

**Western Washington University Associated Students  
Legislative Affairs Council  
Thursday, May 5, 2016 VU 567**

**Present:** Patrick Eckroth (ASVP for Governmental Affairs), Nora Selander (Vice Chair), Josie Ellison (Legislative Liaison), Bridget Doyle Williams (Student at Large), Henry Pollet (Student at Large), Briana Dearing (Student at Large), Losa Berhane (Student at Large), and Emma Bigongiari (Student at Large).

**Absent:** Andrea Tompkins (Student at Large) and McKenzie Dent (Local Liaison).

**Advisor:** Lisa Rosenberg

**Secretary:** Bryce Hammer

**Guest:** Samara Almonte and Sierra Flanagan

**MOTIONS**

- LAC-16-S-14** Motion to move items from info to action. **Passed.**
- LAC-16-S-15** Motion to approve the VOTE proposal. **Passed.**
- LAC-16-S-16** Motion to approve the New and Dedicated Revenue Proposal. **Passed.**
- LAC-16-S-17** Motion to approve the Student Success proposal. **Passed.**
- LAC-16-S-18** Motion to approve the Support for Survivors proposal. **Passed.**
- LAC-16-S-19** Motion to approve the Support for Survivors proposal. **Passed.**
- LAC-16-S-20** Approved the minutes from 4-28-2016. **Passed.**
- LAC-16-S-21** Motion to adjourn. **Passed.**

**Patrick Eckroth, Chair of Legislative Affairs Council, called the meeting to order at 5:20pm.**

**The council did not have quorum but they moved into discussion that did not require a vote.**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. REVISIONS TO THE AGENDA**

- A. Eckroth took removed the proposed budget item from Information Items.

**III. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**A. Withdrawal from USSA**

Eckroth said he wanted to have a discussion about our direct membership with USSA. Western spends a lot of money on it every year and he's heard mixed

reviews on people's experiences with it. Eckroth put the USSA end of the year report on the screen for everyone to read. He said there are final expenses and reflections. A third of the people who attended the USSA NSPS did not submit reflections so we need to change the way that those reflections are brought back. Dearing said Marco did submit a reflection, though he was not included on the list. Eckroth said at last week's LAC meeting they decided they would only look at thoughtful reflections; Marco did not have one because his answers were short. Eckroth asked the guests who attended USSA NSPS to share their experiences. Flanagan said the experience was really valuable but the preparation prior could use some development. The people who were not familiar with USSA felt unprepared so some kind of training would've been useful. She said the whole conference was helpful but the folks who were not previously involved found it difficult. Dearing said that USSA is important and can be powerful but there were two things she was confused about. She did not know what the conference was going to be about before she left. The second thing was some of the people who attended were well educated on social justice issues and others were not, and for those that were not, the experience was entirely new, which was shocking for them. She said there was also supposed to be an action, which did not end up happening, but students did not know what to expect or what they were standing behind. Flanagan said most of her critiques are for USSA. Selander said the REP now has a liaison with USSA and it was new this year, she asked if this person knew more about USSA would it be more helpful for the people who attended the conference. Flanagan said yes, especially having another person that was not just Losa because it was hard for her. Selander said yes, she does good work but she has other responsibilities. Almonte said she agreed with Dearing and Flanagan and added that USSA had a lot going on in this conference and it seemed a bit too much for one conference. The titles of the workshops were things like "Social Justice Workshop", which was vague and confusing. They should be aware before they go into the space. She said it would've been nice to know what they were signing up for. Pollet said part of what they looked at for the applications was potential impact. Dearing said she feels impacted by the conference because it was a good reminder that people our age try to change the problems of the world, not remaining apathetic, which is easy to do because of all the work that students have to do. She said it was nice to have the community of likeminded people. Flanagan said she feels impacted by the students she met there, and they're building those relationships more outside of the conference. She said USSA makes it possible for students to form these groups and by bringing it back to campus more students have the opportunity to make those connections. Almonte said it was eye-opening because bringing in people from different schools creates conflict and seeing how to resolve it helps her grow.

***Bigongiari arrived at 5:35. Quorum was reached.***

Eckroth said USSA requires a lot of funding and does not have a particularly strong presence on campus and they have a short staff, he wants to know people's view on it. Berhane said she'd like to find ways to create a more direct impact on campus

and having some sort of paid position that is required to liaise with them would help with that. USSA is going through a transitional period and they're trying to find a way to get more students involved and they're trying to implement the 6 pillars and a national platform. The platform identifies problems that students have on campuses across the nation and how to work with those movements. The 6 pillars will contribute to the different issues, that way students don't have to be directly connected to USSA staff in order to feel USSA presence on campus. Because it is a national organization, many students work on a lot of issues and we can work with USSA to connect students that are passionate about those subjects to the people that are working on them. Eckroth said the concern that he has is, we have a stable fee of \$1 per student per quarter that goes towards these memberships and conferences and the total fees that go to USSA was around 30K for this year and that was from the total fund of 43K, which takes away from the money that students can access for more local lobbying. He said the things we're leading to are contradictory. Dearing asked what happened with the leftover 12K and did USSA take precedent over other things. Eckroth said the non-discretionary items always take priority. 12K is usually spent WSA and 6K for USSA but only 6K was paid to WSA this year, the remaining 6K will be payed next year. The WSA fee is expected to increase and they're hoping to expand lobbying efforts. He said there is also some money set aside for student use. He said we were able to fund everything because there was 22K in reserves and that was an unreasonable level. Rosenberg asked how much reserves we spend. Eckroth said right now, which does not include the upcoming USSA meeting, they've spend 7K, so it'll be around 15K in reserves for next year. Eckroth asked what the USSA attendees thought of sending 16 students. He asked if it was overwhelming. Berhane said it would not have been overwhelming if she wasn't on the Board and several committees. The delegation took a lot of responsibility and was really great but having a person that was in charge of those people, like a paid position, would be really great. Having organizational context could help. Eckroth asked Rosenberg if there could be some kind of compensation for a person to do that work. Rosenberg said they could explore it. Selander said they could use the O&O Coordinator to do that, so giving them time to get settled and allowing us time to figure out our direct membership would be good. Seare said she talked with Aja, the West coast field organizer. Aja said she wants to be as accessible as possible to anyone that wants to talk with her, she suggested having Aja call into LAC so they could be frank. They're critiquing themselves and USSA membership has some ideas about what a strong presence on campuses will look like. Seare said they're in a weird situation because the WSA isn't currently involved in USSA. Seare said it's clear that we do spend a lot of money on USSA but they bring organizing that's not legislative to this campus. Berhane said interacting with other students who are doing organizing on their campus, not in the legislature, and not everyone has access to do that. She said USSA provides a platform to connect with those students and they connect students to the issues they care about. Berhane said it's lonely to be a student organizer and having those connections to other organizers on other campuses is really important, particularly marginalized identities and

people who don't know a lot about leg stuff. Selander said we can send students to conferences without being direct members and she wants to know how much support the students feel from the staff. Berhane said that she's been in constant contact with Aja and Bree, which has been good, especially because they have organized on campuses before and they have a lot of good experience. They've been great for getting in contact with other campuses. Seare said she's not as actively involved in USSA but she was last year. She was involved in State of Emergency and she would talk to them multiple times per week. Sometimes it can be difficult to come away from the conference without knowing what to do with that information. Having the person in the REP makes it more accessible, and students come back really energized and ready. She went to a conference two years ago when Mike Brown was killed and it was a natural way of getting involved with USSA and sometimes when you go to the conference it feels like coming into the middle of the meeting. If we're able to communicate the context so they understand what they're coming into, students would probably feel better about the conferences and know what to do with the information afterwards. She said the summit can be a good time to get people on the same page and if you haven't been to a conference then it's difficult. Berhane said the pillars realized the conferences were inaccessible and the Board members have decided they want members to have direct contact with USSA. Seare said USSA is targeted at student government. Almonte said that's what she meant about conflicting themes, because there was organizing, campaigns, student government, lobbying, etc. It was difficult to figure out what they're supposed to do. Almonte said a lot of the people that go are involved in their student government. Berhane said they're still trying to figure out how to get closer to organizing on campus but some organizations are stopping that. They're trying to create ways for student organizers to be involved in USSA without being involved in their student government. Lisa said having different tracts or conferences would be good. Dearing said having a conversation about it at the beginning of the conference would be good. They should prioritize information about actions so that people know what they're advocating for. Almonte asked how USSA will get feedback from students. Berhane said she can send it to them. She said it would be good to give this information to them. Seare said this is the first time they've had a conversation about it. Berhane said people get motivated at conferences but there's not an avenue to put it into. Having a group of students on campus like that would be really good. Selander asked if having the person in the REP would be good and if having an avenue set up beforehand would be good. Pollet said he'd be hesitant because the application process was targeted at students that can create change on campus and having one position that dictates how that happens could be dangerous. We should focus on each individual's experience on campus. Selander said she doesn't want to do that but getting them the info before they go would be good. Eckroth said they'll be bringing this back next week so they can have a bigger discussion about it. He said he's impartial towards the USSA but evaluating it would be good. He asked for final comments, there were none.

#### **IV. INFORMATION ITEMS**

##### **A. BA for LD**

The job description has changed and it will expand this position from VLD to all lobby days. It will also move the position into non-discretionary funds. This position will coordinate with relevant groups that are working around advocacy. Dearing asked if it would be a new position. Eckroth said it'll expand the BA for VLD from 60 hours max to 100 hours with an average of 85. It'll go through winter quarter. It will also allow for hiring a little earlier which will help the VP for Gov. Selander asked if the Leg liaison is part of that relationship. Eckroth said yes, but it is in a lot of places so it's a bit redundant. He said not many changes but it'll be a 4 or 500-dollar increase in the amount of pay.

##### **B. WSA Proposals**

Eckroth said Western has signed up for 4 proposals for WSA. VOTE, Student Support Services, which is Western specific, Student Trustee Empowerment, and New and Dedicated Revenue which will be complementing an already existing proposal about college affordability. We did not get any new proposals done. Eckroth said he thinks it's okay to pass the issues without having the documents because none of them are new. They'll focus on specific leg language later. The only weird one is dedicated rev. Selander said they can pass them through and then see them next week. They went over the details of the proposals. Eckroth said it would be the same proposal from VLD but it'll be a new biennium for the bill numbers will change.

##### ***Ellison came in at 6:17.***

Ellison said we should update the voting on college campus ones and the 16/ 17-year-old ones. Selander asked if WSA has ever done support for survivors. Ellison said yes but the person who brought it didn't know. Having it would be good because Ranker has offered to write a bill about it and statewide support would be helpful for passing it. Selander asked if it would pass. Ellison said yes. They said a list was compiled. Nora said we should move on it. Eckroth moved onto Dedicated Rev. Ellison said we should take off capital gains and the estate tax increase because it won't pass WSA and this can ease them in. Eckroth said student success will be the same with sexual assault survivors. He said the new one will be Student Trustee empowerment. Ellison said it would be scratching the area in the law that says the trustee can't be in the room for personnel decisions. They said we should partner with the faculty for a faculty trustee.

##### ***Motion LAC-16-S-14 by Pollet***

Motion to move items from info to action.

Second: Bigongiari

Vote: 6-0-0

Motion: Passed.

##### ***Motion LAC-16-S-15 by Ellison***

Motion to approve the VOTE proposal.

Second: Pollet Vote: 7-0-0

Motion:Passed.

***Motion LAC-16-S-16 by Selander***

Motion to approve the New and Dedicated Revenue Proposal.

Second: Dearing

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion:Passed.

There was a suggestion to include Student Success and Support for Survivors in one proposal. Berhane asked if they should be one. Ellison said the trick is student success is Western specific and it would help getting it through WSA if we have support for survivors. It would help getting it passed but it would make it harder to get funding for student success. Eckroth asked if one proposal can be two agenda items. They said it can be but they're fine with either. Selander said it could be two. Ellison said student success will probably be in the next budget. Selander asked if it was worth it for WSA to have it. Ellison said all schools in WA could use more funding for retention. The other schools need to have that conversation on their campuses. Eckroth said this is less specific than the transit proposal from UW.

***Motion LAC-16-S-17 by Ellison***

Motion to approve the Student Success proposal.

Second: Dearing

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed.

***Motion LAC-16-S-18 by Pollet***

Motion to approve the Support for Survivors proposal.

Second: Selander

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed.

***Motion LAC-16-S-19 by Dearing***

Motion to approve the Student Trustee Empowerment proposal.

Second: Bigongiari

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion:Passed.

## **y. REPORTS**

- A.** Legislative Liaison: Western has had Tina Podlodowski on campus and The Western Front had a good article about it. Van Wyvem was on campus and she was interested in it during session. They're excited to find out who their successor is and they'll be meeting.
- B.** Western Votes! : Selander said Western Votes! had their General Assemble. Griffin Crisp was elected WV President. Hannah Spencer is VP. Selander is Outreach. Communications is still open. Ellison said they decided to wait on hiring so people have time to figure out if they want to run. Nora said they're thinking of doing a sit down with the Board as a way to keep accountability there and to make it more accessible for students. They're hoping for engagement with the presidential race. Selander read off a note from Dent who suggested the people who will be in the REP next year should go to the MNAC plan. Dent also helped register 75 students at Sehome High. She plans to create a guide for students about their reps in state and local level. McKenzie is also interested in keeping connection to other campuses across the country.
- C.** AS Vice President for Governmental Affairs: The AS is starting internships. Ellison said their job description is updated. Eckroth said it'll be at the Board meeting tomorrow and the budgeting process will be interesting. It'll add five hours per week over fall quarter. Josie said they'll get paid for the work that they're doing. Eckroth said it'll also add summer hours. WSA is having GA on the 14<sup>th</sup>. 8 people are going so far and WSA will also be having a students of color summit for the first time. Berhane asked for details. Eckroth said all students of color will be out of the room during the proposal process, which Western is not in favor of. Eckroth said he's looking at getting different cars so people that want to go to the summit can and people who want to go to GA can. Ellison said they technically only need four people in the room to have votes. Eckroth said he does not like proxy but yes technically. Ellison said they can bounce between rooms too. Eckroth said the WSA is going through restructure. Selander said she's on the hiring committee for OD. Selander and Hammer were nominated for WSA Board.

## **VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

### ***MOTION LAC-16-S-20 by Ellison***

Approved the minutes from 4-28-2016.

Second: Dearing Vote: 7-0-0

Action: MotionPassed.

### ***Motion LAC-16-S-21 by Ellison***

Motion to adjourn.

Second: Dearing

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed.

**VII. OTHER BUSINESS**

- A. Berhane asked if the WSA was next weekend, she also said they're having the USSA Board meeting and they'll be talking about congress and money.

*The meeting was adjourned at 6:53.*