



Western Washington University Associated Students

AS Board of Directors

March 1st, 2019

VU 567

Board Members: *Present:* Millka Solomon (President), Levi Eckman (VP for Academic Affairs), Camilla Mejía (VP for Diversity), Natasha Hessami (VP for Governmental Affairs), and Anne Lee (VP for Student Life)

Absent: Ama Monkah (VP for Activities)

Advisor: Annie Byers

Secretary: Grace Drechsel (AS Board Assistant for Representation Committees)

Guest(s): Emma Calvert (Western Front), Emma Nordlund (Students for Renewable Energy), Trever Nullins (Students for Renewable Energy), Anna Schorr (GSAC), Phillip Hensyel (GSAC), Darcy Allen

Motions:

ASB-19-W-46 Approval of the minutes from last week. *Passed.*

ASB-19-W-47 To pass the committee assignments of Grace LaMonte on the AS Elections Advisory Committee and Astrid Dueñas on Legislative Affairs Council. *Passed.*

Millka Solomon, AS President, called the meeting to order at 4:02pm.

I. Approval of Minutes

MOTION ASB-19-W-46 By Eckman
To approve the minutes from last week.

Second: Mejía

Vote: 4-0-0

Action: Passed

II. Public Forum (*comments from students and the community*)

Alec Willis, REP Elections Coordinator, gave an update regarding the results of the recent special election. Section 1 Clause 4 of the Elections Code says that Willis is to present the election results to the ASBOD after all grievances have been finalized. Since the financial and poster deadline is the coming Monday, he stated that he cannot present the results today, and will present them next week on Friday. However, since there were no grievances filed against the initiative, he will present the results for the initiative this week.

Nate Jo, the Vice President-Elect for Business and Operations, stated that they have been talking to Hessami and Harren about this issue. Due to the nature of the special election, Jo would like to begin work immediately. They acknowledged that there are grievances in process, and would be happy to negate the results should something come up against him that would remove them from the position. Jo sees no reason why the board cannot ratify elections results pending the approval of all grievances and posters.

Eckman said he is fine with Jo working under “Vice-President Elect” until grievances have been processed, and would let them serve in the meeting. The BOD consulted the advisor,

Annie Byers, who said she would feel comfortable waiting for Jo to start VP duties until next week.

Willis said that the position could be filled in the meantime, but he is concerned with officially ratifying the results before grievances have been processed. Due to language in elections code, results should not be presented and ratified. In summary, Nate Jo can be working but not official.

Mejía said that she would like to begin working with Jo, but doesn't want them to work if there is a chance they will not be paid for this coming week.

Jo said that in their transition from Board Assistant to VP, those duties overlap. It is also important to ratify the results as soon as possible in order to replace the Board Assistant. They would also like to begin meeting with Hessami and the Budget Committee as soon as possible.

Eckman said that he would feel comfortable with what Byers and Willis are comfortable with.

President Solomon decided that Jo will not be confirmed until next week's meeting when all grievances have been processed.

Solomon re-opened public forum after the first Information Item in order to allow Darcy Allen to speak.

She brought forward her issues with Parking and Transportation Advisory Committee and the AS committee for ATF. Allen said she is a student with disabilities but active in transportation related issues in town as a member of the Walk/Bus/Bike Bellingham citizen committee designed to foster conversations around mobility. Her issue is that WWU does not have a mechanism to bring stakeholders to the table to talk about transportation. WWU is at capacity in terms of parking capacity on campus (over 100% capacity in parking lots). In terms of WTA buses, a lot of the time they are at capacity, as there are buses that come at certain times of day that leave people behind at the bus stop. There are many other mobility and access issues. The questions that need to be focused on in her view are - How to we move people to, from, and around campus? How do we improve these systems and get stakeholders to the table? Currently at WWU, people are trying to have these conversations, but we don't have any mechanisms in place. She doesn't want to create more layers of bureaucracy, but wants the AS Board to consider this issue so that many people can participate in these conversations.

IV. Information Items - Guests

A. Resolution by Students for Renewable Energy

Emma Nordlund and Trever Mullins from Students for Renewable Energy explained that they are working on a Sustainable Investing campaign, i.e. working with the Investment campaign to get fossil fuels out of the investments of WWU, since those investments don't really represent the morals of the student body. During their presentation, they clarified that ESG means Environmental Social Governance, and the decision for Commonfund investments are made every 5 years. They hoped for Board support in terms of the campaign, and the negotiations will take place on March 13th and 14th.

Sam Frost, Communications Director, asked what their reasoning is behind doing a resolution instead of another form of support? They answered that they're also working on petition and a resolution from the Senate. A resolution would be an official way to show support in addition to a petition to get as many forms of student support as possible.

Eckman added that the Student Senate did approve the resolution, with the understanding that Communications director will be looking over it.

Hessami asked if they did any research into different divestments. The presenters answered that they have done research into firms that they have been allowed to. Every firm does have some money within fossil fuels. They just want to choose one where there are more efforts towards ESGs, and the foundation can choose within the firm.

The Board agreed that the resolution was very thoughtful and thorough.

Hessami recommended that they add the Board of Trustees to the list of who the resolution will be distributed to.

Solomon asked if they would be comfortable with a joint resolution between the Board and Senate. The presenters answered yes.

B. Resolution Regarding GA Compensation and Fee Schedule

Philip Hensyel and Anna Schorr, both Grad Students on the ASWWU Student Senate, brought to the Board a resolution regarding GA Compensation and Fee Schedule. Schorr explained that she chairs the Grad Student Advisory Council, and in that capacity, she asked Grad students their biggest concerns – 30 of them said financial burden. The GA stipend is \$3,960 per quarter (a bit higher if you are a Chemistry or Biology GA). Quarterly fees and the cost of living have increased while stipends haven't increased, so GA's take less disposable income home. Schorr explained that she loses 28% of her income to fees. After paying university, department, and books, she is losing 36% of income. Further, the fees are expected to be paid before the quarter starts. Therefore, students need to have saved up money to pay fees, or they charge late fees and interest.

They are bringing this forward because a resolution from Board would hold more weight than just grad students. At WWU, there is a culture where grad students are being used and not appreciated fully. They would like more support from undergraduate students. They would like a resolution signed before the meeting with Sabah (during prep week).

Solomon asked if they want a one-time increase of the GA stipend, or to have it constantly reflect the cost of living? Schorr answered that they would like an ongoing reflection of the ratio of cost-of-living to stipend.

Hessami recommended also getting in touch with WSA and collaborating with other graduate associations from other universities to lobby next session.

C. Alternative Transportation Fee

Hessami presented different options for the Transportation fee increase. They could increase it by 14% to \$30, \$29.50 or \$29 OR they could do a 5% increase that wouldn't go to student vote. The benefit to a higher increase now is that it would take care of the

problem now and would prevent the depletion of our reserves in the Transportation program. The benefit to a 5% increase is that we don't know what our next WTA contract will look like. Hessami reached out to Brian Sullivan (who will negotiate with WTA next time) and Lee and Hessami will be meeting with him soon to get a different perspective. The bottom line is that there will need to be a fee increase at some point.

Lee said that they are advocating for a more than 5% increase. Doing 5% this year and next year and the next isn't transparent or efficient.

Solomon asked that if negotiations happening this year, and we raise the fee a lot this year, will that affect how the negotiations go? Kay McMurren said that she has no answer to that. Hessami and Lee will ask Brian Sullivan.

Mejía asked if sending it to a student vote mean it's on the ballot for the spring election. Hessami said yes. Mejía asked, if WTA knew that we increased this fee, what kind of leverage would that give them for negotiations? Would it appear that students are overly willing to pay?

Hessami said that a decision needs to be made the first meeting of spring quarter at the latest. She and Lee will meet back in Alternative Transportation Fee committee to discuss further. However, she believes that doing the 5% increase or no increase at all will be pushing the issue to next week's board and it will become more urgent as time goes on.

V. Information Items - Board

A. Elections Code

Hessami outlined the new proposed changes to the Elections Code. There were no drastic changes. Things were changes such as dates and language that you could only advertise in Red Square if you have a table. They added clarification on indoor public spaces and delineating public spaces between indoor/outdoor. They added exceptions on campaigning indoors to include casual conversations and changed the word "banner" to "campaign material". There were clarifications made on apparel. The biggest change was language regarding preemptive funding. They were thinking of doing a \$75 on campus printing credit (at WWU Print and Copy Services).

Solomon asked why the limit is \$75 and not \$150. What if someone wants to spend all their money on printing? Hessami added that the committee thought students need some sort of limitation so that someone doesn't get over ambitious about their spending. Solomon responded everyone are adults, so we should just give them the \$150. She thought that the credit should be able to be applied to the bookstore too.

Courtney Yoshiyama, AS Student Senator-at-Large, asked what the policy was before. Hessami answered that the policy was that you can do whatever you want, but you get reimbursed after the election. This policy change would be an attempt to give money up front and limit accessibility barriers but still being restrictive with these funds. Solomon reiterated that \$150 can stop someone from running.

Willis added that another reason why the limit was decided to be \$75 is that just in case there are so many candidates, the Elections Coordinator's personal account maybe cannot

give \$150 to every single candidate. The \$75 another way to make sure Willis doesn't preemptively spend too much.

Jo agreed with Solomon. They suggested that instead of giving a numerical amount, it could be based on the percentage of funding equally distributed to the candidates running. Candidates should ideally have the full amount. Nicole Ballard also pointed out that during her election, she printed all posters in the library (25 cents per sheet) because Print and Copy services costed more.

Adah Barenburg asked if this would change anything for the senate elections. Hessami answered that the committee didn't talk about that. Eckman said that he would love to introduce this idea to the senate elections as well. Willis said this wouldn't affect the Senate code, but he is interested in applying it to Senate elections. However, the budget for Senate elections will be in the hands of the Senate Pro-Tempore.

Hessami and Willis said that they will talk to the Finance office next week and bring this back. Solomon said that they could also consider using the Board reserves. Eckman suggested that they could ask the Budget Committee to delegate money to this.

They also added to the code a spending cap of 10% of actual budget (\$15) on social media usage. Willis pointed out that buying advertisements online requires a contract to be signed. The AS funding those purchases means that it would have to go through the Contract Office. Un-reimbursable items still need to be filed and count to \$150 (donations, social media)

There was also language changed to Executive Board. They also banned edits to the election code while the election is running to avoid previous mishaps that have occurred. Lastly, they made the REP director the interim Elections Board Chair if no other chair can be hired before a grievance is filed.

VI. Consent Items *(subject to immediate action)*

A. Hessami reported that the new Constitution passed in the recent special election.

B. *MOTION ASB-19-W-47 by Hessami*

To pass the committee assignments of Grace LaMonte on the AS Elections Advisory Committee and Astrid Duenas on Legislative Affairs Council.

Second: Eckman

Vote: 4-0-0

Action: Passed

X. Board Reports

Millka Solomon, AS President stated that she met with Melynda Huskey today and had a good conversation about how they are going to hire someone for Multicultural Services. Nick Sanchez is no longer the MCC director and there will be a nationwide search. Her goal is to hire pro-staff to support things happen in MCC and student groups within different races. She also added that she and Lee have been planning the next Students of color forum, and have decided not to host it this quarter. They had a conversation with Sabah and expressed their expectation that Sabah plan it and not students. He was very willing to do it. The forum will be happening in early May.

Levi Eckman, VP for Academic Affairs stated that an issue came up on Faculty Senate when Juliet Knowles was there in his place. Dr. DeGraaff, a professor in the physics department and also the sole STEM inclusion person, sent out email. They were distressed by the talk about academic freedom and trusting colleagues that occurred during the previous meeting. Eckman read out the email that DeGraaff sent. Eckman does not agree with McNeil Janson's statement about academic freedom, and will send a letter in support of Dr. DeGraaff's statement. Eckman read the draft that he is planning to send. Eckman pointed out that academic freedom isn't a policy, it's an overall precedent that says that a professor can decide what they would like to teach and how they would like to teach it. Hessami urged Eckman to check that DeGraaff is comfortable with him sending the letter of support. Eckman said that Faculty Senate has a pattern where the chair will table or move relevant issues, and will never bring it back up, such as the Students of color forum. Monday the 11th is the next public meeting and he urged everyone to go. He added that Faculty Senate benefits from students not showing up to their meetings.

Camilla Mejía, VP for Diversity dittoed what Solomon said about the meeting with Melynda. She is trying to figure out who is going to be in the group to designate policies and procedures for the MCC, and she is working with Leti Romo on that issue. She has also been meeting with the ESC Executive Committee and planning the soft opening and outlining the grand opening for the MCC.

Natasha Hessami, VP for Governmental Affairs, stated that at UPRC on Wednesday, thanks to a report from Juliet Knowles, saw that Fairhaven College's top priority for the future was to implement Ethnic Studies. She reached out to Students for Ethnic Studies and found out that Fairhaven hasn't reached out to anyone from that club.

Hessami also reported that things are looking bad for the State Need Grant, according to Legislative Liaison Henry Pollet. The legislature will not fully fund it next year. Apparently, the Appropriations Committee will not be funding anything over \$500,000 – a decrease from the current SNG fund). Nicole Ballard will be in Red Square next week urging students to call their senators.

Millka Solomon, AS President, adjourned this meeting at 5:51pm.