

## **2015-2016 United States Student Association Report**

*This year the Associated Students of Western Washington University continued its direct membership with the United States Student Association for the second year. ASWWU's membership, which began immediately following the withdrawal of the Washington Student Association (WSA) from statewide membership with USSA, has provided numerous students with the education, training, and other support necessary for them organize their campuses and build student power. After WSA withdrew its statewide membership with USSA during its General Assembly in May, 2014 (both striking all mentions of USSA in the WSA Bylaws and reallocating all USSA-related funding in the 2014-15 annual budget) for "budgetary reasons—which were secretly true for UW-Seattle and a cover for ideological differences for WSU—the ASWWU began exploring direct membership with USSA. On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2014 the AS Board of Directors entered into direct membership with USSA with a discounted dues rate of \$0.40/FTE for the 2014-15 academic year due to the potential for unpredictable funding levels. The dues rate for the 2015-16 academic year was \$0.45/FTE and next year will be at the standard dues rate of \$0.50/FTE. WWU students may request funding from the Legislative Action Fund to attend USSA conferences, such as the USSA National Student Congress and USSA National Student Power Summit. Based on LAC policies, the process to apply for such funding must be open, include sufficient outreach to the campus community, and remain open for at least 2 weeks. There are two sole requirements for receiving these funds: assisting the VP for Governmental Affairs and VU Finance Office in making arrangements for the conference, and completion of a thoughtful reflection upon return from the conference to detail how the experience and information will be used to benefit the campus community. Those who do not meet those requirements are no longer eligible for funding through the Legislative Action Fund.*

### **United States Student Association National Student Power Summit 2016 Report**

Expenses-

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E354 Travel Expenses	<b>USSA Congress</b>	5,8412.60
	Flights	\$ 2,515.35
	Lodging	\$ 1,845.69
	Stipends	\$ 1,800.00
	Registration	\$ 2,120.00
	Other Travel Expenses (parking, metro, etc.)	\$ 131.56

<b>Student Attendee</b>	<b>Thoughtful Reflection Submitted?</b>
Andrea Tompkins	Yes
Losa Berhane	Yes
Abby Ramos	Yes
Marya Draw	Yes
Elva Nitereka	Yes
Alia Taqieddin	Yes
Belina Seare	No
Patricia Pacheco	No
Josie Ellison	Alternate Funding Source
Rachael Belisle	Alternate Funding Source

### **USSA National Student Congress 2016 Reflection Questions and Attendee Responses**

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

Abby: The biggest thing I learned during the conference was the strength of direct action. While at the conference I went to a workshop titled "Mean girls" where we discussed the process of where to start when you want to get something accomplished on your campus. This workshop really opened my eyes to seeing how important and how much direct action can have an impact. With this new knowledge I plan on implementing it in my work with my position on the BoD, especially around the ESC and the new renovation.

Mar/a: I learned one main thing: that there is a time for personal development as an activist, and a time to put personal feelings aside in order to be able to get real work done without interruption. It's very important to hone individual perspectives because that can be useful in the group setting in working towards a campaign. However, doing both in the same context is stressful and difficult. This alternation of super deep introspection in caucus spaces and then into larger groups was hard to reconcile. Having NSC set up like that made me realize that at WWU I'd like to have spaces pre-campaign planning that had to do with discussion on perspectives, feelings and opinions, before working on the actual physical things we want to tackle. Coming

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into a space for work knowing that the touchy stuff is already unpacked will make it easier to be productive..

Elva: I learned that movement building is driven by the work of students who continue to act even when the immediate space of organizing has dissipated. A lot of the campaigns in USSA stemmed from ideas or movements which were carried from the previous years. I saw this as an opportunity from students from previous years to continue sharing knowledge, and at the forefront of influencing the incoming generations. The only issue I saw was active members who organized campaigns without being transparent with the entire USSA Community.

Losa: I learned that relationship building is necessary prior to planning actions and delving into strategizing. The group dynamic will be more authentic and ultimately more work can be done in terms of organizing actions and fulfilling collective goals if we can understand each other in order to build with one another and other coalitions.

Andrea: I think the main thing I learned at Congress was how political organizing within systems/ institutions that is driven by students works. Having very little organizing experience with Western, I was not sure what to expect as tangible tools to do successful campus organizing was not something I necessarily had knowledge or access to prior to congress. Understanding how to start, support and accomplish an actual campaign was very beneficial, as I have been involved with State of Emergency since last year but did not fully understand how it had all come together.

Alia: I learned that an active and engaged student body is integral to any form of community building or organizing on campus. After observing how the USSA campus affiliates that organize at a high capacity strategized around their campaigns' accessibility for students-at-large, I have been reflecting on how effective the AS/ student organizers are at making opportunities for engagement accessible to the general WWU population.

2. What ideas do you have moving forward?

Abby: The idea I have moving forward is to work with students around the ESC and the renovation to fight for what students actually want, which is a physical building. So with some of the skills I learned in the conference I plan to use those to the best of my ability to get the ESC an actual building with the help of other students.

Marya: Mostly I realized that we need numbers and dedication to be successful. When considering how to apply USSA campaigns at WWU I often thought "that would be hard to do on

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our campus"but that was mostly because passionate people are spread apart In different groups . If we can concentrate on shared Interests and band together, It wouldn't be so hard to take big actions. I definitely want to coordinate collaboration between the core group of student leaders on campus with club leaders and students at large to make this possible.

Elva: Moving forward I would like to build more awareness of student movements across campus. I am currently working In the Women's Center, and trying to bridge between food sovereignty organizers In the university, and the activist In the Bellingham community. I am currently In communication with various environmental organization, and hope to build more student and community power In the discussion/ process of sustainability.

Losa: I would like to continue the work of the State of Emergency campaign on our campus and really make It a sustaining and engaging campaign for Black and Brown students to feel like they have something that will be altered and catered to the needs of those students on this campus. I'd like to continue the focus on campus diversity but also build with the community when Incorporating the legislation (two bills) and prison divestment Into the campaign.

Andr5a: Moving forward I would love to get more students Involved, specifically students of color, first generation, low Income students that do not necessarily have access to USSA In the ways that I have. As for working on campaigns, continuing my work with State of Emergency would be wonderful, especially since last year was more of Informing folks about what this campaign was, hopefully we can take more action within the campaign. Personally I would love to do more work surrounding Prison Divestment. Western, through Aramark Is a huge supporter of the Prison Industrial Complex, which could potentially be addressed within the State of Emergency Campaign I am already working on.

Alla: Moving forward, I hope to be supportive In my role within the AS, and as a student affected by harmful policies, In making USSA campaigns accessible and successful on campus.

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?

Abby: As a first timer at this conference I found that USSA was extremely overwhelming with the Information and was not easily understandable for someone who Is new to the space. It also felt hostile to ask questions and did not feel safe to ask questions. The space was also dominated by California schools and the conference revolved around that most of the time. It also felt really odd to be put In a position to make a vote on an organization that I had never been Involved with. I did feel some of the ways of procedure were Interesting and found ways to Implement

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them in the AS (i.e. AS fall staff development and vlbe-checkers). I also enjoyed the caucus spaces, however a majority of the time we talked about what needed to be voted on and I didn't feel like we really got to build a community.

Mar/a: As I touched on earlier, USSA's emphasis on personal development is way too mixed in with a space for concrete planning. We had a presentation from a representative of Canada's equivalent org, and they have accomplished a TON without spending as much time in caucus spaces discussing on a personal level. Those closed spaces were easily my favorite part of the conference, but I wish they could have happened at the beginning and end instead of throughout maybe. Or maybe the spaces could have been more oriented toward specific aspects of what USSA wants to accomplish.. It was just really emotionally and psychologically taxing to go back and forth between an impersonal workshop and having heart to hearts. It really didn't make sense to me how we were supposed to bounce back and forth and be productive in both.

Elva: I foresee nothing as perfect or as an immediate solution for problems. Keeping this in mind I am also interested in investing my energy in spaces that are more intentional. I would like to add a disclaimer that my thoughts are directed at organizational process not individual people. Keeping this in mind I would like to touch a little the act of harm, which was heavily perpetuated in this conference in Vegas. It is real and it is pervasive within this organization's structure, the organization has not made many strides to radically change or address inaccessibility of attending the conferences. There is a lack of support for students of color attending historically Black Universities, community colleges, or schools that have not been accredited. This left conference attendees coming from highly privileged backgrounds or universities, which historically excluded students of color in the process of policy making.

A strength I see are some individuals and participating caucus spaces which are reimagining what it means to be and act as a community. I am a member of the People Of African Descent Caucus (POAD) space, which is by far one of the most radical spaces I have ever been in, where people act in love, and the energy of resilience and trauma which carries us. I genuinely love all of POAD, they were not only my friends at the conference they were my family.

Losa: USSA as an organization has a lot of evolving and restructuring necessary to become a truly accessible and safer space for all students. I am hopeful and willing to put my energy into that foreseeing change due to the revolutionary people in the leadership of USSA and the power and healing and derives from the relationships created with other students at these conferences. I found building with other students across the nation truly a privilege that I was able to access as a current board member and member of POAD (People Of African Descent). However the organization needs to make accessibility a priority to marginalized students, plenary is something

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that needs to be completely restructured as its origins and oppressive and exclusionary to those who are often underrepresented.

Andrea: I will start with the strengths that I encountered within USSA at congress first. I think that having a space for students to take part in political student run organizations is an opportunity many students specifically underrepresented students do not necessarily have access too is something astounding. Some of the student organizers that I have met through USSA, have been able to show me that there can be a critical and use their access to USSA to strengthen their work outside of USSA. As for some of the weaknesses I encountered... The lack of intentional inclusion was by far the biggest weakness that spread all throughout this organization. At congress people were continuously mis-gendered. Accessibility to students not familiar with political student organization or USSA were left in the dark about many things (speaking from my own experience), the strongest strength about USSA I encountered was by far People of African Descent (POAD), not only did the people within that space make time for unity and support, it was a very critical and intentionally space that I felt safe in. As POAD peoples we could really bring our lived experiences with institutions, organizing, School, etc into that space and be validated and supported, while also being pushed to think of ways we can collectively dismantle the continued oppression in certain spaces.

6 (optional). WWU's direct membership with USSA is up for review due to contract negotiations and a potential dues increase. Given this information, and your personal experience with USSA, do you think WWU should continue direct membership with USSA?

Abby: I think it's hard to say, I would want to know what the cons would be of us not being direct members. But as of right now I don't think we should continue with the membership. I don't think students get the full benefit and a majority of them don't know we're with USSA. The organization also has a lot of flaws that as someone being in that space for the first time, I would not want to return. I would be interested in looking into other organizations.

Marya: I think we need to stay members. It was brought up a lot at the conference that the org isn't perfect, but it's a student run, evolving, organization. If we (or other schools) leave it now (whether because we think it's too expensive or not accessible enough yet etc), in the big picture we are losing our chance to access the government and lobby for concrete victories. I understand many individual's concern with USSA, but I think we need to work on improving it how we want to instead of abandoning it and starting from scratch.

Elva: I think with the amount of power students are given to either facilitate healing or harm it is important to keep showing up and carrying the our energy of resilience and demand

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transformative learning and ways of being. These conferences are highly inaccessible for students who do have an interest in navigating policy structures to personally fund themselves. In addition the organization gives students the opportunity to host workshops, about important student issues which can reach students around the country. I think it would be important conversation at WWU about alternative organizations or communities we will offer opportunities with USSA no longer become available. I think no organization is perfect, but it has the ability to evolve through the energy that is carried around it.

Losa: I think we (students) should discuss what the advantages and disadvantages of the being a recognized member in relation to potentially involvement in other organizations. I personally don't know of other organization but I'd be interested in learning of other orgs but I do think students on this campus benefit from some aspects of the organization (voting, building with other student organizers) whether or not that's enough is really determined on an individual then collective understanding/decision,

Andrea: As students i think this is a question we should be asking the broader student population on this campus. I think that this organization has huge potentially to continue to implement true change, but with the exclusiveness and accessibility being part of USSA has I think this is something that "active" members should not be solely responsible for taking. I do not know of any better options at this point but I do think that continuing our membership shows our dedication and gives us more of a platform to address the problems we do see within the organizations itself (such as: accessibility, safety, inclusion, outreach, support, etc.).

### United States Student Association National Student Power Summit 2016 Report

Expenses-

		<b>USSA Power Summit</b>	\$ 12,753.90
		Flights	\$ 6,311.40
		Lodging	\$ 2,404.44
		Stipends	\$ 1,800.00
		Registration	\$ 1,800.00
		Other Travel Expenses (parking, metro, etc.)	\$ 438.06

<b>Student Attendee</b>	<b>Thoughtful Reflection Submitted?</b>
Andrea Tompkins (DL)	Yes
Losa Berhane (DL/USSA Board Member)	Yes
Tanvi Soans	Yes
Samara Almonte	Yes
Bridget Doyle Williams	Yes

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Brianna Dearing	Yes
Theari Leng	Yes
Moisé Payne	Yes
Dayjha McMillan	Yes
Mjllka Solomon	No
Sierra Flanagan	No
Marco Morales	No
Shiffite Awel	No
Jenifer Pacheco	No

### USSA NSPS 2016 Reflection Questions and Attendee Responses:

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

Bridget -1 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

*Marco: I learned that sometimes when we do not know the intentions of other student organizers the best thing to do is maybe get a little uncomfortable and ask. It also taught me that there is still lots of work that needs to be done in these pad'icular spaces around anti-blackness.*

Tanvi: Since this was my first real involvement with USSA I learned a lot of what the organization was about and how people were involved with student activism across the nation. I learned a lot about the different actions going on around different campuses, as well as the differing campus climates. It was good to get a perspective on how our climate at Western both differs and relates to other schools.

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.



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Moisé-1 have learned how important it is to check in with yourself and to make sure you're taking care of yourself mentally and physically while fighting to make change and justice on campus and elsewhere, because If you're In an unhealthy state while simultaneously trying to devote your time and energy elsewhere you may eventually become overwhelmed and burnt-out. In addition to checking In with yourself, It Is also crucial to check In with others who are a part of your support team. Having a strong support team with a vision, goals and clear communication on what those goals are will give you success In achieving those goals. It's crucial that everyone Is on the same page with that vision.

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 activists I hope to be aware of these challenges and remember my privilege as well.

Andrea-1 agree with a lot that has already been said. At USSA National Power Summit, I really learned/experienced what It meant to move In when needed, help out as needed, and use my previous knowledge with USSA and with organizing to help out as much as possible logistically at the conference.

Thearl- Echoing what has been said previously, I learned more about my privileges. There was just so much complexity to each workshop that I am still unpacking the things I tried to absorb and need to reflect on. But something that I bring back with me Is the empowerment as said above, for students of color. It was amazing to hear about the resilient work and effort other students are putting Into organizing on their campus. And from these stories, It Is proven that change CAN and IS happening.

Losa: I learned a lot about organizing and building and rebuilding relationships In times of conflict that Is bound to happen within organizing spaces especially with so many Identities and experiences that can make up a group or a whole conference. I reconnect with many people who I have built very strong relationships with In the past so It was really great reconnecting with them and learning and watching student organizers and movement grow tremendously within a

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year. Personally, these student conferences relieve the sense of Isolation I have and I think many student organizers have across the nation and definitely with In Bellingham because of the geographical distance and negative responses people In power have towards student practicing and receiving REAL power Institutions that should be serving them.

Dayjha-1 learned better organizing skills but also healing spaces are so Important when It comes to doing this kind of work. You cannot be a student activist and not have a place/person to go to In order to de-stress and collect yourself.

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

Bridget -1 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.

*Dayjha: I would like to get more involved in the conferences that go on at Western and I could be interested in working for the AS.*

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.

Tanvi: I would like to be more Involved In the education process about a lot of these Issues. I know that there are many students that are not Involved with student activism, and neither am I In comparison to others. But It would be beneficial to get all students at Western to care and get Involved.

Molsé-In regards to moving forward at WWU, I would want to see other ESC clubs become more connected with each other. Building a stronger connection with other students on campus, gives us the possibility to create an even stronger support group for continuing to push our agenda forward.

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.

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Andrea-1 think laying out more time for delegations to come together as a delegation to reflect, learn and check in with one another is crucial. I am slightly confused on what kind of answer is "wanted" from the wording of this question...

Theari- Moving forward from this conference, I hope to learn more about USSA and the radical works being done on campuses around the nation through students who are involved. I also hope that more students from WWU become aware of this opportunity and that more people have access to this conference.

Losa: I agree with Andrea, I would like to reflect with the delegation individually and collectively about our reflections and what concrete goals people want to create and change within their time at Western.

*Marco: Some of the ideas I have is creating campus wide campaigns that address the issues of access into higher ed for students who have historically have been and continue to be shut out of higher ed.*

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?*

Dayjha- strengths: they have a great community of people. They had a clear understanding of how they wanted the 'action' plan to go but some of the weaknesses was the action plan itself. I don't think the organization realized the privileges they hold. They put a lot of identities on the line.

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.

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Tanvi: Like others have stated USSA as an organization is a strength. It provides a platform for students that are often ignored and unheard an opportunity to be involved in making a change for their own future. A weakness is generally how unorganized the event was. I also feel that when you are in an environment where there is a lot of emotions and high stress there should be room to connect with other individuals on a casual level, which there wasn't really any opportunities for.

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

Moisé-One of the strengths of USSA is the existence of it itself. The USSA gives student leaders and upcoming leaders the opportunity to learn and share their experiences with others around the nation. Understanding that you're not alone in the struggles that we face as students here at WWU is a beautiful and power thing. To be able to connect with others who identify the same as you and to share each other's ideas is encouraging. One of the weaknesses of the USSA was the miscommunication with the planned action that failed to take place. I think it would have been a good idea to give the students options of what kind of action that we wanted to partake in. WWU could best utilize direct membership with USSA in the upcoming year by gaining support and creating ideas from each other on how to push for students agenda's on campus.

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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.

Andrea-1 think USSA has great intentions but is under staffed, and uses co-optation and exploitation just like western does to a certain extent. I also know that if it weren't for USSA, I would not be connected with like-minded Black student activists across the country. "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." I understand the complexities of USSA but I also see the beauty and potential USSA offers historically oppressed students.

Theari- Being a first generation student who is passionate about the bridging the immense gap between higher education and students of color, learning about USSA was a miracle to me. I feel like many organizations that are trying to do work around dismantling colonized and violent systems are generally underfunded and lack resources that would make organization and flow more fluid. But this work around educational justice seems to have little to no roadmap and I think that heavily have played into the disorganization and confusion experienced during the

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conference, which I don't see that as a weakness but more as a hard learning experience for organizers and something the participants needed to understand.

Losa: Like many folks have mentioned, USSA provides one of the only opportunities (that I'm aware of) that centers the organization around student and student power and does this in a way that actively incorporates social justice through the collaborating the student movements happening right now and connecting those efforts. As a board member, I realized how extremely difficult yet rewarding it is to have an organization be student led but in order for USSA to be sustainable and continue to improve with restructuring we need 5-10 more staff members. It is absolutely amazing the work that 4 staff members can execute a national summit by compiling the students movements happening over the country. There seems to be a cycle in which students don't pay their dues which makes it difficult to use the organization to its full potential which restricts the staff and board from hiring more staff. With that students could connect with our field organizers and receive the concrete benefits the organizational services

Marco: I like USSA with all its flaws and hope to continue partaking in it as well as supporting students who may want to get involved. I also see USSA as an opportunity re-charge the student activist battery to come back and go hard. I also believe that USSA needs more staff in order to better serve the students that work within the organization and those served on their respective conferences.

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 -1 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.

Dayjha-1 think the membership should stay because the trip still taught me important things even if it were chaotic.

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 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

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have the opportunity to meet with other folks from across the nation and see how student activism ranges from region to region.

Moisé-Being a part of P.O.A.D. during the conference was very encouraging and inspiring. For future students who would identify with P.O.A.D. and attend WWU, going to this conference and experiencing being a part of P.O.A.D. could give them the support and encouragement that they may not be getting on campus to not give up and to continue their fight within the education system and this goes along with any other social group on campus that does not identify with P.O.A.D. I do believe that WWU should continue its direct membership with USSA.

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.

Andrea-1 think that as I said Before USSA has a lot to offer, USSA is also not perfect and has a lot of areas to grow in. I think that having a STUDENT run organization that is connecting students from across the country to fight for educational justice is powerful, and could be used as a tool to help make real change on different campuses and nationally.

Theari-1 feel like WWU's partnership with USSA gives students of marginalized identities to gather tools, empowerment, and techniques to push the movement towards social justice in differing areas in a momentous way. The power of uniting a group of student across the nation looking to learn as they do genuine work is something this campus needs.

Tanvi: I think the membership needs to be continued. Even though the event was chaotic, the organization provides a positive platform for students. I personally learned a lot about student issues as well as about myself during that short time there. If WWU decided not to continue its membership it would be a lost educational opportunity for students that are interested in student activism.

Marco: USSA needs to continue because student run student led orgs. need to be supported to continue to grow. The spirit of many student groups from across geographic spaces coming together is powerful!