

Support for Undocumented Students

The ASWWU is disturbed by the lack of resources and support available for undocumented students in higher education across the state. Washington is 1 of 19 states that extends in-state tuition through the state legislature and 1 in 7 states that allow undocumented students to receive state financial aid, but these students still face many obstacles in higher education. Within the current political climate, undocumented students, staff, and faculty are at risk of losing DACA status. Further, there are currently no protections for undocumented people on Washington State campuses which can lead to physical and mental health issues, poor academic performance, low retention rates, or even being separated from their families due to the threat of ICE on campus. In addition to supporting undocumented students in their higher education and career endeavors, we see it important to encompass and support the undocumented community as a whole. Therefore, the ASWWU asks that the legislature

- Requires in depth protocols for universities that prioritize undocumented student safety, modeled off of [AB-21 in California](#)
- Supports the Washington Student Association ask to implement a state-funded student loan program for undocumented students to access
- Closes the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma by revoking its business license due to the number of severe health and safety violations that have occurred there under the ownership of the GEO Group, which is responsible for poor conditions, human rights violations, hunger strikes, mental health crises, and deaths

Funding for Ethnic Studies

The ASWWU strongly believes that Western's institutions and its offerings of academic programs must represent the historically marginalized communities of Washington State. The academic programs of Western demonstrate consistent gaps in perspectives from populations that endure systemic and social marginalization, particularly communities of color. Underrepresented students do not see their histories and experiences reflected in their school system, nor do they have faculty and mentors who share similar backgrounds and experiences. Drawing from UC Berkeley, Ethnic Studies is the critical and interdisciplinary study of race, ethnicity, and indigeneity, with a focus on the narratives by and from people of color within and beyond the United States. The Coalition for Ethnic Studies at WWU has worked to build support for Ethnic Studies on Western's campus through conversations and forums with key administrators and the student population to discuss visions for curriculum, structure, student support, and funding. With the recent passage of SB 5023, concerning K-12 public school Ethnic Studies curriculum, recent education graduates are now required to teach Ethnic Studies, yet have no contact with the specific curriculum in higher education. Therefore, the ASWWU asks that the legislature

- Allocates \$550,000 (\$1.05 million per biennium) to fund five tenure track faculty with expertise and experience in critical ethnic studies to structurally support adopting an Ethnic Studies program at WWU

Farm Worker Protections

The ASWWU recognizes and strongly believes that the health and safety of farm workers in Washington state are integral to the success and vitality of our state's economy. The people who perform the more strenuous work in our economy - growing and harvesting our food - have been denied even the most basic health and safety protections, fair wages, and proper recognition. Substantive change is required in order to ensure the State of Washington adheres to the strictest standard of human and worker dignity and secures the future prosperity of our state. Therefore, the ASWWU asks that the legislature

To support the rights and dignity of workers, Western strongly advocates for the following:

- Amend the 1958 Washington State Minimum Wage and Hour Act, closing the overtime loophole for farm and dairy workers, making them eligible for overtime pay and a fair compensation for time worked (RCW 49.46.130).
- Simplify independent contractor definitions and improving enforcement to end the practice of misclassifying workers as independent contractors in an effort to avoid paying workers' compensation, unemployment insurance, and other public necessities. By doing so, the state will support both workers and law-abiding employers.
- Support SB 6261 that would increase safety amongst farmworkers via holding supervisors and farm owners liable for retaliation.
- Support the WWU Shred the Contract Agenda to end their contract with Aramark and adopt a self- operated dining system with the safety of farmworkers in mind.

Support for Survivors of Sexual Assault

The ASWWU is concerned with the frequency of sexual violence on college campuses and how often these instances go unreported. We believe that, as a whole, we have a responsibility to alleviate the burden faced by survivors of sexual assault as much as possible. We leave the burden entirely on survivors if we don't advocate on behalf and in support of them. 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. Therefore, the ASWWU asks that the legislature

- Supports a new version of HB 1002 to modify the definition of rape in the third degree by removing the requirement for the "lack of consent" to be "clearly expressed by the victim's words or conduct"
- Allocates resources so that specialized personnel, resources, and training for staff members can be implemented at universities leading to an improved ability to respond to sexual violence and involved parties.
- Develops and implements a mandatory, state-wide training program for all university faculty, staff, and administration
- Requires universities & colleges to conduct a sexual assault campus survey to assess the prevalence of this issue on an institutional level, to keep record of all credible instances/complaints against university faculty & staff, and to maintain Obama-era guidelines for the preponderance of evidence standard in Title IX investigations.

- Supports and passes a new version of [SB 5395](#), or its companion bill, [HB1407](#) creating an improved and expanded Healthy Youth Act (RCW [28A.300.475](#)) mandating comprehensive, medically and scientifically accurate, and age appropriate sexual health education that stresses affirmative consent in the K-12 public school curriculum in Washington State

Support for Native American Students

The ASWWU recognizes the need for increased Native American Student support and the work set forth by these students. In 2016, WWU's Native American Student Union (NASU) sent a letter to then incoming President Sabah Randhawa's office advocating for changes to be made to help support Indigenous students at Western Washington University. Among those asks was the construction of a Coastal Salish Longhouse to "honor the historic importance of place which WWU occupies."^[1] Native American Students at Western have also advocated for a Tribal Sovereignty Curriculum to educate students at WWU about the history of tribal governments. The Washington Student Association is also advocating for tuition waivers for Native students as well as changing Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day.

In order to provide solutions for the issues, both present and historic, facing Native American students, the ASWWU recommends:

- Providing \$4.9 million out of the capital budget to be used for the construction of a Coastal Salish Longhouse to be built on or near WWU's campus
- Allocate \$500,000 to WWU per year to create a Tribal Sovereignty Curriculum at Western that is approved by all federally recognized tribes
- Waive the tuition and fees for Native American students in Washington State's Federally Recognized Tribes
- Enact a law changing "Columbus Day" to "Indigenous People's Day" in Washington State

[1] WWU Administration's One-Pager for the Coast Salish Longhouse

Mental Health & Wellness

The ASWWU believes that mental health care and wellness services are vital resources for students in higher education. On both Western's campus and campuses across the state, several roadblocks stand in the way of accessible mental health services. These barriers are more likely to impact students with disabilities, students of color, and LGBTQ+ students as finding a counselor that understands the intricacies of their identity can be incredibly difficult. The counseling centers on Washington State public university campuses remain extremely understaffed, leading to long wait-lists and lack of essential care. Therefore, the ASWWU asks that the legislature:

- Funds the implementation of fully integrated health and wellness on Western's campus, including \$30 million for a new building to co-locate WWU wellness services such as Alcohol and Drug Consultation and Assessment Services (ADCAS), Consultation and Sexual Assault Support (CASAS), the Student Health Center, and the Counseling Center
- Allocate more resources to college campuses statewide, including but not limited to: requiring detailed mental health training for faculty, staff & students, and providing more personnel funding so that campuses may focus on hiring counselors that are representative of the student population.

Public Accessibility Action

The ASWWU firmly believes in every space being as accessible as possible at all times. There are several ways in which public spaces remain completely inaccessible to people with disabilities making it much more difficult, if not impossible, to go about their daily lives. By providing public accommodations, we make the lives of folks with disabilities safer, easier and minimize the undue burden of having to find accommodations for themselves. With this in mind, the ASWWU ask that the legislature:

- Support HB 2272, which would allow folks who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing to have an optional marker on their license, and create new legislation that would allow similar markers for other disabilities.
- Support SB 6182, a bill that would require closed-captioning on televisions at places of public accommodation whenever possible, in order to make public information more accessible to folks who are Deaf, hard-of-hearing or experience sensory overload.
- Support SB 6087, which would cap insulin costs at \$100/month, while working on eliminating co-pays for insulin in order to lessen the burden on people with diabetes.
- Support SB 6098, which would require insurance (at least at the Medicare level) to cover the cost of prosthetics & orthotics, alleviating financial & potential physical barriers.
- Establish state-wide guidelines for weather-related closures/incidents and how universities respond to the resulting accessibility needs in order to alleviate some of the undue burden that extreme weather can place on students with physical disabilities.

Reproductive Justice

The ASWWU is increasingly concerned with the threat to reproductive justice in our country. Maintaining our current level of rights, as well as expanding on them, is imperative to keeping not only students but everyone in our state healthy. Reproductive justice plays a role in many aspects of our daily lives and isn't just a "women's issue"; people of all gender identities,

ethnicities, abilities and age are affected by changes in reproductive rights. Given this information, the ASWWU recommends the following:

- Support HB 2327 in order to properly assess sexual assault statistics across Washington state universities so that institutions may be held more accountable and thus become a safer space for students.
- Support HB 2252 and companion bill SB 6129 in order to offer more well-rounded reproductive healthcare to college students.
- Support SB 6073 and add an amendment to expand this bill to public universities & campuses so that easy access to menstrual hygiene products can be guaranteed at the collegiate level.