

## WILD Concerns

AS President <aspres@wwu.edu>

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To: AS Senate President <AS.Senate.President@wwu.edu>; AS VP for Governmental Affairs <ASVP.Gov@wwu.edu>; AS VP for Diversity <asvpdiv@wwu.edu>; AS Vice President for Sustainability <AS.VP.Sustainability@wwu.edu>; AS Vice President for Student Services <AS.VP.StudentServices@wwu.edu>; AS VP for Activities <asvpact@wwu.edu>; Rahma Iqbal <iqbalr@wwu.edu>; Jesus Resendiz-Eyler <resendj2@wwu.edu>; Boliy Waathan <waathaa@wwu.edu>; Seb Genge <genges@wwu.edu>; Sophie Snyder <snyders9@wwu.edu>; Noah Schexnayder <schexnn@wwu.edu>  
Cc: AS OCE Director of Legislative Affairs <AS.OCE.Director.LegislativeAffairs@wwu.edu>; Naira Gonzales Aranda <gonzaln5@wwu.edu>

Hi everyone,

(This email was written by Naira and me):

### **I still am concerned that WILD only has 50 seats.**

The decision to reduce WILD to 50 seats gives off the assumption that the day isn't as important as Lobby Day or shouldn't be as big. **Even if that isn't the intention, it is the impact.**

This comes after proposals by advisors in Fall Quarter to make WILD and Lobby Day one day - another instance where it felt like WILD was being diminished.

WILD should be treated just as equally as Lobby Day.

There may be the argument that Lobby Day didn't get the full 100 students either in January and it's typically "more popular." But, it was the first in-person lobbying event in years - that is why the attendance was lower than usual. Also, many students who volunteered in January expressed interest in WILD. This is really promising. ***And, I believe that overworking women of color and less support from the AS is what has led to "[lower] historical attendance"*** (a big reason for the reduction in spots). As someone who has attended 7 AS lobbying events, **there is (and has always been) implicit bias for AS to put more effort into Lobby Day. I have witnessed it firsthand.**

Reducing spots as the first solution to "[lower] historical attendance" **is not an ADEI-centered decision.** Maybe if we instead chose to support the WILD organizers (who are typically overworked women of color) more this year and the AS actually pulled their work in advertising the event, WILD could be as successful and attended as Lobby Day. I personally will be helping to make WILD as successful as possible.

Also, Naira, the Director of Legislative Affairs and a woman of color, was excluded from the WILD planning process. The decision to make it 50 seats was made against her advice, someone who has worked 40-50 hour weeks in Olympia and knows more about lobbying than any of us do. The LAC meeting and voting on the WILD agenda happened without her. Even if Naira couldn't be there, more open communication about this should have happened.

Even though this decision was made by Josh, Annie, and Jesus: Naira and I don't hold Jesus accountable for this. He is a student leader just like any of us who was advised by an advisor. **I want to ask, "Why are primarily advisors deciding the number of WILD spots?"** The AS is "by students for students." The LAC, Executive Board, and Student Senate should decide this.

As you could see today, I am constantly interrupted and talked over by our advisor during our meetings. I hope this email is a call to action for your support. I ask for your solidarity. If I or another woman of color is being interrupted, excluded, gaslit, dismissed, or treated unfairly, say something about it. If a woman of color is concerned that something isn't equitable, back them up. If a woman of color is saying something and no one is listening to them, listen.

We were told this decision cannot be changed, but I hope we can do everything in our power to increase the number of spots.

Cutting something instead of nurturing it first is not my leadership style.

Thank you,  
Sargun Handa

**I hold remote office hours MWF 10 am-12 pm, TR 12-2 pm, or by appointment. Please email me if you would like to meet so I can send you the Zoom/Teams link!**



**Sargun Handa** | She/her/hers  
AS President | Associated Students of WWU  
Western Washington University  
516 High Street, Bellingham WA 98225  
[aspres@wwu.edu](mailto:aspres@wwu.edu) | [360-650-3265](tel:360-650-3265)