



ASWWU Legislative Agenda

Proposals

Issue: Vote

**Presenter(s): Bryce Hammer, AS Vice President for Governmental Affairs
Nora Selander, AS Legislative Liaison
Rosa Rice-Pelepko, AS Voting and Outreach Coordinator**

Considerations for presenters:

- Describe the issue: What is the problem? What is the solution?
- How does it directly impact and improve students' lives?
- Please provide background information and the current context of the issue.
- Does it have a clear target? If yes, who?
 - (e.g. a specific legislator, committee, or other agency)
- How will it strengthen and expand efforts within Western?
- How could students build a diverse campus coalition around this issue?
- In what way does it have a local/state/federal organizing and lobbying angle?
- What creative and/or innovative tactics could we employ to engage the media and excite new students around this issue?

The current processes surrounding elections in Washington State, including voter registration and ballot submission, are inaccessible, especially to people that have been historically disenfranchised. Students and young people have often been provided with the least access to these processes, largely leaving the student voice out of democratic decisions. Voter turnout is low at both the state and federal levels and the lack of access to the voting process is largely to blame. These issues directly impact and improve students' lives by increasing the ability for their voices to be heard and represented in our government and reducing the costs associated with the process of voting. Since these costs disproportionately affect people with a lower income, like most students and people with marginalized identities, they decrease voter registration and turnout and therefore the representation of these groups. Making voter registration and ballot submission more open and accessible would provide more opportunity for students' voices to be heard and represented. WWU already has a powerful voter registration drive, these pieces of legislation could help us to do an even better job reaching out to students that we are not currently getting to. In addition to this, the increase in numbers of voters registered directly correlates to the amount of power that we have with legislators in Olympia. The following bills will increase access to voting for students and the population of Washington State.



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Motor Voter

This legislation would allow people to pre-register to vote at the department of licensing when they are 16 and 17 years old. Once the person turns 18 they would automatically be registered to vote and would start receiving ballots in the next election. California and Oregon have both implemented these systems in the few last years.

Automatic Voter Registration

This legislation would ensure that in departments that require proof of citizenship would also automatically register people to vote. Hopefully including institutions of higher education and the department of licensing when the licensing format is updated to include citizenship requirements.

Landlord Voter Registration

This legislation would require that landlords provide new tenants with a voter registration form. Considering that people between age 18-25, a predominantly student age group, move nearly every year this should help make sure that people can keep their registration up to date.

Voting Rights Act

The Washington Voting Rights Act (WVRA) was created to address the systemic exclusion of people of color from the political process. This would provide support to ensure that local elections allow for accurate representation of the district they represent. Recently Yakima, which, prior to the adoption of district voting, had never elected a Latino council member, despite 40% of the district being Latino, spent ~\$1 million defending their election system against the ACLU and lost. The WVRA would help to create truly representative districts to prevent these problems, but also creates a different court channel than the federal process that will be more efficient in time and money.

Extend Deadline

This legislation would extend the allow for same-day voter registration through election day. The following states have same-day, in-person deadlines for voter registration: Maine, Minnesota, and Wisconsin in the early-to-mid-1970s, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Wisconsin, and Wyoming and the District of Columbia. The arbitrary deadlines currently in place prematurely end voter registration so that only those who know and understand the deadlines are able to participate in elections. These deadlines severely disadvantaged students in Washington. As most of the public colleges and universities operate on quarter systems, the current systems only allow for student voter registration drives to happen in the first two weeks of school which drastically limits the effectiveness of these efforts. County auditors, who would be impacted the most by this change in legislation, have expressed their support for these bills. Extending voter registration deadlines would substantially increase student access to elections.

Access for Voters with Disabilities

This legislation would allow people who are unable to sign their ballot to do a voter registration affidavit once and then simply make their mark or use a signature stamp for their ballots in the future instead of



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requiring two signatories. Right now, two signatories are required each time someone who is unable to sign their ballot votes. Streamlining this process would greatly increase access to voting for people with disabilities.

Automatic Voter Registration for Institutions of Higher Education

This legislation would require each institution of higher education to automatically register eligible students to vote. This legislation would help to make voting accessible to all student across the state and make voting rights and turnout a priority to institutions. The Associated Students already runs an active voter registration drive, that has been increasingly successful, but legislation is important to support these efforts.

Prepaid postage

This legislation would require return envelopes for ballots to have prepaid postage, essentially abolishing the poll tax currently associated with voting. The people of Washington State should not have to pay for a stamp in order to have their voices heard, voting is a right that should be freely exercised. Requiring a stamps in order for a ballot to be mailed is a barrier to participating in the political process. Prepaid postage on ballots would help take down the obstacles associated with voting and provide better access for all people.

In the last session:

- Motor Voter passed the House and made it to committee in the Senate.
- Automatic Voter Registration passed the House but failed to be voted out of committee in the Senate.
- Landlord voter registration did not make any progress but had bills introduced in both chambers.
- The Voting Rights Act passed the House and did not make progress in the Senate.
- Extending Voter Registration Deadline has made progress in the House, one piece passed, and is being held up in the Senate.
- Access for Voters with Disabilities had a bill introduced in the House, but that bill did not make progress. No companion bill in Senate
- A bill for Higher Education Institutions to have voter registration plans was introduced in the House and Senate and was referred to committee in the Senate but was not heard before the end of session.
- Prepaid Postage bills were introduced but did not make it out of committee in either chamber.

Targets for this issue include but are not limited to:

Chair of House State Government Committee

Chair of House Appropriations Committee

Chair of Senate Government Operations and Security

Chair of Senate Ways and Means

Chair of the House Higher Education Committee

Chair of the Senate Higher Education Committee



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As students encounter these barriers and are made aware of how they disproportionately impact young people and people with marginalized identities, they are inspired to change these policies. Most of these bills gained traction in the last biennium and we should be able to quickly get legislation on these bills introduced and build support for these issues early on in session. Therefore, each of these issues are likely to be debated and acted upon in the upcoming session.

Some creative and/or innovative tactics could we employ to engage students around this issue include:

- Doing a video series to let students and legislators know why voting is important to students
- A letter writing campaign to legislators from students about the difficulties of registering to vote and the barriers that prevent students from voting, and pressure from constituents
- Student testimony as to how these issues impact them and why increasing access matters
- Encouraging students to get out and vote this year by providing accessible voter guides about who represents their district in Olympia and their track record with voting on higher education/voter issues.



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Issue: Civic Participation

Students often do not have access to voter registration or civic engagement before they get to college, if they attend. The overall lack in youth voters is often characterized by access, not apathy. When given the tools to become civically engaged many young people do. Research has also proven that the younger someone is when they become engaged with the civic process, the more likely that they will be engaged for life. K-12 education currently has a bare minimum of civics requirement that does not fully equip people to understand the political systems they operate under. The legislature regulates what is taught in K-12 schools across the state, this is therefore the most effective place to push for this change right now. It also allows for more outreach to allies in public school programs across the spectrum of education. This could be a way to bring all of Washington State's education components together in support of legislation. Specifics around the goals of democratic/civic education should include:

- 1) students considering social issues in relationship to the public good,
- 2) students using democratic decision-making processes in the classroom,
- 3) teachers embedding content in critical thinking about real issues,
- 4) teachers engaging students in multiple perspectives and multiple funds of knowledge,
- 5) schools affording all students access to high-quality education, and
- 6) students' cultural and linguistic identities being supported and viewed as legitimate aspects of citizenship" (Christine E. Sleeter, 2008).

From these practices and the existing graduation requirements, schools ought to equip students with the ability to:

- 1) Identify the districts they live in and which elected officials represent them
- 2) Understand which level of government (city, county, state) handle various issues and resources
- 3) Access the mechanisms of decision making that operate at each local level of government
- 4) Understand impacts of grassroots organizing
- 5) Identify how to demand transparency from elected officials as well as hold elected officials accountable for their actions

More comprehensive civic education in public schools across the state can mitigate the access problem that is so prevalent among young voters and instead create a culture where civic participation is the norm. Cultivation of involvement with political systems can lay the tracks not only for more regular voters, but better informed voters. The importance of making the state legislative process more accessible is incredibly visible at the college level, college should not be the first time a student interacts with ways to make legislation and legislators more accessible. The conversation around millennial voter turnout is quick to put the blame on the young adult and not the system that actively disenfranchises them. This marginalization is perpetuated for people of color, queer identified individuals, people with disabilities, and others for whom the current system creates barriers or actively disenfranchises. In addition, increasing civic education ensures that this knowledge is available to students who may not have access to a college degree, by enfranchising voters at a younger age we allow their needs to be more accurately



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represented by the legislators they play a part in electing. Therefore an increase in young voters is intrinsically good for higher education because it means legislators will take students our age more seriously.

This is an issue that affects all students, and has the opportunity to educate students throughout the K-12 system in our state to better prepare them for civic involvement. We also have potential to ally with different state-wide teacher unions like American Federation of Teachers or the Washington Education Association, these coalitions can be very meaningful and help us to build collective power in Olympia.

In order to organize around this issue, students on our campus might collaborate with local high schools in order to find out what students are currently learning and how to be more effective when working with high-schoolers on this issue. This will not only help to show our power but will also help to prove our argument of access over apathy.



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Issue: Student Trustee Empowerment

Each campus has a student representative on their board of trustees/board of regents. These students are appointed to represent the interests of Washington but also serve as a representative of the student body. Currently they are barred from "participation or voting on matters relating to the hiring, discipline, or tenure of faculty members and personnel or any other matters pertaining to collective bargaining agreements." Additionally, these students are selected by the office of the Governor. This proposal is a solution to the problem of student representation. This problem can be addressed by removing the second point under RCW 28B.50.102, and instituting a transition to elected student trustees. For reference see the full RCW on student trustees below.

RCW 28B.50.102

Boards of trustees—Student trustee.

(1) Boards of trustees for each college district, by majority vote, may establish a sixth trustee that shall be filled by a student. The governor shall select each student member from a list of candidates, of at least three and not more than five, submitted by the associated student governments or their equivalent of the college district. The student member shall hold his or her office for a term of one year, beginning July 1st and ending June 30th, or until the student member's successor is appointed and qualified, whichever is later. The student member shall be a full-time student in good standing at a college within the college district at the time of appointment and throughout the student's term. If the student member fails to be enrolled at the college full-time or forfeits his or her academic standing, the student member is disqualified and a new student member must be appointed.

(2) A student appointed under this section shall excuse himself or herself from participation or voting on matters relating to the hiring, discipline, or tenure of faculty members and personnel or any other matters pertaining to collective bargaining agreements.

If Western starts now, this issue will likely be an uphill battle but one that is well worth it. Trustees and Regents have the final say on almost all issues affecting students at university. By limiting the participation of the student representative important decisions are being made with no student representation present. There is also precedent for elected student trustees in systems and states across the country. See Massachusetts General Laws (Part I. Title II. Chapter 15A. Section 21)

Each student member shall be elected by the student body annually, no later than May fifteenth. The term of office of each elected student member of the board shall be one year and shall commence on July first following their election and terminate on June thirtieth of the following year. The student member shall be eligible for re-election for as long as said student remains a full-time undergraduate student and maintains satisfactory academic progress as determined by the policy of the institution at which the student is enrolled. If at any time during the elected term of office said student member ceases to be a full-time undergraduate student or fails to maintain satisfactory academic progress, the membership of said student on the board



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shall be terminated and the office of the elected student member shall be deemed vacant, provided, however, that if the elected student member vacates his position upon graduation from the institution prior to July first, the elected successor may assume the position of student member on the board effective from the date of graduation of his predecessor, provided further that the statutory time limit of one year of the successor student trustee shall commence to run on July first notwithstanding any taking of office prior to the commencement of said term. A vacancy in the office of the elected student member prior to the expiration of a term shall be filled for the remainder of the term in the same manner as student elections to full terms.

The boards in charge of our universities are the final say on decisions that impact students. This is especially true because the decisions that students are barred from are personnel decisions about faculty, which students spend the most time with, and collective bargaining, which affects students' rights to unionize or to support faculty in that process.

If this goal is met, Western would have real student representative in all university decisions and ways to hold them accountable through student government elections. Making the student trustee an elected position will bring more student attention to the actions of the trustees and the issues they debate on, which is a form of accountability and encourages student involvement. The ASWU believes that students should have a say on the issues that impact them.

By creating a more transparent trustee process and by institutionalizing their authority students gain more measurable power on campuses across the state. Student power helps to show students that they have the authority to cause change and WSA is one of the main ways that change is coordinated at the state level.

From the WSA website: "Sometimes obtaining a seat at the table is half the battle. Student participation and input in a number of task forces, blue ribbon committees, and other work groups has also often been driven by the WSA.

- In 1998, after the WSA and its predecessors had been advocating for 17 years, the Legislature approved the creation of the governor-appointed "Student Regent/Trustee" position that is in place today.
- In the 2008 session the WSA began the next step in advocating for student representation for community and technical college students to have a voice and a vote on their Boards of Trustees.
- In the 2012 legislative session, the WSA then won legislation to place voting rights for students on the Board of Trustees for all Community and Technical Colleges. Now, there are no public colleges in Washington that can't have student representation on the largest governing boards.
- The WSA has also successfully advocated for a student member on the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) - appointed by the Governor. The WSA also ensured that the replacement of the HECB, The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), had a student representative⁷

<http://www.wastudents.org/victories/>

By taking on this issue Western could create a pathway for each of the current student trustees to advocate for or support this issue to the legislature. Additionally there could be good visual campaign



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components attached to the fact that the student is essentially in many cases a token that is not actively listened to or respected in the same way or with the same power as their faculty, staff, and administrative peers.

This could be done through Higher Education in the House and Senate or through the House State Gov. Committee & Senate Gov. Ops and Security. The targets would be the chairs/ranking members on these committees. The main pushback we have gotten so far is from the Governor, John Aultman says that governors selecting trustees is "just how it had always been" and that "all the other governors pick trustees" so the main negotiation will be between students and the governor's office.

Considerations for the Legislative Affairs Council

This section is comprised of questions LAC should keep in mind while considering proposals

- Is it winnable?
- Does it have a clear and realistic time frame?
- Is it likely to be debated and acted upon by the Legislature in the next year?



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Proposals

Issue: Support for Survivors of Sexual and Domestic Violence

Presenter(s): Nora Selander, Bridget Williams, Leanna Sauerlander, Sarah Gallagher, Sofia Perry

Considerations for presenters:

- Describe the issue: What is the problem? What is the solution?
- How does it directly impact and improve students' lives?
- Please provide background information and the current context of the issue.
- Does it have a clear target? If yes, who?
 - (e.g. a specific legislator, committee, or other agency)
- How will it strengthen and expand efforts within Western?
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Sexual and domestic violence on our college campuses is a real issue for all students. These acts of aggression range from unwanted stalking or touching, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and rape. An estimate of **one in every five womxn** are sexually assaulted while they are in college and only around 13% are able to report due to personal or institutional barriers. The ASWWU recognizes that this issue is not one that exclusively impacts women and female identified folks, and that male identified and gender nonconforming folks also experience sexual and domestic violence. On top of the barriers that exist for female identified folks who wish to report, there are unique barriers that often go unrecognized for male identified and gender nonconforming people. On top of this, campuses often perpetuate victim-blaming, a huge part of rape culture, which has manifested itself in our universities. Multiple campuses in the state of Washington have been part of a federal investigation into how our campuses are handling these issues. Some beginnings of a solution include funding for counseling services, which are currently underfunded and too understaffed to support students who are survivors of sexual violence. The difficulty in trying to navigate through the information that is available can be an additional barrier to a person who is thinking about getting help/wanting to report an incident. Additionally, faculty and staff need to be trained on supporting survivors and coordinating campus resources.



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Sexual assault prevention campaigns are highly supported on college campuses because there is little opposition to the concept of preventing sexual assault. However, taking up this issue from the side of support for survivors acknowledges that this is a problem on campuses and that people are not being adequately taken care of when they experience violence and seek support. Advocating for funding for more supportive services is important because sexual and domestic violence is so pervasive. Shedding light on this issue will help to pressure legislators into taking action.

Historically, national legislative acts such as Title IX and the Clery Act were created to make higher education safer and more accessible for marginalized communities, especially womxn. Though they have had some positive impact, these legislative acts haven't been enough. 106 schools across the nation are currently under investigation by the Dept. of Education's Office of Civil Rights.

This has increased the attention being given to sexual violence on college campuses per the national investigation of many institutions on their sexual assault policies. Last year the Office of Civil Rights from the U.S. Department of Education was on multiple campuses looking into allegations of the mishandling of students' reports of sexual assault. A federal investigation of ineffective policies for supporting survivors of sexual violence pushes the State of Washington into the spotlight around this issue. This issue is currently receiving a lot of widespread support and from many different local, state, and federal organizations, which helps to leverage our pressure and increasing the likelihood that specific legislators will be motivated to take a stand with us.

There are many campus groups, community organizations, and individual students who will want to get behind working on this issue because sexual and domestic violence 1) is an issue that is experienced across the identity spectrum and 2) drastically affects a survivor's ability to be an active and healthy member of the campus community. Because of how strongly this issue impacts people on our campus and because of how deeply it is felt, there are going to be many people that relate to or care about this issue. This issue has the potential to build a broad coalition because there are many organizations and movements at the state and local level lobbying on the issues of sexual and domestic violence. Many of the campuses involved in the WSA have already been independently working on this issue and the report compiled by the WSA shows that this issue urgently needs to be addressed. Addressing this issue not from a prevention standpoint but from supporting survivors is a very powerful angle. From this angle there is no minimizing the issue or ignoring the fact that instances of sexual and domestic violence are taking place, impacting students, and our universities are not doing enough to provide support. Also, many campuses have been lobbying on student success packages that include more funding for counseling services. However, separating this issue into its own agenda item is also a testament to the extreme and undeniable need for these services.



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The following legislators have control over the budget and policies regarding higher education, depending on what part of the issue on which we focus (funding v. policy.)

House Higher Education Chair

Senate Higher Education Leadership

House Appropriations Members

Senate Ways and Means Members

Tactics to consider while organizing around this issue:

- Carry that weight style awareness actions
- Send legislators small cut-outs of people (gingerbread style) representing how many people on campus are affected by this issue (reference the 1 in 5 statistic)
- On campus educational tactic- clip cut outs to a string and wrap around the light posts on red square to represent the number of survivors
- Potentially send letters to legislators with an account (anonymous or not, up to individual) of a survivor's experience and explain how many people on campus are affected by this issue.
- Look for avenues to provide testimony from survivors as much as possible in order to empower voices and **not** *speaking for* survivors



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Issue: Student Success

The success of Western students depends not only on the resources and support they receive inside the classroom, but also is very much dependent on the resources and support made available to them outside the classroom. In order for students to be successful on our campus, we need to look at them holistically and ensure that we're providing them with ample resources to aid in their progress while at Western. Unfortunately, as funding at our institution is limited, we do not have the resources available to fully ensure student success from a holistic standpoint. First-generation, low-income, and students of color need more academic advising and tutoring support to guarantee their success and graduation from Western needs the resources to recruit and retain a more diverse group of students to our campus. Students with disabilities, whether they be physical, mental, or emotional, need to be provided more counseling, professional health services, and other disability resources.

In order to support students in these ways, Western needs increased funding to offer better services for Western students who face unique challenges while attending our university. It is important we set every student up for success by providing them with resources to support them both inside and outside of the classroom. As of now, Western has limited ability to provide all the services Western's diverse range of students need.

The Student Success package being lobbied on by the administration, with the addition of a few services, would help provide the various resources and services Western students need to ensure their success.

In order to demonstrate Western's needs for greater student resources We've included some statistics below.

Academic Advising Services:

Graduations Rates After Six Years: 2014 -

All students: 71.5 %

Black/African American: 50%

Latino/Latina: 62%

White: 73.7%

[Source](#)

70% of students who enter WWU as first year students are still undeclared at 90 credits
WWU Academic Advising Center and Student Outreach Services will have to provide support for approximately 7, 000 Students

[Source](#)

WWU Tutoring Center

Demand for Tutoring Center (TC) services has increased by nearly 200% over the past six years without adequate increases in resources.

[Source](#)

Increased Recruitment and Retention of Students of Color:

Demographics:

Students of Color- 25.3%



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Latino/Latina - 8.3%
Black/African American - 2.5%
White - 72.4%
Source

Support for Students who are Experiencing Homelessness

Because of the lack of data collected around this issue, the number of students this would affect is unknown. Regardless of the number of students it would serve, this service would still significantly increase access to WWU for students who cannot afford housing. The urgent need related to this issue is increased access to emergency housing, and emergency housing that allows for a minimum of a 1 month stay with students not owing any money for taking advantage of emergency housing services.

HB 2024

Mental Health and Counseling Services

Available data suggests that suicide occurs at a rate between 6.5 and 7.5 per 100,000 among college students. According to Western's Office of Survey Research, personal health/mental health is cited as one of the top 3 reasons students leave WWU.

Additionally, the WWU Counseling Center and Student Health Center have seen a continually growing trend in both the number of students seeking mental health services and in the severity of the mental health needs.

Source

This issue is winnable because student success is key to a university's reputation and degree-completion rate, both of which have significant influence on the future of the Western, funding included. Everyone goes to college to succeed, but if there are no resources for support services, students of color and other students who are underrepresented will drop out at higher rates. This makes this an incredibly winnable issue not only because the administration will align with most of this proposal, and the unified front we create down in Olympia is an incredible tactic to convince legislators of the importance of these issues, but also because it's an easily justifiable expense and has obvious and immediate impacts for students.

Many students need access to support services, whether it be veterans' services, disability resource services, or counseling services. Access to these resources is essential for students to be able to know they have a place to get help when they need it and to improve their quality of life. In order for students to be able to focus on school and their careers, they must first know that there are resources available to ensure their quality of life and mental health, which are prerequisites to other aspects of life like careers and grades and participating in extracurricular activities. Knowing these resources are available will impact and improve students' lives exponentially.



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Targets are as follows:

Chair of the House Appropriations Committee
Ranking Minority Member, House Appropriations Committee
Speaker of the House
Senate Majority Leader
Senate Ways and Means Chair
Ranking member Ways and Means

This issue gained a lot of traction in the house last biennium and was even included in the Senate's budget in 2016. This issue has a lot of support for being a reasonable increase in services request, it is incredibly well justified and most legislators support that. The specific time frame is difficult to map out at this time because it's unsure how the state legislature will deal with supplemental budgeting this year.

The deeply personal implications of some parts of this proposal lend it a lot of authority, and it will help us build power. It is easy to find a student on campus that has been negatively affected by this lack of resources, and numbers means power in student organizing.

The increase in funding can be easily marketed as a maintenance to campus services. Many legislators feel as though Western is already serving its students well because of our relative position in the state, however relative good is not absolute good, and WWU can always be doing more, especially to support marginalized communities on campus like students of color. While Western's current policies and funding level are better than some places in the state, they are still failing students of color, students with disabilities, queer students, and other marginalized communities. If you already have the societal pressure of systemic oppression like racism it is that much harder to overcome the barriers to success at institutions like WWU. The nature of the issue also lends itself to building a diverse coalition around it.

Since the great recession in 2008, higher education has taken serious cuts in state funding. While some of this was made up for by drastic increases in tuition, there were still departments that took large cuts in order for WWU to remain functional- many of these were student support offices. This means that not only were the worst of the tuition increases carried by already marginalized students but once those students got to campus they were also the hardest hit by the lack of resources available. This is perpetuating incredibly problematic systems of oppression that this proposal hopes to begin to address.

In advocating for increased funding for student services, we have the exciting opportunity to not only educate students about the resources that are available for them on campus, but also to highlight the important work that has already been done in those offices. A creative tactic might be to encourage students to, if they feel comfortable, talk about how those services have empowered them.

We also have the opportunity to talk realistically about student retention and struggles that students (particularly students of marginalized identities) currently face despite the presence of student services. Another thing too that might be able to excite new students around the issue would be to launch grassroots educational campaigns that talk about institutional marginalization and privilege in an accessible way- perhaps many folks who would think themselves removed from the issue of student services and student retention on-campus could realize the ways in which those issues impact them.



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Considerations for the Legislative Affairs Council

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Proposals

Issue: Tuition and Revenue

Authors(s): Nora Selander, Bryce Hammer, Sarah Gallagher

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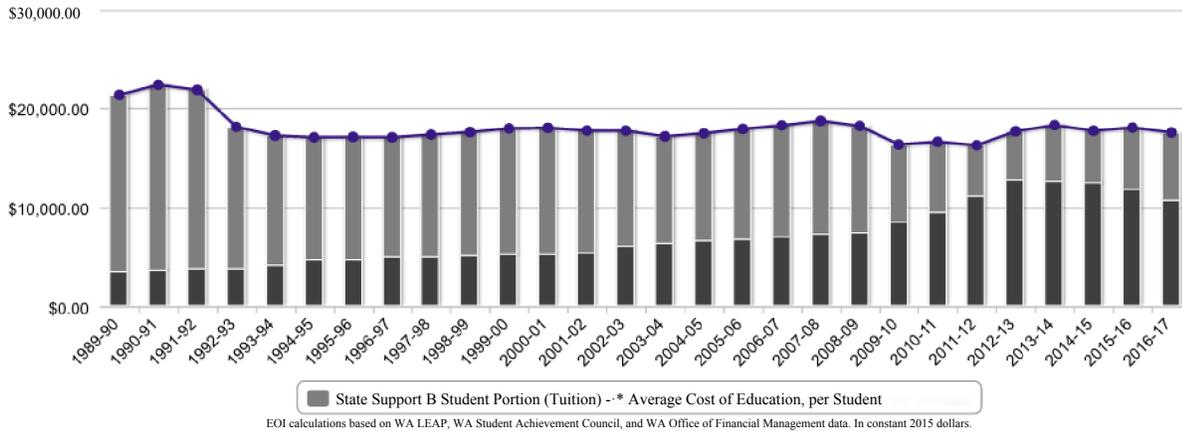
Tuition:

State divestment in higher education has caused students to endure a greater financial burden. In fact, twenty years ago, the state government paid 73 percent of the cost of a student's education and a student paid 27 percent. Today, the state pays 33 percent of the cost, and the student pays 67 percent. The median debt for 2016 WWU graduates is \$19,500. As the cost of higher education increases, many students are unable to pursue postsecondary education or do so but graduate with increasing amounts of debt that stifle their development after graduation.



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Share of State vs Student Funding at the University of Washington



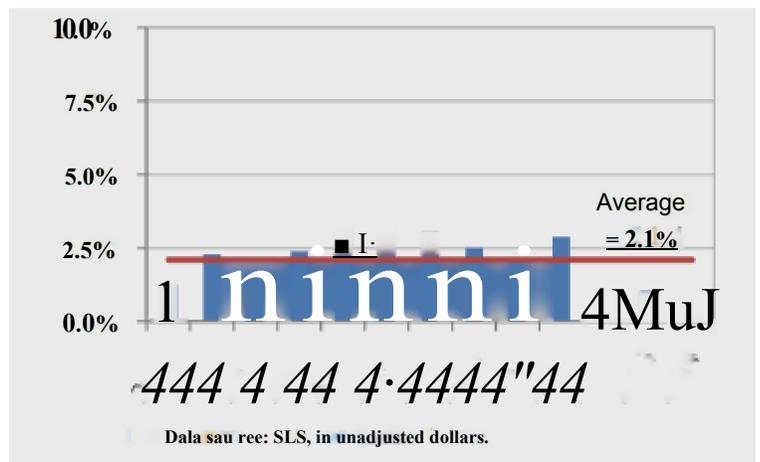
Updated 00/25/2016

Resident undergraduate tuition for 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 was frozen and for 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 tuition was decreased. While these freezes and decreases have temporarily helped to lessen the burden students are taking on in terms of tuition, long term tuition policy is needed to adequately address this issue. In making this policy, there are some complicating factors such as an impending tuition increase, the McCleary decision, tens of thousands of students unserved by the State Need Grant and Service and Activities Fees (S&A) being coupled with tuition.

For the 2017-2018, SB 5954 allows for tuition to rise according to the trend of median hourly wages in Washington over the past 14 years, this change is currently 2.1%.

In light of the McCleary decision in which the state legislature was found to be unconstitutionally underfunding education, the ASWWU understands education as a spectrum from early learning, to K-12 to higher education in which all components must be properly funded in order for

Washington State to have a competitive educational system that prepares students for an increasingly demanding job market. Beyond economic impact, Washington has a





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paramount duty to fully fund schools in order to enfranchise and empower students and their communities.

In addition to rising tuition costs, due to underfunding, the State Need Grant is currently not serving about 25,000 students who are eligible for aid. This means that access to affordable higher education is restricted for those 25,000 students, which in turn impacts financial aid allocations for students who are not eligible for the State Need Grant. Current estimates for fully funding the State Need Grant total \$202 million for the coming biennium.

Eight years ago the legislature coupled S&A fees to tuition, this was due in part to a budget process change brought about by Tim Eyman. If S&A fees continue to be tied to tuition, if tuition is frozen or decreases, student accessibility-related services will be negatively impacted. In the past two budget cycles, S&A fees have been decoupled from tuition through a budget proviso that required extensive last minute lobbying. Decoupling S&A fees restores student autonomy and reduces the risk that organizations critical to student accessibility will have their budgets cut.

In light of the context concerning tuition and funding of higher education in Washington State, the ASWWU advocates for the following:

- A tuition freeze to prevent the 2.1% tuition increase with backfdl
- Full funding of the State Need Grant
- Restore state higher education funding to pre-recession levels
- Fully fund education as a spectrum from early learning to higher education
- De-couple Service and Activities Fees from tuition permanently



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Issue: Revenue

In order to improve the affordability and accessibility of higher education, the state must increase their financial contribution, which is unlikely without an increase in consistent revenue from reliable sources. With new and dedicated revenue Washington state has the potential to radically redefine what public higher education looks like in this biennium- by fully funding higher education we can truly serve the diverse needs of the students on our campus.

Historically, finding new and dedicated revenue has been an extremely difficult challenge even though it is a necessary condition to accomplishing most of the ASWWU legislative requests. While these proposals push Washington towards economic justice, the potential revenue is what can actually improve people's lives, with more steady sources of revenue Washington would be able to fund not only higher education, but many other services that could make higher education truly accessible in Washington.

A decrease in financial burdens and barriers as well as an increase in the quality of higher education has an incredible impact on students, being able to navigate our institution of higher education is difficult enough without the additional stress of finances or lack of support. All students can relate over high tuition and less access to financial aid, which has made pursuing higher education increasingly difficult.

It is incredibly important to note too that the issue of inadequate funding disproportionately affects students of color, and in order for the solutions to be real and meaningful students of color need to be involved in this work. In addition, some of the proposals listed create a natural alliance with environmental groups on campus.



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New and Dedicated Revenue will be especially important this session as students will be heavily pushing for fully funding the state need grant, the work study program, and other need based forms of aid. This is a budget year where the legislature is under intense pressure to fund education in compliance with McCleary, so fighting for funding for the spectrum of early learning through higher education with real, attainable sources of revenue will be the best way to approach session.

This proposal will attempt to offer clear and realistic sources of new and dedicated revenue that can be specifically allocated towards higher education. The criteria for these suggestions have taken into account three basic guidelines:

- 1) Do not increase existing taxes that disproportionately harm people of lower income
- 2) Aim for tax increases that discourage negative behaviors that are harmful to society
- 3) Avoid negatively impacting the economy of Washington State.

Tax Cannabis

1-502 was approved by WA state voters in the 2012 statewide elections. According to the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Control Board Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2015, taxing cannabis brought in \$65 million dollars, the majority of which was deposited into the state's general fund which may be used for any governmental purpose as it is appropriated by the legislature. According to a weekly report from the same board, which was published on October 26 2016 reports that the current taxes that have come in for fiscal year 2016 are over \$185 million. We recommend establishing dedicated funding for higher education from this tax, specifically it could be used to support student services on campus that increase graduation rates.

Tax Lottery Winnings

Although lottery winnings are already implicitly taxed, there should be an explicit tax on lottery winnings with the proceeds funding higher education. Washington state's current implicit lottery tax revenue results in a profit equivalent to \$19 per person, which is lower than the U.S. average at \$58 per person. These revenue policy changes will be easier to implement because the tax structures already exist and opposition to increases in these taxes is minimal.

Close the Extracted Fuel Exemption

As part of a multi-year effort on climate policy and with a looming need to find new revenue to support higher education, this proposal would build on a campaign initiated by the environmental community in 2013 to eliminate the "extracted fuel exemption" in state



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tax code. This exemption was created in 1949 for sawmills and producers of other wood products. The exemption follows that, “fuel consumed by manufacturers or extractors is exempt from use tax when the fuel is used in the process of manufacturing or extracting at the same plant.” Currently, 98% of the money exempted from taxation is from oil refineries and only 2% is from wood product firms. Closing the loophole would generate about \$50 million per biennium. The environmental community’s strong campaign to mobilize support for closing the loophole makes 2017 a good session to build a broader base of support for pushing oil companies to make investments in critical state obligations like higher education.

Increase the Estate Tax

We currently have a sliding scale estate tax between 10-20%, it is applied only to assets over \$2 million. There have been bills put forth in recent sessions that increase that scale to 20-38%. This issue has made slight traction on previous years but despite the fact that it strongly benefits the overwhelming majority of Washington residents it remains locked in a partisan divide.

First Time Mortgage Lenders Tax Loophole

Banks that lend to first time home buyers do not pay tax on profits. This was originally designed to benefit WaMu, a bank that no longer exists. This could generate about \$50 million per biennium. This should be relatively easy, when the reason for a piece of legislation becomes obsolete, like WaMu has, there is a strong argument to be made for the removal of those protections. This loophole is not used by credit unions. This was reviewed in 2015 and the Joint Legislative Audit Review Committee recommended limiting this to “community banks.”

Limit Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) exemptions

Currently when you sell a house in WA you pay a REET, we propose limiting the exemptions currently offered so that lenders pay a REET when they sell foreclosed properties. This could raise up to \$81.9 million per biennium. This also has fallen more along partisan lines, but the moral argument for it is pretty strong.

Capital Gains Tax

Capital Gains are the profits from sales of corporate stocks, bonds, investment property (Not on primary residences) & other high end financial assets. This would only be on gains of over \$25,000 a year (per individual), and would mostly affect people with an average annual income of over \$490,000. It could generate as much as \$800 million a year/ \$1.6 billion per biennium. This issue is incredibly partisan but one that could raise an incredible amount of money without affecting most of Washington state, and in a very progressive ways.



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| | Governor's | House Dems | Senator Ranker (SB 6102) |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Number of people taxed | 31,500 | 31,500 | 7,500 |
| Taxes annual investment profits above | \$50,000 couple/\$25,000 individual | \$50,000 couple/\$25,000 individual | \$500,000 couple/\$250,000 individual |
| Percent taxed | 7% | 5% | 7% |
| Revenue generated (2017) | \$800 million | \$550 million | \$531 million |

Our primary targets are as follows:
 Chair of the House Appropriations Committee.
 Ranking minority member, House Appropriations Committee
 Speaker of the house
 Senate Majority Leader.
 Next Senate Ways and Means Chair
 Ranking member Ways and Means

Secondary Targets
 Governor: Has made education a top priority
 Senate Higher Ed Chair: Invested in Higher Ed

A creative way to engage students with this issue would be using fake money or checks to signify how much students are paying annually to attend WWU or how much debt they will be graduating with. Running a "what if" campaign might also be an effective way for students to express how much debt they are going to graduate with and what they could have bought with that same amount of money. We can come up with other tactics throughout the year as we react to the way the session is forming around a supplemental budget.



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Considerations for the Legislative Affairs Council

This section is comprised of questions LAC should keep in mind while considering proposals

- Is it winnable?
- Does it have a clear and realistic time frame?
- Is it likely to be debated and acted upon by the Legislature in the next year?



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