

**Western Washington University Associated Students
STUDENT SENATE**

Date: January 20th, 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, Charlotta Abernathy, Raquel Vigil, Casey Hayden, Taylor McGillis, Karen Deysher, Ruth Flint-Blanchard*

MOTIONS

ASWWUSS-21-W-19	To add the DOC Letter to the Agenda.
ASWWUSS-21-W-20	To move information item to action item.
ASWWUSS-21-W-21	To vote to approve the language on the ballot.

Sargun Handa, Senate Pro-Tempore, called the meeting to order at 6:35 P.M.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

II. REVISIONS TO THE AGENDA

Laura Wagner (she/her) proposed adding the DOC letter to senators to the Senate Reports section of the Agenda.

ASWWUSS-21-W-19

Motion by Alex Park

To add the DOC Letter to the Agenda

Seconded by Jasleen Kaur

Passed 15-0-0

III. BSO DEMANDS

S. Handa (she/her) reported that she has an AS Constitutional Task Force with AS President and several others in the AS to look at the AS Constitution in depth with the purpose of updating it. She is going to collaborate with ASVP for Diversity, Ranulfo Molina on his task force for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion BSO demands. She is also working with ACC on asking the BSO for input on changes to the syllabi.

Laura Wagner (she/her) reported that she and Francis Neff had looked into the BSO demands regarding reevaluating hiring processes and curriculum. The Dean

of the College of the Environment suggested they speak to the Faculty about what progress is being done on these topics. They hope to get more feedback from students on this topic. On the issue of renaming campus buildings, the p-ed on renaming the Huxley College of the Environment should be posted shortly. The College of the Environment Senators also want to get more student input on that issue.

S. Handa (she/her) reported that Sabah has asked her and AS President Malik Ford that two AS Student Representatives be appointed to the Legacy Review Committee, a committee that is reviewing all campus building names at WWU. She is considering appointing a College of the Environment Senator or another BIPOC Senator who is passionate on the topic.

Stevens (she/her) updated that Dean Spicer of the College of Fine and Performing Arts has proposed forming a DEI task force of Staff and Students, including one of the CFPA Senators. The task force charge focuses more on recruitment than retention, and not evaluating within the College what needs to be done to make BIPOC students feel supported, and she hopes that she will be able to focus on that issue as a Senator on that task force. She hopes to help focus on improvements and not just recruitment.

Wagner commented on the Legacy Review Committee, saying that while she would enjoy being on it, she feels that someone of marginalized identities should be on the committee rather than her. She went on to say that there is a concern for students in general about the transparency of task forces or committees at WWU, and since there are only two students on that task force, she feels that they should be students who are BIPOC or disabled or neurodivergent, etc. She feels that another Senator would be able to represent the students of WWU better and would amplify important voices better.

S. Handa brought up the issue of the Honors curriculum. Stevens said that more work had been done on the survey. Neff (he/him) explained that the survey was created by him and several others to address issues of diversity and equity in the honors program. They felt it was important to do an honor student wide survey asking about student experience in the honors program, especially in the first year and in representation. The survey also asked for direct input on changes that might want to be seen in the honors program in the future.

IV. PUBLIC FORUM

V. INFORMATION ITEMS – Guests*

VI. ACTION ITEMS- Guests *

VII. PERSONELL ITEMS

VIII. ACTION ITEMS – Senate*

IX. INFORMATION ITEMS – Senate *

- a. **AS Constitution Amendment** – S. Handa (she/her) presented the AS Constitution Amendment document. She explained that while this would mean that there would be fewer opportunities for first year students, she would work to create other opportunities for those students, and feels the pros outweigh the cons in this situation. One idea was to work with the ASVP for Activities to create roles for a freshman, transfer, and graduate student on the new Student Union Board, which will be another branch of the Student Government, as well as considering the creation of First Year Experience Committees, and other involvement opportunities. She also pointed out that the election timing can be changed again if needed. She expressed the importance of having student representation over the course of the summer and early fall. She feels if a portion of At-Large and Graduate Senators were elected in Fall while the others were elected in Spring, there would be an issue with the new Senators being unprepared for their role and uninformed on the current issues. Quidwai (she/her) asked if the current senator's term would shorten due to this change. S. Handa (she/her) responded that their terms would end at the normal time, but Spring Elections would give them a change to train the new Senators. Park (she/they) said that they felt it was a good idea to move elections to Spring, since it would help new Senators feel less lost. They also added that, as a first-year student, they felt it was a good idea to have a break between starting college and starting as a Senator, and that it would be better to have other positions available for first-year students. S. Handa (she/her) agreed that being a Senator in her first year was not the best for her mental health, even though she enjoyed the position, and that other positions created for first years could better suit their experience without causing burnout. McGinnis (she/her) asked what the Senator's options were for voting on this topic. S. Handa (she/her) responded that the Senators could vote during the meetings, or electronically on Friday after thinking about it more and hearing from other Executive Board Member's on their feelings. McGinnis responded that she would prefer to hear more on the topic and vote on Friday. S. Handa responded that she understands that and admits to being biased on this topic since it is something her predecessors were working towards as well. Henry (she/her) offered the idea of elections being staggered so one Senator from each college was elected in the Spring, and the rest were elected in the Fall. S. Handa responded that another idea was electing 17 students in the Spring and the remaining 3 in the Fall, but that would not guarantee that those three Senators would be first year, unless it was a requirement. She continued to say that system also would not be fair to the Graduate Student and At-Large Students elected in the spring since they would be representing students alone or with fewer Senators. McGinnis clarified that there would always be the same number of Senators in her proposed plan, leaving no one working alone. S. Handa (she/her) said that if elections had been in the Spring from the start, it is unlikely there would be an issue with it, seeing as that is the case in the Executive Board.

Hayden (he/him) brought up the financial impact to electing Senators in the Spring, asking about how that could be represented on the ballot and if there has been a decision about if Senators will be in office and working in the Summer or just be available if they are needed in the summer. S. Handa replied that having the Senate through the Summer, even if Senators worked every week, it would be covered by money from the deans of the colleges and the S and A fee, which may go to the AS. She also stated that the Senators will not work all summer, like the Executive Board they will train and work a little in August, and then are able to fully start during the academic year, as only the Senate Pro-Tempore and AS President are able to work throughout the summer. She continued that this set up would allow Senators to work with committees in the summer as student representation is needed. She continued that her ballpark estimation for how much it will all cost is \$70,000-80,000, while it currently costs \$50,000 to run the Senate, and they have leftovers at the end of every year that roll-over to the next year. She plans to try to work out exact math soon for how much everything costs. Vigil (she/her) stated that while she understands the want for a financial impact statement, she does not see a reason for that to stop Senators from voting during the meeting on if the amendment language is approved. S. Handa (she/her) responded that she will put the financial implications in the statement and added that just because something costs more that does not mean it is a bad thing, since it would increase student representation, and that there are ways to make sure the University shares the financial investment with the students. She continued that this vote is to have this vote on the ballot, not to put it into action. Vigil (she/her) stated that there is a financial impact which she is not ready to speak on yet, since the Senators will be working three quarters with allowance for training in the summer. S. Handa restated that this can be a trial period if it does not work out. Vigil stated that through December the Senate has spent \$8,000, despite the increase in available hours, and if this is a representative government system with the Executive Board and Senate running parallel, that should be considered in this vote. S. Handa stated that the extra money would be available in the next year if the Senators continued working hours in the way they have and is not concerned about this decision burdening students. She proposed the idea of the Spring Elections being a one-year trial period being put into the language on the ballot. Hayden (he/him) said that while he liked the idea, that creating a need to revisit the issue could create a burden on future Senators, since it is a change that can be made whether it is written into the language or not, and thinks that the Senate should go all in. S. Handa (she/her) disagreed because they would not have to go in depth in revisiting it and could remove the one-year language from the bylaws. Vigil (she/her) agreed with Hayden and if there is a backdoor out of the change, what makes it seem like it is a change that is worth making now, having the Senator's input over the entire academic year is worth it in her opinion. S. Handa agreed that going all in is the best path, since it will never be a perfect system. Quidwai (she/her) spoke on the perspective of graduate students, saying that most graduate programs are two years, and it would be beneficial to graduate students to have spring elections since their summer quarters are lighter in course load and they would be more able to do

trainings during that time. She also felt that it would be beneficial to be able to be on committees starting earlier. Stevens (she/her) asked what would happen if the Senate did not vote to approve this language. Vigil (she/her) responded that she thought it would be odd if the Senators did not vote to support what the general student body already passed.

ASWWUSS-21-W-20

Motion by Marissa McGinnis

To move item to an action item

Second: Alex Park

Motion passed 17-0-0

ASWWUSS-21-W-21

Motion by Connor Johnson

To approve the language on the ballot

Second: Marissa McGinnis

Motion passed 17-0-0

X. CONSENT ITEMS

XI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Alex Park (she/they) stated that a student from their Honors cohort had asked them to present an idea at the Senate Meeting. This student wants the confetti to graphical interface to be implemented into WWU's Canvas system across all applications since it is inspiring, as it pops up every time an assignment is submitted. S. Handa (she/her) responded that she would speak to IT about that.
- b. Laura Wagner (she/her) brought up the Letter to the Senators from the DOC to give Senators a chance to read it. Charlotta Abernathy (they/them), the Disability Outreach Center's Educational Program Coordinator, explained that the Senators had received two emails, one being the DOC Letter to the Senators, and one being a survey the DOC was asking them to disseminate a survey to their constituents. They explained they were there to answer any questions about the survey. Taylor McGillis (she/they), the DOC's Community Engagement Coordinator, introduced themselves as well. Wagner commented that many issues had to do with classroom requirements and had realized that a good way to get through to professors about issues of curriculum or accessibility is to speak to the

Faculty Senate. Wagner asked about 5d on the document, which was on the topic of stimming, and asking about incidents in which professors stopping students from stimming in class had happened. Abernathy responded that several students in the past had experienced Campus Police being called on them for stimming in public spaces. They continued that many professors will insist things like fidget toys be put away under the guise that it is distracting. They explained that stimming is self-regulatory behavior. McGillis expressed that it is especially an issue in the STEM departments, and that it is very difficult to be disabled as a STEM student, because it is expected that students behave like a “robot”. They explained that pushing for more accessibility and respect is important because it allows people to participate in different spaces where people may not understand the boundaries created by issues like not being able to stim.

- c. S. Handa (she/her) presented an update she received on the ACC Syllabus Requirements. She explained that if a professor changes their course, they have to submit their syllabus to ACC for review, and the update explains that for the changes to be approved a description of the course must be included, which consists of the course number, course title, number of credits, course description, goals, learning objectives, a weekly agenda, and the previous syllabus. Instructors are also now required to provide a link to syllabus policies for students. She then showed what the syllabus policies were on the website. McGillis added that many professors tell students they need to get accommodations within a certain amount of time, but that is not actually something they can do, and accommodations can be obtained at any point.
- d. Kara Henry (she/her) presented on the legacy documents. She said that she and McGinnis have been working on a document for all senators to put information on how the university works as a resource for future senators and students looking to create change. The document would include mapping out different organizations at the university and what their powers are. The document will also contain the potentials for student government, including that there is meant to be three branches of student government, which the Senate is one branch of. Marissa McGinnis (she/her) added that they hope for this document to act as a legacy document to make navigating the university easier. She also brought up that they are hoping to make a survey to find out what students will want from the document. S. Handa shared a chart of the organizational structure at WWU but explained that it was minimalistic and what Henry and McGinnis were making would be much more useful. S. Handa then suggested that McGinnis and Henry set up a task force.

XII. BOARD REPORTS

XIII. SENATE REPORTS

XIV. OTHER BUSINESS

The meeting was adjourned @ 8:34 P.M.