

**Western Washington University Associated Students
STUDENT SENATE**

Date: December 2, 2020

Attendees: *Olivia Chatters, Althea Frye, Ankur Handa, Kara Henry, Kendrick Jackson, Connor Johnson, Jasleen Kaur, Marissa McGinnis, Francis Neff, Alex Park, Samia Quidwai, Liz Rosales, Sameer Shorab, Kharma Stambaugh, Aidyn Stevens, Selam Swier, Laura Wagner, Sargun Handa, Nicole Ballard, Jude Ahmed, Donna Qualley, Brooke Love, Casey Hayden, Annie Byers, Ruth Flint-Blanchard*

MOTIONS

ASWWUSS-20-F-15	To table the minutes
ASWWUSS-20-F-16	To vote electronically for Vice-Chair
ASWWUSS-20-F-17	To instate Wagner and Frye as Co Vice-Chairs

Sargun Handa, Senate Pro-Tempore, called the meeting to order at 2:06 PM

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. November 19, 2020 Minutes – Minutes were tabled.

ASWWUSS-20-F-15

Motion by Alex Park

To table minutes for next Senate Meeting

Second: Connor Johnson

Motion passed 13-0-0

II. REVISIONS TO THE AGENDA

III. PUBLIC FORUM

IV. ACTION ITEMS – Guests *

V. INFORMATION ITEMS – Guests *

a. PLEJ GURs – Sargun Handa (she/her) introduced the draft proposing PLEJ (Power, Liberation, Equity, and Justice) GURs (General University Requirements) replace the CGM (Comparative Gender and Multicultural) GURs. Donna Qualley (she/her) presented a PowerPoint presentation on PLEJ, explaining that the PLEJ proposal is part of a larger proposal from 2018. The Academic Coordinating Commission (ACC) put out several areas for improvement, and PLEJ focuses on

what the ACC called the diversity requirement but separates justice and equity from general diversity issues. The Committee on Undergraduate Education (CUE) was charged by the ACC to look at the proposal and develop ideas to present to WWU faculty and students. CUE spoke with various groups at WWU over Fall 2019, Winter 2020, and Summer 2020 Quarters to put together the draft being presented at the Student Senate meeting. The draft was influenced by many documents and events, including a letter from the BSO, WWU's Strategic Mission and Plan, the WWU President's solidarity message, and current events. The current CGM requirement is a diversity requirement, and diversity has different purposes and outcomes than equity and justice. Qualley then presented examples of the meanings of diversity, equity, justice, and inclusion. The name PLEJ was chosen because "Equality" and "Justice" were words used by the ACC and kept with WWU's current goals, and "Power" and "Liberation" were used to replace "Diversity", since they are more coherent and consequential. Currently, the CUE is suggesting a 2-course sequence: PLEJ-1 and PLEJ-2. PLEJ-1 would be the foundational course, that introduced students to both a theoretical foundation to understand issues and ways to think about and interact with these issues. PLEJ-2 would extend and apply the ideas from PLEJ-1. PLEJ-1 would focus on the broad ideas, and PLEJ-2 would focus deeper on the subject matter of the PLEJ-1 course. Model A of the PLEJ courses would focus specifically on race, racism, and anti-racism in the United States, while Model B would focus on any marginalized community. CUE was more in favor of Model A, as it showed support for BIPOC students and staff, and made sure that all WWU students had a course on race, racism, and anti-racism in their time at Western. Model B has a wider focus, which means that students could graduate without having a course on race, racism, and anti-racism while at WWU. Qualley then went on to explain the 3 varying structures the PLEJ courses could take, which included having a PLEJ category, having PLEJ tagged Humanities/Social Sciences courses, and a structure that combined the two with a focus on including major specific PLEJ courses. Qualley reiterated that this current proposal is a draft, and that CUE is looking for feedback and input on it. Brooke Love (she/her) then took over the presentation to present on the short-term process and student feedback with PLEJ. She explained that CUE wanted student feedback on the topic. CUE hopes to have an official proposal drafted by February 2021 and continue to consult with various bodies across campus in the Spring and have a final proposal and approval in June of 2021. Sargun Handa (she/her) then explained that the role of the Senate was to work to properly understand the PLEJ draft so that the Senators can educate the students on what PLEJ is and get feedback from the students and report back to Faculty Senate, ACC, and CUE. She then presented on the PLEJ draft survey for students and explained proposed edits to it that would better explain what PLEJ is so students understand what they are responding to and went over what the survey would be asking. Quidwai (she/her) asked if the option of different majors implementing the PLEJ requirement within their curriculum would prolong the time it takes for PLEJ to go into effect. Qualley responded that it would not because if that were the chosen model it would go into effect in the same timeframe, which has plenty of time allotted to fulfill any of the model's requirements, she continued to explain that majors would not be required to take a

PLEJ course in their major, because there would be GUR PLEJ courses available as well. Johnson (he/him) asked about why in one model the courses specifically focus on the United States rather than other countries. Qualley explained that the suggestion was for PLEJ-1 only to focus on the United States because that is the foundational course, and students might associate the topics as issues elsewhere, not in the United States, but PLEJ-2 could be international or domestic, though CUE believes that international requirements should be under Humanities not PLEJ. Stevens (she/her) asked about if Direct Transfer Students with Associates would be asked to take a PLEJ course in every model, or if that was just in Model 3 where it was specifically mentioned. Qualley responded that it would just be Model 3, since that model is dealing with Graduation Requirements, and the other two discuss PLEJ courses as a GUR, which a Direct Transfer Student with an Associates would have completed. Stevens (she/her) asked where in the timeline the financial specifics and hiring specifics would be addressed. Qualley responded that, depending on which model is passed, that over the several years before the PLEJ courses are in effect they would hire the positions that needed filled. She commented that hiring has been difficult at WWU, but the hope was that the PLEJ requirement might help attract new faculty. A. Handa (he/him) asked if he was correct in his understanding that PLEJ courses would not increase the number of required GURs. Qualley responded that he was correct. A. Handa (he/him) asked how the classes would become accessible to students in the transition period. Qualley responded that students would continue to take ACGM and BCGM requirements as they slowly begin to introduce PLEJ courses. CUE is trying to find classes that already focus on PLEJ issues to provide to students who have interest in taking such courses. A. Handa (he/him) asked about how the major specific courses would look for STEM majors specifically. Qualley responded that STEM students had brought up the idea of major specific PLEJ courses, and an example may be looking at the biological basis of racism. Love expanded that there could be courses on the inequity in a particular field. S. Handa (she/her) read comments in the chat.

b. WLD Agenda – Nicole Ballard (she/her), the Associate Students Executive Board Vice President for Governmental Affairs and Jude Ahmed (she/her), the Associated Students Office of Civic Engagement Director of Legislative Affairs, presented on first draft of the Western Lobby Day Agenda. Ballard explained that many of the WLD asks center around equity. The first topic was on College affordability, which included advocating that the Washington College Grant stay fully funded, that loan forgiveness programs are expanded, and supporting the creation of the Native American Tuition Assistance program. Ahmed (she/her) expanded on the Native American Tuition Assistance program, explaining that it is a program that Washington State University would also be lobbying on the program this year, and that it would provide funding for Native American students that did not require going through a lot of other forms and scholarships to get college funding, and that it would be attached to the Washington College Grant and WASFA instead and automatically be factored in. Ballard moved on to the next topic, which was about Environmental Justice, and explained that WILD would have another section on Environmental Justice. Johnson (he/him) asked if WLD would include advocating

for changing interest rates on student loans alongside advocating for loan forgiveness. Ballard responded that Washington State does not have a State loan program beyond the undocumented student loan program, which is not in effect until July 1st, 2021, so the interest rates would not be controlled by the state, but the federal government. The next topic Ballard discussed was Mental Health and Wellness, which included advocating for fully funding the Minor Works ask to expand WWU's mental health services, supporting the plan for a future integrated health and wellness building on WWU campus, advocating to expand Washington State health insurance to include undocumented individuals, and advocating to fund WWU's Advancing Inclusive Success \$3.4 million ask to address needs on campus. Ahmed then explained the next topic of Facilitating Comprehensive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Trainings at a State level. This topic included advocating for a comprehensive DEI training with an anti-racism component that is also inclusive of disability advocacy and LGBTQ+ advocacy and developed with student input to create a training that students would benefit and learn from, as well as an improved training for WWU staff, and advocating for LGBTQ+/Trans-inclusive services across state college campuses. Ahmed moved on to the next topic of Supporting Survivors of Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence, which included advocating for strengthening Title IX regulations at the state level and advocating to integrate interpersonal violence training and advocacy. Stevens (she/her) asked what feedback would be useful from the Senators on the WLD agenda. Ballard responded that any feedback would be useful. Ahmed responded that if Senators see any gaps or any voices not being included in the asks, hearing about that would be helpful. Ballard continued that the agenda is meant to speak for the Associated Students at WWU, so with the Senators and the Executive Board working on it, they can make the agenda representative of student voices. Ballard moved on to the topic of the Coast Salish Longhouse, which included advocating for \$4.95 million in funds to be allocated to build a Coast Salish Longhouse on WWU's campus, as WWU is one of the few schools in the state of Washington that does not have a Longhouse on campus and would be a space to support Indigenous students at WWU. She also explained that the phrasing in the agenda was copied from the Administration's ask as a placeholder and would be updated with NASU student input. Ballard moved on to the \$10 million Equity Funding ask, which is from WWU, Eastern Washington University, Central Washington University, and Evergreen College. Out of this \$10 million, WWU would receive \$3.4 million. The WLD agenda advocates that this money would go towards creating an endowment scholarship for BIPOC students, address needs in mental health for students, and create an Ethnic Studies curriculum for WWU. S. Handa (she/her) asked why WSU and UW are not part of this ask. Ballard responded that the ask came from all the universities putting their capital budget requests into the state and seeing that the region schools had similar equity asks and decided to collaborate to ask for the Equity Funding. UW and WSU are not region schools and are larger than the regent schools. S. Handa (she/her) asked what a region school was. Ballard explained that they are the regional schools. Ahmed added that she hoped to be able to collaborate more with the student senate on this legislation because the University will decide where the funding goes and having a strong coalition of students will be important to have a say in where the funds go.

Ballard moved on to the topic of Support and Resources for Undocumented and DACA students, which included advocating for fully funding the Undocumented Student Loan Program, lowering the residency requirement for in-state financial aid from 3 years to 1 year, requiring in-depth protocols for universities to prioritize undocumented student safety, closing the Northwest ICE Processing Center in Tacoma, and expanding the Washington Immigrant Relief Fund to \$60 million. Wagner (she/her) asked if the issue of the Columbia River Dams, which she had brought up in an earlier meeting, is still on their radar, and when the agenda would be voted on in January. Ballard responded that it would be the first week of January and the issue of the dams is still on their radar, as there is a lot of room to grow on the agenda. She continued that the agenda is very long this year, so many environmental justice issues may end up in the WILD agenda. Ballard moved on to the topic of Meeting Basic Needs, which included advocating for making SB 5800 a permanent program to assist foster care and houseless students, extending the eviction moratorium through March 31st, 2021, creating a fee assistance pilot program for Washington State universities housing fees, creating a state grant program for meal assistance and clothing assistance programs for students, creating a state-wide survey for student basic needs that Universities would report results to the state from, and expanding SNAP benefits so students who work 19 hours a week can qualify, though this point will be expanded on in the future. Ballard then moved on to the Dedicated Revenue, which included finding funding for education by advocating for taxing those with high amounts of wealth and closing loopholes.

VI. PERSONELL ITEMS

- a. Vice Chair Elections** – S. Handa (she/her) went over the job description and nomination rules of the Vice-Chair. Neff (he/him) nominated Laura Wagner for Vice-Chair. A. Handa (he/him) nominated himself for Vice-Chair. Frye (they/she) nominated themselves for Vice-Chair. The candidates for Vice-Chair were Laura Wagner from the College of the Environment, Ankur Handa from the College of Science and Engineering, and Althea Frye from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Each candidate then gave a short speech about why they were running for Vice-Chair and why they felt they were a good fit. Wagner (she/her) explained that she had worked with S. Handa and her College of the Environment co-senator on the Shred the Contract resolution and presented it at the Executive Board Meeting, worked on student outreach through club meetings and events and online. She expressed that she would love to be Vice-Chair because the position would be a great step up to allow her the opportunity to further understand the workings of the Senate and the Executive Board, as well as helping the Senators and the Senate Pro-Tempore when they need support. She continued that she also wants to be in a position where she could better facilitate constituents' ideas and needs at a higher level to improve WWU's community. She expressed that she is very excited by the possibility of working closely with the Senate Pro-Tempore to bring the lasting change students want and to be someone the Senate can depend on. A. Handa (he/him) introduced himself as a person of color and a first-generation college student. He

expressed that he would like to be the Vice-Chair because he wanted to facilitate the relationship between students and the Student Senate, and to assist his fellow Senators in any way he can. A. Handa stated that he has been working with Shred the Contract towards a self-operated dining system. As a part of this process, he has reached out to ASWSU for support. Some of his goals as Vice-Chair are to ensure that BIPOC students and students with disabilities get the support that they need, especially during a pandemic. A. Handa and his co-senator have also started checking major admission and graduation requirements to see how they impact students. A. Handa gave an example that a report of introductory math course fail rates has shown that there are structural barriers to student success. BIPOC students, who are disproportionately from disadvantaged backgrounds, are especially hurt by these barriers. Frye (they/she) introduced themselves as a first-generation college student and first-generation immigrant from the Philippines, with their mother language being Tagalog. They explained that the reasons they wanted to run for Vice-Chair are the same reason they ran for senate; they are a senior at WWU now and felt in the past that their voice did not matter, but with the progress made by Black Lives Matter and the highlight on inequality, they decided to use their voice to speak up for others. They stated that they had experience chairing committees, having previously been on events and organization committee, as well as communications committee. Frye expressed that they are good at listening to different perspectives and making sure everyone's wants and needs are met. They have also already begun working with the Idea Committee on ways to improve accessibility for students, especially for first-generation college students and people of color. Frye stated that they want to leave Western Washington University a better place than it was when they started here. S. Handa asked for seconds for the nominations. Laura Wagner's nomination was seconded by Marissa McGinnis. Ankur Handa's nomination was seconded by Olivia Chatters. Althea Frye's nomination was seconded by Alex Park. Wagner and Frye tied for votes. The Senator's then voted between the two of them.

ASWWUSS-20-F-16

Motion by Alex Park

To vote electronically for Vice-Chair

Second: Kara Henry

Motion passed 16-0-0

ASWWUSS-20-F-17

Electronic vote results for December 2, 2020

Althea Frye: 10 votes

Laura Wagner: 10 votes

Frye and Wagner were voted in as Co Vice-Chairs

VII. ACTION ITEMS – Senate*

VIII. INFORMATION ITEMS – Senate *

IX. CONSENT ITEMS

X. BOARD REPORTS

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

The meeting was adjourned @ 4:05 P.M.