

Please answer the following questions regarding the 2016 US SA National Student Power Summit and **include your name before your response.** If there is a portion of your response that you do not want to be public information, please do not include it on this form. If you still want this information to be heard and involved in the discussion around US SA, please email it to [asvp. gov@wwu. edu](mailto:asvp.gov@wwu.edu) or as.president@wwu.edu based on your comfort.

Reflection Questions:

1. *What did you learn at USSA Congress and how will you apply it to your work on campus?*

I learned better networking skills and made great connections with people from other campuses which i plan on using as resources to bring to campus.

Bridget -I learned a lot about myself, my privilege, and how I can help get students involved on our campus. I learned about how I can be a vehicle for change and how I can help people from marginalized identities. I think that a lot of people at Western don't know much about their privilege how necessary it is that change happens on college campuses so that they become more inclusive. I want to help those who people understand how important it is that Western support people from marginalized identities. -Bridget

Briana: I learned that there are plenty of people who are not apathetic, they just simply don't have the resources or connections or the know-how to positively impact the campus climate. I was pleasantly surprised to meet many like-minded individuals who want to change the way things operate, so that marginalized people can gain social and political power. My primary goal is to use my own privilege to provide some sort of platform via art, radio and social media for those who have important, impactful messages to share.

Samara: I agree with Briana, I also encountered many folks who were apathetic to various issues depending on their background or availability to resources. Being that said USSA congress taught me a lot about disagreement that can happen within activists spaces. Although there was a space for students of color to come together and be proactive about various movements, I definitely saw some disagreement and was faced with the reality that there is still much solidarity work to do within communities of color. Therefore, USSA Power Summit was a great

learning experience because it taught me that activists spaces are not always going to be a straightforward process and there are challenges that will be faced. I appreciated this opportunity because as I move forward on my journey as an activist I hope to be aware of these challenges and remember my privilege as well.

Jenifer -I learned a lot about other student organizations and movements and how they deal with specific challenges. I think I learned to network better and create out of state connections with other students across the country. I will definitely use what I learned to reach out to resources that other students can provide and do the same for them.

2. *What ideas do you have moving forward?*

Bridget -I don't know if I understand what this question is asking. If you are asking about my plans for Western, I think that it can become a more inclusive campus if we have fair AS elections and get more students involved with student government.

Briana: First and foremost, more local opportunities for communities like this to get together and plan actions and empower other people who are on the fringes, who want to make change but might be just a little too lazy to do the planning themselves.

Samara: I hope to bring about more intersection between groups of people of color on campus and realize that a lot of our struggles and borders are actually very similar and intersect. I believe USSA had a big theme on large student activism, so I believe at Western we need more intersection between various groups, including allies.

Jenifer -I am not exactly sure what the question pertains to. I assume it means what to do now that I am on campus. I definitely think that we need to work on better connections and communications between groups and clubs within schools so that there can be a stronger western community, so bridging the gap would be important. I think this could be accomplished by having students stand in solidarity with one another so that people can work and learn from each other

3. *What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of USSA ? How do you think WWU could best utilize direct membership with USSA in the upcoming year?*

Bridget -1 think that USSA offers a community to those who may feel as if their college isn't supporting them. I think that USSA is full of creative ideas on how it can help students from all sorts of backgrounds. I do not know how WWU can best utilize its direct membership though because USSA is very unorganized and needs a lot of work. However, there is no other organization like this and it can serve as a great platform for change. I think WWU can help USSA grow so it can better serve students. I understand that USSA isn't staffed well and doesn't have much funding. I wonder though if USSA is best for Western. Maybe the money we use for our membership can be put towards something else that could help students more. Unfortunately, I think a lot of this depends on if other campuses choose to also continue their memberships. I'm afraid that if we pull out, other campuses will too. If other campuses cancel their memberships, then USSA will become even more unorganized because of its lack of funding. USSA may have too valuable of a platform for us to let this happen.

Briana: USSA is unlike any other opportunity available to college activists. A national platform that brings together students from all over the US is incredibly important-especially one dedicated to direct student voice, specifically about social justice. However, so many people had no idea what was going on and there needs to be a stronger sense of community instilled. Starting with the selection/application process. More information about what the Student Power Summit actually is (to me, it was informative seminars based around identity, politics and social change but it needs to be made clear that it is *specifically* about dismantling systems of oppression). There had to have been at least one person there who had no idea what they were walking into. Then for the summit itself. There should be more opportunities for "networking" aka talking to each other and making friends and learning from each other. More story time, longer forums to foster in-depth discussion. Quality, not quantity. If there is going to be an action, every single person needs to know exactly what they are standing for and they need to know the potential dangers (arrest, violence from police and/or bystanders, media attention, I'm sure there are other blaring ones that I'm forgetting). The leaders need to be there to talk and they need to create a sense of community. I'm not trying to take away from the work the leaders did do— it's incredibly taxing, difficult and time-stealing work. But if the people attending the conference do not feel like their leader even knows that they are there or that they cannot trust their leader if they have a pressing concern, there needs to be either more people in leadership positions or less work for the leadership to do (fewer forums, a more organized action, more breaks). A big thanks for Losa and Andrea and everyone else who went on the trip though, I couldn't have imagined it without y'all

Samara: I think the idea and the mission of USSA is great because as others mentioned above me, it creates a platform for students to have voice on issues that directly affect them and their campuses while working with folks from around the nation. However, I also agree that it was not executed the most effective. I also felt quite lost during the conference, and felt like at often times there were two types of conferences being held. One was all about dismantling systems of oppression, which was super informative and it made me think about my own privilege within my community of color as well as other communities of color. However, it felt like on the side there were also a few workshops that were more tailored to what the descriptions of the summit was on the flyers and website. Meaning there were some workshops on student organization on campus and/or student leadership, which didn't seem to collaborate as much with the dismantling of oppressive system workshops. So I felt some disconnection there, which I believe can be fixed with better organization and agreement on a central theme for the next Student Power Summit. Also I really feel like quantity over quality was theme for this conference. It felt like it was more about how many workshops and panels can we fit into your day versus folks connecting with other students and hearing about the movements and actions they are creating on their campuses. It wasn't until I was able to friend like 2 people from the summit on FB that I found out about the various work they are doing on their campuses. I really think there should be more space for networking as well as self-care options. All that being said I really do want to go back to my point about the positive aspect of USSA. I think it can truly be a great space for students of color as well as allies to connect and share ideas, and I believe that if USSA pays close attention to the feedback that students and campuses have, then this truly can be a great program.

Jenifer - I think that USSA definitely has the potential to really make student movements grow and thrive but I do think that it needs more organization. That being said however it is one of the only, if not the only student led organization so I definitely think that we should keep our membership because I believe in what the students are doing and I think that they are seriously trying to reform USSA in order to really make it a major force that students can use. A strength I would definitely think that USSA has would be that it brings students from a lot of different places together but a weakness would be lack of communication and cohesion but I do think they are working on addressing that. I am not sure what you mean about how Western can use its membership; I don't really know what they can do with it besides the conference that we were able to attend.

4. *Given your personal experience, what do you see as the benefits of USSA membership and do you think WWU should continue its direct membership with USSA?*

Bridget - I think that USSA offers the building blocks for a national organization of universities from around the country. It needs to become more organized. For now, I think Western should pay attention to USSA's progress and look to see if other campuses are maintaining their memberships.

Samara: I would also echo the comments being said by Bridget and Briana. The organization of USSA Power Summit should be reevaluated and make sure that the actions that we do in the future are safe as a whole, so that our purpose gets across and those in privilege aware of their privilege within these actions and know how much space they take up in the movements. I believe WWU should continue its direct membership with USSA so that students can continue to have the opportunity to meet with other folks from across the nation and see how student activism ranges from region to region.

Briana: I feel like I addressed the benefits pretty clearly above. The National Student Power Summit has so much potential, although I am slightly concerned about it working in the future-if there is always going to be an action, it needs to be strategic and it needs to be safe and I could see future dangers arising if certain authority figures feel threatened by its existence. But otherwise, a national gathering can be so powerful if only the structure is there. Perhaps starting with local power summits first. I think we should continue membership but only if serious work and thought is put into organization.

5. *Other thoughts, comments, questions, concerns, etc?*

Briana: I think I got it all !