

ASWWU Legislative Agenda

DRAFT to be presented to LAC on 1/9/19

K-12 Education

The ASWWU recognizes and appreciates the legislatures increased funding to K-12 education last year. WWU boasts 87% in state students, and many students consider sexual assault, lack of cultural competency, and inadequate civics education to be pervasive problems faced by universities that could be addressed in K-12.

Washington state sex education is currently not required for K-12 schools, and curriculums used omits the crucial importance of consent. K-12 education currently has a bare minimum of civics requirement that does not fully equip young people to understand the political systems they operate under. 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.

Ethnic studies curricula that have been implemented throughout California as a means of engaging Latino students, and as a graduation requirement for all Portland, Oregon high school students improved grade point average by 1.4 points and attendance by 21 percent for at-risk youth enrolled in ethnic studies classes, according to a 2016 Stanford study. A failure to improve curriculum for K-12 is a disservice to communities across Washington State.

To better prepare young students for university, Western strongly advocates for the following:

1. Improved and expanded Healthy Youth Act (RCW 28A.300.475) by including education on necessity of affirmative consent.
2. Requiring comprehensive HIV, LGBTQA+, and healthy sex education for all K-12 public schools
3. Support and pass SB 5023 to develop a model ethnic studies curriculum for grade 7 to 12.

Support for Undocumented Students

The ASWWU appreciates the legislature for passing the Dream Act 2.0 (HB 1488) in the previous year. However, undocumented students remain one of the most vulnerable groups of students and Western remains concerned with the lack of resources available for undocumented students in higher education across the state of Washington. Along with supporting undocumented students, we see it important to encompass and support the entire undocumented community.

Western strongly advocates for the following:

1. Support undocumented students' rights to work on campus regardless of DACA status
2. Amend HB 1079 and RCW 28B.15.012 to lower the residency requirement for in-state financial aid and tuition from three year to one year, thereby ensuring as many undocumented students have access to higher education and opportunity as possible.

3. Public support of the Tacoma City Ordinance No. 28491 which limits the expansion of the Northwest Detention Center.
4. Amend the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), WAC. 365-196-550, and RCW 36.70A.200 to specifically exclude federal detention facilities.
5. Close the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma by revoking its business license due to the number of severe health, safety, and human rights violations that have occurred there, under the ownership of the for-profit GEO Group. The blatant profiteering of GEO Group has led to poor conditions, gross human rights violations, and numerous incidences of hunger strikes, suicides, and deaths.

Environmental Protections

The ASWWU recognizes that the State of Washington must provide environmental protections that encompass all pillars of social and environmental sustainability to ensure the healthy and safe future of the residents of Washington State. While the state of Washington goes beyond national standards of sustainability, more environmental protections are necessary in order to mitigate the effects of climate change and set an example for the rest of the nation to follow

Western strongly advocates for the following:

1. Carbon free utility legislation for utility providers to be 100% renewable by 2045, ensuring that LNG plants will be phased out in order to greater reduce the risk of toxic chemical spills in vulnerable communities, protect natural resources, and reduce carbon emissions
2. Fund requests put forward by the department of ecology to conduct pre-adjudication work regarding tribal water rights in Washington State
3. A statewide plastic bag ban, banning plastic bags in the entire state of Washington
4. Protected funding for the Model Toxics Control Act and passing the tax through another fiscal year to ensure that vulnerable communities are protected in the event of toxic spills and natural disaster.
5. Institute a state-level ban in support of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and Attorney General Bob Ferguson , such as those passed in Hawaii and California, of chlorpyrifos to protect local communities and habitats

Support for Survivors of Sexual Assault

The ASWWU is concerned about the frequency of sexual violence on college campuses and how often these instances go unreported. While it is estimated that 1 in 5 womxn are sexually assaulted while in college, 80% of those assaulted do not report due to personal or institutional barriers. Furthermore, transgender students, students with mental disabilities, Black and Native American students, and students facing poverty are disproportionately impacted by sexual violence. With increased funding at the state level will permit universities to implement stronger and more effective support programs for survivors, creating campuses where survivors can complete their education with fewer roadblocks.

Western strongly advocates for increased funding to allow for:

1. Specialized personnel, resources, and trained staff members to improve the universities' ability to prevent and respond to sexual violence.
2. Clarification of the reporting process as well as readily available information of support services for survivors of sexual and domestic violence at the university and in our community.
3. Support HB 1002 (which modifies the offense of rape in the third degree) and 1016 (which concerns hospital notification of availability of sexual assault evidence kit collection), both of which have direct impact on survivors of sexual assault.

State Need Grant

The ASWWU recognizes the increasing cost of education has been a barrier for students from low income families, and is becoming a barrier for those from middle income families. Western appreciates the funding of the State Need Grant (SNG) at \$298 million in 2017-18. Even with this increase, there are still 18,000 students statewide and [REDACTED] students at Western who qualified for the SNG and did not receive any funds. Western believes all students who qualify for the SNG deserve the funds promised to complete their higher education.

Western strongly advocates for the following:

1. **Full and accelerated funding of the State Need Grant by or before 2021** to ensure all qualified students receive funding
2. **Making the SNG program and entitlement program** to ensure secured funding
3. **Expanded eligibility from 70% median family income (MFI) to 125% MFI** to expand eligibility to the middle class, who often cannot afford the high cost of university and do not qualify for low income grant programs.

Dedicated Revenue

The ASWWU recommends implementing progressive, reasonable sources of revenue. Decreasing tuition and fully funding financial aid are critical to the success of college and university students. The chronic lack of funding for higher education disproportionately affects marginalized communities including people of color, first generation students, low income students, and non-traditional students. These measures will propel Washington State toward equity, both in tax policy and in higher education.

Western strongly advocates for:

1. A portion of Governor Inslee's proposed Capital Gains Tax equal to at least 15% or \$500 million be dedicated to Higher Education
2. An increase in the Business and Occupation Tax with at least \$500 million dedicated for higher education
3. Lowering the minimum value of an estate to qualify for the Estate Tax
4. Removing some exemptions from the Real Estate Excise Tax
5. Closing the First Time Mortgage Lenders tax loophole
6. Closing the Extracted Fuel Exemption
7. Taxing lottery winnings