

**Western Washington University Associated Students  
Legislative Affairs Council  
Monday, April 21, 2014** **VU 567**

**Present:** Kaylee Galloway (ASVP for Governmental Affairs), Heather Heffelmire (Western Votes! Representative), Matthew Bobbink (Legislative Liaison), Oscar Aguirre, Nie Doherty, Danny Edgel, Blake Bishop, Theo Bickel, Maia Hanson, Patrick Eckroth, Jazzy Smith, and Sarah Kohout

**Absent:** Joseph Levy (Local Liaison)  
**Advisor:** Kevin Majkut  
**Secretary:** Amy Kleitsch  
**Guest:** Mayra Guizar and Carly Roberts

**MOTIONS**

**LAC-13-S-04** Approve the Minutes from March 3, 2014. *Passed.*  
**LAC-13-S-05** Approve the Minutes from April 7, 2014. *Passed.*

**Kaylee Galloway, Chair of Legislative Affairs Council, called the meeting to order at 4:02pm**

**I. Call to Order**

**II. Additions and Changes to the Agenda**

**III. Approval of the Minutes**

*MO TIONLA C-14-S -04 by Edgel*  
Approve the minutes from March 3, 2014  
Second: Aguirre                      Vote: 10-0-1                      Action: Passed

*MO TION LA C-14-S -05 by Doherty*  
Approve the minutes from April 7, 2014  
Second: Eckroth                      Vote: 10-0-1                      Action: Passed

**IV. Public Forum**

**V. Reports**

- A.** VP for Governmental Affairs  
Due to the anticipated length of discussion, reports will be skipped at this meeting.
- B.** Legislative Liaison
- C.** Local Liaison
- D.** Western Votes!

## **VI. Information Items**

## **VII. Action Items**

## **VIII. Discussion Items**

### **A. AS Federal Lobby Trip Update**

Galloway, Matthew Bobbink, and Carly Roberts went to Washington DC April 6<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> and participated in the Associated Students Federal Lobby Trip. Galloway said the focus of this trip was to ensure student representation at a federal level. She said they went to six congressional meetings and 3 agency meetings. Carly Roberts said the importance of the congressional meetings were to have students from Western lobby directly in front of representatives on the national level. She mentioned that not many other schools do this, and many representatives were surprised to see them taking an active part in the meetings. She said every meeting they had was student led, but they did have President Shepard and Vice President Swan present at all of the meetings. Roberts gave kudos to Galloway for planning this trip for all three attendees within the budget that was originally only allocated for the AS President and the AS VP for Governmental Affairs. She said they were able to plan meetings with both of Washington State's Senators and four representatives. She mentioned that the importance of the agency meetings was to keep Western Washington University in the minds of these agencies and to develop connections for grant money for Western's programs like Compass to Campus and the Institute for Energy Studies. She said they were able to meet with the Department of Energy, Department of Education, and Department of Commerce. Galloway added that they also advocated for the Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act that was recently sponsored by Senator Patty Murray. Bobbink thought everyone they talked to was receptive of this topic and Patty Murray was very impressed with them during their meeting. Roberts mentioned that President Shepard said during the meetings that the best way to show the legislators Western Washington University was to have them meet with students. Heffelmire wondered how this was received by their representatives. Roberts thought they were receptive to students speaking to them and she believes it was refreshing for them to hear directly from students. Galloway thought it was interesting to learn what Western Washington University does on a federal level on an ongoing basis. She said Western has federal contracted lobbyists that they were able to meet with and these lobbyists helped organize the documents and prepped them before every meeting. Roberts also wanted to highlight that they were also able to meet with the USSA Vice President during this trip. Galloway wanted to take minute to discuss the Department of Energy meeting she had at the federal lobby trip. She was the one who spoke at this meeting because of her involvement with the Energy Policy Minor. She went into the meeting to put Western Washington University's Institute for Energy Studies on their radar. She also asked about various partnership opportunities and they gave her a lot of organizations the university would be able to connect with. She asked if there were any funding or grant opportunities available. She said they were receptive to this idea even though there is limited funding available. She brought up the Sustainable Business major as a collaboration between Huxley and the College of Business and Economics. She said the Nova Solar Technology was also brought up as a collaborative project that has won awards. She said it was cool opportunity to show cutting edge projects coming out of Western that highlight the collaboration between business and the environment. Bishop explained that Nova Solar Technologies is in the startup phase. He said they are featured in the Western Front and in Klipsun. He and a chemistry graduate student partnered up to compete at the Environment Innovation Challenge at the University of Washington. He said they came in second place out of 23 teams as well as won the Clean Energy Prize. He

mentioned that the product is a solar window, which functions like a solar panel but has the visibility of a window.

**B. USSA LegCon Update (Docs. 1 -2)**

Galloway explained that six Western Washington University students went to Washington DC from March 14<sup>th</sup> to March 17<sup>th</sup>. She encourages everyone to read these documents after the meeting if they haven't, in preparation for future conversations. Mayra mentioned that her reflection is not currently in this document, but will be added shortly. She said the workshops and safe spaces provided by USSA are crucial when making sure that students across the country realize that they all have a powerful and unified voice. She said that as a student of color, the safe spaces provided by USSA have given her an opportunity to connect with other students who are fighting the same fights she is. She is fortunate for the connections she has made and hopes to continue to foster these relationships to pass on resources she has gotten from this organization to students on campus. She said her favorite part of LegCon was their lobby efforts. She mentioned that the awards ceremony Washington State won three awards with Kaylee Galloway being one of the recipients. She thinks Western Washington University would benefit a lot from being direct members of USSA. She said they would be able to have more access to resources and from what they have done this year, she thinks they would be able to utilize it to the upmost capacity. Guizar said they each lobbied on specific areas, and she spoke on behalf of a higher education preparation program called Trio. She talked with legislators about not cutting funding for these programs, which cater to first generation low income students. Guizar said through the workshops she attended, she was able to connect with students to create a rapid response to how diversity has recently been taken at Western. She created an event to take a peaceful action, and doesn't think she would have the skills or confidence to do this without USSA. She said this event is tomorrow is at 5pm in Miller Hall 139. Galloway mentioned that this conference included a combination of regional and identity spaces, workshops, speakers, and different networking events. She said a new addition to the conference was the SLAP Track, which Jazzy Smith attended. Heffelmire attended the Taking the Money Out of Politics workshop and went to some of the identity spaces. She was able to go to some of the identity spaces and meet other students that have come from similar backgrounds and have shared similar experiences. She said her favorite part of LegCon was having the opportunity to lobby at the national level. She thinks they were well received and that all the meetings they had were really effective. Heffelmire facilitated a lobby training with Kalwis Lo, who lobbies for USSA at the federal level. She thinks this training could be implemented as a standard lobby training that they use for lobby trips. She was also able to sit in on a voter registration training. She thinks this was a good training to get people pumped up about voter registration and thinks it would be a good training to give to the Western Votes! and Voter Registration staff. She said the training she facilitated with Kalwis Lo made lobbying easier. She said it highlighted sharing stories and backing up stories with their electoral power. Galloway said the biggest topic they focused on during this trip was college affordability and accessibility. She said each member of delegation took on a role within the meetings. Galloway facilitated and transitioned the topics of conversations. Heffelmire spoke on behalf of for profit universities and the GI Bill. Kohout spoke about aspects around voter registration. Smith spoke about student loans and student debt. Ellison spoke on behalf of the federal work-study program. Guizar spoke on behalf of the Trio and Gear Up programs. Galloway said this was a unique opportunity to come to the table and speak to the topics they are passionate about. She said the topics they were advocating for were higher education related and under the branch of college affordability and accessibility. She said they had the opportunity to weave in some of their priorities like for profit accountability in order represent Western Washington University. She said three or four lobby visits and other activities on

Monday had been canceled due to snow. Hanson wondered if trainings were videotaped so she would be able to bring them to the students. Heffelmire said depending on your membership with USSA, they bring staff to those campuses and present trainings. Galloway said they have extensive written documents that script the trainings, and those are some resources they have been available to them. Smith went to LegCon representing SLAP. She thought this was a great experience because Western Washington University's SLAP chapter is new. She learned more about other schools are doing as well as what SLAP is doing at the federal level. She said this conference helped inspire her of what SLAP could do as a club and what they could do to help Western's campus. She said participating in the SLAP track at LegCon helped her learn more about importance of unionizing and student solidarity on campus. She was able to bring back ideas of working with the Students for Farmworker Justice as well as other organizations. She thought lobbying at a federal level was an amazing experience. She said it was great to be able to incorporate her special story to make it more personal rather than reading a script. She was supposed to speak on student debt at the action that was planned but ended up being canceled because of snow. Kohout enjoyed seeing Chirag Bhakta and Maxwell Love facilitate a teach-in because she and Heffelmire have also done a teach-in before on campus. She will be able to bring this experience back to campus by using this as an example for when wanting to facilitate future teach-ins. She attended an electoral action training where they discussed tactics for voter registration, how to get more people to register to vote, and see the strategies other schools and states tend to do. She said they also talked about collective, institutional, and individual power. Kohout played around with the idea of having a voter registration puppy to draw in students to register to vote. She said they have trouble registering people to vote who live off campus and is thinking about having someone stationed at the Lincoln Creek Park and Ride or the REC Center to register people to vote. She said another idea that was brought up was having voter registration club competitions to make it fun and to get different groups of students registering voters. Kohout did a legislative briefing with Chirag Bhakta. She said it was informative because she didn't know a lot about higher education at the federal level until this training. She enjoyed the speakers who came and spoke about prioritizing higher education and how Band-Aids are put over big issues. She was also able to listen to a speaker having a different perspective on Pay It Forward that she hadn't heard on a state level. The speaker said this idea wasn't revolutionary because it was essentially a loan where the payments have been pushed back and how this program wouldn't make college more accessible. Bickel wondered what the upcoming issues USSA is going to address in the future. Galloway did not receive insight of USSA's strategic plans for the future. She said at a fundamental level they are advocating for education as a right and should be free to all students. She said this is their vision and there would always be something to work towards regarding this. She said they dedicate themselves to the affordability and accessibility to higher education and until they start seeing adequate amounts of federal financial aid they are going to keep fighting for it. She said they have experienced a lot of growth and looking at different ways to expand the organization. She mentioned they have recently received feedback about the homogeneity of their ideologies and in the future she could see improvements being made in these areas. Kohout mentioned that Reauthorization of Higher Education Act is coming up, and this is something they will be focusing on for the next five years. Heffelmire said the issues USSA chooses are current and up to date. She said they have their issue choosing process at Congress in the summer, and what they choose is always student driven and about what is affecting students at the moment. Doherty mentioned that when talking to Chirag Bhakta earlier in the year he asked if there was a budget for USSA that the committee could look at. Galloway said in her trip in April they requested this as well, but she will follow up with Maxwell Love about acquiring this document. Doherty wondered what USSA's last accomplishment was and what are they known for. Galloway said last year USSA ran a

national campaign to not double student loan rates. She said the reality is that the federal level is a lot harder of a sphere than a state level. She thinks at minimum having the student voice there is important and fears what would happen in the absence of the student voice. Kohout said USSA's biggest accomplishments are listed in the Beginning of the Year USSA Packet. Galloway mentioned that this information is also posted on the website. Edgel asked if USSA talked about the ways they would fix the recent criticism they have received. Galloway believes Western representatives have been vocal about giving that feedback to USSA staff members. She has seen them currently enhancing their recruitment efforts and recruiting from states that tend to be more moderate. She thinks some of the struggles they have is the fact the most of the members of USSA tend to be from more liberal campuses. She said they try to be inclusive of all political affiliations and ideologies, but often times no one shows up to these spaces. Edgel mentioned that a presentation that was given at Western Votes from USSA, and there were a lot of deliberately partisan aspects of this presentation. Heffelmire thinks they need to take an active role to moderate USSA. Aguirre also wonders how many individual campuses have direct membership with USSA. Galloway is documenting all the questions the committee has, and will get back to them with the answers at the next meeting. Majkut said there are not a lot of organizations out there that represent students. He thinks if the committee believes there is value to Western students participating and providing input at a federal level, this is the organization you would tend to go with because other student associations have faded away in recent years. Doherty said Western agrees with a large part of what USSA is doing, but wonders how comfortable they are with cutting a check to an organization that is not necessarily as targeted as they would like them to be. 3 dittos. He thinks they need to discuss why they want to be a part of USSA and what they would get out of this organization. Majkut said if they are not in the game, they would be limiting their ability to make an impact. He sees this as thinking less about the political aspects and more about the issues that are affecting students. Galloway mentioned that the only body that would have authority to agree to direct membership with USSA would be the AS Board of Directors. She said this committee would secure the funding through the account in which the committee oversees and endorse this it to the Board of Directors. Doherty thinks it is important to question things they would be spending a significant amount of public money on. Bickel believes if they tie themselves too closely to USSA in the future there is a danger that Western's intentions will slide and their interests would only maintain USSA's power because institutions gain too much of the dynamic power that all students have. Doherty said it is easy to forget who you are representing and it difficult to maintain your own goals at the national level with an organization who has some very strong goals of their own. Galloway said at Viking Lobby Day they lobby on behalf of the agenda that is set by LAC, and at the WS A Lobby Day they lobby on behalf of the agenda that is set at the WS A General Assembly. She said they justify this because they see a lot of intersections between WWU and WS A because they are both advocating for affordability and accessibility for higher education. She mentioned that when they lobby on behalf of their agendas they can tie in issues representative of Western. Bobbink said the reason they are so successful with their lobbying efforts is because they pride themselves being on being nonpartisan. He has a hard time seeing USSA change because the conglomerate of people that are the voting members in USSA hold similar ideologies. He said if they are going to think about being involved with USSA they need to remember is that in Washington they are successful because they work at being nonpartisan, and if USSA wants to be successful they need to work at being nonpartisan as well. 1 ditto. Kohout thinks they are working on being more inclusive to other ideologies and that after time could create more change. Bobbink said a large amount of people would need to join USSA in order to change the direction in which the organization votes. He said there aren't even enough SSA's in the country to change the way the body votes. Heffelmire said USSA has been around for decades,

and they haven't been around for so long because they are alienating or aren't representative of groups of students. She thinks USSA has been around for so long is because they are representing students and they have been doing a good job of it. Galloway appreciates everyone questions and perspective. She said this conversation will continue throughout the year. She mentioned at the May 3<sup>rd</sup> WS A general assembly, there is a possibility they will withdraw membership from USSA as a SSA. She said this is going to be conversation that they need to have regarding what they are going to do a campus if they no longer have WS A membership with USSA. She said they need to look at how Western has benefitted from USSA and where they would go next.

**IX. Other Items**

**X. Next Meeting Date**

- **April 28, 2014**

**X. Adjourn**

*The Meeting was adjourned at 5:53pm*