

Western Washington University

Legislative Affairs Council

Wednesday, November 14th

VU 462A

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

Absent: Grace LaMonte

Advisor: Leti Romo

Secretary: Grace Drechsel

Guests: Nora Harren (REP Director)

MOTIONS

LAC-18-F-20 Approve minutes from 10/31 and 11/7.

LAC-18-F-21 Reimburse Natasha Hessami for the food provided at WSA GA training.

LAC-18-F-22 Reimburse Henry Pollet for travel.

Natasha Hessami called the meeting to order at 4:31pm.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ADDITIONS AND CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION LAC-18-F-20 by *Lane*

Approve minutes from 10/31 and 11/7

Second: Winkelman

Vote: 10-0-0

Action: *Passed*

IV. INFO ITEMS

a. Funding Request for Travel to Senate Higher Ed Committee in Olympia

Hessami presented this info item for Pollet. There is a higher ed committee meeting and Olympia, and it is very important that someone from Western be there. Pollet is seeking mileage reimbursement and per diem for the 2 days that he will be gone. Soon, we will get an open order for Pollet's travel. This will come as an action item next week.

b. ASWWU Legislative Agenda Timeline

Today, this agenda is coming as an info item to LAC. This Friday, it will be brought to the ASBOD as an info item. There are no meetings next week because of Thanksgiving. The following Wednesday, we will finalize the legislative agenda as an action item in LAC. This is the last meeting that we will see it as a draft. Hessami said that she will dump everything into a Google Doc and share it with everyone. She encourages everyone in LAC to pick the item that they are most familiar with and spend 20 minutes reading it over. The more eyes, the better. On Friday the 30th, it will come as an info item for a second time to the ASBOD. On December 7th, we have to pass it as a finalized agenda. Although it's passing as a final action item through LAC before the 7th, the Board has ultimate authority and we can make our changes up until the 7th. We don't have support for DACA students yet because of unfortunate oversight. That is one thing that is missing, and it will be amended. January 21st is lobby day, and the 19th is our collection of smaller lobby days. Hessami encourages everyone to come to Lobby Days. We will be starting recruitment the Monday after Thanksgiving. We need group leaders for each group, and LAC members are best positioned to be those leaders.

c. ASWWU Legislative Agenda Draft

This draft includes all of the shorter paragraphs that LAC members have written for previous weeks. We will be working on the wording. Again, the draft will be put into a Google Doc and sent out to everyone. The draft has State Need Grant Expansion, State Need Grant Funding, Housing (in which we are focusing on renter's rights), Support for Survivors, Prepaid Postage, Civilian Oversight Boards, Sex ed in K-12, and we are still waiting on the Pre-Healthcare Decision package.

Pollet said that the Pre-Healthcare decision package might be a good thing for the Board to make a decision on instead of LAC. Hessami agreed.

Pai said that Support for Undocumented Students is on the draft for ESC Lobby Day. It reiterates point made from previous lobby days. Pai said that he needs Pollet's help if there's any specific pieces of legislation to lobby on. Otherwise, Support for Undocumented Students is pretty much set.

Pollet said that the meeting he is going to on Tuesday in Olympia might give him some more insight on this. He hasn't seen an agenda for the meeting, but it may be discussed.

Gillihan wants to add something about expansion of mental health services. Hessami agreed, and said that this is also something that went through WSA. The votes from WSA GA will be posted tonight, and she will email them out as soon as we get them. For those who weren't at GA – there were 19 proposals.

Lane suggested adding civics education. Pai asked if we could amend civics education to include ethnic studies education in K-12. Hessami asked what people thought about combining sex-ed, civics, and ethnic studies education and creating a K-12 advocacy package. Harren said that sounds

good, and then the ethnic studies proposal could potentially be used for ESC, ESP, and DOC Lobby Days, which tend to be more specific issues. Lane said that he believes there is value in keeping sex education separate from the package, because the asks in that one are a little bit more specific and have bigger connotations. Pai said that the only reason he would be in favor of combining and creating a K-12 package is because of our subsequent Lobby Days, like ESP and ESC, we would have the impact of the legislators having already seen this issue once. It may put us in a stronger position. Pollet said first, if we can get the OSPI (Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction) to support our ask, if we are saying that this is a comprehensive list of recent high school graduates, (which is what some of us are), that would have a real shot at having some impact. Second, it is simpler to hand over to legislators when it is all together. This shouldn't be a priority for us at this stage, but it will look cleaner if we have all of our K-12 asks under one header. Nazari said that certain legislators will have different opinions on different issues, and that is where she is worried about melting them together, because they are such different issues. Lumping them together in a K-12 may reduce the value of each.

Hessami said that when we are actually going and lobbying and sitting in these legislator's offices, we (Pollet, Hessami, and the Lobby Day assistant) will coach you on what to talk about. For example, this super religious legislator might not be the person to target for Sex Ed, but maybe we could target them for civics. We could be mindful in what we actually guide folks to talk about in these meetings. Hessami said that she is in favor of combining them since we have a lot of priorities, and it condenses 3 into 1. We can keep parsing this out.

Nazari asked a clarifying question: If we did keep everything in one package, would there be a way to lobby on these individually? Hessami said: absolutely.

Pai asked if repeal of rent control was coming up, because he knows that there was housing reform coming up. Hessami said yes, and we will get some bullet points. Right now, our best legislator to target with this is Nicole Macri in the 43rd district. We still don't know who some of the legislators are, and that could help shape how heavily we focus on certain issues. Some legislators are obviously in support and some are not.

Pai read that there was a movement to implement a tracker for rape kits so that victims of sexual assault would be able to track their evidence. That could possibly go into support for survivors. Rackers said that IVAWA, which is coming up for re-authorization, is a big thing that provides funding for rape kits, specifically in indigenous communities. Since it's coming up for re-authorization, there needs to be lobbying on that. However, the deadline to re-authorize it is December 9th – before we lobby.

Lane said that we should have a general section on environment and sustainability. Hessami asks who would want to take this on. Pollet said that dedicated revenue is mostly together, and he could add a carbon tax as part of it.

Hessami asked if we want something specific on the environment. Pai said that him and Winkelman had talked in passing about Tribal water rights. Pai said that it would tie nicely into ESC Lobby day as well. Winkelman said that we could also put in MTCA, which dedicates revenue to toxic cleanups in non-white communities. They have re-vamped their program so they are a lot better at responding to non-white communities.

Pollet said that there will definitely be talk of water rights in this session because a decision by the Supreme Court pretty much broke our entire water right system in Washington State. It was determined that WA hasn't been living up to its treaty requirements, and the current system isn't good enough to support life, especially salmon.

Pollet said that we can have maximum 10 items on our physical agenda. However, LAC and the Board can definitely pass things that we should be lobbying on that aren't necessarily our top priority. Redtfeldt asked if we should do some sort of impromptu polling online in order to get students to rank the priorities of our agenda items. Hessami said that she has exhausted her Board privileges to send out blast emails. Maybe LAC members could distribute the poll on their Facebooks, through friends and offices in the AS, and we could probably collect about 100 or 200 responses just from that. Ask your clubs and classes to participate. Drechsel will put together another Google Form that has just the ideas discussed today and we can get people to rank their top 5.

Hessami asks for 20 minutes of everyone's time over Thanksgiving Break to look at and further develop the preexisting agenda items.

V. ACTION ITEM

a. Reimbursement for WSA GA Prep Food

There was Thai food at last week's GA prep meeting, and Hessami would like to be reimbursed for it.

MOTION LAC-18-F-21 by *Pollet*

Reimburse Natasha Hessami for the food provided at WSA GA training.

Second: Pai Vote: 9-0-1 Action: *Passed*

b. Reimbursement for Travel

MOTION LAC-18-F-22 by *Pai*

Reimburse Henry Pollet for travel.

Second: Rackers Vote: 10-0-0 Action: *Passed*

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. WSA General Assembly Recap

Gillihan expressed frustration with the reaction to the Civilian Oversight Boards presentation. A lot of the criticism that WWU got was very similar for a lot of other proposals that had more positive responses. We had specific asks, and still the complaint was that the proposal didn't have enough "teeth".

Lane said that a lot of the response to criticism to other schools' legislative proposals was that "it will get added later." He understands why, and that LPs need to be aligned with the language of other stakeholders and things like that. He has an idea for next year: a mechanism like a presidential signing statement, which essentially goes at the end of the bill and that is where the president says what they think of it. Not binding precedent to the bill, just saying what thoughts on the proposal are. Lane didn't like the feeling of the universal, "it will get added in later." The issue is that there should be some deliberation on the proposals without having to go through the full amendment process. Basically, just tracking the comments on a proposal. At this point, WSA has to trust that Guillermo and the WSA Board of Directors are doing the right thing and getting these proposals to have good finalized language. The complicated part is that it is important to WSA to say yes or no at GA, because WSA votes no, then Legislative Liaisons cannot lobby yes on behalf of WSA. We have to vote going off the title of the proposals.

Pollet said that it is his understanding that this year was a little bit different because of the bylaw changes. One of the changes was to formalize the powers of the Legislative Liaisons, which allows

the liaisons to decide whether or not to lobby on something with a significant vote and support of the WSABOD. This allows us to be a little more fluid and less strictly bound to what WSA has passed. Hessami asked for an example of when a Legislative Liaison would need to make a snap decision. Pollet said – close to the end of last session, someone dropped Expanding SNG to 100% without talking to any of us. No Legislative Liaison knew that was happening, and all of the sudden, people saw it in bill trackers, and we needed to decide on the spot whether or not Legislative Liaisons would support that. These kinds of things happen often, maybe not daily but probably weekly, and there are a whole lot of things that aren't explicitly higher ed or things that we didn't think would come up in Session that could arise.

Lane said that he has been to similar events, and WSA GA was really well-run.

Harren said that for those who weren't there – it was really cool to see how much people value WWU's opinion on things. The work that we do in this room is valued and respected by other schools.

VII. REPORTS

a. VP for Governmental Affairs

Hessami reports that she has been in contact with the Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Committee in CSE. She will be meeting with them and tasking them with holding the university accountable for our asks concerning the Pre-Healthcare Decision package. This will be the deciding factor on if we will lobby on this or not.

Pollet said that if SACNAS and other clubs in the college think that there will be progress made in CSE, he will advise the board to support the Pre-Healthcare Decision package. If they feel like they are unsure, then he will be neutral. If he thinks that there will be no accountability, then he will advise them to oppose.

b. REP Director

Harren has been working on WSA, and catching up on everything else this week.

c. Legislative Liaison

Pollet said he is going to Olympia tomorrow and Seattle on Tuesday. Next time we meet, he will give a report on these meetings. The meeting tomorrow is about making college affordable.

d. Local Issues Coordinator

Kissinger said it's an off week for local politics. He has been working on instituting a Community Ambassador Network – student representatives sitting on the neighborhood association meetings. He will be doing a lot of work to expand the local realm of LAC's jurisdiction this year.

VIII. ADJOURN

Hessami adjourned the meeting at 5:25pm.