



Legislative Agenda Preview

Sponsor: Kaylee Galloway, ASVP for Governmental Affairs

Persons of Contact: Legislative Affairs Council

Date: November 22, 2013

Background & Context

AS State Legislative Agenda will be separated into three sections:

1. Legislative Priorities
 - Predominately used for Viking Lobby Day and needs to be finalized in content and language before the end of break
 - Issues that Western Votes may want to run a campaign on
 - A main focus of the AS Legislative Liaison
 - Around 2-4 (ideally 3) priorities is my recommendation based on what I think is reasonable and feasible for the purposes
2. Legislative Interests
 - Proposals that we deem important but are not quite our priorities
 - This is an evolving section of the agenda that students can continue to add proposals too throughout legislative session and if student groups want to go down to Olympia and lobby (for example, environmental groups on environmental issues)
3. Endorsements
 - This is predominantly for bills
 - It is a way for LAC to stay actively engaged in the issues the Legislature is working on throughout session
 - Will also help the AS Legislative Liaison when talking with legislators and testifying
 - WSA has a similar structure where students are educated on a bill and then take a stance

AS Local Legislative Liaison will be separated into two sections:

1. Priorities
 - AS Local Liaison will predominately focus on these issues throughout the year
2. Interests
 - Evolving section of the agenda that can be added to
 - Allows for developing issues including those that may not directly affect students but that the AS Local Liaison needs to be educated on and ready to talk to community members and elected officials about

The Legislative Affairs Council has been drafting proposals for both agendas. The proposals will serve multiple purposes including being a resource for the respective liaisons, building content for a campaign if students want to run one, and having information relevant to draft a fact sheet for students when they lobby or if they are interested in the topic. The proposal itself is very detailed and not meant to be perfect word for word. This means, that when we are passing a legislative issue, we are passing the idea and the concepts expressed in the proposals, not necessarily every word of every proposal. Since this is the case, I think it is appropriate to allow for the proposals to evolve, grow, and develop over time and as we learn more about the topics. Furthermore, the proposals consider the issues from a short,

intermediate, and long term perspective, so that students can benefit from these proposals this year and in years to come. The goal is to build a strong foundation so that action taken towards these issues are well developed and strategic.

The AS Legislative Agendas will be multiple pages and will include the proposals. However, the section of the agenda that we give legislators, staff and other elected officials must be short and must reflect our priorities in a concise and effective manner. Last year, the AS State Legislative Agenda included a cover page with guiding principles, a letter from the AS President and AS VP for Governmental Affairs, and two pages of priorities including graphs and diagrams. As you are thinking about the content of the agendas, also consider the structure and what you think will be most effective.

Summary of Proposal

This proposal is not to reflect or serve as the final or official content, language, or structure of the agenda, it is simply to introduce the ideas and topics to start conversations that will carry for the next couple weeks and throughout legislative session. The issues have not been officially approved by the Legislative Affairs Council, but will be on Monday, November 25th. The focus of this document is on the AS State Legislative Agenda.

Priorities (as deemed by LAC in an informal vote):

1. Dedicated Revenue
 - With a focus on closing tax loopholes (such as the Big Oil Tax Loophole), increasing current taxes (such as doubling the estate tax), or allocating revenue from tax credits that are expiring (B&O tax credits)
 - Revenue is seen as a priority because it is necessary to achieve many of our other goals including lowering tuition, increasing access to and amount of financial aid, and increasing funding for higher education in general
2. DREAM Act
 - Focus on providing students who are undocumented access to state financial aid, more specifically the State Need Grant
 - This issue is a WSA Priority this year and was last year too
 - A lot of progress was made last year on this issue
 - Gained more bipartisanship support than any other bill of its type
 - There is a moral and economic argument
 - Moral: this issue is fundamental in ensuring an affordable and accessible higher education for all students
 - Economic: many people who are undocumented are state residents, work in the state, pay state sales and property taxes and have been attending school in the state. Many students who are undocumented have access to in-state tuition, but not financial aid
3. Carver Academic Facility Renovation Project
 - Deemed as a WWU Administration supplementary budget priority
 - The physical condition of Carver is not safe (severe damage would occur in the state of an earthquake, windows fall out, sewer problems, etc.) yet the facility is home to the largest academic department on campus (PEHR), to many athletic programs and other large events such as graduation
 - The renovation project requires state funding and has been neglected the last few years
 - Great opportunity to collaborate and work with WWU Administration