

2014 Associated Students

# AS Review

AS Structure and Program Advisory Committee

## Assessment Program Proposed Recommendations

### *Areas for Improvements & Recommendations:*

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

1. *Revise mission statement*

The current mission statement hasn't been revised since 2005. The AS Review has grown as a publication during these years in order to accommodate students and be more accessible to its readership. We request the revision of The AS Review's current mission statement to better reflect its constituency, standards and goals.

We request a work session(s) to draft a new mission statement that represents The AS Review and its readership. Start the process of Management Council approval in time to have the statement voted on by the Board by the end of the 2013-2014 school year.

The following is a draft mission statement that we would like the final version to be similar to:

*The AS Review is a weekly publication that provides coverage of student interests such as student life, the Associated Students, student government, activities and other areas of student interest. The Review seeks to enhance the Western student experience by shedding light on under-represented issues, inclusive coverage, informing readers and promoting dialogue.*

2. *Evaluate 2014-15 budget to include funds for demographics project incentive*

Unlike other programming offices within the Associated Students, collecting data on The AS Review's readership is difficult as it's a free publication. Distribution staff collects data each week as to how many papers are left standing on the newsstands after each cycle. However, people often read The AS Review and then place it back on the stands. We are also unable to know "who" is reading our paper and what they are most interested in.'

In the beginning of next fall quarter, we suggest The AS Review conduct a survey to evaluate its readership. A supplemental brochure with this survey can be inserted into each newspaper for four cycles – or one month. This survey will also be available online via Survey Monkey. The paper surveys may be placed in drop boxes that can be located near newsstands. Each

survey completed will be entered to win a prize. We feel like two prizes of an iPad Mini would be a great incentive to our readership to partake.

The data collected will include: year in school, age, gender identity, sexual identity, racial identity, ethnic identity, Associated Students involvement, extra-curricular involvement, academic department, residence (dorms if on campus) or off-campus, Associated Students interests (areas of Associated Students they are most interested in), story interests (sports, art, music, clubs, food/recipes, how-to's, social issues, government, etc.) and a qualitative opinion portion.

To prevent ineffective data evaluation due to an influx of people taking the survey compared to regular readers, there will be a sufficient qualitative section as well.

3. *Establish Public Relations Crisis Response Team*

With the establishment of the AS Communications Office in 2011, we feel it is imperative that the Associated Students formulate structure and methods to respond and repair public opinion in the occasion of public relations conflicts or crises. In the spring of 2012, communications staff within the Associated Students saw a need for coordinated public response efforts during two public relations conflicts: the suspension of an AS Board of Directors vice president and a controversial event that sparked protests by students.

The Crisis Response Team should consist of the Communications Office Director, Public Relations Coordinator, AS Review Editor-in-Chief, AS President and necessary supervisors and advisors.

These positions make up the core of AS communications and are tasked with handling these events. In the occasion of such events, these positions will be called upon to meet and discuss methods necessary to mediate conflict, respond to questions, quell public outcry, and formulate a coordinated response that's within the best interest of the organization given the situation.

4. *Encourage and expedite changes to the Associated Students' website and make AS Review page more accessible*

We understand the Associated Students website staff is overloaded for the year and changes to The AS Review's page most likely won't be made by the end of this school year. However, we'd like to encourage the process to improve the entire website in making it more visually appealing, current, reflective of the organization, and accessible.

The AS Review staff would like to see these changes made to The AS Review's website as soon as possible:

- Incorporation of current flags, fonts, and visual elements present in the print version of the paper.
- An accessible photo-gallery page based on assignment.
- Revision of the staff page to include photographers, designers and copy editors – rather than the frequent selected writer option that automatically inserts writers of stories into our staff list (ie: if a student were to write three letters to the editor, they would automatically show up on our staff list). Photographers, designer and copy editor are currently not listed on the staff page.
- Current sections to read as: News, activities, features, arts, photos
- Linkable to social media pages via icons to enable connectivity and easy sharing.
- Replace tagging system with a more connective and accessible plan.

5. *Assess 2015-16 budget to increase Assistant Editor salary to a coordinator salary*

The Assistant Editor currently makes an annual salary of \$5,209 or \$274 per every two-week pay cycle, based on the revised Salary Determination Policy. This is an assistant coordinator's salary, while the AS Photographer makes a coordinator's salary of \$5,600 and the Editor-in-Chief makes \$7,918 annually. While the editor-in-chief is a budget authority and performs more executive roles than the assistant editor, we feel it's fair to allow them to receive a coordinator salary as both editors do many of the similar tasks. The current amount the assistant editor makes is not an accurate reflection of the work done.

During spring and fall of 2014, there will be tracking and assessment of the hours and work that the Assistant Editor currently performs. Office will keep in mind that pay in the AS is based on job description responsibilities, and

there will be evaluation of what the duties the Assistant Editor is performing to see if there needs to be a shift in tasks.

6. *Establish a strong presence of The AS Review within the Associated Students and across Western*

The AS Review has struggled with consistent readership due to changes in social media, quality of content and organizational culture. We'd like to see the Review have a stronger presence in the Associated Students by working to detach it from the Publicity Center. Though the AS Review is in the same facility as the Publicity Center and shares a supervisor, the AS Review is not a service the Publicity Center provides. This can be extrapolated on in AS trainings where the AS Review and Publicity Center are represented as two separate entities, as well as tabling at Info Fair, marketing and publicity.

The AS Review can also strengthen its presence by having copies available in most AS offices and performing an introductory presentation at Fall Staff Development to explain how offices may utilize the services the paper can offer.

Readership may also grow with consistent branding and marketing. The Review's flag – or logo – has changed four times within the past four years. This creates an unfamiliar trend with its readership. Consistent, appealing variety of stories in each issue will also help solidify readership.

Values must be passed down between editorships through the execution of thorough Legacy Documents and fifteen-hour internships, which haven't always been completed in the past. Editors must be held to a standard of assigning and publishing quality work and providing necessary leadership to the staff.

With changes to the website, The AS Review will be able to advance its readership online – making it easy for readers to cruise through AS Review stories and photos on their computers or smart phones. Editors must also continue to update social media pages frequently with links to stories, photos, breaking news announcements, and interacting with readers.

If readership and awareness of The AS Review continues to suffer, the editors and supervisor must expand on other marketing plans or changes in coverage that would draw readers back in.