

Associated Students of Western Washington University

2013 Legislative Agenda



Legislative Mission: The Associated Students of Western Washington University, the recognized student governance organization on campus, advocates measures that protect the institutional integrity that fosters a student's personal growth and prepares them to make a positive contribution in our society.



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GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Associated Students of Western Washington University, the recognized student governance organization on campus, advocates measures that protect the institutional integrity, that fosters a student's personal growth, and prepares them to make a positive contribution in our society. As such, the following principles guide our legislative agenda:

- 1. The opportunity to pursue higher education is the right of every individual, regardless of financial resources.*
- 2. Higher education is a public good that provides significant benefits to individuals and the state of Washington.*
- 3. Student lives are comprehensive and are not confined to the boundaries of campus.*



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PRIORITY LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

FINANCIAL AID

The ASWWU believes that the state should work to maintain affordable higher education institutions through investment in need-based programs, which will give a wider range of students the opportunity to pursue a post-secondary education within Washington. Additionally, we believe that the best form of financial aid is low tuition.

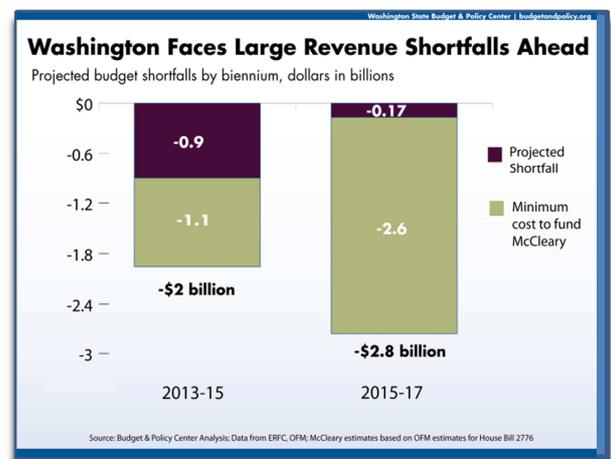
- Prioritize funding for low tuition as the most effective form of financial aid for all students.
- Support the increase of state funding for higher education as a budget priority.
- Return the employer match to previous levels and increase funding of work study awards.
- Support legislation to sustain the value of State Need Grant awards by ensuring appropriations for eligible, yet underfunded students.
- Ensure that adequate financial aid is available to everyone who qualifies.
- Support expansion of financial aid to include otherwise eligible students who are undocumented.

- Financial aid has not kept pace with tuition costs, exacerbating the college affordability problem.
- Washington's most underserved populations are among the least able to afford the continuous escalation of tuition, the least likely to enroll in college, and the least likely to complete degree programs if they do enroll.

REVENUE

The ASWWU finds it imperative that the state raise more revenue in order to fund the responsibilities necessary for a thriving local and state polity. The choice between funding education and funding other state services is a false dichotomy. Many of these services are required in order to have true access to higher education.

- Support the implementation of an update to our revenue system including, but not limited to a restructure of the B&O tax, an expansion of the sales tax to include services, a capital gains tax, and a partial securement—for higher education—of the funds resulting from the recent marijuana legalization.
- Close tax loopholes which are outdated and hold no societal benefit.
- Support taxes which do not disproportionately affect low income and middle class households, including students.





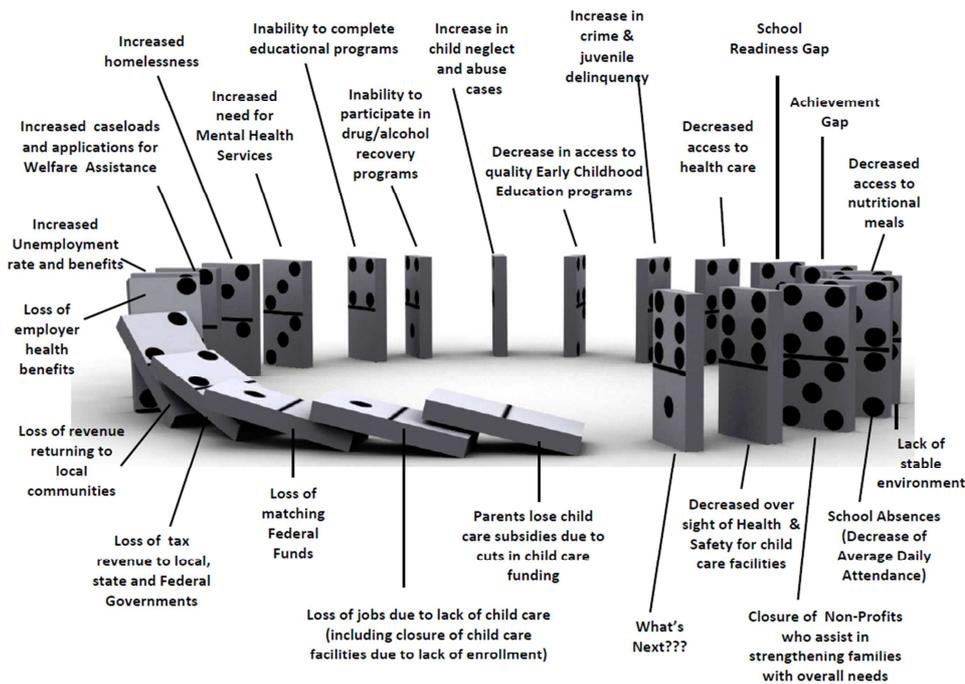
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ACCESS AND ATTAINMENT

ASWU believes that all individuals who wish to pursue a higher education should have the opportunity to do so, regardless of their background or status.

- Support subsidies for the Child Care Matching Grant to ensure that students with children have access to higher education.
- Support policies that ease the transition from military to student life with an emphasis on recognizing and responding to the unique needs of veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns.
- Support funding for increased enrollments at institutions of higher education.

The Domino Effect of Cuts in Child Care Funding



Compiled by staff of Child Care Links June 2009



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FROM THE ASSOCIATED STUDENTS PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT FOR GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Dear Colleagues:

It is with honor that we present to you the 2013 Legislative Agenda for the Associated Students of Western Washington University (ASWWU). This agenda went through many rounds of revision and received input from the communities affected by these issues. It is a reflection of the issues we care about as students and represents the voices of 14,833 students attending Western, students who will bring these words to life during session.

As we go into the budget session for the new biennium, it is important to recognize the crucial period in which we find ourselves regarding the progression of our state. Washington State has continued to divest in higher education for the past few decades, decreasing the ability of our universities to offer opportunity for an increased amount of students. Western has carried on despite this divestment because of a commitment to providing quality education to its students. We have the most efficient higher education system in the nation, but in order to increase access to our universities, funding needs to be restored to previous levels, and financial aid needs to be available to every student who is eligible. Additionally, the ASWWU finds it a fundamental value that financial aid needs to be accessible for every student in need, including students without documentation.

The ASWWU recognizes that other state services cannot be cut to fund higher education because these services are critical to the success of every student and are integral to their access to and attainment of a postsecondary degree. We recognize the importance of raising new revenue in a way which does not hurt students, and that updating our revenue system does not just benefit higher education, but helps our state move forward holistically and adapt to our new economy.

These are not just economic, but moral issues. The budget produced from this session will reflect the values of our state, and we hope that these values are ones students want to inherit as we take ownership of our future.

Sincerely,

Ethan Glemaker
AS President

Patrick Stickney
AS VP for Governmental Affairs

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STUDENT VALUES LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

ACCOUNTABILITY AND STUDENT REPRESENTATION

The ASWWU recognizes the inherent value achieved from including the student voice and vote in all decisions that affect students as current participants and stakeholders in our system of public higher education, especially in the current budgetary atmosphere where students and their families are burdened with greater responsibility of fund these institutions.

- Support legislation that grants student fee autonomy to students, including but not limited to the Services and Activities (S&A), health, student building, technology, and recreation fees. Per RCW 12B.12.014, we support former Washington State Auditor, Brian Sonntag's language that we need to "ensure charges to restricted student activity funds are for the express purpose of funding student activities and programs."
- Support student review and student approval of mandatory course fees.
- Remove exemptions for not-for-profit public higher education institutions which impede transparency and quality of education.
- Support measures that restrict university tuition setting authority to ensure tuition increases are matched with increases in financial aid funding.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The ASWWU believes that the health and safety on and around campus is imperative to an academic environment that promotes success of all students.

- Support legislation and funding that improves the ability of emergency response organizations, as well as student safety on campus and in the surrounding areas.
- Support expansion of anti-harassment legislation to include institutions of higher education
- Support legislation that funds or otherwise advocates for quality education and for resources that prevent sexual assault.
- Support legislation and funding that improves accessibility for students with disabilities by enhancing on-campus resources and services, and by improving the physical accessibility of campus. These may include more accessible alternative transportation, a focus on students with physical disabilities, accessible late-night travel, and attention to the effect of severe weather situations on students with disabilities.
- Support funding to increase the availability, affordability and quality of healthcare on campus.



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- Support funding for increased emotional and mental health resources for students of Western Washington University.
- Support legislation that promotes sexual health by providing resources for contraceptives, sexual education, and treatment for sexually transmitted infections.

DIVERSITY

The ASWWU recognizes that diversity is imperative for an optimal learning environment that prepares students for future career success and work in a global society by enhancing social development and self-awareness, promoting critical thinking, and broadening perspectives.

- Recognize that raising tuition disproportionately affects marginalized, undocumented, and low-income students, and students of color.
- Support measures encouraging active recruitment and retention of a highly qualified and diverse student body, faculty, and staff as well as the appropriations to ensure it.
- Support legislation that mandates a holistic review of applicants in the admission process, while taking into account race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, genetic information, veteran status, documentation status, ability, political ideology, and socio-economic conditions.
- Support legislation that allows students to participate in government institutions; predominantly public higher education through a shared governance model.
- Support the explicit naming of gender identity and expression in anti-harassment laws.
- Support more accessible processes to update name and gender-marker on identity documents as university procedures reference these laws and processes for their own records and placement in student housing.

ENVIRONMENT

The ASWWU is “dedicated to fostering environmental consciousness on campus. We are committed to fostering a person-earth awareness, systems thinking, and action. We believe environmental stewardship is a thread that weaves purposeful, passionate communities.” –The AS Environmental Center Mission

- Oppose the proposed Cherry Point Coal Terminal because of its potential for harmful impacts to the global and local environment, the local economy, community health, social equity, and the WWU community. Commit public resources to a holistic study of the effects of increased industrial rail traffic on public transportation.



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- Encourage the legislature to enable higher education institutions to become carbon neutral, and affirm a commitment to the development and use of renewable and sustainable energy.
- Support legislation that requires minimization of the environmental impact due to the construction of new state buildings and raises LEED certification requirements for all new state buildings on college and university campuses.
- Support legislation that incentivizes recycling and composting programs at all public institutions.
- Support local control of universities with regard to green energy programs, with specific attention to student input.
- Support a state mandate that food service contractors for state institutions of higher education serve food grown sustainability within Washington State or a reasonable distance when available.
- Support legislation that phases out the selling and distribution of bottled water in state institutions of higher education and provides alternatives for a sustainable and clean water future.
- Support providing students with viable transit services, and encouraging sustainable transportation practices.

FACULTY AND STAFF

The ASWWU asserts that dedicated, diverse, faculty and staff are the cornerstone of a quality higher education experience.

- Support increases in faculty and staff salaries in the form of a full funding commitment by the State, and not as an increase in student costs.
- Support legislation that provides for full time faculty positions to be tenure track.
- Support a robust faculty and staff role in the University governance.
- Support increased funding for faculty research, while not affecting the student costs.
- Support a reasonable student to faculty ratio to provide for a quality learning environment
- Support our faculty and staff's right to collectively bargain.