

Western Washington University Associated Students
Legislative Affairs Council
Monday, December 11, 2012 **VU 567**

Present: Patrick Stickney (AS VP Governmental Affairs, Chair), Amy Stavig, Andrew Taylor, Ben Crowther (Legislative Liaison), Evan Fowler, Graham Marmion, Joseph Levy, Neil Christenson, and Tom Durham. **Absent:** Nathan Haugen
Advisor: Kevin Majkut
Secretary: Kaylee Galloway

MOTIONS

- LAC-12-F-17** Approve the expenditure for the 56 and 36 passenger busses. *Passed*
LAC-12-F-18 Approve an expenditure of \$2,200 from the LAF to fund the breakfast room, catering, and reimbursement schemes for students who do not attend the Students of Color dinner. *Passed*
LAC-12-F-19 Approve \$50.00 from the LAF for publicity for smaller lobby trips. *Passed*

Patrick Stickney, Chair of Legislative Affairs Council, called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ADDITIONS AND CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

IV. PUBLIC FORUM

V. REPORTS

VI. INFORMATION ITEMS

VII. ACTION ITEMS

- A. Funding Request for Students of Color Reception and Buses for Viking Lobby Day**
Stickney said that there were several items that were not budgeted last year including room rate increases, some travel, and for the dinner for students of color. This funding is to make sure that we have enough money going forward with the planning. He showed the committee that there was about \$19,000 in the LAF and that number did not show the appropriations from students registering for winter courses. He said the \$3,404.00 is for a 56 and 36 passenger bus, the breakfast room, and buffet style catering. Stickney said that the dinner is for students of color and legislators will be invited. He said the bus costs are approximate and include a room for the driver. Stickney said that transportation was in the budget, but that it also included WSA travel. He said that the two busses are to transport everyone to Olympia for Viking Lobby Day. After, he said that there will be about \$1000 left which will go towards WSA travel. Stickney said that the reception is open to everyone, but there is a priority for students of color. He said there is enough space for 40 students and spaces left over will be available to everyone. He said that normally everyone else will be on their own for dinner in Olympia. Stickney said that the money is not coming from the ESC because the process would take too long and that it is a lot simpler to come from the LAF. He also said the plan is that ESC would not pay the LAF back. Stickney said the goal of the LAF is to increase representation and that this reception provides an opportunity for students who have not always been represented to strengthen their connections in Olympia. Christenson is in full support of the reception, but he

would like to see the ESC contribute funds for some of the costs even if that is in the form of a reimbursement. Fowler said that it would fine if it didn't prioritize students from the ESC. He thought it was ridiculous that they ask for money and then prioritize themselves because they didn't have their stuff organized to do this. Stickney said that the idea to prioritize was his idea not just the ESCs'. Stickney clarified that the ESC did not plan this event, but that it was driven by himself and included Deng de Duot, the VP for Diversity, and the ESC. Stickney said that this event is the VP for Diversity's job description but that it is a legislative affairs action that was brought to his attention in the summer. Crowther supports funding the event encouraging more students of color to have their voices represented and that having an event for underrepresented voices ensures that students feel more welcome. Stickney said that students of color is determined based on how students identify themselves. Taylor thought that if people want to be all inclusive then maybe everyone should be budgeted. Stickney said that was an option, but that there was a severe concern by the ESC that the voices of students of color may not be heard and that this would provide them with a safe space to talk. He said this is why there is a prioritization. Christenson said that the event should go forward, it is just a matter of who pays for the event and that it seems that the ESC is the one driving the dinner. He recognized that it is important to have underrepresented voices represented, but thinks that it is important to include allies at the dinner, and by prioritizing people, allies are less likely to be there. Christenson said that if LAC is going to budget for one, then LAC needs to budget for all. He is all for students of color having representation and that everyone should have their voice heard. Taylor said that there should be an alternative event for everyone else. Crowther said that this is a night where people traditionally get dinner on their own, which people look forward to and is fun for people. He said that LAC is co-sponsoring the event, it is not just the ESC's. He said that it is relevant to what we are doing and that it is making sure that students' voices are being heard. He said this is within LAC jurisdiction and that LAC should help fund it. Fowler wondered about the opportunity cost of the reception and food cost and noted that it was comparable to the cost of another 56 passenger bus. He said that if the tradition to find food on their own, then maybe they should be reimbursed for their meal. He agreed that this type of event is great but he said that this is a joint event but that we are paying for it. He said it loosely relates to the LAF. Marmion said this suggests that people are getting this event by virtue of the color of their skin. He said that there should be an all-inclusive event that everyone can attend. Stickney noted that students of color were underrepresented at last year's Viking Lobby Day. He said that the reception is a way to ensure that more students of color are being represented. Stickney said currently only 7 out of 39 applicants are interested in the event so he thinks that people who are interested will not be left out and that 40 people is a large enough group. He said that after the reception, there will be the lobbying training and the tour of the capital. Stickney further emphasized the importance of representation. Christenson called to divide the question separating the passenger bus expenditures from the breakfast room and catering expenditures and then called it to question.

MOTION LAC-12-F-17 by Christenson

Approve the expenditure for the 56 and 36 passenger busses for an amount not to exceed \$2284.00 from the LAF.

Second: Levy Vote: 8-0-0 Action: Passed

Christenson asked about the reimbursement process. Stickney said that he is unsure. He also said that all 40 seats to the students of color dinner might not even be filled. Christenson is unhappy with the lack of planning. He said that this event is supposed to be inclusive to everyone and that everyone should have the same advantage. Stickney said that the reason this meeting was called as an emergency was that Viking Lobby Day planning started in November and that this event has not been held before so there was no appropriate budgetary estimate. He just got estimates from the catering company. Stavig thought that it is a great idea that LAC

is partnering up with the ESC for this event. She wanted to make sure that the ESC would actively reach out to students of color. Stickney said that there has been some communication through Facebook and that there are students who are excited about getting involved and engaged. Stavig said that she thought it would definitely a good idea to have something going for the people who are not going to the dinner. She also suggests that next year they work with the Women's Center to see if more females would want to participate in Viking Lobby Day. Crowther said that he often hears resistance from people who do not belong to particular groups such as groups women, people of color, and queer folks, and complain about why the space is not inclusive of them. He said there should be budget, staff, and resources available to groups who feel underrepresented. He would love to expand spaces for more underrepresented folks and that he would like to see a space for people of color because they are underrepresented at Viking Lobby Day. Crowther said that people of color need this space and would be more willing to attend Viking Lobby Day if they had this space. He noted that LAC is a group of white folks and that that conversation would be different if people of color were included. Fowler said that the variable cost is \$28 per person; he said that there could be a retroactive voucher for people for dinner. He understands that it is a safe space, but he said that it concerns him that money is going towards one group and not everyone. Majkut said that in the past, Viking Lobby Day has funded evening meals for people, but cut it out because of budgetary reasons. He thought that it would be possible to gather the people not involved and go to dinner in groups. Majkut said that it would be possible that other people can be given additional options for food and have the funds come from the budget. Marmion clarified that no one is saying that they don't want students of color to not have a safe space to have their voices hear or to not fund their dinner event, it is just the case that everyone should have equal opportunity to take part. Taylor wanted to make sure that there was time for all students to meet and be trained. He said that having that context is very helpful. He feels a lot better about funding this event now. Stickney said that there will be training and a tour of the capital, which will be especially helpful for group leaders. He said last year, Rep. Kris Lytton spoke at breakfast. Levy felt that if something is being done for one group it should be done for everyone. Durham feared that students will get the impression that some people's message will be more important than others. Durham said that if the AS is going to preach inclusion then it needs to be acted on. Stickney said that historically, the representation at Viking Lobby Day has been mostly white people and very little students of color. He said that white people have access to the legislature and are overrepresented. Stickney said that this is an opportunity to include students of color because they haven't been a part of Viking Lobby Day in the past because they did not have access. Christenson felt the primary concern of the committee is that a not everyone is being given a free lunch, he proposed funding the dinner at \$15 per student. Christenson said the problem is budgetary in that the funds are coming from the LAF, which serves to represent every single student, which means that everyone should be funded. Crowther said that a portion of the AS budget is dedicated to students who are underrepresented. He said that the AS funds resource centers like the Women's Center, the Queer Resource Center, and the Ethnic Student Center and that the committee agrees that it should. Taylor was concerned about the proposal to fund only for reimbursement later. Majkut is concerned about the reimbursement process and that it might be complicated. He said that groups of people go out to dinner and then there is a way that people can interact with others and make connections. It is another aspect of the experience. He said that it makes more sense to spend money in a way that maximizes the experience of the students that are there and that team leaders could be set up for dinner groups. He thinks it would be better to have a programmatic process rather than just giving people money. Majkut suggested making a motion to increase the total funds to \$2,200. Stickney is weary about supporting a motion that allocates more money and that the purpose of the event is to support students who are underrepresented and providing them more access. Christenson recognized that diverse elements need to be represented. He said that the AS has already budgeted for the ESC and

that if it comes from the LAF it should be for everyone. Levy said that this is about money not about skin color and everyone deserves equality. Fowler said that LAC has a duty to represent all students at Western. He said this is a great event but not exactly under LAC purview and this additional funding allows for others students to have a great experience. Stavig said it is important to fund this event. She noted that students of color do not have a voice on LAC to stand up for themselves and that without their voice, the LAC needs to assume that the event will be successful. Stavig thought that some of the committee members were being whiny that they weren't getting a free dinner. Crowther said that this is appropriate for this budget and that it is relevant. He said that this is for dinner in Olympia with legislators at Viking Lobby Day. He said that the ESC is co-sponsoring this event with the LAC. Durham said that this is about money not about race. He is worried about the turnout and wants to make sure the funds are used efficiently. Marmion said the issue was about providing equal funding to everyone and providing extra funding to enable reimbursement for people who are not attending the event. He said that no one is saying that the event shouldn't happen. Taylor said that the LAF should fund this dinner and that he doesn't care about getting reimbursed for his dinner. Crowther said that it is ok to use funds for underrepresented people. He didn't understand why it was felt that everyone needed to have their dinner paid for when the event's purpose was to increase the representation of students of color. Stickney just got the estimates for the room and catering and is uncomfortable with the motion. Christenson is confused about why the committee is hesitant to expand the dinner to all students. He said that if it is going to come out of this budget then it should be from everyone. Fowler said that expanding it to more people would be more inclusive.

MOTION LAC-12-F-18 by Christenson

Approve an expenditure of \$2,200 from the LAF to fund the breakfast room, catering, and reimbursement schemes for students who do not attend the Students of Color dinner.

Second: Marmion Vote: 8-0-0 Action: Passed

B. Funding Request for Publicity for Smaller Lobby Trips

No discussion

MOTION LAC-12-F-19 by Acclamation

Approve \$50.00 from the LAF for publicity for smaller lobby trips

Vote: 8-0-0 Action: passed

VIII. NEXT MEETING DATE

IX. ADJOURN

X. OUTSIDE OF COMMITTEE WORK

The Meeting was adjourned at 6:37