

Western Washington University

Legislative Affairs Council

November 10th, 2020

MS Teams

Board Members: *Present:* Nicole Ballard (VP for Governmental Affairs), Nathalie Wagler (Voter Recruitment and Engagement Coordinator), Mariam Wolters (Outreach and Representation), Jude Ahmed (Director of Legislative Affairs), Natalie Szabo (Local Liaison), Daniela Rodriguez (ESC Representative), Breaker Chittenden (Student At-Large), and Jennifer Leveque (Student At-Large).

Secretary: Sierra Templeton

Guest(s): None

Motions:

LAC-19-F- None

I. Call to Order

Nicole Ballard, VP of Governmental Affairs, called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

II. Additions and Changes to the Agenda

None

III. Approval of Minutes

None

IV. Information Items

A. Mandatory DEI Training with Anti-Racism Component Proposal

1. Ahmed stated that she has been hearing feedback concerning the DEI training that was implemented at WWU. The idea is to take a model, such as WWU's and expand it so all college campuses have an anti-racism training. This also holds WWU to continue to create and mandate an effective training.
2. Chittenden asked if the target was to base the training off of WWU's or to create guidelines for the training. Ahmed stated that it is ideal to create guidelines for the training. Ballard responded that the goal is to ensure that universities must continue to mandate anti-racism training after this year.
3. Szabo asked if there would be something included in the ask that requires student feedback. Ahmed responded that the goal is to get feedback after the first training round, but this feedback could be added yearly, especially due to the rapid changes in vocabulary.

B. Title IX Proposal

1. Ahmed stated that the current Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos released new guidelines surrounding Title IX. The goal of the ask is to insure that universities are maintaining their Title IX rules, strengthening the language surrounding support for survivors, and maintaining rules about LGBT or sex discrimination.
2. Chittenden asked if there are targeted senators, representatives, or committees for this proposal. Ahmed responded that a committee focusing on K-12 education, and perhaps higher education would be appropriate.

C. Eliminating the EdTPA Proposal

1. Ahmed stated that the EdTPA is the assessment during the teaching program. It costs \$300 in addition to program fees and has been shown to be racially biased. With COVID-19 especially, it is difficult for low-income students to reliably access the internet. There are already some senators and representatives interested in the item, but it is important to have teachers rally behind it. One idea is to have each university submit their own assessment process to the Professional Educator Standards Board.
2. Ahmed stated that there are three parts of the exam, one is an actual linguistically based exam (where correct answers may contradict what they have learned in class), a recording of the student teaching, and a write-up describing and measuring the progress of the student.

D. Banning Educational Institutions from Hiring Officers with Disciplinary Records Proposal

1. Ahmed stated that the proposal has not been updated since the WSA General Assembly, because the universities must organize to define what constitutes a disciplinary record. This is a proposal that doesn't affect funding and is applicable across all universities. The goal is also to mandate universities to release information about their funding towards campus police, ban the use of K-9 dogs, and mental health training for officers.
2. Wolters asked if the budget is available currently. Ballard responded that she has the budget and will send it over.

E. CARES/GEER Funding Proposal

1. Ahmed stated that the proposal requires universities to publish information about what the CARES funding is being used for on their website, making it accessible and transparent too students, and advertising its presence.
2. Szabo asked if this concerns the money that students apply for, or the university spending, and Ahmed clarified that it concerns both.

V. **Discussion Items**

A. Role of Committee Members

1. Ballard stated that every representative on the committee represents more than their individual office, or position. Their perspective is extremely valuable, but it is also important to reach out to their own office, give LAC updates, and make sure their perspectives are being heard as well. The more the LAC reaches out to different voices, to more the LAC can challenge the university and government to meet student needs on campus.

B. Specifying Asks within Umbrella Topics

1. Ballard stated that the survey got way more responses than expected over the weekend and asked whether the council would like to add more gift cards to be given out. Ballard now has the budget for the Legislative Action Fund (LAF), and currently the LAF holds \$76,000. Typically, lobby days cost \$10,000-15,000, and although there are still WSA dues to pay, last year about \$500 went to promoting the survey so she would feel comfortable about extending the amount of gift cards provided.
2. Wagler asked if the LAC could promote the Instagram post about the survey, Ballard responded that unfortunately, the survey closes this following Sunday and she is not sure if this would be able to pass in time.
3. Ballard stated that the top eight priorities in the survey were: college affordability, mental health resources, COVID-19 relief, environmental justice, anti-racism training, defending DACA, racial-discrimination on campus, and student healthcare.
4. Chittenden stated that it would be interesting to look into other state's COVID-19 relief, to inform COVID-19 relief in Washington State. He also is interested in looking at mental health reform at WWU's counseling center as counselors are not trained to respond to crisis and are generally not able to meet all student's needs. Rodriguez added that one of the BSO demands is to recruit and retain black mental health counselors, and currently there is only one that is planning to be retained.
5. Szabo stated her concern for the state of the counseling center, as well as environmental justice on campus, as the Bellingham steam plants are environmentally unfriendly. Ballard responded that even if the counseling center ask is not plausible because of budget cuts, large asks usually take a couple years to pass anyway.
6. Ballard stated that the committee can always use previous legislative agendas and information as a guide to their work, keeping in mind the survey feedback and what the administrators are lobbying for as well.

VI. Reports

Natale Szabo, Local Issues Coordinator stated that she is planning on scheduling a listening session with Bellingham City Planners about the zoning codes which prohibit more than three non-family members living together.

Jude Ahmed, Director of Legislative Affairs, stated that the WSA Students of Color Association is looking for members and should contact Ahmed if they are interested.

Nathalie Wagler, Organizing and Outreach Coordinator, stated that members should reach out to her if there are projects she can help with.

Nicole Ballard, AS VP for Governmental Affairs, stated that since the committee last met on Friday she doesn't have much to report, but would love feedback on making any information more accessible.

VII. Other Business

- A. Specifying Mental Health Proposal

1. Chittenden stated that he is interested in looking at the excused mental health days in Oregon, HB2191, that was created in reaction to the high increase of teen suicide.
2. Ballard stated that if anyone is interested in joining a more in-depth group for writing legislation, they should reach out to her.

Nicole Ballard, AS VP of Governmental Affairs, adjourned this meeting at 10:00 a.m.

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