

**Western Washington University Associated Students**  
**AS BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup> 2018 Viking Union 567

**AS Board Officers:** *Present:* Simrun Chhabra(President), Hunter Eider (VP Academics), Julia Rutledge (VP Activities), Alex LaVallee (VP BusOps), Erick Yanzon (VP Diversity), and Annie Gordon (VP Student Life)

**Advisor(s):** Eric Alexander (Advisor)

**Guest(s):** Jacob Molloy, Vanessa Murphy

**MOTIONS**

**ASB-18-W-9** Approve \$6,000 from FSXXRES to fund students traveling to the National Association for Ethnic Studies conference on March 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> at Virginia Commonwealth University. *Passed*

**ASB-18-W-10** Approve the UHRAC Charge and Charter. *Passed*

**ASB-18-W-11** Approve all committee appointments with the addition of Kayla Owens and Branden Emeil to the Academic Grievance Board. *Passed*

*Simrun Chhabra, AS President, called the meeting to order at 3:06p.m.*

**I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**II. REVISIONS TO THE AGENDA**

The Board moved the Election Code information item to the end of the meeting. The Board removed the Student Technology Fee proposal from the agenda.

**III. PUBLIC FORUM** (*comments from students and the community*)

**IV. INFORMATION ITEMS - Guests\***

**A. Election Code**

The Board discussed the changes to the Election code. Gordon asked the thought process behind removing the alternative to signature collection. Chhabra said it was removed because an alternate hadn't come up before. Rutledge said that just because it hasn't come up doesn't mean it will not. The Board agreed the provision to have an alternative signature collection process should stay in. Alexander provided context for the changes, after the yik yak event two years ago there was the sentiment that people from traditionally marginalized groups might face barriers to collecting signatures. Chhabra said that the reason to have to collect a hundred signatures in the first place is to prove a candidate can interact with students. Chhabra asked how the Board collected their signatures. Rutledge said that they passed theirs around clubs and stood in Red Square. Gordon said that they collected them at the VU bus stop. Chhabra said they used clubs and students from their major. Yanzon said they used clubs. Eider said that they mostly got signatures from people they knew. LaVallee said that they couldn't remember how but they collected them quickly. Houck said that when this clause is actually used it is hard to find a suitable alternative, as the code is written the impact is on the student to have suggestions. Gordon brought up that having options for alternatives would be good, it says a lot that the way most of the Board got signatures was by knowing a lot of people and that requirement creates its own barriers. Gordon questioned how much correlation there is between the ability to make good decisions and be a good leader and the ability to walk up to a hundred people and asking for their signature. LaVallee brought

up that if the system isn't really working, especially if it can be abused, maybe it shouldn't exist. Hayden elaborated on discussions had in the committee about alternatives, including online collection. Hayden said it is a demonstration on a base level of support from the student body to serve as a pre-requisite for campaigning. Gordon said the alternative would also need to guarantee exposure. Chhabra said that it seemed like the Board wanted to include an alternative. Molloy said that they'd like to argue in favor of having some barrier to entry to make sure that there is not just a sea of people running because it is easy to run. Chhabra iterated that there were three options, keeping it, removing the alternative and keeping the signature system, or removing the signature requirement. Alexander said that there are already a lot of barriers when campaigning. Gordon suggested that candidates submit platforms to the Board and the current Board presents candidates. Rutledge said that this is one of the ways that we know someone is running because they have their packet with the signatures. Chhabra said that elections are intense, there is a lot going on. LaVallee said that it would be nice if posters had the requirements that there was some amount of platform on posters. LaVallee said that candidates should just submit a digital form as opposed to red square posters with candidates faces on them. Chhabra said they thought posters with the candidates faces are good outreach. Rutledge said moving posters online will cause there to be even less student engagement. Hayden said that if the Board was close to providing alternatives it would be better to just remove the signature requirement. Alexander said that in his experience when people are campaigning is when they refine their platform. The next section discussed is on candidate eligibility. Qualifications are now to be met by the end of the filing period, through the campaign period and through the entirety of the position. Required GPA was changed from being specific to job description to being a flat GPA of over 2.5. Alexander clarified that it is required that the candidates have a GPA of 2.5 so that if their GPA dips during the term of their position the student is not on academic probation. LaVallee pointed out that this metric is heavily discriminatory against Fairhaven students because Fairhaven classes don't count towards a student's GPA so any university classes count very heavily. Chhabra said that they are biased when it comes to GPA's, they are subjective. This puts the responsibility on students to decide to prioritize academics, we need to think about how this organization asks students to prioritize their time. Rutledge said that they understand that they just don't see how else to make sure employees are still doing well in school. They said they see it as trying to make sure students put their studies first. Chhabra said that that still puts the pressure on the students when it should be on the organization for the way that the organization is handling its employees and the workload it puts on them. Chhabra said that while they see what Rutledge is saying they aren't that good at school but don't think they are bad at their job. Chhabra said that they were an exception, their GPA was below 2.5 and Hannah made an exception because Chhabra's GPA was on track to rise. Eider asked what Chhabra was proposing. Chhabra said that it should be the same as the rest of the AS, 2.0. Hayden said that the reason that they have it set at 2.5 is because of a previous Board decision. LaVallee added that they do not think there should be a GPA requirement for Fairhaven majors. Alexander said that last year part of the discussion was that if someone's GPA drops below 2.0 for a term then they are no longer enrolled in Western and will be removed from their position, so the 2.5 limit is to provide a cushion. Houck said that exceptions can be made, and the job description said that at the time of election the candidate needs a 2.5 but during the position they only need 2.0. Eider said that they like how it is now, with the possibility of exception. LaVallee asked what it says that we anticipate peoples GPA's dropping over the course of this position. Hayden mentioned that job descriptions are within the Boards control so they could change all AS positions to having the minimum GPA at the time they are hired to be 2.5. Rutledge said that they don't see the point of having it change from 2.5 to 2.0. Houck said that it takes a little while for a GPA to drop from 2.5 to 2.0, usually longer than one quarter and that would give us time to help them readjust their schedule. LaVallee wondered if it would be possible to add a no cost class to all VP's academic record to pad their GPAs because of their academic experience in their position. Alexander said that that seems unethical. Rutledge said that that would be being compensated in a way that wasn't a salary. Alexander asked if it would

be an automatic A, because that would be unethical. Yanzon said that it was important to bring up how we can make sure students can access these positions without them fearing that their GPA is going to drop because we don't support them and their education. Murphy asked if there has ever been a case where an exception has been denied, because if there hasn't then it's not really an exception, it's just not enforcing the rule. Houck said that everyone she knew about has had the exception made. Houck said that they see the GPA limit as a way of making sure that students can afford to add another 19 hours of work to their week, plenty of people pick up packets to apply and don't end up turning them in and we don't really have a good way to figure out why but we like to be honest upfront with students and let them know these are hard positions. Gordon said that because there is a lack of data they have no way of knowing how many applicants this clause excludes, they would like to see the GPA limit to be phrased more like a check-in as opposed to a rule. Hayden mentioned that Francesca had done a lot of work on making this document this easy to read and had said that they would be willing to update it with any changes the Board decided on. Yanzon asked how we are making sure that the students appointed to the Election Advisory Committee have enough access to what is in the current election code. Hayden said that there is a lot of notes passed from one year to the next and they read the code thoroughly over the first couple sections. The Board began discussing the section about the eligibility of students to run if they do not have documentation. Chhabra said that they strongly feel that the GPA limit should not be in the election code. Gordon agreed that they believe it should be taken out. Rutledge said that they want to have a plan for what to do after it is taken out if someone without proof of employment eligibility runs. Alexander clarified that the problem would be if someone runs and when they get to the hiring stage what to do. Gordon said they wondered where the decision should lay, even if someone can't be compensated that doesn't mean they shouldn't be able to choose to run. Murphy asked if a scholarship would be able to be given to someone for the amount they would have been paid so that they could take it out of their tuition. Hayden said that that could not happen how it is structured currently. Gordon said that under the advisement given to the board neither scholarships nor stipends are an option. Rutledge asked if there was a way for a Board member to get work-study pay. Alexander said that work-study is a federal program. Chhabra said that this is a conversation that has been had many times before. LaVallee said that the way it's set up it is up to the Board to decide but there is nothing they can do. Chhabra doesn't agree with the idea that the way to fix the problem is just to remove the ability to employ people without documentation. Elections was a huge growth period and it seems wrong to not let someone experience that or participate in the kind of work the Board has been doing all year. Alexander said that the way the positions are set up either all the Board members have to be paid or none of them can be. Additionally these employment requirements are not something anyone at the university sets, they are federal requirements. Guest one asked if waivers are a possibility, because they don't want to see no one get paid. They also brought up that if this is passed now then this Board doesn't have another chance to change it, and if it doesn't get changed then students aren't being served, if this was a federal and state issue why wasn't it a bigger part of lobby day. Alexander said that right now the only state that has waivers is California and right now that is being tested in court as tax evasion. Rutledge clarified that they did want the clause removed. Guest one brought up that this has been waiting to be changed for six months because you are waiting for change but progress isn't being made. Guest one said that their issue is that the university is stating its support for undocumented students but it hasn't been showing support, undocumented students need this change now. Molloy asked how the Board was paid. Alexander said through student fees, particularly the S&A fee. Molloy asked why the university didn't just pay them illegally and let this get resolved and taken to the state level. LaVallee said that since the university is a state entity they don't want to break state law. Alexander agreed and said that it would be different if the university was private. Molloy clarified that it is just functionally impossible to pay someone like that. Chhabra asked if the Board wanted to move on because of time concerns. Yanzon suggested approving the consent items and then finishing this conversation. Rutledge clarified the time line for approving the election code. Hayden said that

they could possibly have two more meetings on it. The Board approved the Consent Items then returned to this discussion. Hayden said that another reason that this was changed was that the way it was written before it was the election coordinators job to verify eligibility, which left some room for discussion about it. This allowed people to spend time campaigning then when it came time for election they could be taken out of the running. Hayden wants it to be clear what the election coordinator needs to do and what is expected of the candidates. Gordon said that they still don't want the clause there and they don't want the Board to be the one who steps in and says who can and cannot hold the position. TaVallee said that there was no great solution unless the Board becomes a voluntary Board that isn't paid, with the potential of receiving scholarships. Gordon said that it would be the same issue with eligibility for scholarship. TaVallee said that all positions should be voluntary. Guest one asked if all scholarships were off the table, because undocumented students can qualify for some scholarships. TaVallee said that they were thinking of distributing scholarships through the non-profit. Alexander said that if they were going to need the fundraising capacity to raise that much money. Alexander said that the scholarship could only be for academic endeavors. Hayden said that there were two different things, private groups can give scholarships to whoever they want, it's a different story when it is Western money, it depends on if it is a scholarship in exchange for work which could be seen as against the rules. Hayden said that it would take a large change but the positions could eventually become volunteer. TaVallee said that the Board could become like Westerns Board of Trustees and just meet every so often to vote and not too much else. Chhabra said that they disagree with not compensating Board members, they think that making the positions volunteer would also cut down on accessibility. TaVallee said the nature of the positions would change, perhaps they would only come to Board meetings and would have people from the AS advise them. TaVallee said there might also be a conflict of interest with the non-profit awarding themselves scholarships. Gordon brought up that the Board saw the lobby day agenda and didn't bring this issue up. Gordon said that the short term solution is not having Board members get paid but in the long run the Board should commit to trying to get something done on a state level. TaVallee said that they were complicit in the oppression of undocumented students in that they do not take their time to talk to legislators in Olympia and make undocumented students a priority. Chhabra said that the fixes talked about don't address the larger problem in a sustainable way. TaVallee said that he preferred the option that allowed all students to participate in their student government. Chhabra said that making the positions unpaid excludes the people that don't have the time or energy to devote to that position and not get compensated for it. Gordon said that this year at no point did the Board prevent someone who was not authorized to work from assuming their position. TaVallee asked if they were currently paid to represent student voices, right now the positions are work, if the value is to have equity in who can access elections then an unpaid Board makes more sense. Guest one said that they are wary of that approach, especially because it could stir up resentment from the student population. They are looking for proactiveness in looking for a long-term solution, undocumented students want to be advocated for but they do not want the Board to be their voice. Guest one said that part of the reason it is so hard to make progress is that they have to shut things down that are counter-productive. TaVallee said that they agreed that there was not a lot of engagement with students. Chhabra asked where the Board wanted this discussion should go. TaVallee said that they wanted to at least explore what making the positions unpaid would look like. Gordon said that it was just said that that would further limit job opportunities for undocumented students. TaVallee said that the Board can't create job opportunities for people without work authorization but they could create more jobs out of the funds saved by moving the Board to being unpaid. Gordon said that that still doesn't help undocumented people find jobs. TaVallee said that the problem is that people can't represent themselves, or at least that is the problem the Board can fix. Hayden suggested that given that the Board does not want to limit the option for people to be on the Board they could simply make it clear that you need employment authorization to be employed. This solution does not have to mean that the Board will stop trying to advocate for undocumented students. The way they see it there are three options, pushing on

a federal level, making every position volunteer or changing employment on campus to be based on scholarships. Chhabra suggested everyone come with thoughts on how to solve this problem to the next meeting.

## V. ACTION ITEMS - Guests\*

## VI. PERSONNEL ITEMS *(subject to immediate action)*

## VII. ACTION ITEMS - Board\*

### A. Ethnic Studies Conference Funding Proposal

Yanzon said that there were a few updates on the proposal. SEF is not going to supply very much funding because they feel that the board can fund the majority of the trip, that decision is not final, the SEF will vote next week. The proposal was an info item in Activities Council this week and will be voted on next week. Yanzon said that they had removed per diem from the request, the new total would be at least \$5,350, potentially increasing to \$6,000 depending on other funding sources. The conference will be at the Virginia Commonwealth University Yanzon explained that Eider and Yanzon would be attending the conference, along with up to ten students who will apply and are chosen by Eider and Yanzon. Rutledge clarified how much money was being asked for. Yanzon said that the Board will only be asked for \$6,000 no matter what, if the funding from other sources falls short they will take less students, to a minimum of eight people total. Yanzon moved to approve \$6,000 from FSXXRES to fund students traveling to the National Association for Ethnic Studies conference on March 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> at Virginia Commonwealth University.

*MOTIONASB-18-W- 9* by: Yanzon

Approve \$6,000 from FSXXRES to fund students traveling to the National Association for Ethnic conference on March 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Second: Rutledge Vote: 4 - 0 - 2 Action:Pass

### B. UHRAC Charge and Charter

Gordon said that a few typos had been corrected, the committee is meeting tomorrow. Chhabra asked about the representative from the legal information center and confirmed how many employees the center has. Gordon said that the committee should have Quorum. Hayden asked how the communication and recruitment is going for the AS positions. Gordon said that they have an ESC rep and a DOC rep and are working on getting the others. Gordon moved to approve the UHRAC Charge and Charter.

*MOTIONASB-18-W- 10* by: Gordon

To approve the UHRAC charge and charter.

Second: Eider Vote: 6 - 0 - 0 Action:Pass

## VIII. INFORMATION ITEMS - Board\*

### A. Legislative Affairs Council Charge and Charter

Chhabra gave a shout out to Chloe for helping this committee come together. Chhabra changed the Graduate Student representative from non-voting to voting. Casey Hayden

was added to the committee. The chairperson is to be appointed by the Board when it is not the AS VP for Governmental Affairs.

**IX. CONSENT ITEMS** *(subject to immediate action)*

**A. Committee Appointments**

Cole clarified that they were one of the two people who had applied for the position in the committee they were nominated for and wanted to be upfront and ask if the Board had any problem with it. Rutledge said Cole was great. Cole mentioned that the student academic grievance board is having a hearing in the next two weeks and they managed to get two more people approved to that committee, Brandon Emeil and Kayla Owens, they already serve on the academic coordinating commission. Cole asked if they could be added to the approvals for today. Yanzon moved to approve the committee appointments with the noted additions. LaVallee seconded.

**Ronald Kleinknecht Excellence in Teaching Award Committee**

Cora Cole Junior Political Science

**Sehome Arboretum Board of Governors**

Mary Childress Sophomore Environmental Science

**Student Conduct Review Board**

Phelicia Noggle senior Sociology

***MOTION ASB-18-W-11*** by: Yanzon

Approve all committee appointments with the addition of Kayla Owens and Branden Emeil to the Academic Grievance Board.

Second: LaVallee Vote: 5 - 0 - 0 Action: Pass

**X. BOARD REPORTS**

**No reports were given due to limited time.**

**XIII. OTHER BUSINESS**

***The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 5:00p.m.***