

**Western Washington University Associated Students**  
**Legislative Affairs Council**  
**Monday, May 5, 2014** **VU567**

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

**Absent:** Maia Hanson

**Advisor:** Kevin Majkut

**Secretary:** Amy Kleitsch

## **MOTIONS**

**LAC-14-S-06** Approve Vote Project Funding Request as Amended. *Passed.*

*Kaylee Galloway, Chair of Legislative Affairs Council, called the meeting to order at 4:05pm*

### **I. Call to Order**

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

Galloway entertained a motion to add an information item called USSA Direct Membership Resolution to the agenda. She wants this documents to be given at least two Information Item weeks before it is seen as an Action Item. She said with this document being seen on today's Agenda, they might not have to meet on the week of May 26<sup>th</sup>. Galloway said this documents won't be guaranteeing funding for USSA Direct Membership at this point, but rather forming the language for the resolution. Motion moved by Heffelmire. Seconded by Kohout. 10-0-0.

### **III. Approval of the Minutes**

### **IV. Public Forum**

### **V. Reports**

#### **A. VP for Governmental Affairs**

Galloway found out on Friday that the Legislative Action Fee Restructure Referendum passed with overwhelming support. She said as an information item today, they will be talk a bit about the future of the LAF and what the committee's remaining responsibilities are going to be. She went to Central Washington University this weekend for the WS A General Assembly and Board of Directors meeting. She said the Legislative Agenda for the upcoming session was passed at this meeting. The priorities for the 2015 session are New and Dedicated Revenue, Voter Accessibility, College Affordability, Setting A Minimum Standard for Voter Accessibility, and Graduate and Professional Education. The secondary priorities for the agenda are Academic Advising, Child Care, Gender Neutral Bathrooms, having Electronic Benefit Transfers on Campus, Funding for the Recruitment of Faculty and Students, Funding for Graduate TA and RA Positions, and Ensuring Research Funding in Case of Federal Cuts. She said the WSA Bylaws were updated and there was the Executive Board Elections. She is proud to announce that Carly Roberts was elected WSA President, Morgan Burke was elected WSA VP of Finance, and Lily Jaquith was re-elected the WSA VP of Communications. She said that at this meeting, WSA did choose to withdraw membership from USSA. She also wanted to give the committee an update on transportation. She had a meeting today with the Alternative Transportation Fee Committee, which is chaired by the VP for Student Life. She

explained that the Whatcom Transit Authority is working with the Skagit bus system to harmonize their bus pass system. She said that Western students are facing the possibility of paying \$25 more a quarter if they utilize the 80x. Galloway said this would only affect the users of the 80x. She said a final decision hasn't been made, but wants it to be on everyone's radars. She mentioned that they are going to be meeting next week regarding this topic, and those who are interested should get in touch with her or Robby Eckroth.

#### **B. Legislative Liaison**

The event, Ask a Congressman, is going to be next Wednesday. He said Rick Larsen is going to be speaking at this event along with answering questions that students have. He hopes to have good attendance at this event. He added that a Facebook event page was recently made and the Political Science Association is going to be providing pizza. He encourages everyone to attend. This event is from 1:30 to 2:30pm in VU 565 A and B.

#### **C. Local Liaison**

Levy said the Bellinghome event is on May 19<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at City Council. He said the Bellinghome week of action is going to be May 12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup>. He is going to the Sehome Board Meeting tomorrow night. He and Samantha Goldblatt are planning a Sehome Block Party on June 1st. He met with Jack Weiss and community members. They discussed the rental inspection ordinance. He mentioned that Jack Weiss is planning on getting an employee hired to do rental inspections all year round. Bickel added that almost everyone on City Council is on board with the idea of a rental registration system, but they are unsure of how it would be enforced. He went to the City Planning Meeting today and found it disheartening because they were talking more about zoning policy rather than the health and safety of tenants. He said they were also concerned about what the cost to landlords is going to be for the whole program. He thinks the policies they have come forth with should be worded in a way to protect both landlords and tenants.

#### **D. Western Votes!**

Heffelmire said Western Votes is wrapping up their 1 trillion campaign. She said that the Washington Student Association decided to pull out of the United States Students Association, but they will have a much more expansive conversation on this topic later.

### **VI. Information Items**

#### **A. Legislative Action Fund**

Galloway said this is going to be a brief introduction on this topic because she can see this topic being talked about in future meetings. She said the LAL restructure did pass with 75% of the student voters being in favor. Her next steps are to establish an opt-out process with the Student Business Office and speak with the administration. She also needs to make a presentation to present to the Board of Trustees at their June 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. She said this meeting will seek their approval and support of the LAL opt-out restructure. She would like the committee to collaborate and create a Legislative Action Fund policy and budget recommendations, so they can set up the next LAC for success. She said Nie Doherty is working on drafting the policy. She said if anyone has any ideas for this or would like to help him draft this policy to get in contact with him. She would like some committee members to take on the responsibility to draft up a new budget proposal recommendation. She said they would need to look critically at what their projected revenue will look like with the new restructure, what their responsibilities are in terms of membership dues, and different ways in which they allocated funds. Danny Edgel and Sarah Kohout are both interested in drafting up this proposal. She would like the committee to bring their first draft of these documents to the

next meeting for committee input. She will be willing to help them if they have any questions. Galloway mentioned that Sarah Kohout will be the VP for Governmental Affairs next year, and will be next year's committee chair. Galloway encourages those who are not graduating next year to reapply for this committee. Kohout added that committee appointments for next fall are now open until May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

## **B. USSA Direct Membership Resolution**

Galloway is looking for feedback on the wording of the resolution. Bickel doesn't like the direction this is going. He thinks they should shift the focus and work towards getting WSA back in USSA. He doesn't like the fact they are talking about direct membership and thinks it's more important to represent all students in Washington if they are talking about USSA membership. Heffelmire agrees that all Washington students should be represented at a federal level, but it is not an option at the moment. She said for the foreseeable future they may not get USSA membership back in WSA. She thinks as of now they need to think about how they are going to represent Western students, so this is the next best option. Aguirre said it seems like WSU doesn't feel like USSA represents their students and what they want, so they don't want to allocate their funds towards this. He said they can't really wait for them to change their minds and it would be a waste of efforts to try and convince WSU's Student Senate to rejoin USSA. Edgel said if this really is about representing Western students, they should do this as a referendum this year. Bickel wonders what would happen if WSA and USSA take different stances on the same issues because this would put Western in an uncomfortable situation. Galloway said that since WSA is strictly state issues and USSA is strictly federal issues, she doesn't ever foresee them overlapping. She thinks that USSA aligns with many of the student view on Western's campus. She mentioned the benefits that the campus would receive from direct membership to USSA would be bringing workshops, trainings, and staff to campus along with USSA staff working with Western on campaigns. She said they will receive materials for their Days of Action along with leadership guidance for Western Votes. She doesn't think being direct members with USSA would be disrespectful to any other campus in Washington state. She said since they were put in an ultimatum they kind of need to have the mindset of every person for themselves. Bickel doesn't want to get caught into a false binary that they either need to get involved as an individual campus or they have to leave USSA alone. He said there is always going to be the other option that WSA leadership changes. Heffelmire fears they would have no representation at a federal level when trying to run a referendum on this topic, which she considers a bigger disservice to students. 2 dittos. Doherty thinks it's important to remember that as far as civic engagement goes, Western generally goes it alone in the state. He doesn't think they should limit their lobbying efforts because other schools can't get their act together. 3 dittos. He thinks that having direct membership with USSA appears like the only way they would have involvement with USSA, but he doesn't think this should be their only federal representation because it is not sufficient. Edgel said WSU mentioned that withdrawing from USSA is one way to urge USSA to become more nonpartisan. He said they mentioned this isn't a permanent removal and they would possibly reconsider rejoining in the future. Bickel asked if Western would have both WSA and USSA direct membership if they rejoin. Galloway said they would have both until they decided to whether or not they want to drop direct membership. She thinks this is a conversation to have in the future because there is no way to know what will happen at this point. Eckroth encourages the committee to limit conversation on this because they have been discussing this for a while now. He thinks that if the committee has problems with the resolution existing, then to vote no when they decide whether or not to pass the resolution. Galloway said the fee restructure will lead to an increase in their revenue, so if USSA isn't the best investment than what other investments would be worth it. Heffelmire thinks on a state level when they saw that tuition kept rising and the

Dream Act wasn't getting passed, they never said they wanted to pull out of WSA because they weren't working hard enough. She thinks it is important to think about where they would be if USSA wasn't there and what would be the implications of not having a voice at the federal level. Edgel said they will have representation at the federal level with the federal lobby trip along with the university lobbyists that are in Washington DC. He said USSA will still be there and doesn't think not being involved for one year would make a big difference. He doesn't they would yield any negative utility not being involved with USSA for one year while running the referendum. He thinks it would be a bigger disservice to assume the opinions and desires of students. Doherty added that a referendum could be ran at any time during the year. Heffelmire mentioned that the lobbyists they have in Washington DC are the administration's lobbyists and they don't always align with students on the issues. 3 dittos. Bickel thinks they need to look into getting a referendum about this topic as soon as they can this quarter. 3 dittos. Doherty said if they were to run a referendum they need to look over the timeline to make sure that students have adequate time to know that something is going on, but thinks this is something that could definitely be done. Galloway said from a representative democracy standpoint, the Board of Directors was elected by the student body to represent student interests and student needs. She said the language on the referendum specifically cited increased federal representation, and if the student body didn't want increased federal representation then they would've voted against this. Bickel agrees that AS elected representatives try extremely hard to represent student interests, but he thinks there are some issues that direct democracy does better at representing. He thinks it is essential to have an open, democratic referendum. 2 dittos. Galloway will inquire about running a referendum this quarter. Doherty said one of concerns about approving the funding for this is that it would be a large fiscal outlay. He said the AS makes expenditures that are equivalent to this to bring speakers to campus that speak to only 100 students. He thinks direct democracy is important when it comes to affecting the way students live their lives or their educational experience. He doesn't think that the AS making an \$8,000 expenditure to increase student representation has any possible negative when it comes to affecting students' lives. 3 dittos. Edgel didn't think it was clear when voting for the LAF restructure that they would spend money for representation at the federal level in this capacity. He thinks that the fee restructure makes the LAF a little less transparent and this paired with an obscure agreement on federal representation is a bit of a slippery slope to fulfilling personal wishes in the name of student interest. He thinks that a direct and transparent referendum is a cleaner way to go about this and sets a precedent. Levy thinks doing a referendum this quarter isn't a good idea because the vote wont necessary represent students. He said 1,110 students voted this quarter in the AS elections, and thinks that if they run a referendum now they will have a lot less people vote. He doesn't think they will get direct democracy if they run a referendum this quarter. Galloway added that a special referendum won't get the turn out that a regular referendum gets. Aguirre said the student body elected these individuals and this seems like one of these issues where they should leave it up to the expertise of these people. Eckroth has some comments about the document. He likes all the points the document is making, but wishes there would be a way to make it more concise. He also wonders if the last Where As should be a Be It Resolved. Doherty suggests changing the fourth Where As to make it more concise. Heffelmire doesn't think this should be rushed and thinks they should fully develop this conversation. She said if they run this referendum this quarter, they would be lucky if they got an 8<sup>th</sup> of the voter turnout they received in the special elections. She thinks an idea they could pursue is to go into direct membership and then run a referendum if they would want to continue with direct membership. Galloway said that what the LAC is essentially doing is recommending direct membership with a fiscal note, and the Board of Directors will make a final decision about this. Doherty mentioned that there was a referendum ran when they joined WSA and was approved with strong support. He mentioned

that the amount direct membership would cost is around the amount they spent to send 6 people to congress. Galloway respects and understands the arguments to have referendum, but doesn't think an extra step in this process is necessary. She believes that with the way she would word it, there would be few students in opposition. Bickel thinks it's a stretch to believe all students would want USSA direct membership and thinks a decision like this should be made as democratic as they can.

## **VII. Action Items**

### **A. Vote Project Funding Request (Doc. 1)**

Galloway added 5 hours to this proposal to bring the total to 35 hours per the committee's request. She said the added 5 hours would be used as an internship. She recalculated the expenses, which brings the not to exceed amount up to \$350.

*MO TION LA C-14-S -06 By: Doherty*

Move to Approve the AS Legislative Action Fund Request for the Vote Project for a Total of 35 Hours with an Expected Cost of \$335.98, but not to Exceed \$350.

Second: Kohout                      Vote: 10-0-0                      Action: Passed

## **VIII. Discussion Items**

### **A. USSA Follow-up Round 2**

Galloway got in touched with the USSA Vice President, Maxwell Love and got some answers to the committee's questions. She said the income section in their budget reflects their anticipated income for Congress and LegCon. She said they look lower than the actual from the prior year because they are expecting greater campus subsidies where Congress is going to be held, which is a University of California, Irvine. She said in terms of personnel salaries, they have a C4 tax code that is a part of the non-profit section that focuses on their lobby efforts while the USSA foundation is a C3. She said the C4 covers some of the personnel expenses, while the foundation covers the rest. She said there is funding for two interns in the summer that come from the foundation as well. She said a lot of the zeroes in the budget document mean this cost is covered by the foundation. She said when she spoke with Maxwell about their fiscal values, he said there are a lot of lower numbers because they are attempting to plan things more efficiently. Levy has a friend who sits on a committee at the University of Oregon that determine whether or not they will be members of USSA. Levy reported that she said "[USSA's] work is an invaluable leadership asset. I give them a lot of credit for helping maintain and increase diversity. Beyond the work they do with hands on leadership training, they are the best lobbying organization at the federal level that students have direct access too". Galloway mentioned that Maxwell Love is trying to get her in contact with someone from University of California Irvine about this topic, and hopes they will be able to get more testimony in about a week or so. She also asked Maxwell about different deals he could cut for Western when it comes to direct membership. She said that Maxwell would ask about coalition joint membership with other Washington schools, but they are trying to move away from making deals because it makes other direct members unhappy. She said he is currently in the process of trying to restructure USSA membership dues and is hoping to bring it to Congress in July. She said the restructure would make it so every campus would pay depending upon the number of students in the institution on a sliding scale. She said Maxwell wants to see Western join and would work with Western as much as he could in terms of direct membership and the negotiation process. She said these are conversations they can have when they move towards the final processes of getting the resolution passed.

### **A. Legacy Document**

Doherty would like to see a committee policy created. Edgel suggests to have this document as a Discussion Item next week. Galloway would like to have a sectioning regarding the LAF Budget, WSA, and USSA. Bickel suggests adding a section about the AS Local Liaison and local issues. Doherty added that Matthew Bobbink should write a section of the document focusing on statewide issues. Eckroth would like to have a section on issue proposals and bill tracking. Kohout suggests having a subsection about Western Votes in the WSA and USSA section. Galloway suggests writing a section regarding ideas moving forward along with any ideas they have for potential investments and what sorts of things the committee should spend money on. Galloway would like to implement a way to incorporate new LAC members who come in throughout the year. She would like Blake Bishop to write a section on how to better represent and reach out to graduate students. Galloway suggests adding a section about how to recruit students they normally don't see at the table. Smith wants to work on the new LAC member section. Aguirre wants to work on the local issues section with Joseph Levy and Theo Bickel.

List of the Legacy Document topics:

- Incorporating new members into LAC/ Reaching out to students not currently at the table (Grad Students, STEM, etc.): Jazzy Smith, Blake Bishop, Maia Hanson(?)
- State Issues/ Role as a Legislative Liaison: Matthew Bobbink
- WSA/ USSA/ Western Votes: Heather Heffelmire, Sarah Kohout
- Local Issues/ Role as a Local Liaison: Theo Bickel, Oscar Aguirre, Joseph Levy
- Committee Policy/ LAF Budget: Danny Edgel, Nie Doherty, Sarah Kohout
- Issue Proposals/ Bill Tracking Process: Patrick Eckroth
- Ideas Moving Forward: Group Collaboration

## **IX. Other Items**

### **X. Next Meeting Date**

- May 12, 2014

### **X. Adjourn**

*The Meeting was adjourned at 5:44pm*