

**Western Washington University**  
**AS Food and Housing Insecurity Advisory Committee**

February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020

VU 462 A

**Board Members:** *Present:* Trever Mullins (VP for Sustainability), Patrick Czichas (AS Student Senator), Soumya Ayelasomayajula (ESC Representative Proxy), Ethan Chrisope (Off-Campus Living Representative), Britta Eschete (Career Services Representative), Alyssa Tsukada (Office of Sustainability Representative), Amber C (Feeding Western Coordinator), Karen Deysher (SAIRC Coordinator), and Lorrie Bortuzzo (Multicultural Services).

**Secretary:** Sierra Templeton

**Guest(s):** None

**Motions:**

HIA-20-W-           None

**I. Call to Order**

*Trever Mullins, AS VP of Sustainability, called the meeting to order at 1:06*

**II. Additions and Changes to the Agenda**

None

**III. Approval of Minutes**

None

**IV. Discussion Items**

**A. Feeding Western Coordinator Position**

1. C announced that she will be leaving the Feeding Western Coordinator position at the end of the week. She will point to her coworkers in the food insecurity spheres on campus and the folks who are running the journalism pantry to continue her work after she leaves. Those running the journalism food pantry have used their own money to stock the pantry as well as created a cookbook. There will be no one replacing her for now, but this may change come August. C stated that questions can always be emailed to her while she's still in the position, and that she will be passing along legacy documents and fliers to Deysher.

B. Modalities of Campus Food Security

1. Deysher has compiled food and housing insecurity resources from other campuses that are good examples of integrated support rather than simply departmental. This may include information about emergency aid programs (as insecurity may be caused by an emergency), and tools to build a capacity for more support.
2. Amarillo College has a lot of institutions looking to them as an example. Deysher visited the community college which is fairly small but is using poverty-informed processes. The president has genuine relationships with students, and the whole school has a relationship/love oriented system, rather than expecting students to have knowledge of a more complicated paperwork system. Deysher commented that students seem to really believe and buy into this idea. They have adopted a no excuses philosophy that puts the pressure of student graduation and success on the institution itself rather than on students. They have an Advocacy and Resource Center that handles case management working with students so that having to repeatedly talk about trauma in order to get resources is eliminated. Most of their donations to their food pantries come from the community, and the pantry stock is informed by norms and holidays of all different cultures. They have made it an institutional goal to eradicate poverty, using data to inform the path for the university. For example, if certain populations of students aren't passing a specific class, the university may work with faculty to revise and grow.
  - a. C stated that Western has smaller goals, but isn't used to working towards a larger goals such as eradicating poverty, which may be helpful.
  - b. Deysher noted that maybe a top-heavy approach such as this would be useful, to embed it into the culture of the university. To use class as a way of discussing what it means to be in college, especially as demographics of students change.
  - c. Bortuzzo asked what came first for Amarillo, the ARC or the culture of care. Deysher responded that Amarillo noticed that students were not receiving the grants or resources even if they were available and realized that the average person may not be able to figure out the processes to achieve assistance. This led to case workers to help and then they started building the system. The ARC is mostly funded by donors and they provide help that isn't demeaning with legal services as a basic need. They have more information on how it got started on their website.
3. UC Davis has a really well-organized website with obvious access to help, using experiences instead of words like homelessness and food-insecurity that may scare off students from reaching out for support.
  - a. Tsukada asked what the source for these projects is for the university.
  - b. Deysher responded that it may be fee-based, or donor-based depending on the system. Currently, addressing student needs at the level of higher education is seen as a new issue, but addressing this will accomplish wider university goals, such as increasing graduation rates.
  - c. Mullins stated that it's important to collect student data so Western knows exactly what student needs and resources will help.
  - d. C noted that even if we have this data, we need to make sure the current resources are fully supported. For example, she receives inquiries concerning housing frequently, but is unable to do much other than point at other resources in which students are given the responsibility of figuring out how to get support. Having one office in which employees are able to connect students and help with paperwork would be very beneficial.

- e. Deysher said that a college she worked at first figured out what resources exist on campus and what they did/did not do and what students were asking for. Then they found extra money to create an emergency grant system and were able to give up to \$5,000 each time in a time of need to a student. They had a board consisting of members such as the equivalent of Melynda Huskey and Eric Alexander. The system wasn't abused, but helped students who genuinely needed support. They stated that it's important to find a solid plan for this, find donors, and move through the hiccups that may occur. They had no idea that they would be working at WHOLE, it wasn't listed in job duties, so they wonder how many other people had the same thing occur and are or aren't able to add this to their other work. It's important to make sure the people working on this are passionate and have time to focus on it.
  - f. Eschete noted that the Career Services Center has found it very helpful to have an anonymous survey of how their service has helped them which is a good marker on who's being served.
  - g. Deysher noted that things that aren't normally thought about as basic needs can be essential, such as eyeglasses and this needs to be kept in mind.
  - h. C noted that the financial aid office has emergency food funds and an emergency loan system, so they may have information on why students need the money. She wonders if this data can be found/used. She also noted that lots of people heard about SwipeOut Hunger from the Counseling Center, and this could be a good avenue to put resource information.
  - i. Deysher stated that they think the next step would be to have a meeting or series of meetings with higher-ups, stepping back with the work plan, and coming up with what the committee would like to see happen on campus and coordinate with people who are actually able to enact change.
4. Mullins stated that Karen's documents will be posted on the AS HIA Committee website and Amber's resources will be uploaded on the Teams website group as well.

**V. Reports**  
None

**VI. Other Business**  
A. None

*Trever Mullins, AS VP of Sustainability, adjourned this meeting at 2:08 p.m.*