



Washington Student Association 2015 Legislative Agenda DRAFT

Priority Items:

College Affordability

The affordability of post-secondary education is the most crucial issue facing students. We support low tuition, full funding of state financial aid, and funding of institutions of higher education at maintenance level or above. We support increased funding for higher education, including from new and dedicated revenue sources.

We propose that a minimum standard of affordability be established for Washington higher education institutions. Some potential benchmarks include: tuition being tied to 10% of the median family income; identifying a minimum percentage of state funding to higher education institutions; and defining a maximum amount that a student would be expected to cover from loans and work.

Voter Registration Accessibility

We propose allowing more time for voter registration and updating voter information by extending the voter registration deadline until 11 days prior to the election, and in-person on the day of the election.

16-17 year olds should be allowed to pre-register to improve overall voter accessibility in Washington State. These actions will provide a much-needed increase in student and youth voting turnouts in elections that impact them directly.

Graduate and Professional Student Education

We advocate for increased funding for Teaching Assistant and Research Assistant (TA/RA) positions. TA/RA positions are both a common route to pay for school and an excellent way to enhance both the quality of education for undergraduates and the level of research productivity for the university's research missions.

To supplement potential loss of federal research dollars, we advocate for a mechanism that would cover the level of funding not keeping up with inflation, as well as funds that would allow our institutions to maintain its research programs at current levels.

Ancillary Items:

Gender Neutral Bathrooms

We support institutional latitude to install gender neutral restrooms on public state college and university campuses. Hurdles for schools and other public facilities to adopt a more open stance toward gender neutral facilities independently in their developmental plans should be removed.

EBT on College Campuses

We support the reversal of the prohibition of Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) sales on campuses. By permitting state-run academic institutions to accept EBT funds for sales that would otherwise comply with all other EBT regulations, students and educators who are dependent on the State for food assistance would have access to food at their educational facilities.

Ensuring Academic Resources and Advising for Undergraduate Students

We urge the Legislature to establish policy that encourages or mandates that institutions offer academic support measures. Further, we ask that it provide institutions with the funding necessary to fully support their students academically.

Funding for Childcare

We urge the Legislature to identify additional funding for childcare for student parents. Access to affordable childcare had a large impact on a parent's ability to afford and complete school. Childcare programs have eroded after budget cuts and the recent recession.

Whistleblower Protection for Student Government

We propose that student government members be included in whistleblower protection provided to other state employees.