



Western Washington University Associated Students
AS Executive Board
March 12th, 2021
MS Teams

Board Members: Present: Abdul Malik Ford (President), Keenan Kaemingk (VP for Activities), Zarea Lavalais (VP for Sustainability), Nicole Ballard (VP for Governmental Affairs), Carson Brock (VP for Student Services), Ranulfo Molina (VP for Diversity), and Sargun Handa (Senate Pro-Tempore).
Absent: None

Advisor: Annie Byers (AS Board Program Coordinator), Eric Alexander (Director of the Viking Union)

Secretary: Sierra Templeton

Guest(s): Leonard Jones, Kurt Willis, and Raquel Vigil.

Motions:

ASB-21-W-16 To approve the AS Executive Board minutes from the date of January 22nd, 2021. **Passed.**

ASB-21-W-17 To add ten more minutes to the Housing Budget Proposal item. **Passed.**

ASB-21-W-18 To give an advisory vote of no to the Housing Budget Proposal. **Passed.**

Abdul Malik Ford, AS President, called the meeting to order at 12:43 p.m.

I. Approval of Minutes

January 22nd, 2021

Handa stated that on page three, number seven quotes her saying “the only person on the taskforce who wouldn’t be connected to the AS would be Huskey, which she is uncomfortable with.” Handa stated that this should be clarified to mean that she is uncomfortable with admin on the taskforce, not specifically Huskey.

MOTION ASB-21-W-16 by Molina

To approve the AS Executive Board minutes from the date of January 22nd, 2021.

Second: Ford

Vote: 7-0-0

Action: Passed

Yes:

No:

Abstaining:

II. Revisions to the Agenda

1. Ford requested to add the tabled item from last week, the Student Selection Committee Charge and Charter under Information Items.
2. Molina requested adding the Black Student Coalition Account item under Information Items with the Board. He also requested adding Sabah Randhawa’s email on the Equity Office under Discussion Items.

3. Ballard requested adding the Federal Lobby Day Trip Funding Allocation under Consent Items.

III. BSO Demands

1. Ford reminded board members to compile a list of BSO updates to post on the website.
2. Ballard stated that she talked with the WWU lobbyist concerning the state budget which so far looks promising for WWU.

IV. Public Forum (*comments from students and the community*)

None

V. Action Items - Guests

A. Housing Budget Proposal- Brock

1. Ballard asked Jones and Willis if the university is planning on lowering the cost of housing or if it will continue to rise as currently the university is pushing students off campus due to the expense.
2. Jones responded that Western has commitments to certain costs such as Puget Sound Energy which keep going up, which is why the housing department has chosen differential housing to accommodate for different levels of financial concern. Jones stated that housing at Western is not required, but that these prices will likely continue to increase.
3. Ballard asked if there are priorities to decrease the price of housing as even the lowest priced housing is increasing.
4. Willis stated that for double rooms price is increasing, but for triple rooms in the base tier of buildings there is no increase.
5. Molina asked if meal plan prices will increase. Willis responded that this is the case.
6. Ballard stated concern about the availability of the lowest cost rooms, and the percentage of rooms that continue to be low-cost over time.
7. Jones stated that under the proposed plan, 65% of campus rooms are at the lowest tier rate.
8. Ballard stated concern about a housing residence receiving more amenities which may raise the cost of low-priced housing.
9. Jones responded that the housing department will continue to advocate for lowest price availability in all housing units, but they need to continue to investigate the impact of financial accessibility in these spaces.
10. Ballard stated that, as she worked for the past three years pushing policy for WWU's legislative agenda, she has a hard time knowing that Western has not considered the impact of differential pricing which will disproportionately impact low-income students, BIPOC students, and first-generation students. Ballard stated that she understands this isn't a perfect model but perhaps Western should wait more time before implementing the proposal.
11. Brock asked if there will be a written commitment for housing accountability.

12. Willis stated that because housing is a self-sustaining enterprise it is not receiving any subsidy from the state, and if the system does not receive support from students it cannot continue to exist.
13. Jones stated that the percentage of higher-priced housing depends upon the amount of housing that has been renovated or has more amenities. Jones stated that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the housing department has postponed renovations scheduled, but this will depend year to year.
14. Molina stated that the pandemic has financially affected everyone, and that this proposal feels hurtful knowing that the University is increasing prices. Molina asked if the University could delay the increase until the WWU community is able to get back on their feet.
15. Jones stated that this is not something he had considered before, and as the proposal goes before the Board of Trustees they can choose to approve or not approve, but there is some way needed of meeting financial obligations.
16. Ford stated that Western is the second highest cost for the lowest tier of room and asked if the housing department has evaluated lowering the rates to be more aligned with other universities.
17. Willis stated that it is important to look at the blended rate, or how many students are able to get the lowest price. Willis stated that there is more accessibility in allowing more students to pay for the lowest cost housing. Willis stated that the range is fairly tight, and he doesn't see lowering the price happening considering the cost factors alluded to.
18. Jones stated that, when talking to student leaders, there was concern with the amount of amenities allowed to students who pay less, so they decided to keep the range as tight as possible.
19. Ballard stated a question from the open Q&A asking if the RAs will be paid differently depending on the rooms they are selected for.
20. Jones stated that he does not expect RAs to be paid differently based on where they are living.
21. Molina stated that it was alarming that the Black affinity space would be in the middle tier with a larger increase in pricing.
22. Jones stated that there are needs to house certain programs in certain buildings, such as the Honors Program, but after conversations with Res Life, this seems to be the best option.
23. Ballard asked why Western's rates are raising now after the pandemic, when other Universities are lowering or stalling rates. Ballard asked if there is a way to subsidize prices for at least this year.
24. Jones stated that he would be glad to have further conversations about why other universities are doing what they're doing. Jones stated that COVID-19's impact has been devastated and all the normal systems have been broken, he will consider this and try to come up with answers.
25. Willis stated that he would caution against comparing Western to other universities as they have different situations. Willis stated that lowering the prices would solve a short-term problem but would have a long-term impact, and it is important to consider the price elasticity.

MOTION ASB-21-W-17 by Ballard

To add ten more minutes to the Housing Budget Proposal item.

Second: Handa

Vote: 7-0-0

Action: Passed

Yes:

No:

Abstaining:

26. Ballard stated he concern about a price increase with a lack of safety increase, there are still many Western Alerts about concerning events happening on and around campus.
27. Jones stated that he has continued to have conversations about UPD around bringing back the Greencoats and building community safety programs. Jones stated that whether the price is increased or not the housing department will work to increase safety on campus.
28. Ballard stated a question from the open Q&A asking if the benefit of the increase would mitigate the potential of leaning into a decrease of socioeconomic diversity that would be implied with these heights of costs.
29. Willis stated that there is a potential impact, but he hopes that the quality of Westerns community and education outweighs the concern over cost of housing.
30. Jones stated that there is an opportunity throughout the year to give a more wholistic picture.
31. Ford stated a question from the open Q&A asking how much extra revenue Western is projecting on receiving with the new housing model.
32. Willis stated that he will send the worksheet with this information to the board.

MOTION ASB-21-W-18 by Ballard

To give an advisory vote of no to the Housing Budget Proposal.

Second: Handa

Vote: 7-0-0

Action: Passed

Yes:

No:

Abstaining:

VI. Information Items - Guests

A. None

VII. Personnel Items (subject to immediate action)

A. None

VIII. Action Items - Board

A. None

IX. Information Items - Board

A. Ethics Board Charge and Charter- Ballard

1. Handa stated that she believes that the Charge and Charter should not state “12 Students At-Large that are randomly selected, in a jury style, out of the entire student body.” in order to brainstorm more diversity onto the board from a majority white institution. Handa stated that it could simply state “12 Students At-Large”.
2. Ballard stated that there are a couple other options for stating the membership on the committee. Ballard then presented the Ethics Board Charge and Charter which can be viewed in full on the AS Executive Board website under meeting minute documents.
3. Ballard stated that she is considering adding an additional point under the Charge concerning the Ethics Board using the restorative justice model. Ballard stated that she was considering having the appointment process go through the Committee Council but stated that this would still be keeping the process within the AS which could lead to bias due to connections students may have. Ballard stated that she talked with Adah Barenburg from the OCE about having six of the members be drawn from a pool of applicants and six from the student body to ensure diversity on the Ethics Board.
4. Ford stated that when considering modeling the Ethics Board around restorative justice, the Executive Board should keep in mind the goal to repair the hurt of the aggrieved model, and if this goal does not have active steps towards this, the Ethics Board should not be using this model.
5. Brock stated that his concern that the students applying would be those connected to the AS who are aware of this model already which may lead to bias.
6. Molina stated his support for random selection from the entire student body, but he believed it would be equitable either way.
7. Alexander stated that in the past AS employees and elected officials have not served on the Ethics Board, but that this should be clearly defined in the new Charge and Charter.
8. Brock stated that he supports the half and half model as if a random spot cannot be filled, a student could be randomly selected from the application, and additionally, AS student employees can help others apply.
9. Ballard stated that this model is just for the Spring model and can be changed in the future.
10. Alexander stated that if payment is provided for those serving on the Ethics Board, it may unintentionally exclude undocumented students.
11. Ford stated that the Executive Board would take a vote on the Ethics Board Charge and Charter before the following Wednesday, March 17th at 4:00 p.m.

B. Student Trustee Selection Committee Charge and Charter- Ford
1. This item was tabled until the following week.

C. Black Student Coalition Account- Molina
1. This item was tabled until the following week.

X. Consent Items (*subject to immediate action*)

- A. Federal Lobby Day Trip Allocation- Ballard
 - 1. This item was tabled until the following week.

XI. Discussion Items

- A. Randhawa's Email Concerning the Equity Office- Molina
 - 1. This item was tabled until the following week.

XII. Board Reports

No board reports were given due to lack of time.

XIII. Senate Reports

None

XIV. Other Business

- A. None

Abdul Malik Ford, AS President, adjourned this meeting at 2:30 p.m.