

Legislative Proposal Request Form

- **Title** (*Should be short and articulate the subject of the proposal*): Tenant Education Clinic
- **Sponsor(s)** (*Groups that are supporting this proposal*): If passed, LAC and the AS will be the sponsors
- **Describe the issue** (*What is the problem, why should Western work on it, and what is the solution?*): Now that Rental Registration & Inspections are due to be approved, it is important to inform students of how to exercise their rights within this new system.
- **What are you advocating for** (*Specify the legislative action you are looking for*): We are looking for a phased-in tenant rights education program to eventually be a required workshop that students must attend. The first phase will include developing an education video with KVIK that students are required to watch before registering for classes, preferably when they are registering for classes for Spring Quarter since they are more likely to be signing leases at this time. At the very least, the timing of this video should be different from the other required videos so that students aren't overwhelmed by requirements. This will include things like how to use the new landlord registration list by the City; what to do in case the landlord violates part of the lease, the new program, or other existing laws; and how to use existing university resources that students may not be aware exist, like the university's off-campus housing website. (like the off-campus housing registry that I had no idea existed until 10 minutes ago). The second phase will include a workshop that is offered on a regular basis for students to attend on an at-will basis. The third and final phase will include a mandatory workshop that students must attend as a freshman as part of their GUR requirements, similar to a 1-credit seminar. We hope to include an office of off-campus student housing as part of this last phase. Many universities have this and so should Western. Western has an online page for this, but it is not user friendly and there is no one to contact with questions (the "Contact Us" link leads to an error page). There will likely be many intermediate phases that will prove to be necessary, but this is a rough outline of how we will get to our end goal. A possible additional component would be to require either the video or the workshop only for first-year students who opt out of living on campus. The problem with this, however, is that students won't be watching the video or attending the clinic until after school starts, so they will already have a place to live by then. These workshops will still be valuable to them, but won't help aid them in the preliminary stages of finding a place to live and signing a lease.
- **Who do you have as support so far?** (*Identify at least one legislator who would be willing to sponsor a bill for this issue, and list any organizations or individuals that would support the proposed action*) Since we just got the Rental Ordinance (almost) passed (woohoo!), there hasn't been much of a chance to discuss what would be done beyond the Ordinance itself. Before she left her position as a council member, Cathy Lehman discussed the possibility of the City and the University co-sponsoring some sort of

Tenant Rights Education campaign. This was something we endorsed in the compromise, but since we ended up getting inspections we stopped working on this part. Since we had support from the previous Council President, it is likely that we would receive support from the City government for a future program that included offering these services to members of the community (phase 3). In addition, 6.15.040(1) of the new Ordinance authorizes the Planning Director to create outreach and instructional classes for owners, property managers and tenants regarding requirements of this program. Rick Sepler, the new Planning Director, has offered to meet with me regarding any questions on processes that students or the University may have. If the City decides to actually implement these outreach and instructional classes, it is likely that Mr. Sempler would be willing to at least consider cooperating with the University on this and providing information on how to use resources as an additional component to those classes.

- **Who needs to be moved/potential opposition?** (*Identify specific legislators, committees, and organizations*): We will need to be advocating for this issue to the University's administration. Especially since this program will likely cost money, we will probably face some opposition from the school. The first phase will have minimal costs, so we aren't likely to receive much opposition on that ground right away. We will, however, have to convince University administrators that this program is *necessary* and that they should therefore require students to participate. Some students may be opposed to being required to take part in this program, but this is outweighed by the potential thousands of dollars and hours of stress that it may save them.
- **Provide any legislative background and context for the issue.** (*Has this issue been worked on recently, how far did it get, other legislative history, where is the public at with issue, etc.*): This issue specifically does not have any legislative background because it is a new thing that we are advocating for. The rental ordinance that just got passed for 1st and 2nd Reading, AB 20382, requires landlords to provide information regarding tenant rights and resources whenever a new tenant signs a lease. Providing resources does not guarantee that students know how to actually use these resources in order to resolve problems with their landlords, however, and an instructional course would greatly benefit students who may not even read the resources at all. In addition, the Council passed an Ordinance funding the rental program (AB 20709) today (1/26/2015), indicating they are likely to pass the original ordinance for 3rd and Final Reading.