

Western Washington University

Legislative Affairs Council

Wednesday, October 24th

VU 462A

Present: Natasha Hessami (ASVP for Governmental Affairs), Henry Pollet (Legislative Liaison), Patrick Kissinger (Local Issues Coordinator), James Pai (ESC Advocacy Director), Katie Winkleman (ESP Director), Kayl Gillihan (SAIRC Coordinator), Colton Redtfeldt, Maddie Rackers, Grace LaMonte, Gabbi Nazari, Brandon Lane, Bennett Massey, Colton Redtfeldt

Absent: Katie Winkleman (ESP Director)

Advisor: Leti Romo

Secretary: Grace Drechsel

Guests: Hunter Eider

MOTIONS

LAC-18-F-10 Add Hunter Eider's request for funds as an Info Item.

LAC-18-F-11 Approve the funding request to reimburse Pollet for his trip to the WSA meeting in the Tri-cities.

LAC-18-F-12 Approve the funding request for an ASL interpreter for the candidate forums.

LAC-18-F-13 Extend future LAC meetings to 1.5 hours

Natasha Hessami called the meeting to order at 4:34pm.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ADDITIONS AND CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

MOTION LAC-18-F-10 by *Hessami*

Add Hunter Eider's request for funds as an Info Item.

Second: Nazari

Vote: 13-0-0

Action: *Passed*

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION LAC-18-F-11 by *Pollet*

Approve the minutes from the previous meeting, October 17th.

Second: Nazari

Vote: 13-0-0

Action: *Passed*

IV. INFORMATION ITEMS

a. Bellingham Herald Funding Request

Kissinger proposed funding to purchase a full year subscription of the Bellingham Herald. He said that this subscription fits with the purpose of LAC, because 1) we need to encourage civic engagement and student participation in the political process, and we need to know what opportunities there are for civic engagement, and Kissinger thinks that the Herald does a great job of covering that. 2) We need to formulate policy positions and the Herald does a good job of that too. Kissinger said that he is choosing the Herald because it has a long-standing history of the newspaper of Bellingham, and lots of contact within the city. The Herald covers a lot of national issues, but they have a great section for local news. In Kissinger's position of Local Issues Coordinator, he covers a lot of different news sources, but it is helpful to have a mainstream voice. The Herald has a lot of contacts that Kissinger can't seem to get a hold of himself. The subscription is \$12.99 per month, and Kissinger would like it for the duration of his job, 8 months, so that he doesn't have to pay out of pocket. Kissinger says that it is necessary to his job to know what is going on in the community. The cost will total \$112.96.

Hessami asks if Kissinger has money within his REP budget to cover this. Kissinger says that there is no Local Issues Coordinator budget, and the REP Director's budget is just for wages. He said that in the spring, he will be campaigning very hard for a Local Issues Coordinator budget because there are things in his job that he would like to do but cannot do because of lack of a budget.

Hessami also asks if this is a daily newspaper that will be coming in. Kissinger said that it is daily, unlimited access.

b. Civic Engagement/Voting Video

Hunter Eider wants to create a Voter Education video in the form of a song parody to engage people and get them to want to vote in a fun and entertaining way. He knows that by the time this is released, it will be too late to register, but he's hoping that this will still entice people who registered to vote to cast their ballot. The video could be used in the future to get people to register to vote. He wants to do a parody of the song "Rock the Boat" by Aaliyah and call it "Rock the Vote". The lyrics are almost done, and he is finishing up the choreography on Friday. Originally, Eider wanted to have six backup dancers that he recruited through the hip hop dance club on campus, and compensate them at the rate of minimum wage. Then he realized that they all put in a lot of work on their own time to perfect their dancing skills, so he would like to pay them \$15 per hour for 6-7 hours: 2 hours this Saturday for practice, 2 hours on Sunday for drilling, and then 2-3 hours on Monday depending on how long it takes to film. Originally he was going to have six dancers, but people flaked and now there will just be 2 folks, paying them each \$90 total, and then paying one person \$20 to sing. AS Videographers will film. This would hopefully be filmed, edited and released by next Wednesday with at least 6 days for people to see.

Hessami asked if Eider has already talked to the videographers and if they are on board. Eider said no. If they aren't on board, then Eider has some people to video for him, but he will be talking to them tomorrow.

Redtfeldt asked what kind of channels that Eider is going to use to distribute the video. Eider said that he will release it through the WWU REP page and then his own personal Facebook and other social media. The REP can use this in the future for whatever they want to.

Pollet requested that Eider show him the language that is going to be used, because we have to make sure that we are being non-partisan. Eider said that he doesn't have the lyrics on him, but he can say that none of the lyrics are talking about a particular candidate, the lyrics just say that it is your chance to vote.

Kissinger asked if any specific issues are addressed in the song. Eider responded that no particular issues are mentioned, so the video can be used in future years to encourage voter turnout. Also, if people across the country see the video, it can still apply to them. Kissinger said that he was recently interviewed by the Western Front, and we were zeroing in on why we are encouraging people to vote. It's important to not say, because of our current climate, now it is important to vote. That is a partisan statement because that signals that you are unhappy with the political climate. Hessami recommended that Eider talk to Sam Frost from Communications and let her know or ask her if you can distribute this on various AS platforms, because that is ultimately up to her. Kissinger said that Sam Frost is also really good with knowing what language you can and cannot use.

Hessami said that she supports the video idea, and she appreciates Eider sticking to his promise from the spring, but she would appreciate that before next week when this is up for an Action item, Eider has consulted with folks from the REP on language, and consulted with Sam Frost on distribution.

Pollet wanted to clarify when it would be done and ready to release. Eider said that he was hoping to have it done on Monday the 29th and released Wednesday the 31st. Pollet pointed out that we won't have voted on whether or not to fund the video by then. Hessami asked Eider how his dancers would feel if this doesn't pass. Eider said that his dancers know that the money is not guaranteed, and that Eider told them that they would get compensated, but it might not be right away, and they were okay with that.

V. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Designating Legislative Agenda Items.

Hessami encouraged LAC to use the documents from last year as reference when writing Agenda proposals, because a lot of work was put into them and there is no reason to start from scratch. Also, keep the question in mind when writing them – is this sellable to the legislators? Is this something that is realistic? Is this something that 120 WWU students can get behind when we go to Lobby Day? Also, is this something that we can sell to WSA? Make sure to use updated statistics in the proposals as well. Follow up on what happened last year in the legislature. Look at bill trackers and get up to date.

Nazari wants to work on increasing support for survivors of sexual assault. Rackers and Pai want to work on civilian oversight boards. Lane wants to work on housing and rent control. Hessami asked if Blue Group would want to do DACA, and Pai said that he is going to a Blue Group meeting after LAC and will ask them. Pollet said that he is working on a dedicated revenue piece, which has three sections: a capital gains tax, a carbon fee, and closing tax loopholes. He is also working on State Need Grant part 2, which deals with expanding the qualifications for the State Need Grant. Lane said that he will help Pollet with this.

Lane asks that, when writing these proposals, is there a way to delineate between what we actually want and what we believe will get passed this year? Hessami said that this is something that happens at WSA, and something that Pollet and Hessami work with Becca and Joe on. As everyone is

writing these, don't worry too much about making it perfect. Just get some information down, and a few clear asks. Feel free to include a larger long term goal, and then a more realistic goal. Also a reminder that Lobby Day is January 21st, and so we need to shoot for having the final proposals done at the end of the quarter, but realistically, it's okay if it's a little bit after that. However, November 1st is the deadline for agenda items that we want to bring to WSA. Pollet asks if we can have these paragraphs as consent items on the 31st. Hessami asked if those who volunteered for an issue could please have a paragraph emailed to her and/or Grace by Tuesday at 5pm. Include the issue and what the ask is.

Kissinger volunteered for mental health services.

Hessami clarified that these issues shouldn't be specific to WWU – the arguments should explain why the proposal is good for the state. When we lobby in January, this is how we phrase our issues.

General Assembly is on November 10th, and we will have these proposals as consent items next Wednesday.

b. WSA General Assembly

WWU has 8 votes at General Assembly. These people can be the members of LAC, if people want to come to GA and vote. Hessami said that she will talk more on this next week. It's going to be on a Saturday in the VU, from 10am-5pm and breakfast and lunch will be provided. We might have an additional hour-long meeting that week for those in LAC who are interested in coming. If more than 8 people are interested in coming, that is all good, we will just split up the votes, and those who can't vote will still be a part of the discussion. Pollet and Hessami will definitely be there, as well as Millka Solomon, the AS President, and Nora and Patrick from the REP. It is a good opportunity to meet with representation from other colleges, and our equivalents of this committee at other colleges. At GA we will figure out what the state legislative priorities are.

Lane asked if we need to register if we want to go. Hessami said no, just send her an email, and everyone should go if they can. It's a great learning experience.

VI. ACTION ITEMS

a. WSA Meeting Reimbursement

MOTION LAC-18-F-11

by Redtfeldt

Approve the funding request to reimburse Pollet for his trip to the WSA meeting in the Tri-cities.

Second: Nazari

Vote: 12-0-1

Action: *Passed*

VII. REPORTS

a. Local Issues Coordinator

Active city council and county council meetings this week. The city council had a public hearing about the passing of a resolution regarding I-1631. It passed 5-1-1. You could potentially fit some language in there in terms of the candidate forum tomorrow. The resolution expresses support for the federal effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. County council did the exact same thing for the low income housing levy, AKA Bellingham Home Fund. Kissinger went to the MNAC (Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission) meeting last week, where the mayor proposed her biennial budget and there will be a hearing on the budget November 5th for city council. They are hoping to have the budget pass by the 7th. Eider asked how they classify neighborhoods. Kissinger

said that they are based on distinctions drawn up by the city, so York neighborhood, Sehome, Samish, South Hill, Happy Valley, etc. This week is also a Whatcom Housing week, so Kissinger has been going to tons of different workshops about housing. If there are issues about housing that are brought up on the agenda, Kissinger will have a lot of new resources. Tomorrow, Kissinger is going to a breakfast for the Whatcom Housing Alliance, and we will see about getting Western involved as a partner for the Bellingham for Everyone campaign. A week from Thursday, there will be a local candidate forum. We just went live on Facebook today, so there is an event and Kissinger invited everyone that he knows, and he will make it possible to share and invite other people.

b. Legislative Liaison

Pollet said he has been working a bit on legislative proposals. He will be at the Candidate Forum tomorrow. Tonight, a party organization is going on. Rick Larsen is going to be on campus. This will be a good chance to hear what he has to say about things. 7:30 in Miller Hall 138.

c. ESC Advocacy Coordinator

Pai said that the ESC is almost done with their Democracy and Donuts event. He still has to talk to the REP Director about final details, but the publicity is done and it turned out good. Please stop by and get a donut. The event is November 6th, from 2:30-5:30pm in the ESC lounge. There will be a temporary ballot box and computers if anyone needs to print their ballot.

VIII. Consent Item

a. Candidate Forums ASL Interpreter

State Candidate Forum tomorrow 5-7pm in AW 210. Next week, in the same time same place, will be the Local Candidate forum.

Hessami said that she and Kissinger were contacted and asked if there would be an ASL interpreter at the forums. There may be folks from the deaf community there. Hessami contacted Disability Resources on campus, and got an ASL interpreter for both forums. It costs \$450 per night, there are 2 interpreters and they have to take a break. This is a service that the university provides. It was an oversight when we were planning, so it is rushed. We need it on Thursday. Kim in the Disability Access Center will be there. We have the money for it, and it is important.

MOTION LAC-18-F-12 by *Pai*

Approve the funding request for an ASL interpreter for the candidate forums.

Second: Rackers Vote: 13-0-0 Action: *Passed*

IX. Other Business

a. Changing the Length of LAC

The last few minutes have gone long, and especially when we start going into Legislative proposals, we will need more time. We might not use the full hour and a half every time, but it would be nice to have the option.

MOTION LAC-18-F-13 by *Pollet*

Extend future LAC meetings to 1.5 hours

Second: Nazari

Vote: 13-0-0

Action: *Passed*

Hessami adjourned the meeting at 5:20pm.

DRAFT