

**Western Washington University Associated Students
Legislative Affairs Council
Thursday, October 15, 2015 VU 567**

Present: Patrick Eckroth (ASVP for Governmental Affairs), Josie Ellison (Legislative Liaison), McKenzie Dent (Local Liaison), Nora Selander (Western Votes), Danny Edgel, Bridget Doyle Williams.

Absent: Luciane De Almeida, Seth Ceely

Advisor: Lisa Rosenberg

Secretary: Bryce Hammer

MOTIONS

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| LAC-15-F-3 | Approve the minutes from October 8, 2015. Passed |
| LAC-15-F-4 | Take a small break and reconvene in a few minutes. Passed. |
| LAC-15-F-5 | Adjourn the meeting. Passed. |

Patrick Eckroth, Chair of Legislative Affairs Council, called the meeting to order at 4:03pm

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. REVISIONS TO THE AGENDA

- A.** Reports were moved to the end of the meeting and the discussion items were moved to the front.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. MOTION LAC- 15-F-3 by Edgel

Approved the minutes from October 8, 2015

Second: Selander Vote: 5-0-0 Action: Motion passed, minutes approved.

IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Restructuring the Agenda—Patrick Eckroth

Patrick presented the 2008 Legislative Agenda to the council which was structured differently than how the council currently does it. In 2008 there was one agenda that included all of the items the council wanted to work on. At some point the agenda got split up into several different agendas and this year the council is bringing them back together to focus on all agenda items at once. Nonetheless, the traditional Viking Lobby Day agenda items will be the focal point. Patrick then asked if any of the council members had proposals in mind.

Josie suggested dedicated revenue for higher education which Danny supported. Patrick said that he'd like to include a specific look at the State Need Grant and how it's implemented on a local level. Josie asked if anyone had an idea on how to get this funding, Danny said he'd look into it and that the goal is obviously to fund a tuition decrease. Nora asked the council if they thought it would be appropriate to address issues that they saw with tuition decreases in the past, like raising tuition for the out of state students. Danny said that we're already implicitly doing it but we could make it more explicit in this new agenda. Josie said that yes, even if it's not on the agenda we can push for it in meetings with the legislature and have students advocate for it during Viking Lobby Day. As an addition to that, Josie asked if we should have another item on the agenda about who has tuition setting authority. Danny suggested that the legislature shouldn't have that power over out-of-state and international students because they're not represented in Washington. Josie suggested regulating out-of-state and international tuition increases in a way that's different from the in-state tuition increases that happen steeply with little warning. As a new agenda item, Patrick suggested increased funding for student support services such as academic advising, counseling services, etc. Danny said that we should add support for work study, on campus student wages, and career support services. Bridget said that we should include disability services. Josie opened up a new agenda item related to voting. He said the three important things that were not accomplished last year were Motor Voter registration (teenagers being automatically registered to vote upon getting a driver's license), pushing the deadline for voter registration back, and the Voting Rights Act. Danny suggested adding a state holiday for voting to the agenda. Patrick said that on the WSA Agenda there's an item about all postage on ballots being prepaid so voting is free. Also, the WSA is looking into letting students register to vote in the residents halls because right now Western is the only one that allows it. McKenzie said that at UW the problem is that the residence halls are operated by private companies that are connected to their food services. Nora said that the LAC could draft a policy that demands the companies let students do this in the dorms. Josie said we could put it on the agenda and even if it doesn't get anywhere we can use it when talking with legislatures and during lobbying. Patrick suggested requiring landlords to hand out voter registration forms to their tenants upon move in because it was on the agenda last year and almost passed. Josie said that last year Oregon passed a law that allowed universities to track the number of queer identified students in their schools and suggested that Western implement something like that. McKenzie suggested adding support for homeless students on campus so they have somewhere to go. Josie said that other campuses have programs like this that are only available to those who know about them but often times those people aren't the same ones that need the help and Western should be more explicit in their support of homeless students. Josie also suggested that we permanently decouple the Services and Activities Fee from tuition. It was done this past year because if they hadn't then the fee would have had to dramatically decrease the fee. If they were decoupled then the students would be able to set the fee independently.

Josie also suggested that LAC should work with the faculty to put a student and a faculty member on the Board of Trustees with full rights as Trustees because there will be an item like this on the faculty's agenda for the year and it would be a good project to collaborate with them on. Danny asked if a student position like this already exists just without the voting rights when it comes to decisions about the faculty. Josie said yes, the student position now is not allowed in executive session, does not weigh in on personnel decisions, and is not allowed to be involved with hiring processes. Nora asked what involvement the current student trustee will have with the presidential search. Josie said that it would be less than the other trustees. The faculty are also pushing for a position on the Board and we should devote an agenda item to faculty and put the Board position under it. Danny said that he liked how the 2008 Legislative Agenda had an entire bullet point for the faculty and we should look into what they pushed for. Lisa said that the faculty needs may have changed since they unionized. Josie and Danny said they would talk to the union president and that LAC might have to write these proposals while they're going through negotiations. Danny then suggested that we include adjunct professors on the list because they get a bad deal and it's a bad deal for students. Josie said that if we're going to include them we should also look into including support for TAs, IAs, and other student teacher positions. On other campuses these people are unionized and have bargaining rights, and there should be some sort of check on student teachers and their classes so that they receive basic support and student opinions are taken into account. Patrick then mentioned that last year there was an item on the agenda that demanded increase support for survivors of sexual assault. Josie said there are two task forces that are working on that but their outcomes will likely vary from students' wishes. Danny said that last time he was on LAC there was a separate list of things that were given to students to lobby for but weren't on the official agenda. Patrick said that LAC didn't have it last year because their focus was on different things. McKenzie suggested adding a section to the application for Lobby Day that includes a space for students to list what they'd prefer to lobby for. Lisa said that she looked up the Student Trustee position and gendered language might be a long term project for the council to take on. Patrick then asked if everyone would feel comfortable dividing up the agenda items to work on separately. The breakdown was as follows: Dedicated Revenue (Danny and Josie), Student Support Services (Josie and Nora), voting matters (Nora, McKenzie, and Josie), data collection of queer students (Josie), homeless student services (McKenzie), decoupling S&A from tuition (Nora, Josie, Patrick), Student Trustee (Josie and Nora), faculty (Josie, Danny, with help from Jaleesa and Zach). Josie Ellison left at 4:48. Patrick went on to say that he recognized the problems with having a set agenda before the application for Viking Lobby Day is even open and he'd like to see a more public LAC meeting so that students can get involved with the agenda. Danny suggested a giveaway for students to send in changes that they'd like to see and then a winner could be chosen at random. Lisa brought up guidelines for raffles but said the committee could work around them. Patrick asked the council if they liked the idea and they responded that

they did. He then suggested some type of OrgSync form or a bull's eye email to get the word out and to hear back from the students. More public meetings could be held to get students involved. McKenzie said that we could do a more purposeful outreach to ESC and the ROP. Patrick said that he agreed and wants to meet with the ESC and ROP and wants all proposals to go through them and Western Votes with some sort of endorsement process attached to it. He also said that he'd like to get an email out to all of the clubs and invite them to the meeting. McKenzie, Lisa, and Danny said that RHA and the residence halls could get involved too and suggested LAC go to some of the hall council meetings and give a short presentation. Patrick said that he's trying to get a handout made and it could be used at those meetings. McKenzie said that she's also working with the residence halls to get them interested in Western Votes.

V. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Legislative Action Fund—Patrick

Patrick started off by explaining the last fiscal year's expenses (July 2014-June 2015). The expenses are broken down by ENT though he didn't go through and break down everything by the actuals. The spending has been trimmed down because of the doubt surrounding the Legislative Action Fund and the policy doing with that. The reason this is being brought back to the council is because the reserve section states that 5% of revenues for the year go into reserves until it reach 125% of non-discretionary funds. Right now the reserves are just hoarding money and aren't benefiting the students paying the fee so Patrick wants to revisit the policy with the council and implement a smaller reserve amount. He gave a breakdown of what the Legislative Action Fund reserve currently looks like which is quickly approaching the 125%. Lisa said that the reserve right now is at \$22,579.88 and the entire Action Fund is at \$185,567.92. Patrick then started to explain what could be moved around in the fund and what was less negotiable. It takes a vote of two-thirds majority to change non-discretionary funds to discretionary funds. He showed the group the proposed breakdown of last year's numbers without the USSA fee included. The USSA requires travel, grass roots fees, trainings, lobby, days, and the conferences. WSA expense is for people to go to the retreat and other miscellaneous things are listed. Additional lobbying day expenses are listed as are other, smaller lobby days. The last line item is student use which would, for example, be something that students use to interact with the legislature. As far as the reserves go the amount in there would change depending on what the council does with the policy. Patrick said that he'd like to take money out of the reserves because he doesn't feel it's necessary to have that much money in reserves. As far as revenue goes, we only have solid numbers for this quarter so Winter and Spring are projections of Fall. Nora asked if Patrick plans on lowering the reserve policy and he said yes but with a cap on it. Nora asked about how we spend money on the USSA Congress and if they should spend more on it and Patrick says that part confuses him because of when the money is spent. He's not sure if the line in the budget is about money the council spent this last summer or the money they will spend in the summer coming up. Lisa said

that if it was for next summer then it wouldn't get spent until the next fiscal year. Patrick then said he would have more clarity on that for the next meeting. Danny suggested a cap of 50% on non-discretionary funds because it will be somewhat arbitrary no matter what the council settles on. Patrick said that would be almost exactly \$10,000. Nora said that sounds good to her. Patrick said that Western's budgeting cycle does not coincide with the USSA membership fees which is a problem because the fee is likely to be raised this year and the council will need to pay for that in some way. Putting the cap at 50% would be a good compromise between making sure the council isn't hoarding money that could be better spent and having enough in reserves that the council can cover any additional fees that might come up. The council agreed. Danny said that if that policy goes through then the fund will be well over the cap and he wondered what the council planned to do with the excess. Patrick said the council should lay out a long term plan to spend that money. It would be beneficial to have a grass roots campaign system on campus, the council could increase the delegation sent to legislature meetings. Danny asked if LAC had ever had a problem taking students to Viking Lobby Day because of lack of funds and Patrick said that so far they hadn't but additional lobby days could be a good thing to spend the money on. Patrick said that he would update the policy and bring it back in the next meeting. Lisa wanted to clarify that the 5% per year rule only goes into effect when the reserves dip below the cap that the council sets.

B. Legislative Affairs Council Draft Rules of Operation—Patrick

The main changes were adding positions that are listed on the Charge & Charter. The biggest one from that is adding the ESC position. The language describing it is vague so that the person in the position and the ESC can shape it to their needs. The member is appointed by the ESC. There was discussion in the Board of Directors meeting brought up by Abby Ramos, the VP of Diversity, that there was some concern among the ESC that the position would only exist to have a student of color on the council which is not what the position was intended to be. The section about voting rights, suspension, and how that relates to quorum also needs attention. Patrick asked if the power to take away voting rights should lie with the council or with the chair because it feels like something that the council should do but that might not be possible if quorum cannot be achieved first. Nora suggested that the chair could take away the voting rights and then the council could retroactively approve it once quorum was achieved. The council agreed that something like this should be implemented because taking away voting rights shouldn't rest on one person but there is benefit to not needing quorum. Danny asked what the council approves versus what the Board approves. Patrick said that the Board creates the Charge & Charter but the council creates the Rules of Operation that the Board can then edit if they feel it necessary. Concerning the ESC position, McKenzie suggested that the council could create similar positions for different representation groups like the ESP and the ROP so that the ESC position isn't as tokenizing. Patrick said that he likes the idea of more diverse representation on the council but that might present a problem with the number of AS employees that sit on LAC. He suggested that the council

create positions with the same intent but that don't pull from the AS. Lisa said that it would be difficult to add two hours a week for such a small staff. McKenzie asked if there would be a way to reach out to student clubs that would achieve the same goal. Patrick said that he intended to do that with intentional outreach to fulfill the student at large positions. Nora asked if these people could be appointed instead of hired so that it would be people that are involved in the ROP and ESP but aren't employed by them so they could act as liaisons. McKenzie said that the main problem with that would be that people who visit the ROP do so because they're seeking help and it would be wrong to ask them to do something in return for that assistance. Danny suggested that the ROP could, however, create a requirement within their own department. Patrick also suggested that the council could reach out to student groups that have similar goals as the ROP but don't work for the AS.

C. Draft LAC Conference Attendance Application—Patrick

Most of the top part is the same. There have been small changes made to correct grammar and the questions have been rewritten to be clearer and more direct so the student knows what the council wants. Danny asked if the application would change based on the conference that people were applying to and Patrick responded that would be the ideal. Nora suggested that the council include a line at the top that makes a distinction between preferred name and legal name because of the confusion that comes from trying to schedule travel plans for people that don't give their full legal name. Patrick said that it would certainly be easier but potentially not better depending on why people choose not to go by their legal name. Lisa and Danny suggested that the application could make it clear why the council is asking. Patrick said that it's definitely something that should be considered.

D. Draft LAC Guidelines for Lunding Conference Attendance—Patrick

There were no edits made to the draft but Patrick wanted to draw the council's attention to the sixth criteria item. Nora said that it was made for last year's diversity requirement and the intent behind it was to make the conference accessible and transparent. Danny asked if there was any reason not to have it. Patrick responded no, he just wanted to point it out because people had questions about it in the previous meeting.

VI. REPORTS

A. VP for Governmental Affairs: Last night was the third board meeting of the quarter, and the board members made decisions about who would be sent forward for the board of trustees' advisory committee. Other than that, they've been planning the trip to the WSA on the 14th which will be a general assembly and not a board of directors meeting. This would be a good opportunity for students to have a say, updating proposals, campaign proposals. Patrick said that he is trying to interest people in going.

B. Local Liaison: She attended her first city council meeting on Monday where she voted yes to endorse prop 9 and voted not to endorse propositions, 2, and 3. She

is working on voter info graphic to use for tabling and pamphlets. There is an ongoing discussion on the Aloha motel with the idea of turning into affordable housing for students off campus.

- C. Western Votes!: Didn't meet this week, meeting on Monday the 19th at 4pm. Working on get out the vote.

VII. ACTION ITEMS

- A. Move to take a short break at 5:09pm and reconvene at 5:14pm.

MOTION LAC-15-F-4 by Edgel

Second: Selander Vote: 5-0-0 Action: Motion passed, short break was taken.

- B. Move to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION LAC-15-F-5 by Selander

Second: Edgel
adjourned.

Vote: 5-0-0

Action: Motion passed, meeting was

The Meeting was adjourned at 6:01pm.