



Student Senate

Proposed Motions: Suspend the operation of the Student Senate for the 2014-15 school year.

Sponsor: Kaylee Galloway, AS VP for Governmental Affairs

Persons of Contact: Sarah Kohout, 2014-15 AS VP for Governmental Affairs and 2012-13 Student Senator

Guest Speaker: Sarah Kohout and Joseph Levy, 2012-13 First Year Student Senator

Date: May 22, 2014

Background & Context

On March 7, 2013, the AS Board of Directors voted to suspend the operation of the student senate for the 2013-14 school year because the Student Senate had problems with attendance and lacked direction and purpose. The motion read: “Suspend the operation of the Student Senate for the 2013-2014 school year, and hire a Senate Reform Personnel who will lead and prepare all meetings regarding the drafting of a reform recommendation to the Board striking the language “bringing a referendum to the student body”). They also hired a Senate Reform Staff member instead of student senate chair, and their duty was to draft a recommendation to the AS Board by the end of winter quarter. Unfortunately, no viable option was presented that would fit Western’s campus and AS needs. On April 3, 2014, the AS Board of Directors passed a referendum to be on the spring ballot that would read: “Shall the Student Senate be removed from the AS Bylaws (Article V Section 2d).” On May 2, 2014, the students voted 72% to 38% to keep the Student Senate in the AS bylaws.

March 7, 2013 Minutes: <http://media.as.wvu.edu/up/2013/04/ASB%20Min%203-7-13.pdf>

March 14, 2013 Minutes: <http://media.as.wvu.edu/up/2013/04/ASB%20Min%203-14-13.pdf>

Senate Reform Proposal: <http://media.as.wvu.edu/up/2013/03/Senate%20Reform%20Proposal%202.pdf>

March 19, 2014 Minutes: <http://media.as.wvu.edu/up/2014/04/ASB%20Min%203-19-14.pdf>

April 3, 2014 Minutes: <http://media.as.wvu.edu/up/2014/04/ASB%20Min%204-3-14.pdf>

Student Senate Referendum:

<http://media.as.wvu.edu/up/2014/03/Doc.%206%20Referendum%20Regarding%20Student%20Senate.pdf>

Summary of Proposal

This proposal seeks AS Board authorization to suspend the AS Student Senate for another one year hiatus. Since the students voted to keep the Student Senate, we would theoretically need to re-

implement the Student Senate for this next academic year. This is not a reasonable or feasible option for the AS at this time. First, the Student Senate was criticized for not having a clear purpose or direction. If the Student Senate were to be re-implemented, some of these same concerns would still exist. Second, the Student Senate requires many additional personnel hours from the AS including the AS Board Assistant for Representation Committees, AS VP for Academic Affairs, and Assistant Director for Student Activities, in addition to the need to hire a Student Senate Chairperson. The currently existing positions have been delegated additional responsibilities and adding the Student Senate at this time would not be reasonable for their work loads. Also, hiring a Student Senate Chair would be a challenge because AS hiring has already occurred. Also, there is no money available to fund this position. The AS is already struggling to fund the current requests, so adding an additional position would not be financially reasonable.

This all being said, the Student Senate needs to be placed on another year hiatus. Sarah Kohout, AS VP for Governmental Affairs 2014-15, served as a student senator at large for the 2012-2013 school year. She has decided to dedicate a portion of her term to working on the Student Senate and finding a more reasonable and realistic option for the students of Western.

Fiscally: No implications

Senate Timeline:

Thursday, May 15: Brought to BOD Meeting as an information item

Monday, May 19: Meeting between Kaylee, Carly, and Sarah

Thursday, May 22: Action item at the Board

Summer: Establish project outline and work group purpose and timeline

Fall and Winter: Work with a committee to brainstorm, outreach to alumni and past senators, and draft a proposal to be presented to the Board of

Spring: Run a referendum

Goal: The goal comes in two parts.

A) Recreating a Student Senate or removing the Student Senate from the AS Bylaws

B) Running a referendum if necessary

Rationale: This is what makes the most sense at this time.