

**Western Washington University Associated Students  
Legislative Affairs Council**

**Friday, April 12, 2013**

**VU 567**

**Present:** Patrick Stickney (AS VP Governmental Affairs, Chair), Andrew Taylor, Ben Crowther (Legislative Liaison), Joseph Levy, Neil Christenson, and Eileen Pollet. *Absent:* Amy Stavig, Evan Fowler, Graham Marmion, Tom Durham, and Marc Oommen

**Advisor:** Kevin Majkut

**Secretary:** Mayra Guizar

**Guest:** Ethan Glemaker and Tully Smith

**Patrick Stickney, Chair of Legislative Affairs Council, called the meeting to order at 3:07pm**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. ADDITIONS AND CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**IV. PUBLIC FORUM**

**V. REPORTS**

**A. VP for Governmental Affairs**

Stickney reported that he and Ethan Glemaker went down to Olympia on Wednesday and were able to see the House budget get released. He said they talked to Senator Ranker, Representative Lytton, and briefly to Representative Zeiger. He said that he and Glemaker had positive meetings especially with Senator Ranker. The Senate Democrats are looking to get the DREAM Act passed by the end of session. He said Senator Ranker is advocating for a tuition freeze. He said they talked about concerns with Representative Lytton and dropped off comments to Representative Morris's. He said that they also dropped off the postcard from the rally to Jay Inslee. Taylor asked where the freeze would come from. Stickney said he wouldn't like to see tuition increase in the next two weeks. With regards to rental safety, he said the next committee meeting is April 22nd.

**B. Legislative Liaison**

Nothing to report.

**C. Western Votes**

Taylor reported that there is a day of action next Wednesday regarding the Student Loan Forgiveness Act. He said that he designed a flyer and that critiques are welcome. He said Western Votes will be calling Representative Larson and other Representatives to co-sponsor the bill. He said the bill already has 47 co-sponsors. He noted the Student Loan Forgiveness Act is a big bill and good for students. Stickney wondered if all the sponsors were Democrats. Taylor said yes.

**D. Student Senate**

Christenson reported they passed polling questions.

**VI. INFORMATION ITEMS**

**A. Spring WSA Dues**

Levy asked what the dues are used for. Stickney said dues go to paying the executive director salary, legislative liaison training, travel, some cell phone plan, operating budget of WSA, etc.

**B. Revisit Federal Agenda**

Stickney said the Federal Lobby trip to Washington DC was moved to April instead of March. He noted that the picture on the front was changed, but that it is not necessary the picture that has to be on the front. He said that the Federal Legislative Agenda includes currently the Fairness For Struggling Student Act, Protecting Financial Aid for Students and Taxpayers Act, GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act, the Violence Against Women Act, and the Student Support Act. Taylor suggested adding the Student Loan Forgiveness Act, which advocates for income based repayment.

### C. Majority Budget Resolution

Taylor said that because the Senate budget was passed on Friday and that this resolution was written before the House bill was passed. He said that he would be open to amendments to include the House budget information. He said the reason he wrote this resolution is because the budget is bad for Western. He said the budget cuts money, cuts programs, cuts faculty, and has a tuition decrease but at the cost of an efficient education. Taylor said that as of right now, Western has the lowest funding per student because of efficiency, and that Western cannot sustain another cut. Glemaker said at the Board of Trustees meeting, Sherry Burkey gave a legislative update and said she has been testifying positively for the 5% tuition increase in the House Budget. He said that in his report, he said that students are not in favor and are pushing for a tuition freeze. He said that Joe Meyer asked Bruce Shepard about the Baumgartner bill. Glemaker did not think of it at the time, but students are advocating for freeze because 5% is too much. Bruce made a comment about asking if students are willing to sacrifice the quality of education. He said students do not want the quality of education to suffer; rather students want more revenue for higher education. Glemaker recognized that realistically students may not get enough revenue or a tuition freeze, but that it is still the ideal. He said the AS Board of Directors saw the housing and dining rates proposal and that there will be a 3% increase and the Board approved it and so did the Trustees. He said the Student Technology Fee referendum purposed a 10% increase for print quotas and U drive access at home. The increase would be from \$25 to \$35, which is a huge increase. Glemaker said that a lot of folks felt that students are not supporting faculty and staff when fees are increasing yet advocating against any sort of tuition increase. He clarified that he does not want to spread that message and that he wants to see staff supported. He said that he talked to Western Front about this too. He said that he wants everyone on the same page with similar messaging. Victor Celis, VP for Academic Affairs, sits on the committee for housing and dining and so he wants to ensure that everyone has the same message. Taylor said the Senate budget doesn't allow pay through collective bargaining. He said that students have supported faculty and that it should echoed. Crowther said he would like to make amendments. Stickney said that LAC should make points of what should be covered, so that this resolution can be crafted well. Crowther said that he has a problem with the eighth and ninth "whereas" clauses on the first page. He said both should be struck out, because it is a bipartisan budget. He said it is not a stance for students to take. Pollet said there are a lot of issues with majority budget. She said that it should be emphasized that the budget affects the quality of higher education and doesn't help students or families. She said that students would take a different stance if the budget was a reinvestment in higher education, but it is not. She said that it will take students longer to graduate because of the cuts to faculty and classes. Taylor said there is a 3% tuition cut with a \$14 to \$17.1 million shortfall for Western's budget for next year. He said the cuts will come from faculty. Eileen said there would be departmental cuts. She said universities are more likely to cut science and engineering programs because they cost more and that liberal arts programs made larger because they cost less to produce. Glemaker said his perception of quality might be different than the administration, but that he does not want to frame the conversation as students versus administration. He said that he is disappointed by how the conversation has been framed in Olympia. He said that none of the funding has been allocated to departments and classes, but

rather it has gone towards decision packages that students do not necessarily agree with. He said that students want access to classes they need to graduate. Stickney said the university has put together decision packages, or plans, such as expanding computer science enrollments and getting community and technical colleges in the area to increase transition of veterans to WWU. Ben said this is about the prioritization of two conflicting values. He said there has been a massive decrease in affordability and accessibility of state institutions. He said that he would feel comfortable giving up some quality for the sake of increasing accessibility. He said that increasing tuition might mean better quality, but that high tuition is not accessible and that public institutions need to focus on accessibility. Stickney proposed searching for a tuition freeze, advocating to maintain quality through the closure of tax exemptions, and note repeated support for faculty and staff in the final document. He said that the legislative agenda includes supporting faculty and increased funding through revenue. Levy was concerned about the quality versus quantity issue, and that he has always thought to prefer quality to quantity. He thought that preserving the quality of higher education should be more important. Pollet supported the idea that the document would include all of the budgets. She agreed with Ben about public institutions being accessible and that it should be the top priority. She believed that any WA state student should have higher education as an option. She said it is a ridiculous concept that the quality of higher education would have to be sacrificed for accessibility. She said that investing in access and the State Need Grant should be mentioned in the resolution. Stickney said the budget provides some funding to the State Need Grant. Andrew said that whenever there is an access versus investment versus quality conversation, that faculty has been getting the shit can. He doesn't want to put faculty on the back burner. He expressed concern about course availability and the situation in which students will be forced onto waitlists, taking only 12 credits, not taking the courses they want, and subsequently wasting their money. Andrew urged including support for faculty. Glemaker doesn't like resolutions. With regard to the quality versus quantity conversation, he said that WWU has demonstrated quality. He said that there should be more focus on accessibility, but that the conversation should not be framed in terms of quality versus quantity. Crowther supported high quality education, but that accessibility has been sacrificed. He said that with rising tuition, the two affect each other. He said that students have to make a sacrifice either way, because students are either struggling to get into the courses they want and need or they have to pick up another job to pay for college. He also noted that sacrificing accessibility increases inequality. Pollet said that the issue is affordability. Christenson said that quality needs to be defined because it could be framed in terms of how many faculty members, getting more students into Western, graduation rates, jobs after graduation, etc. Stickney said the response has been framed in terms of programs offered as well as faculty pay. Glemaker said that quality is accessibility. He said he was talking about it in terms of increasing enrollments. He said that when both enrollment and tuition increases, it limits the type of people who are able to attend university. Stickney agreed it shouldn't be a resolution, but more of a response. He said that a response to the budget should include increasing access to students by maintaining or lowering costs to students while supporting faculty and that increases should be through closing of tax exemptions and not on tuition increases. Christenson wondered if students are willing to sacrifice their financial interest for faculty. He said yes and that he would rather maintain or increase tuition in order to support the faculty. He said that supporting faculty will drive quality. Glemaker said students support faculty and so should the state, don't support the decision package, and support tax exemptions. If all fails, students would be in favor of a 3% tuition increase for supporting faculty. He wondered if these points were consistent with what others thought. Pollet said fully funding higher education should be included. Crowther concurs with Glemaker and Pollet. Stickney asked if the committee believed this should be our external decision and if students should advocate for full funding. Crowther said yes and noted

that legislative session would be over in two weeks. Pollet echoed what Crowther said. Glemaker said it's important that students are against the \$5.93 million reallocation towards the engineering and computer science enrollments. Taylor said that the response seems to be similar to the Governor's budget. He said that the house budget proposal is at 5%. Stickney confirmed that students are not supporting the 5% increase. Glemaker thought that Sherry Burkey advocated for the 5% increase because there's word of investment in science and engineering and that 5% would be the only way to cover those costs. Pollet said WWU has been shafted in terms of the budget and deserves more money, which the students are unfortunately being burdened with. Administration supported a 5% tuition increase because WWU budget needs it and that it was unfair that WSU and UW were experience a 5% tuition increase and WWU wasn't.

#### **D. International Student Resolution**

Taylor said the international student surcharge was a key part of raising revenue in the Senate budget because it would be a 20% increase for international students, who make the university unique and diverse. He thought 20% was too fucking high, but 10% would be more appropriate. Crowther generally supported the opposition to the surcharge for international students. Pollet said personally she doesn't have a problem with raising international students' tuition. She said students shouldn't be prohibited from studying abroad, but public institutions need to be accessible to WA state residents. She acknowledged that international students may not come to WA state for higher education because 20% is ridiculous, but at the same time if tuition is going to rise, then she doesn't have a problem raising it for this group of students. Stickney said that because it's an info item can make it a stance. Christenson disagreed. He said that higher education needs to be accessible to everyone. He said that WA state residents should get lower tuition because they have paid more into the system but that WA state residents shouldn't necessarily be prioritized. Christenson absolutely disagreed about picking out groups of students to get a certain type of increase. He said that if there is going to be an increase in tuition, then it needs to be across the board. He said there's the level of fairness to consider. Christenson said that WWU has a phenomenal international program and that this surcharge is against the values of the body as a whole because students have been advocating for lowering tuition. He said it's coming close to morally reprehensible and disagreed with the language. Smith said 20% sounds high, but would agree with Pollet. He said that he has lived overseas. He also noted that some, if not majority, of international students that come, their parents have the money to send them here. Smith said UW has a huge international program. He said that if tuition is low for everyone, then it is a challenge to fund the faculty. Taylor wanted WWU to take action and wanted direct action to come out of this meeting. Stickney said that the Council of Presidents agreed that the surcharge is not ideal because students will choose go to Oregon or California, which will hurt the state. He said international students do pay state taxes and they do help increase access in more ways than one. Smith wondered if there was any comparison made between different universities. Stickney said that lobbying efforts are coming from students and administration, but that the AS hasn't taking action. He said he and Glemaker have talked about the surcharge. Levy said that if the prices rise, then people will attend school elsewhere. Pollet noted that there was a level of prestige associated with an American education. Levy doesn't support the 20% surcharge. Crowther disagreed with Pollet and Christenson. He opposed the 20% surcharge and agrees that state universities should be accessible for WA state residents. He said that Margaret Shepard had good testimony and said that UW has a lot of international students. He noted that if there is a 20% surcharge, students will be looking for other universities with lower tuition or more financial aid. As a council, there is an obligation to advocate for all students, citizens of WA or not. Pollet said to be clear, she didn't agree with the 20% surcharge, but recognized at the same time, there has been a debate on international students, UW especially. She said UW has

increased enrollment for international students, which decreases in-state student enrollment. She said she has a problem with that. She also said that she and Christenson have different ideas of what the WA state public institution goals are. Pollet believed in allowing WA state residents to have access to higher education. Smith doesn't agree with the surcharge, but did think international students should pay more, but not that much. He thought the more students from overseas the better. Christenson agreed that there is a fundamental difference and that there has been a similar debate regarding out of state students. Crowther noted support for the DREAM Act, which deals with legal residents who many not be citizens. Pollet said that it should be added that WWU oppose the 20% surcharge because no student should pay that much in tuition. Taylor said that LAC shouldn't shoot themselves in the foot by saying this and advocating for what will be approved. Christenson said they would accept not supporting it. Stickney suggested opposing the 20% increase because the AS WWU is opposed to tuition increases in principle.

#### **VII. OTHER BUSINESS**

Stickney wishes Taylor a happy birthday. Taylor said that Tully should be a voting member because he always at every meeting. Stickney agreed.

#### **VIII. NEXT MEETING DATE**

April 19, 2013

#### **IX. OUTSIDE OF COMMITTEE WORK**

*The Meeting was adjourned at 4:18 pm.*