



Associated Students of Western Washington University
Board of Directors

A Resolution Regarding Student Labor at WWU
April 2016

WHEREAS, multiple student employment opportunities including Academic student advisers, residence advisers (RAs), orientation student advisors, career services peer advisers, international peer advisers, and Research Writing Center tutors require training(s) in the form of an academic course(s) (SAA 340); and,

WHEREAS, students are required to pay for these required training courses as part of their quarterly tuition payments; and,

WHEREAS, the University does not provide monetary payment to students for their time spent in training courses and academic credits are not legal tender that can be exchanged for goods and services; and,

WHEREAS, Section 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations requires that unpaid trainings are voluntary, in addition to other conditions¹; and,

WHEREAS, the Department of Labor and Industries of the State of Washington interprets “hours worked” under the Industrial Welfare Act to include trainings that do not meet the same conditions given under Section 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations; and,

WHEREAS, students who are required to take SAA 340 cannot be considered trainees or interns (as opposed to employees) because these students have already been hired, and are thus entitled to employment upon completion of the required course; and,

WHEREAS, Unpaid labor inarguably violates core tenets of economic justice; and,

WHEREAS, Western Washington University and Universities in general depend on labor provided by students to function effectively in multiple areas; and,

WHEREAS, Due to the high total cost of accessing higher education, most students must find at least one source of employment during the school year; and,

WHEREAS, The total student debt in the United States of America is over \$1.4 trillion and the average student debt of individuals in the WWU graduating class of 2014 was \$21,520; “and,

WHEREAS, some students who are required to take academic courses as training for employment must go further into debt in order to obtain employment due to the required academic course and those same students are unable to simultaneously pay off this debt because they are not paid during this training; and,

WHEREAS, monetary compensation for multiple periods of employment is not necessarily greater than the cost of the required training course(s); and,

WHEREAS, student employees do not have union representation; and,

BE IT RESOLVED, the Associated Students of Western Washington University strongly urge the WWU administration to critically assess the current practice of requiring unpaid training courses for student employees.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, the University should alter its student employment training practices to be consistent with state and federal labor regulations as well as the values of the University if an assessment suggests that this is not already the case.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, the Associated Students of Western Washington University will commit to critically assessing our own practice of requiring unpaid internships prior to employment and its consistency with state and federal labor regulations as well as the values and mission of the Associated Students and Western Washington University.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, the Associated Students of Western Washington University strongly urge the University to refrain from interfering with student worker's ability to organize.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, the Associated Students of Western Washington University reserve the right to file a complaint with the Washington State Department of Labor on behalf of student employees if sufficient action is not taken by the University to address the concerns raised in this resolution.

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¹ Title 29->Subtitle B->Chapter 7->Subchapter B->§785

² collegedebt.com