

**Western Washington University Associated Students
STUDENT SENATE**

Date: February 17, 2021

Attendees: *Olivia Chatters, Althea Frye, Ankur Handa, Kara Henry, Kendrick Jackson, Connor Johnson, Jasleen Kaur, Marissa McGinnis, Francis Neff, Samia Quidwai, Liz Rosales, Sameer Shorab, Kharma Stambaugh, Aidyn Stevens, Selam Swier, Laura Wagner, A.P. Wang, Sargun Handa, Raquel Vigil, Casey Hayden, Annie Byers, Ruth Flint-Blanchard*

MOTIONS

ASWWU-21-W-26 To approve minutes

Sargun Handa, Senate Pro-Tempore, called the meeting to order at 6:37 P.M.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. ASWWU-21-W-26

Motion by Ankur Handa

To Approve the January 20th Minutes

Seconded by Connor Johnson

Motion passed 11-0-0

II. REVISIONS TO THE AGENDA

III. BSO DEMANDS

- a. Wagner (she/her) reported that the first task force meeting would be the next day, which would not be open to the public, but they are considering a public forum, and Wagner will take notes to keep reporters updated. Wagner feels it should be public. The PLEJ Forum will also be meeting shortly so answer student questions.
- b. S. Handa (she/her) reported that the Executive Board has plans to update the AS website to show the BSO demands updates.

IV. PUBLIC FORUM

V. INFORMATION ITEMS – Guests*

VI. ACTION ITEMS- Guests *

VII. PERSONELL ITEMS

VIII. ACTION ITEMS – Senate*

IX. INFORMATION ITEMS – Senate *

- a. Honors College Proposal – McGinnis (she/her) explained that this is an issue that the Fairhaven senators have been looking into since a meeting presenting the proposal, and that she and Henry were against the proposal but tried to create a nonbiased presentation. Henry (she/her) explained that the Honors program had been around since 1962, and this year the University President and the Provost have been working to push for an Honors College rather than the program. She continued that there has been a lot of student organization around the creation of an Ethnic Studies College. The push for an Ethnic Studies Program, whether a College, Department, Program, or something else, created the Ethnic Studies Collective to work towards this. A budget request was put in to create six tenure-track openings in the Ethnic Studies College or Program, and some amount of money was set aside to cover at least two of these openings. With the pandemic, the funding asks were paused so jobs were not on the line in finding funding. A conference is being organized to figure out the structure of the Ethnic Studies Program. This information is important because this has been pushed for by students for years or decades without the funding being provided, but now funding is being given for an Honors College, which creates the question of why is the Honors College being funded and not an Ethnic Studies College? There are also Ethnic Studies tenure-track positions that may be created within the Honors College, which would make courses from these professors inaccessible to other students. Henry and McGinnis are working to provide transparency about the funding and resources going to the Honors College. S. Handa explained that she is an honors student of color, and honors students have been asking for curriculum changes for years that have not been made. Hearing that the Honors College is being prioritized over the curriculum changes is upsetting. McGinnis, Henry, and S. Handa then presented the Pros and Cons document. Johnson (he/him) asked what the argument being made was for how the Honors College would help students. S. Handa responded that the claim is that it attracts and retains diverse students, brings in funding for the Honors College, and recruits more diverse faculty and students. She continued that the concern is about how the Honors College treats their diverse students. Wagner (she/her) added that she knows an out of state first generation student of color who tried to do the honors program and had to leave, who has given her permission to share his thoughts on an Honors College. He felt it did not make sense, he dropped out of the honors program because he felt he was taking classes he already took, and he wanted to focus on his major rather than honors courses that were reteaching him. He felt that it was a waste of time and money. Wagner then brought up the description of the honors program and what students are in the program. Typically, the students who are outstanding in the areas that allow them to be accepted into honors programs have the resources they need or the capacity they need to excel

in those areas and are usually white students of privilege. She continued that the honor program favors students that are able-bodied, white, and privileged, which explains why BIPOC students struggle so much. She also spoke on the issue of barriers for BIPOC professors and how it is difficult for them to be hired as tenured professors in the honors college. S. Handa then presented the Honors College Demographics. S. Handa then presented the Honors College Curriculum Proposal. Johnson asked if there was information on the students not admitted to the honors program. S. Handa responded that that was information that would need to be found. McGinnis then explained that this item was mostly to inform the senate of what was happening. Hayden asked when the decision would be made about the Honors College. McGinnis responded that it was unknown. Quidwai (she/her) commented that the Honors College would allow WWU to be more competitive with other Washington Colleges and mentioned that the BSO demands, and honors concerns can still be addressed if the Honors College is created. Henry responded that that is true, and she is concerned about the lack of transparency with the creation of the college and wants more information from the University. She then explained that the proposal has to go through the ACC, the Faculty Senate, and the budget has to be passed for it still and the final decision falls on the Provost. Wagner commented that there is a possibility of more funds for the University from the Honors College but pointed out the question of if that money would go towards the right resources. Henry responded that those questions would be brought up when speaking to those involved. S. Handa explained that questions and concerns would be brought up to those discussing the creation of the Honors College.

- b. Legacy Documents – S. Handa presented the legacy document template for the Senators.
- c. Student Senate Bylaws, Job Description, and Charge and Charter – S. Handa presented the edits to the Bylaws, Job Descriptions, and Charge and Charter.

X. CONSENT ITEMS

XI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

XII. SENATE REPORTS

- a. Wagner reported that the College of the Environment senators have been working on their assigned committees, met with the Dean of their College, met with the faculty senator to discuss the BSO demands about reporting on progress. Wagner went to the WOHESC with the ASVP of Sustainability and hopes to share the information they learned there.

- b. Kaur reported that the At-Large senators have been working on student outreach with the College of the Environment senators and on first year math fail rates with the CSE senators.
- c. The College of Education senators reported that they would be holding a student forum and have been working on their committees. Jackson also reported that both senators are serving on the PLEJ subcommittee and working on that.
- d. CBE senators reported that they have been working on the EBD task force and Johnson reported that he has been working with the ACC.
- e. A. Handa reported that the CSE senators have been working on getting ready to present on first year math fail rates. Chatters reported that she has been trying to understand the admissions processes in the CSE departments.
- f. The Fairhaven senators reported that they have been working on narrative evaluations.
- g. The Graduate senators reported that they have been receiving complaints about the graduate student stipend and what it covers.

XIII. BOARD REPORTS

- a. S. Handa reported that the Executive Board is close to completing BSO demand #2.

XIV. OTHER BUSINESS

The meeting was adjourned @ 8:34 PM