Legislative Briefing

3:40 PM—5:30 PM National Women's Student Coalition

Women's Allies Meeting

3:40 PM—5:10 PM Workshop Session II

5:30 PM—7:00 PM Break/Alumni Reception

7:00 PM—9:00 PM USSA Student & Legislative Awards Dinner

10:00 PM—2:00 AM Party!

Sunday, March 16

8:00 AM—9:00 AM Breakfast on Your Own

9:00 AM—10:00 AM Open Spaces

Gender Non-Conforming Space

Conservative Collective

10:00 AM—11:30 AM Workshop Session III

11:30 AM—1:00 PM Lunch and Lunch Panel

1:00 PM—3:30 PM Lobby Clinic

3:40 PM—5:40 PM Regional Meetings

5:40 PM—7:00 PM Dinner on your own

7:10 PM—8:30 PM National Queer Student Coalition

Queer Ally Space

7:10 PM—8:40 PM Workshop Session IV

9:00 PM—10:30 PM Workshop Session V

9:10 PM—11:00 PM National People of Color Student Coalition

People of Color Ally Space

11:00 PM—1:00 AM Lobby Help and Action Prep

Monday, March 17

By 8:30 AM Check Out of Hotel and Drop Off Luggage

9:00 AM - 4:00 PM Lobby Visits/ Action

By 5:00 PM Drop Off Conference & Lobby Visit Evaluations

LegCon 2014 Notes

Jazzy's Notes

- Education at a Crossroads
 - o Privatization of Universities
 - o University Admins and Governing boards raise tuition year after year
 - o State governments de-prioritize higher education
 - o For profit universities making money giving students bad degrees
 - o Social Processes need to be fought with Students Uniting
 - o At a crossroads: Education is transformative not a transaction Admins as public servants not CEOs
 - o State Student Associations build power
 - o Higher Education Act and Student voters
 - o Student Loan Interest rates- don't profit from loans
 - o Pell Grants- Restore funding
 - o Work Study- Expand Work Study to Local Businesses
 - o College costs- govt should hold colleges accountable for receiving billions in aid
- Free Higher Ed
 - o Total cost of attendance is crippling not just tuition, why the graduation rate is low
 - o Indentured servitude to pay off loans
 - o Outsourcing loans to services that make more when you default
 - o Tax breaks only really help the rich and rather than giving tax breaks we need to put the money towards directly funding,
 - o Need to totally rethink the system: Band-aids on Band-aids are not a final major solution, don't focus on more money for grants and lower interest rates
 - o Need the government to force the funding of undergraduate education: more on faculty for a quality
 - o Make education a Public Good, not a job requirement

Workshop I: Union 101

- Vocab:
 - o Union: a collective of workers or people who collectively organize and fight for issues that
 - o Direct Action: an action that would directly impact the person who can make the change or the person above them
 - o Collective bargaining: a group of workers bargaining with the heir bosses to set up contract terms
- Workers vs our Critics

<p>o What we say about us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ deserve wages ■ workers ■ valuable ■ 99% ■ survival ■ organized ■ living wage minimum wage ■ part time deserve benefits 	<p>o What they say about us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ too much cost ■ burger flipper ■ not worth labor ■ employee- no agency ■ lazy ■ extortion ■ replaceable ■ disorganized ■ anti-opportunity ■ racist sexist ablist classist ■ freeloaders ■ communists
<p>o What we say about them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ privileged ■ lazy ■ exploitative ■ ignorant ■ anti-opp ■ racist, sexist, ablist, classist 	<p>o What they about themselves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ stimulate economy ■ job creators ■ bootstrappers ■ executive ■ important ■ providing opportunities ■ capitalists

- Why did the air traffic controller’s strike fail? a lack of allies, demonized
- Reclassification of workers to pay them less despite doing the same jobs
- Intersection movements of Change Walmart and \$15 that make it a hot issue but are maybe to community wide (beyond the specific workforce) in solidarity
- New labor: solidarity without union dues, works with migrant workers and students

Leg Briefing

- When the Government shutdown happened, the peoples most vulnerable were the ones directly affected: veterans, those on food stamps/SNAP/WIC, yet the people who’s job it was to stop this from happening (and didn’t do it) were still paid and unaffected by the cuts and shut down.
- Sequestration was doing both across the board cuts and targeted cuts in areas like unemployment and food stamps to doubly affect those in vulnerable spots.

- 100k students are disqualified from Pell GRants every year due to the budget.
- Higher Education Act is an Omnibus Bill
 - o Have the opportunity with reauthorization to make changes
 - Affordability: more need based aid and debt free community colleges, fix Pell, expand work study, lower student loan interest rates to reflect no governmental profit

Workshop II: Unions 202

- The intersectionality of the issues affecting students, workers, and the community make space for a shared narrative that fosters the importance of students and workers uniting
- Strategies and relationships are key in building solidarity with student workers
- The issues affecting students, workers and the community overlap in many areas, and the institutions that are the source of those issues, like media, administration, etc., have a power imbalance, hence why strategies and relationships are used to regain a balance of power for the students, workers, and the community in relation to those institutions.
 - o consistent communication, student rallies with a coalition beyond just the worker solidarity groups, one on one meetings (with the 80/20 rule), worker's appreciation luncheons
- Our Agenda: fair contract, transparency, safety, living wage, education as a right, representation since students and workers run the university.

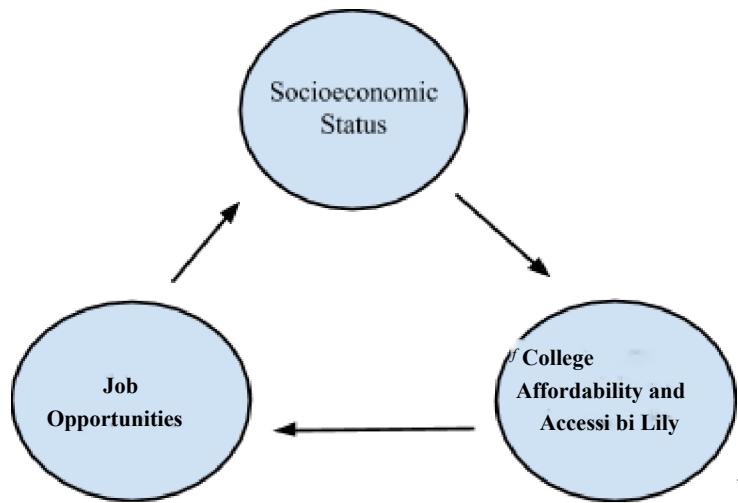
Workshop III: Student Unionism- Organizing Workers on your Campus

- Envisioning Student Worker Unionism
 - o one union for all staff
 - o departmental unions
 - o no small work force
 - o no racial and SES imbalance
- Relational organizing
 - o get in the door
 - o use strategic listening
 - o provide a vision
 - o inoculation as preparation for reactions
 - o assess and move to action
- What unions could help with
 - o providing stability
 - o agreement to working terms and conditions
 - o bringing legitimacy to bargaining
 - o providing better pay
 - o health benefits

Kaylee's Notes

Legislative Briefing:

- Continuing resolution: when congress cannot make a decision on the budget, they use the last fiscal year's budget. This often results in level funding year after year.
- Government shutdown because no budget or continuing resolution was decided and not agreement made
- Budget Control Act of 2014: bi-partisan effort led by Patty Murray and Paul Ryan
 - o There were cuts to Pell, TRIO, and block grants
- Still recovering from sequestration because there was a big loss
 - o \$2.5 billion was cut from the Department of Education
- A few years ago, US SA voted to institutionalize advocacy on the budget
- The two campaigns USSA always run include:
 - o 1) federal budget and appropriations process
 - o 2) every two years voter registration and GOTV
 - over 135,000 students registered last year
- The goal with the budget is to move higher education funding from discretionary to mandatory
- This year, the USSA Action Agenda includes:
 - o budget and appropriations
 - federal pell grant
 - federal TRIO programs
 - other education programs
 - o Student debt
 - o Student fee autonomy and shared governance
- 9 million students rely on pell grants to attend and complete college
- Altered the family income eligible for a zero estimated family contribution from \$32k to \$23k
- 18 to 12 semester reduction eligible for grant and no summer term
- Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act is being looked at this year
- Federal TRIO program funding was cut by \$25 million
- USSA in collaboration with SLAP is running a Debt Free Future campaign
- Poverty Cycle



- College must be affordable
- Must explore and eliminate private companies that profit off of students
- Department of Education must inform students about income based repayment options on paying back their loans
- Higher Education Act Reauthorization
 - HEA reconsidered every 5 years
 - last passed in 2008
 - EIS SA Asks
 - eliminate box 23
 - It asks, “have you been convicted for the possession or sale of illegal drugs for an offense that occurred while you were receiving federal student aid (such as grants, loans or work-study)?”
 - USSA sees that as a problem because we believe that anyone who wishes to pursue a higher education should be able to access it. Denying any individual the opportunity to receive an education to improve their social standing only guarantees a path with no opportunity for success—something no one deserves. The federal government should not be responsible for denying anyone a better future. Box 23 goes against the very reason the FAFSA was created, which is to provide federal student aid to students who need it the most.
 - Reform federal student aid
 - more need based aid and debt free community colleges
 - fix pell
 - expand federal work study
 - lower student loan interest rates and no government profit
 - DACA students qualify for federal student aid
 - End LGBTQ discrimination on FAFSA
 - Asking for the FAFSA to recognize same sex civil unions

Lobby Training

- Make the firm ask, but do not expect commitment
- have clear roles and planning talking points
- ask questions
- if you don't have the answer, don't make things up and have USSA follow-up
- be prepared—know the facts and research before the meeting
- Demystify you legislative decision maker
- strategically choose your roles
- show your electoral power
- be professional
- debrief your lobby visit
- Roles
 - o facilitator
 - o presenter
 - o testimonials
 - o note taker
- have talking points ready
- review their past voting record
- leave behind document(s)/folder
- 7 steps to a successful lobby visit
 - o identify yourself and the group you represent
 - USSA = 1.5 million students
 - o Be prepared to control the meeting
 - o State your position clearly
 - o make a clear ask
 - o provide information
 - physical and testimony
 - o Follow-up: thank them and foster relationship
 - o Debrief

Running a Referendum

- Review process on campus—look at codes and policies, see where status quo can be altered
- Student fees and SS As
 - o opt out have more clout with student association, power, and legislative victories
 - more effective
- Develop a timeline and calendar
 - o events, organizations to get support, internal calendar
- legitimacy of language
- identify people of power/interest—decision makers

- Develop a backwards plan
 - o Aware of timeline
 - o set goals
 - o volunteer recruitment and management
 - o campaign times
- resident halls? dorm storm GOTV? Ballot stations?
- focus on clubs/groups and events
 - o focus on the fact that there will be more funding available to students
- incorporate outreach into the plan
- building coalitions with groups and students
- prepare for the worst

Heather's Notes

Taking the Money out of Politics

The problem -

- It's not new
- Watergate scandal had a lot to do with \$\$\$ in politics
- Ambassadors in Obama Admin. Were campaign donors

o Not just his admin.

- Corruption, nepotism

Issue about what our politicians are doing

- Fundraising instead of governing
- 10-20 Mil. To run Senatorial campaign

o Must raise \$5,000/day in order to run a winning campaign

- 4 hrs call time/day to fundraise, 1 to plan fundraising
- o Only 1-2 on constituent visits
- 83% of the time the candidate who raises the most \$\$\$ wins
- o 93% in House

How did we get here?

- Supreme Court decisions
- o Buckley v. Valeo (1976)

§ Gave the ability for indiv. to spend limitlessly as long as it's not coordinated

§ \$\$\$ in politics is a form of free speech, can't be regulated

o Citizens United v. FEC

§ Can't make a law to determine it's unconstitutional since it's supreme law of the land

§ 5 - 4 decision

§ Prohibits any state or federal regulation on campaign donations

§ Prior to Citizens United \$\$\$ in politics was a big deal, but it's increase exorbitantly since then

2012 elections most expensive ever

- Over 10 bill. On all elections (state and federal)
- o Most than the entire GDPs of some countries
- Even city council races
- o Richmond CA city council race Exxon spent 1.2 mill.

§ Buy out city council to keep refinery open in city

o We can connect this to Whatcom's county council races and the coal train

§ I spoke about this to the group

- Money generally flowing to conservative causes

· 32 indiv. donors in 2012 elections spent just as much as every small donor to Obama and Romney combined

o 32 indiv. Gave as much as 3.7 mill. Americans

It's not the \$\$\$ itself that's the problem

- Putting \$\$\$ into politics is inherently democratic
- The problem is the \$\$\$ is coming from a very limited base
- o In this system, economic inequality = political inequality
- o The size of your wallet should determine your political power
- o Groups w/ money can drown out the voices of everyone else

§ Impedes on free-speech because not every has the opp. To be heard

How is SS in politics affecting current public policy issues

- The most profitable companies can manipulate public policy because they have the \$\$\$ to compete

College Affordability

· \$\$\$ = power

· Students can't make large-scale political campaigns

· Sallie Mae

o Made 2.5 bill off student loans

o Adjust policy to take credit from the gov (a), 2.3 %

§ But charge 23-40 X that on private loans

Immigration Reform?

- Border surveillance
- o Who profits off this??

Prison Indus. Complex

- For-profit prison industry

Text-book Industry

- Rising prices
- We have to buy them

Solutions

- *Inevitably has to change*
- What can we do?*
- *Constitutional Amendment*
- o *Because Supreme Court has ruled on it this is really our ONLY solution*
- o *Campaign finance*
- § *Movements calling for overturning of Citizens United and Buckley v. Valeo*
- o *Corporate constitutional rights amendment*
- *Without an amendment, what we can I do?*
- o *Issue limits on campaign time*
- o *Public access provided for campaigns*
- § *No attack ads*
- *Small donor empowerment programs*
- o *Donor pool is totally separate from constituents*
- § *Think: Indiv. donating to McKenna that don't even live in WA state*

Small donor tax credit

- *Gov. By the People Act*
- o *Candidates get some matching funds if they agree to only raise money from small donors*
- o *\$ 100 dollar from constituent would get you \$600 dollars in public funds*
- § *Close one corporate tax loophole to fund this*

Disclosure

- *A lot of corporations don't have to publicly disclose where their \$\$\$ is coming from*

Organizing

- *Amendment in CA*
- *500 cities/towns have called for constitutional amendment*
- o *Take a movement*
- o *Mass change in ideology*
- *Some bills that do this passed in CN*
- *Federal Tax credit*
- o *1971-86*
- o *Tripled the amount of small donors funding in elections*
- *NYC — city council races, mayoral elections, Wall-Street donations had less of an influence*
- o *Super progressive Won (DeBlasio)*
- o *Trying to expand this to state level*

Mavra's Notes

TRIO 101

Kim Jones 7 years with TRIO

- Began in 1964 when Linden Johnson declared war on poverty
- His personal experience motivated it
- Upward Bound - one of many programs to come out of this year
- Poverty was 19% at the time, now it's 15%
 - o Still A LOT of work to be done
- Says only 4% poverty has gone down 50% and claimed that things like TRIO are a waste - invalid argument compared to funding
- Need academic, social, economical support
- TRIO PROGRAMS:
 - Talent search 6th grade
 - Upward Bound/Upward Bound Math and Science
 - Undergrad EOP or SSS
 - Educational opportunity Center
 - Veterans Upward Bound
 - Through Upward Bound - identifying people of color -Black and Latino
 - After 1980's less of race based program, and more of an economics
 - How to identify talented minorities, and help them exceed?
 - In 1965 - higher education act created the talent program
 - 1968 - Student Support Services

*Called them TRIO because it started with UB, Talent Search, and Student Support Services

The COE (heads of TRIO)

- 1972 = educational opportunity centers, veterans UB
- 1986 = McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement
- 1998 UB Math and Science

All together, there's 7, but still call them TRIO

- Most people think of High school, but not higher ed when it comes to TRIO
- How do we make sure students don't just get to college, but complete it?

- Department of Edu administered TRIO grants through its regional offices
- Regional - and later state - groups formed comprised of TRIO program personnel
- In Dec. 1977, 21 TRIO leaders got together and formed it

TRIO TODAY:

- Serve 758,352 students
- Total funding is at \$838.3 million
- 37% are white
- 35 African-American
- 19 Hispanic
- 4 Native American

TRIO represents more than 1,000 institutions and in every state and most fed territories

- o TRIO Alumns: College presidents, congress members, and many others
- COE do have corporate partners besides federal funding - on local level, too
 - **but, it does rely on Federal funding, which is so scarce now
- Talent Search is based on the needs of the school of supplemental services, so it doesn't target individuals, but school
- Can't work with undocumented students, but TRIO does take stances of issues
- Very strict on reporting grades, whether or not they've filled out FAFSA
- Last year, the US spent 2% of fed budget on education
- Reduced Pell Grant and got rid of Summer Pell because they thought it was glorifying welfare (SHAME), so they made it harder to get
- Biggest enemies of TRIO? - Bipartisan issue.
- What TRIO is trying to achieve besides just getting support, is a champion of it. One willing to put their neck on the line for these programs
- Funding is the biggest issue right now for the programs

Why do we want this money?

- To restore student losses
- TRIO lost 89,000 because of funding cuts even before sequestration hit last year!
- Expand campus-based retention, transfer, and graduation rates for low income,

first gen students

If granted this \$52,000 mill request, will allow us to serve 43,000 more TRIO students next year!

Why should TRIO get more money?

- TRIO students perform better than similarly situated peers who do not receive such services
- o More likely to immediately go into higher ed and graduate
- TRIO enhances value of Pell Grant
- TRIO provides a strong return on the federal investment (one sibling who is in it and goes to school inspires family members, siblings, cousins, etc.)
- With TRIO, we are breaking the cycles of poverty!
- First generation trio, last generation poverty
- “If TRIO is a priority, I know that you all will find a way to make this funding increase possible.”
- (will be receiving powerpoint from presenter, Kim Jones)

Sarah’s Notes:

Friday Keynote: Failure Better by Rinku Sen

Tips for being a great leader:

Three important things for a leader: Humility, curiosity, listening

Looking through different lenses is also key.

Kindness and gratitude for everyone on the team,

Re appreciation for other team members

You need a well rounded team

Fostering peoples strengths

Manage your own energy (and beware of other energy levels)

Being able to fail well and knowing you’ve failed

Failure is where innovation comes from

Failure builds our tolerance to risk and then builds our coverage

Saturday Morning: USSA Teach In done by

Chirag and Maxwell

Really awesome to see others doing the Teach In and was really inspired how to do one next quarter!

Robert Samuels- President of UC-ATF

A major cause of student debt isn't tuition it's all the other costs (day to day expenses)

After awhile we're to start knowing someone who is defaulting on their student loans and then we'll be seeing more reform but that's too late.

529 plan can be where millions hoard money and then pay the 10% to buy things that are not education

EAT (Electoral Action Training): Analyzing and Building Power. (I want an EAT Training for WSA)

EAT is in a coalition with Wellstone.

USSA's goal for voter registration is every campus register an average of 3,000 voters.

Power

Individual the more power you believe that you have be more confident

Collective Power: Power beyond yourself

Institutional Power: USSA and slapping a brand on things

Power is like matter, it cannot be created or destroyed

What are tactics of voter registration:

In CA has made it easier and online voter registration.

UC Irvine does early more in dorm voter registration and they have the largest voter drive in the nation. Target big groups on campus and you have to institutional them.

Get really creative. #voterregpuppy

UC-Berkeley dorm storm voter registration and maybe try off campus housing

How to get office campus students: Maybe have someone at the Lincoln Creek and by the REC center to get off campus students

Clubs: see what sports teams can register the most people to vote

Panel about Financial Aid

Joel

2011 and 2012 1.5 million was cut from financial aid

Leap was eliminate and different other programs were either cut or completely eliminated.

Pell Grant is complex and there are a lot of variables

College students have been contributing to the deficit while receiving very little of the pie.

Preschool is more prioritized more than college.

FISCAL YEAR 2015

President's plan increased discretionary spending and not mandatory

2015 is looking rough HEA is going to be reauthorized but it will not be completed but it's an important time to start.

Sarah (education optimist) policy advocate

Raising for the pell grant \$100 is an insult it should be more

Policy Rules:

1. Do no harm- this happens by only putting on a band aid
2. Prioritize where you can have real impact on changing lives- effects of debt on pose college are not well documented (it's hard to measure things like didn't get married, didn't have kid, chose a different jobs)

3. Ignore the naysayers
4. Radical ideas leads to radical change

Pell grants are a voucher

Private school should not receive federal funding

Pay It Forward: Wouldn't work because rich people will not opt into it and the rates will be higher.

She has a blog and it's awesome.

Post USSA LegCon Reflection:

What LegCon activities did you participate in?

What did you learn at USSA LegCon and how will you apply it to your work on campus or with WSA?

How do you plan to use your experience to benefit WWU students? What ideas do you have moving forward?

What was your favorite and least favorite experience from LegCon?

Other thoughts, comments, questions, concerns, etc.?

Heather's Reflection

What LegCon activities did you participate in?

- Lobbying Meetings with Representative Larsen, Rogers, and DelBene's LA,
- Pacific NW Regional Meeting
- A New Deal for Education presentation
- ***Taking the Money out of Politics Workshop***
 - o Presented by organizers with USPIRG who talked directly about how Money in Politics has had an adverse effect on democracy and higher education. I shared about my experience volunteering for the Whatcom County Council elections and that despite big money being used to influence the election, organized people were able to take on these groups.
- National Women's Coalition
- USSA Awards Dinner

- Stop the Attack on the Youth Vote workshop
 - o Campus organizers with the NAACP were able to speak about how voter suppression laws have been enacted in several states. A presentation was given which I would like to give to Western Votes! and The WSA about getting your campus prepared for voter registration.
- Facilitated a lobby clinic with USSA's Legislative Direction, Kalwis Lo
 - o This was a great training and I would love to present this to various on-campus groups before lobby trip, before next year's VLD, and have already talked to JulieAnne about presenting it to the WSA as well
- Pacific NW Second Regional Meeting
- National Student of Color Coalition
 - o Meet and network with student organizers from across the country who are working to increase the representation of students of color on their campus communities.
- Multi-racial caucus

What did you learn at USSA LegCon and how will you apply it to your work on campus or with WSA?

I learned so much over my three days at USSA LegCon. The days were packed full of trainings, presentation, meeting, and coalition building, but I believe I walked away a stronger student organizer and excited to bring my newly gained knowledge back to improve student life on WWU's campus. Much of my time spent at LegCon was dedicated to learning about the current state of higher education. Attacks on precious programs like TRIO, cuts to the Pell Grant and financial aid, and discriminatory processes when filling out the FAFSA all are making higher education increasingly inaccessible to a growing number of students.

Through the two workshops I attended, I learned how large-scale political problems like money in politics and voter suppression adversely affect students and threaten to make higher education even more inaccessible. Big money has been used to influence politicians by companies like Sallie Mae which make huge profits off of predatory student lending practices. Voter suppression laws which have been passed with increasing ease and frequency since Section IV of the VRA was struck down last June make it increasingly difficult for students to vote.

I also got to sit in and present a training during LegCon. I am most excited about using the knowledge I gained through the trainings and bringing those back to campus. The Lobby Clinic training I gave should be used as our standard training before any Lobby Day event. I think we can tailor it to fit the agendas of the groups lobbying, but it's a great base. I would love to give this training before VLD next year and before WSA lobby day. Additionally, I would be willing to give this training to any group which wants to go down to Olympia to lobby.

I was able to sit in on a training given by campus organizers with the NAACP. I think the training would be perfect to give to Western Votes! or the WSA before our fall voter registration kicks into gear. I think this training would be great to give to next year's vote staff as well. It was full of fun ways to get students excited to vote and engaged before election day.

During LegCon, I was also able to increase and improve upon my lobbying and networking skills. Through my three meetings with US Representatives I gained critical lobbying experience. Throughout LegCon I met hundreds of students and exchanged contact information with them all. Networking and building relationships is an important part during these conferences because some of the best campus leaders from across the country are all in the same place. I really wanted to take advantage of this and meet as many students as I could.

How do you plan to use your experience to benefit WWU students? What ideas do you have moving forward?

As I stated in the previous question I have a lot of exciting ideas for training. I think the Lobby Clinic training I gave while at LegCon should be used as the standard lobbying training of WWU and the WSA. Additionally, the training I received from organizers with the NAACP would be great to give to students before voter registration begins this fall and I think it would be a great way to train vote staff.

I am also really excited to start working more with students for OSA. I had a great conversation with students from UO and other Oregon students about the possibility of joint regional actions. I think we have a lot to learn from these schools and I'm excited to further these relationships. As the State Representative for Western Votes! I think I would serve as a great liaison between our WSA chapter and OSA chapters. I think that forming relationships and working with other SSA's could become something added to the job description for the State Representative, clubs liaison, or something requiring an entirely new Western Votes! board position. Either way, I think it's important that we really start to build coalitions with students in Oregon. They are facing issues very similar to us and OSA is a really strong SSA that we could learn a lot from.

What was your favorite and least favorite experience from LegCon?

It is really hard to name my favorite LegCon experience because the entire trip was INCREDIBLE. In only a few short days I was able to meet hundreds of student leaders, grow my own organizing and leadership qualities, and gain valuable lobbying experience. Being given the opportunity to lobby my elected representatives on Capitol Hill is something I will never forget. I really experienced democracy at that moment and became even more invested in lobbying for students and student rights at both the state and federal levels.

I also really enjoyed being able to present at a Lobby Clinic with USSA's Legislative Director, Kalwis Lo. First, Kalwis is someone who I really respect. He lobbies and works hard for students every day through his position and is so humble and knowledgeable. It was great getting training from him and being able to work with him. I really love giving presentations and having the opportunity to share why I'm passionate about lobbying with other students was a great experience.

Being able to sit in the National Student of Color Coalition was also an experience I am extremely grateful for and one only given by the USSA. As a student of color at a majority White institution I am constantly surrounded by and reminded of the fact that I am a "minority." Because of USSA's commitment to diversity and inclusivity, I was able to experience the joy of sitting in a room with other students of color and explain why we're proud of being people of color and how we're working to improve our campus communities. This is an experience that is hard to quantify or put into words, but was something I had been looking forward to during my entire time at LegCon. USSA ensures that my voice, regardless of its "minority" status is heard and acknowledges that is just as important as the voice of the White student next to me. Something that, unfortunately, I don't always get to experience at Western.

Finally, I will never forget getting to see Jessie Spinney, Kaylee Galloway, and the WSA win awards from USSA. It was so great to feel like all the hardwork everyone put in was validated, especially Kaylee. Over the past year I have seen Kaylee work tirelessly in her position, sacrificing so much of herself to make higher education more accessible and affordable for Washington's students. Seeing her win Organizer of the Year was such a beautiful experience and I can think of NO ONE more deserving as this prestigious award. I have never cried literal tears of joys until that moment, but even thinking about the experience makes me feel emotional again ***GOKAYLEE! YOU ARE AMAZING AND SOMEONE I LOOK UP TO SO MUCH. WHAT WILL WE DO WITHOUT YOU??***

Other thoughts, comments, questions, concerns, etc.?

I am really excited to use this experience to share the values of USSA. I am so excited for Western to increase our involvement with this valuable organization. I am looking forward to pursuing direct membership with USSA, something I think will have really positive outcomes for students at Western and across our state. USSA offers something that better experienced than told about, but I am happy to share why I love this organization with anyone who will listen. I think greater involvement with USSA will not only increase our impact on the federal level, but the state and local level as well. USSA has the capability to give us skills, training, and experiences that we can use to become effective at all levels of government. I think we would be missing out on an amazing opportunity if we don't pursue direct membership.

Kaylee's Reflection

What LegCon activities did you participate in?

- Pacific Northwest Regional Meetings as Vice Chair
- Planning a Winning Campaign: Visualizing Your Victory workshop was cancelled, so I attended the Statewide Student Power: Then and Now workshop.
 - o The facilitator, Angus Johnston, had a great story as he has been involved with the student movement for many years. I do not feel that any technical knowledge was acquired here, but he was very inspiring and provided a lot of great context and history. I think he could be a great speaker to have on campus to get people excited about their contributions.
- National Womyn's Student Coalition
- Running Referendum on Your Campus

What did you learn at USSA LegCon and how will you apply it to your work on campus or with WSA?

I learned a lot about the current status of higher education issues at the federal level and what USSA is advocating. I also learned a good amount about the federal budget process and what is needed to better support students. I think it would be beneficial to students on campus to have this information relayed to them. Even though I am graduating, I hope to leave a comprehensive legacy binder including a well-documented account of this trip and trip planning processes. I think it is imperative to develop the infrastructure so that future delegations can be set up for success.

How do you plan to use your experience to benefit WWU students? What ideas do you have moving forward?

1) I plan to dedicate an entire LAC meeting to talk about LegCon. I am hoping to combine a recount from each member of the delegation as well as some sample workshops given during the conference. I will also provide everyone with a copy of the trip notes and reflection as well as some handouts that were provided. I will extend the invite to Western Votes, the Board, and other potentially interested students.

2) I want to organize a Student Town Hall with Representative(s) (maybe Rick Larsen and Susan Delbene) and USSA Representative(s) (maybe Chirag and Sophie) to educate students on federal issues as related to higher education. Preliminary planning has already started. Potential dates are April 23rd or 24th, midday.

What was your favorite and least favorite experience from LegCon?

My ultimate favorite experience was the awards dinner where WSA won SS A of the year, Jessie Spinney (WSA VP of Federal Affairs) won USSA Board member of the year, and I won Organizer of the Year. It was really fabulous. And the WWU girls just cried tears of joy, I can't even really think about it without my heart melting with love <3

I also really enjoyed the three lobby meetings we had on Friday for more than one reason. First, it was really amazing to have the opportunity to sit in the same room as Representatives. Also, I was really proud and impressed with the WWU delegation and the experiences, insight, and perspective each person offered at the table. I also liked having the meetings before the formal lobby training because the flow of conversation seemed so natural. Plus, I think we were able to shine as students and share our stories. I would recommend not being afraid to schedule meetings on Friday during next year's LegCon because all worked out really well.

My least favorite experience was the fact that all activities on Monday were cancelled due to a light dusting of snow on the ground. As a result, we had to cancel 3-4 lobby meetings and miss out on the thoroughly planned action. If Monday had occurred, our lobby meetings would have conflicted with the action. That would have made me sad because not everyone would have been able to experience both. In the future, it would be nice to know when the action timeframe is so that we could schedule meetings around it.

Other thoughts, comments, questions, concerns, etc.?

As anticipated, this experience was similar to LegCon 2013, so I was prepared and a good portion was review for me. I think that is ok, because my main goal for the trip was to facilitate the experience for the other delegation members. I look forward to hearing feedback from the group about how I did as delegation leader and if they felt adequately prepared.

I do still have interest in pursuing direct membership, as I think this organization has seen vast improvement between Congress and now. I am so pleased that WWU has been able to have increased engagement and involvement in the organization at conferences and bringing events to campus. As a result, I do believe we are already seeing some improvement with our federal advocacy and representation efforts.

Sarah's Reflection:

What LegCon activities did you participate in?

At LegCon I participated in:

EAT: Analyzing and Building Power Workshop

Lead a Legislative Briefing Meeting

Womyns National Coalition Meeting

Running a Ref on your campus

Lobbying Brief led by Heather Heffelmire

What did you learn at USSA LegCon and how will you apply it to your work on campus or with WSA?

I learned a lot about the federal agenda and the federal governments involved in higher education. Sometimes we focus so much on the state's power over our lives as students and we completely forget the role that the federal government plays in it. Giving the legislative briefing was difficult because I was not familiar with the material but after reading it seeing how the federal government is in charge of funding Pell and TRIO Programs.

Something else I really enjoyed learning about other schools and other state student associations. Talking to students from around the country with a variety of different of different kinds of student government, personal stories, and student associations. It was extremely interesting to compare these to Western and WSA.

I will bring the legislative briefing back to Western Votes and LAC. This knowledge helps me better understand the student debt crisis and will help my advocacy efforts in Western Votes and WSA.

How do you plan to use your experience to benefit WWU students? What ideas do you have moving forward?

I plan on using ideas I learned about Voter Registration to help out Western's Voter Registration drive next fall. My favorite idea was the Voter Registration Puppy. Some schools had a puppy at their voter reg table to attract people and I think that would be beneficial. Also some schools did off campus voter registration which I think we could easily do and it would be extremely beneficial such as having people at Lincoln Creek doing voter reg and by the Ree Center. Western does an awesome job of registering new students but it would be awesome to expand to older and transfer students.

I also want to give a legislative briefing at a Western Votes meeting! We do a lot of state organizing and voter education at a local and state level but it is critical for students to understand how the federal government affects them as students.

Something I want to do as WSA and Western Votes is work more with PacNW, our

regional group. There is quite a bit of room for collaboration between the groups and I'd love to test it out.

I'm also looking forward to having a Federal Day of Action for Western Votes at some point throughout Spring Quarter.

What was your favorite and least favorite experience from LegCon?

Favorite part of LegCon:

The lobbying we did on Friday. Meeting with congressmembers and discussing student issues with them was an amazing experience I will never forget. They were attentive and listened to us and we were even able to make it casual and have a good conversation with them. Getting to experience this with the amazing group of people that went was also special. We were able to feed off each other and worked really well as a group.

Since I can't pick just one my other favorite moment was when Kaylee won Organizer of the Year. She deserved that award more than words can explain and I'm glad USSA did it for us by giving her the best organizer in a room full of organizers.

Least Favorite part of LegCon:

When it snowed and our meetings got cancelled. After all the training and workshops I went to during the conference it made me feel extremely prepared to talk to the legislatures and their staff. But because of the snow our meeting got cancelled.

Other thoughts, comments, questions, concerns, etc.?

This was a once in a lifetime trip. I'm so happy that I was fortunate enough to go and be able to share what I learned about the federal agenda to Western students. The ability to take to real federal congressmembers about student issues was incredible. Kaylee and Jessie did such amazing jobs as delegation leaders.

Jazzy's Reflection

What LegCon Activities did you participate in?

- Lobbying Meetings with Representative Larsen, Rogers, and DelBene's LA,
- Pacific NW Regional Meetings
- Demanding Free Higher Education presentation
- Union 101 : Collective Bargaining, Direct Action, and the Future of Work
- Legislative Briefing
- Union 202: Leveraging Student Power for Solidarity with Campus Workers

- SLAP Caucus
- Student Unionism: Organizing Workers on Your Campus
- Lobby Clinic
- A New Vision for Financial Aid
- National People of Color Student Coalition

What did you learn at USSA LegCon and how will you apply it to your work on campus or with WSA?

When I joined SLAP, I had no experience or honest interest in the unionizing side of it. I was drawn in by the Debt Free Future Campaign. While at LegCon, I learned so much about the fight for worker's rights and why it's important to stand in solidarity with student and campus workers. I was also able to network and see what kind of work other SLAP chapters across the nation were doing, which was incredibly helpful as I am new to SLAP and our chapter is new. I will be able to bring these relationships and ideas for future campaigns and inter-chapter solidarity.

Some key campuses I met with and was inspired by are University of Oregon, University of Massachusetts Amherst, and Rowan University. We looked at the issues surrounding Rowan University as a Case Study in Unions 202 and how to go about making changes. UMass was great to meet in the SLAP caucus and the Student Unionism workshop because their chapter has a lot of experience and campaigns under their belt, like creating an RA union and having inhouse dining rather than Aramark or Sodexo . By connecting with a regional school, University of Oregon, we can work in solidarity with each other, collaborate in campaigns and have the the strength of another, more experienced campus to get ideas and strategies from.

How do you plan to use your experience to benefit WWU students? What ideas do you have moving forward?

The experience I gained by participating in this opportunity will benefit other WWU students in that I will be able to bring these back to our SLAP chapter, which in turn, will be able to help student workers and the campus as a whole in our work. Moving forward, some of the campaigns that need to be worked on include the removal of Higher One from our campus, and distributing funds in a manner that is not predatory of students, having the campus and administration stand in solidarity with the student workers to demand Aramark employees to unionize (without threatening letters), and demanding a commitment to tuition and fees freezes past one year so students have a stable price expectation and to put pressure on the state to reinvest in higher education.

Another perspective I gained was seeing SLAP in the context of USSA and representation and engagement. I know SLAP is new to our campus, but WWU could really benefit from not only direct membership of USSA, but integrating SLAP into the REP, alongside

Western Votes. It would provide better opportunities for deliberate and meaningful collaboration on shared objectives.

What was your favorite and least favorite experience from LegCon?

My least favorite part of the trip was Monday obviously, not only because we couldn't lobby, but also because I was going to be speaking during the action that was snowed out as well. All the work that we had put in and all that we had learned about the issues, and Mother Nature cancelled out our demonstration. I was immensely excited for this opportunity to reach out to our Senators and confront the Department of Education in a more meaningful way than a social media campaign.

That said, my favorite part was being able to talk our representatives on Friday, thanks to our delegation scheduling additional meetings prior to the commencement of LegCon. Though we didn't have as much training and briefing as we were later provided, we came with experience and great personal testimony to apply to all issues, so our meetings were most definitely a success.

Aside from the meetings, my favorite part of the conference was being able to meet like-minded people from all over the nation who were able to foster my growth and learning as an advocate, as an organizer, and as a person. USSA provides a unique community of great people doing great things.

Other thoughts, comments, questions, concerns, etc.?

I am so grateful to have had this unbelievable opportunity to represent WWU and SLAP and to learn from such amazing people and gain perspective in line with my passions and pursuits. Earlier this year, I took a class on "Social Policy in Australia". I ended up disliking it because I was convinced that I had zero interest in the high bureaucratic level and that my interests lied on the community level. Somehow, I still found myself taking part in lobbying efforts and they changed my paradigm and I'm so glad it did. I was opened up to new potentials and ways to help the community.

One thing that could have been done better was scheduling of the different caucuses so they were outside of the workshop windows, but otherwise it was very well put together.