

**Western Washington University Associated Students
STUDENT SENATE**

Date: January 7th, 2021

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, A.P. Wang, Sargun Handa, Nicole Ballard, Jude Ahmed, Casey Hayden, Annie Byers, Ruth Flint-Blanchard*

MOTIONS

ASWWUSS-21-W-18

To approve the WLD Agenda

Sargun Handa, Senate Pro-Tempore, called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

II. REVISIONS TO THE AGENDA

III. BSO DEMANDS

- a. Park (she/they) expressed frustration with how the curriculum was handed at the Honors meeting. S. Handa (she/her) explained that Honors Freshmen at WWU have to take the 103-106 sequence of courses. 103 and 104 are both very Eurocentric, and then students can choose to take 105 and get a not western hemisphere focused course, but the course is still taught from a colonizer's perspective. S. Handa gave the example of one course being on South American literature, where the textbook was from the colonizer's perspective, and it depicted people of color and Indigenous people of South America in a gross and uncomfortable way. S. Handa also gave a personal example of taking an honors class on her culture called Indian History, which was taught by a white man and when she disagreed with how the class was taught, she was not treated well. She explained that every Honors Freshman has to take a 101 class which is a seminar, where each Monday a speaker comes in and talks about the topic of "Big History", which is History from the beginning of the universe to the future, which makes humanity a small part of history, which makes injustices and civil rights movement very small and erases all of the BIPOC history and whitewashes history. S. Handa explained that these are examples given of how the Honors Program is unfulfilling to BIPOC Honors Students and can be traumatizing. There are instances of white professors and students saying the n-word in the classroom and BIPOC students being told they are questioning the professors teaching ability when they speak up about it. Handa continued that they have been having meetings to try to change the curriculum of the Honors Program. One issue is the Honors Board, which is made up of several white professors and five students, three of whom are white and two of whom are BIPOC. S. Handa explained that they are asking for one more BIPOC student, since the majority of

voices are white in both the students and professors on the board. The response to this from the board was that they did not see a need to change things. S. Handa expressed that the purpose of all of that was not to bash the Honors Program, the situation is very frustrating because it feels like many of the issues are common sense and are why the Honors Students of Color Club was created because the Honors program is so white, and Students of Color choose not to go to the Honors Board. S. Handa explained that she went to the Honors Board in the past because she had to because of her position in the Honors Students of Color Club, but it was not enjoyable. People of Color do not feel welcomed in the Honors Program or on the Honors Board. The Honors Program shows off that they have a certain population of BIPOC students but needs to address the ways that it harms BIPOC students and has curriculum that harms BIPOC students, as well as the dynamic in their student leadership organizations, and the way that white professors and directors interact with student leaders of color who want more representation on the curriculum committees. There will be an honors course in the coming quarter taught by BIPOC professors called Decolonizing Political Communication. One goal is to get a returning BIPOC professor in the Honors Program, as well as textbooks written by BIPOC people from their perspective.

Stevens (she/her) had another update about adding Black art pieces to buildings on Western's campus, specifically the new science building currently under construction. All of WWU's public owned buildings have an art piece in them, and there is a board of people working on choosing art, which includes the Dean of the College of Fine and Performing Arts. Stevens and Stambaugh plan to meet with the Dean soon about making sure that they are putting an emphasis on having the new art piece be one created by a Black artist. Stevens asked if the AS could create a referendum to encourage and show support for the fact that this art piece should be created by a black artist. S. Handa (she/her) responded that that is something they could do, and that she could also connect Stevens and Stambaugh to people who may be able to help. She continued that the AS should voice their support of having a Black artist's art piece as the installation, and that it was likely that Stevens would hit some roadblocks but to keep working at it.

Wagner (she/her) brought up that she is working on an op-ed piece about the renaming of the Huxley College of the Environment, which will discuss the background of the movement to change the College's name, as well as explain the background on who Thomas Huxley was and his racist beliefs and work, and an explanation of where to move forward from there. Wagner and her co-senator, Neff, decided that an op-ed piece is the best way to spread the information about how Thomas Huxley was and why people avoid using his name when discussing the college. Wagner and Neff plan to have a meeting to discuss the timeline for the goals that they have and reach out to other senators for support in renaming the College of the Environment. The op-ed should be published about a week from the meeting as the op-ed is being edited. S. Handa (she/her) responded that it does feel like Western needs a rebranding as whole, including with the Viking mascot, since many people who were breaking into the White House were

wearing Viking Helmets as their symbol, and that when a woman of color at Western spoke up about it a few years ago, she got lynching threats from a white supremacist student who was only suspended. She continued that change always induces backlash. S. Handa thanked the College of the Environment Senators for all their work.

S. Handa (she/her) then talked about work she was doing with the ACC and CUE on the accommodations in the syllabi. She explained that they want to ask the BSO if they approve the language in the draft that had been made, but she wants to ask the Student Senate their thoughts on doing so, because it is asking the BSO to do the labor and the work of checking. Quidwai (she/her) said that she felt that asking the BSO to look it over would be alright, as long as it is presented with specific questions already provided rather than just asking for thoughts on the draft as a whole. S. Handa asked if Ballard had any thoughts as an Executive Board member. Ballard (she/her) said that she did not have any in the moment. S. Handa continued that she would appreciate any Senate input so the ACC and CUE can avoid making the BSO do the work for them while still fulfilling the BSO's needs.

IV. PUBLIC FORUM

V. INFORMATION ITEMS – Guests*

VI. ACTION ITEMS- Guests *

- a. WWU Lobby Day Agenda - Nicole Ballard (she/her) presented on the WLD agenda. She went over the WLD agenda document with the changes that had been made since the draft was originally presented. She explained that she hoped if the Agenda is approved that a Friendly Amendment would be included to allow for minor edits after approval for grammar and minor changes. Stevens (she/her) asked how Ballard felt with being unable to get in contact with NASU students and other stakeholders about the Salish Longhouse ask. Ballard responded that she wished she could have gotten more input from stakeholders, but she still feels good moving forward with the ask because it is something NASU students have asked for in the past, and Western is also lobbying for it so having student voices on it as well will help amplify the ask. Ballard also explained that the Executive Board will be able to make edits after the Student Senate votes on it. Ballard closed by thanking the Senate for their feedback on the agenda.

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Motion by Marissa McGinnis

To approve WLD Agenda with a Friendly Amendment

Second: Francis Neff

Motion passed: 16-0-0

VII. PERSONELL ITEMS

VIII. ACTION ITEMS – Senate*

IX. INFORMATION ITEMS – Senate *

X. CONSENT ITEMS

XI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. S. Handa (she/her) gave the news that one of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences senators resigned from her position. The decision will later be made whether there will be a special election, or an appointment made. S. Handa spoke in favor of appointing a Senator, for speed and ease. The issue will be discussed further.

XII. BOARD REPORTS

- a. Nicole Ballard (she/her) reported that she had been working on the agenda for lobby day and the trainings for the lobby days. She also has been planning the day itself since it is virtual. She has been spending a lot of time on research.

XIII. SENATE REPORTS

Laura Wagner (she/her) reported that she had been working on the op-ed article. Wagner also asked about when a reoccurring meeting time would be found. S. Handa responded that it would be figured out soon.

Samia Quidwai reported that she and A.P. Wang had been in a committee meeting about thesis renewal after expiration.

A.P. Wang reported that there had been movement in the graduate committee, and the Graduate Senators are understanding their role as student representatives in that committee.

Marissa McGinnis (she/her) reported that she would be working on writing a document about accessibility in online learning and how to advocate for precedents like closed captioning in every meeting.

Kara Henry (she/her) added that if anyone was interested in sending out a similar document to get in contact with her and McGinnis to collaborate.

Liz Rosales (she/her) reported that she and Johnson are working to create a student forum.

Kendrick Jackson (he/him) added that he and Rosales had been attending the Diversity and Equity Committee for Woodring, so they are aware of what is happening there and hoping to meet with the dean.

Ankur Handa (he/him) reported that they had been working on Introductory Math course [something] rates at the end of Fall Quarter and will continue to work on that.

Sargun Handa (she/her) reported that she had been struggling with how the WWU administration treats student leaders, but that she will continue working towards her goals, and she hopes the senators do as well.

XIV. OTHER BUSINESS

The meeting was adjourned @ 7:38 PM