

2018 Associated Students

AS Representation and Engagement Programs (REP)

AS Office of Assessment



Introduction'

AS Representation and Engagement Programs (REP) completed assessment on March 12th, 2018. The currently approved statement of purpose for the REP is:

The Representation & Engagement Programs (REP) exist to provide the resources, services, and support necessary to ensure student representation in decisions that impact students at the university, local, state, and federal levels; to promote effective citizenship and civic engagement through services, programs, and collaboration.

The REP office is a non-partisan civic engagement office that strives to connect students with ways to become civically engaged both locally and federally through voter registration, get out the vote efforts, voting, lobbying, phone-banking, committees, AS elections, educational events, etc.

Program/Services Provided:

1. Voter Registration Drive:

Historically, Western, through the AS REP and Western Votes!, has one of the most successful voter registration drives in the state, registering more people than any other state school combined. This year, we registered just under 3500 voters. The drive consists of attending summer events like SummerStart, Transitions, Noon Concert Series, and community events such as Bellingham Pride. Most of our numbers come from Move-In Weekend which is our busiest time by far. It's all hands on deck during this time which has folks working long hours. Relationships with University Residences, the Whatcom County Auditor's office, and the Washington BUS are crucial for the success of our drive.

2. Get Out the Vote (GOTV):

GOTV is our time to remind folks to turn in their ballots, inform them about what's on the ballot, and to help them know how to turn it properly. This comes in the form of phonebanking events, BYOBallot events, candidate forums, tabhng, ballot chasing, and any other event we feel will get people to turn out for elections.

3. AS Committees:

Students can get involved with university wide decision making by joining one of our 172 AS Committees. There are committees to fit all interests and serving on one is a great way to develop new skills and build your resume. Students have the opportunity to make decisions with university admin and make change they want to see on campus.

> Legislative Affairs Council (LAC):

LAC is the committee the drafts our legislative agendas for each lobby day and is another opportunity for students to get involved.

4. Lobby Days:

The REP houses our AS Legislative Liaison, who spends all of winter quarter in Olympia lobbying, as well as our AS Local Liaison, who works on local issues and with local officials. Students can get involved through the REP to attend Western Lobby Day, Local Lobby Day, ESC Lobby Day, ESP Lobby Day, Disability Advocacy Lobby Day, and other great events that take students to meet with legislators to lobby for student issues. Students who attend these events are taught the skills necessary to lobby and have the opportunity to share their stories.

5. AS Elections:

The AS REP houses the AS Elections Coordinator who organizes the election of a new AS Board of Directors each year. Students can run for a position if they are interested in becoming more involved and taking on a leadership role. Only 16% of the student body voted in last year's election which was a record. AS Elections also consists of recruitment events, debates, poll stations, and an inauguration of the new board members.

6. New York Times:

The AS REP helps to fund and oversee the New York Times that is offered free on campus to all students. Due to funding restraints, we can currently only offer 172 copies per day on campus, but also have login codes that students can use to access the New York Times online.

7. Western Votes!:

The AS REP office was created out of a club on campus called WesternVotes! that was doing the work that the REP now does surrounding voter registration and GOTV. Today, the club acts as the volunteer base and branding for the REP

8. Washington Student Association (WSA):

We have a close relationship with the Washington Student Association (WSA) which is comprised of ## schools from across the state. General Assemblies and meetings are held quarterly at rotating campuses. The WSA works closely with our Legislative Liaison throughout the year, but particularly during legislative session. The REP has also put on various events for WSA such as the WSA Statewide Day of Actions.

SCOT Chart:

<p>Internal Helpful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionalized voter registration • Student to student relation helps legitimize civic engagement for fellow students • Office positions act as supporting roles for one another • Returners to REP provide useful past knowledge 	<p>Internal Harmful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomous positions • Office is too small for voter reg season • Not enough computers for everyone, faulty technology • Office relies heavily on returners or former REP members to function
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<p>External Helpful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputation for civically engaged campus, largest voter registration drive • Partnership with WABus and WSA • Great relationship with Whatcom County Auditor’s office 	<p>External Harmful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion about what the office is/does when we say “Representation and Engagement Programs” (WesternVotes! more widely recognized) • Seen as an annoying force in the fall during voter registration • Office is hard to find • Not as much support from other campus groups
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Areas for Improvements/ Recommendations’

The following are the validated recommendations for strategic goals over the next four years:

1. Relocate the REP office to a larger space.

Currently, the office has room 4 computers, but has 7 employees. This creates barriers to when and how people are able to work. During voter registration, the office is not large enough for us to organize our materials such as the boxes for move-in weekend which we have to take out into the hallway in order to have space. In order to ensure the confidentiality of the personal information we collect with voter registration, it is essential we have enough space to safely store our materials. Furthermore, for the efficiency of our voter registration effort, more space would allow for the utilization of more people as well as an increase in organizational abilities.

2. Consider renaming office for more clarity.

The current name of the office, the Representation and Engagement Programs office, has proven to create a barrier to accessing students who often express a level of uncertainty associated with what the office does based on the name. WesternVotes! is much more widely recognized and explicit, as well as more appealing branding. The fall back to changing to WesternVotes! is that it does not convey the other aspects of the office and what the REP offers outside of voting and voter registration.

3. Purchase at least one new computer.

In addition to not having enough computers for all of our staff, the unreliability of the office's computers this year have had a very large impact on our voter registration drive and data collection as nearly 700 voter registration scans failed to email or to be scanned at all. Multiple computers have difficulty with Outlook which has prevented staff from being able to effectively do their jobs and to maintain communication with those necessary outside of the office.

4. Add an additional 10-15 hours to summer quarter to the AS Committee Coordinator job description and reduce spring quarter hours to be an average of 14 hours per week.

Many applications for AS committees are submitted during the summer quarter with many committees needing to start as early in fall quarter as possible. Adding hours to summer quarter would allow the AS Committee Coordinator to process applications much quicker which would in turn allow committees to start meeting earlier. Additionally, more summer hours would allow the AS Committee Coordinator to plan for more effective outreach for committees. The reduction in hours to spring quarter will counteract the change made to summer quarter to even the budget.

5. Add two quarterly meetings with the AS Board Program Coordinator and the Faculty Senate Shared Governance Operations Manager to the AS Committee Coordinator job description.

Communication between the AS Committee Coordinator, the AS Board, and faculty committees is essential to the effectiveness of this position.

- 6. Hold committee training with the newly elected AS Board and the next year's AS Committee Coordinator before the end of spring quarter. Provide them with a list of committees they approve applications for. Include the deadline for processing applications next to the name of the committee.**

Holding training at the end of spring quarter allows for the outgoing AS Board to offer advice to the incoming AS Board as well as the incoming AS Committee Coordinator to learn from the outgoing AS Committee Coordinator. Furthermore, the training will be more effective when done by the outgoing AS Committee Coordinator who will be the most familiar with the processes.

- 7. AS Legislative Liaison and the Legislative Affairs Council should work on drafting legislation that aligns with our agenda in the interim.**

Many agenda items we lobbied on this year lacked concrete asks of legislators or tangible bills they could support or sponsor. If the Legislative Liaison and the Legislative Affairs Council work on drafting legislation complimentary to our agenda during interim, we would be able to more quickly and effectively move legislation during session which would most likely increase the successes of our lobbying.

- 8. Adjust the winter term of the AS Legislative Liaison position to be allowed to begin during intersession to accommodate training prior to legislative session.**

The AS Legislative Liaison spends winter quarter working and living in Olympia during session. Because they often are moving during intersession as well as beginning their lobbying training during this time, it is important that this position have the ability to begin work during intersession.

- 9. Increase staffing to accommodate work load during voter registration drive and AS elections.**

The voter registration drive and AS elections are the busiest times for the REP office with the largest workload. The Organizing and Outreach Coordinator and the AS Elections Coordinator have historically been

extremely overworked during these times. To combat this and to adjust to the new hourly system and its limitations, an additional staff member should be added to the office. The position could be temporary for just those times, institutionalized, or created in the form of an additional work-study position.

10. Create professional clothing fund to allow for the purchase of professional attire for lobbying positions; AS Legislative Liaison and AS Local Liaison.

Professional or business casual clothing is often expected in the environments and spaces that the above positions are required to work. These clothes are often very expensive, so to combat financial barriers to having the necessary work attire, a fund should be created that can be requested from or additional funds should be added to their respective budgets.

11. Increase the winter and spring work hours of the AS Elections Coordinator to an average of 19 hours per week.

AS Elections Coordinator has historically been overworked during these times. During winter, the AS Elections Coordinator works numerous hours editing the Election Code and facilitating the process through the chairing and organization of the Election Advisory Committee. In addition to this laborious task, this position also needs to chair a hiring committee for Election Board Chair, promote elections and recruitment, and plan for the debates and elections that are to come. Limiting this position's ability to work will only hinder the success of AS Elections and in turn the Associated Students as a whole.

12. Increase the fall work hours of the AS Organizing and Outreach Coordinator to an average of 19 hours per week.

AS Organizing and Outreach Coordinator has historically been overworked during this time. The workload has included attending multiple multi-hour events to register students and preparation for those events. In particular, during Move-in weekend, this position is needed on campus from early in the morning until late in the afternoon each day. Following events, this position is needed to ensure data is entered and scanned which has to be done manually and can be labor intensive. Furthermore, during the fall this position is busy doing class raps, tabling,

and putting on events. The success of our voter registration drive is dependent on the ability for this position to work as much possible.