

2014 Associated Students

AS Pop Music

AS Structure and Program Advisory Committee



Areas for Improvements/ Recommendations:

The following are the Structure and Program Advisory committee's recommendations for strategic goals over the next four years:

1. *Make a Definitive and Evaluative Decision about the Sustainability of the Pop Music Industry Conference*

As we are about to host the fifth PopMIC event, it has become apparent that it takes significant resources to produce this event at the high quality level that we have been able to actualize. The amount of staff and volunteer time to plan and execute the event is considerable, far more than any other AS Productions event. And while the total budget for the event is relatively modest (\$5,000) in light of the quality of the event, the attendance has been such that we end up with a higher-than-ideal per person subsidy for the event. This recommendation is not to offer an evaluative decision at this point in time, but to state the necessity for continued scrutiny of the event and for the development of strategies to mitigate the human resource burden and/or the subsidy ratio issue. Since the SPAC process will come to a close around the same time as this year's PopMIC, we do not have the opportunity to see what success this year will bring before finalizing the process. Prior to the end of spring quarter 2014, our intent is to make a judgment about possible revisions to the event for increased sustainability, which could include, but is not limited to, budgetary revisions, staffing changes, altered program delivery and promotion, or discontinuation of the event entirely.

2. *Utilize Spring Internship Period for Incoming Coordinator to Begin Researching Fall Performer Availability*

The learning curve for the Pop Music Coordinator position is steep, and the spring internship period has typically included conversations around legacy documents, past events, the booking process, and some hands-on experience at spring events. We feel that the internship could perhaps become even more experiential by tasking the incoming coordinator with doing research for booking opportunities in fall, instead of waiting until summer to get started on that task. This would have the two-fold benefit of closely-supervised hands-on experience for the new employee as well as the

possibility of catching tours in the early stages of development, leading to an earlier confirmation of a fall act. (One limitation to this recommendation exists in the case when a Pop Music Coordinator continues in their position for a second year and would be occupied with the typical workload of Spring Quarter. However, at least then the learning curve would not be a major factor.)

3. *Work with the AS Board, and Especially the Vice President of Business and Operations to Explore Different Opportunities with the Large Event Loan Fund Approval Process to Allow for Faster Decisions and Streamlined Procedure*

As the primary user of this fund, it would make sense that AS Productions and Pop Music would be the ideal partner in any attempt to revise the LELF process. There have been time-crunch issues and concerns of confidentiality of prospective performers during most of the past LELF requests. It seems that the AS Board may be amenable to examining this policy and process for efficiencies, and Pop Music and the AS Productions Director and Advisor would be willing partners/resources in that effort.

4. *Implement Identified Strategies for Positioning Western to be More Readily Considered as a Potential Tour Stop when Tours are Forming and Continue the Efforts to Further Identify More Opportunities*

This is a difficult recommendation to actualize, but even if we never fully reach this goal, it is still worth the ongoing attempt. Booking agencies will always view colleges as a separate and different type of venue than the usual arenas, clubs, and performance halls in major urban centers because colleges do so many fewer shows than these venues and because frequent turnover and the fact that we are in a different “business” (that of education) make it difficult to maintain rapport with agencies. This recommendation is about finding any and all ways (most of them small and subtle) to represent Pop Music’s operation as highly professional, easy to work with, and competent enough to handle “big name” acts.

Ideas to increase visibility and rapport include:

- More frequent voice (and if ever possible, face-to-face) communication with agents
- Dedicate time during the 15 hour internship to build relationships with current and new employees and the agents they have worked with

- More long-range and recurring booking with a small stable of agencies that are right for us
- Create means for “singing our own praises” as an effective venue and tour stop (e.g. referencing our past shows, a slick venue specifications document that highlights our venues in a positive light while mentioning high profile past performers, etc.) Send this out annually

5. Conduct More Assessment Targeting the Student Experience Outcomes put forth in this Document

Pop Music (and all of AS Productions really) has focused assessment efforts in recent years on fine-tuning the data-gathering methods (i.e. technology and data entry) and on demographics. It is time to turn our focus toward measuring and getting feedback on how students are affected by our events, resulting in better outcomes evidence for the programming office. This could be achieved by devising a method to better collect attendee contact information so we can send out surveys electronically after our events. We are currently exploring the ticket purchaser contact information that we can get from the WWU Box Office.

ASPOP will still conduct assessments using the tablets during the event, but they will also periodically send out a survey after that event. ASPOP will also continue to work with the Assessment Coordinator and other AS Offices to ensure their outreach, in particular their Taste Test Survey, reaches marginalized populations and that the appropriate demographics data are collected.

Drafts:

6. Explore Opportunities with the Advisor and Director to Create a List of Dates and Holidays that are Advised to Not Schedule Events On

As the office with the most visibility and use of funds, it would make sense that AS Productions and Pop Music would be the ideal office to create a list of dates and holidays that are advised to not schedule events on. There have been incidences where concerts have been scheduled during weekends that fall on holidays such as Easter or Mother’s Day, and a sizeable portion of the student population is out of town. Programs planned on these dates can lead to a waste of student funds and make programs inaccessible for the student body. This list will cause there to be an extra step of evaluating the potential for success of a date before scheduling an event.

7. Work with the AS Board, and Especially the Vice President of Business and Operations, and the Box Office to Explore a Different Process of Online Ticket Sales Which Allow Students to Purchase Tickets at the Discounted Student Price

As the office with the highest number of ticket sales, it would make sense that AS Productions and Pop Music would be the ideal office to explore and put into place a new or changed process for online ticket sales. Currently our system through tickets.com does not allow Western students to purchase tickets at the discounted price that is offered at the box office. Offering an online system with this capability would increase students' interest in purchasing tickets online and take away the barrier of physically going to the box office prior to the event.