

**Western Washington University Associated Students  
Legislative Affairs Council  
Thursday, October 16, 2014 VU 567**

**Present:** Sarah Kohout (ASVP for Governmental Affairs), Heather Heffelmire (Legislative Liaison), Kendra Thomas (Local Liaison), James Mayther, Katie Savinski, Neil Christenson, Cody Simrell, Elizabeth Pebley, Belina Seare, Mayra Guizar (Western Votes! Rep) Sam Goldblatt, Nora Selander, Rodez de la O

**Absent:**

**Advisor:** Lisa Rosenberg, Assistant Director of Student Activities

**Secretary:** Lily Jaquith, Board Assistant for Representation Committees

**Guest:**

**MOTIONS**

**LAC-14-F-5** Move the vice chair elections to after reports.

**LAC-14-F-6** Approve the minutes from October 9, 2014.

**LAC-14-F-7** Approve the 2014-15 budget.

**LAC-14-F-8** Approve the USSA travel funding request.

**Sarah Kohout, Chair of Legislative Affairs Council, called the meeting to order at 6:04pm**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. Additions and Changes to the Agenda**

Kohout said since some folks are going to have to leave early they're going to move the vice chair elections to after reports.

*MOTION LAC-14-F-5 By Christenson*  
Move the vice chair elections to after reports  
Second: Pebley Vote: 13-0-0 Action: Approved

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*MOTION LAC-14-F-6 by Christenson*  
Approve the minutes from October 9, 2014  
Second: Pebley Vote: 13-0-0 Action: Approved

**IV. Public Forum**

**V. REPORTS**

**A. VP for Governmental Affairs**

Kohout said the REP has their official numbers in. They registered 2,706 voters. Two weeks from now, on October 30, they will be having a Rock the Vote event. There will be a couple musicians coming in and speakers including Cathy Lehman, city council president, and Lynn Walker who used to be the legislative assistant for the city council. It's going to be a really cool

event. Kohout said most of her work has been preparing folks for the WS A meeting last weekend.

#### **B. Legislative Liaison**

Heather Heffelmire, Legislative Liaison, said she has been continuing to work and organize the Western lobby training. That will be held on November 17 and 20. If someone can't make one, they can go to the other. Once it gets closer she will let everyone know. She's been working on Rock the Vote. She's contacted Representative Gerry Pollet and Rep. Brady Walkinshaw. She's hoping to get both of them to Western.

#### **C. Local Liaison**

Kendra Thomas, Local Liaison, said she met with Lehman with Kohout this week. It is clear that mandatory inspection are not going to pass. So they're coming up with a compromise, which was passed through the board yesterday. They will be giving it to Kathy who is willing to co-sponsor the compromise. The public hearing will be the next time it gets discussed, which is October 27. On the lighting in Laurel Park issue, there will be an evaluation of Laurel Park. This is to see what can be changed to make it safer. That will include evaluating lighting. She will hear in the next few weeks.

#### **D. Western Votes!**

Mayra Guizar, Western Votes! Rep, said at the last Western Votes meeting they went over measures and candidates on the ballot and got an update on the last WS A meeting. WS A General Assembly is next. They'll take a delegation to Central Washington University. Votes will be based on FTE instead of one vote per campus. Aja Campbell, USSA West Coast Field Organizer, will be at the Ethnic Student Center conference. So she'll be in Washington this weekend at the conference. Western Votes moved "Trick or Vote" training to next Tuesday's meeting, it will be closer to the event. Kohout said they had a couple students go to Pullman for a WSA meeting last weekend. They travelled the night before. Annika Wolters, AS President, Heffelmire, Lily Jaquith, WSA VP of Communication, and Kohout all went. At the meeting they discussed the budget, had a presentation about student trustee autonomy, talked about defining affordability. This included Rep. Pollet and Senators Michael Baumgartner's idea of tuition as 10% of the median family income and the University of Washington Seattle's "meet us in the middle" idea created around how much a student can work reasonably while going to school. They also talked about proposals that will come forward at General Assembly. This is including whistle blower protection, as well as also free speech zones.

### **VI. Election of the Vice Chair**

Kohout said the current nominees are Neil Christenson, Sam Goldblatt and Belina Seare. Seare withdraws. There are no other nominations at that time. They will give each nominee three minutes or so to talk about why they think they would be good in the position. Goldblatt is elected Vice Chair of the Legislative Affairs Council.

### **VII. Presentations**

#### **A. WSA Legislative Agenda (DRAFT)**

Kohout said she wanted to bring to everyone's attention the WSA draft legislative agenda. Mathyer said it says tuition is being tied to 10% of the median family income, what does that mean exactly? Kohout said that would make the definition of affordable whatever 10% of the median family income. Mathyer said median family income is typically \$30,000 in the United States. So what do you do with that \$3,000. Kohout said that would be their definition of affordable. Lisa Rosenberg, Director of Student Activities asked if it is the median family income in Washington or the entire United States. Kohout said it is in Washington. Rosenberg said she looked at the Washington median family income and 2013 was \$55,000-58,000.

Christenson asked if she could elaborate on why they're lobbying on 16-17 year-old pre-registration. Kohout said she just read the bill on it. It's for accessibility. Now if someone is 18 or over and they get their license, they're asked if they're registered to vote. So if they're doing it at 16 and 17 then that increases the chance of being registered and that helps us out because more students have access to being registered. It's more likely they'll be voting later on at college age. Goldblatt asked, under the graduate student issues, it says advocating for increased teaching assistant and research assistant positions would create a potential loss of federal funding. Heffelmire said she doesn't think the positions would lead to a loss, the positions would supplement a loss.

#### B. USSA Update

Guizar said there was a press release sent out on the university and financial institution contract transparency. She will also sit on the outreach and membership committee, looking at getting other groups involved in USSA. They have had two conference calls. They elected the community and labor liaison, voted on locations and dates for TegCon. It will be March 26-30 at Gallaudet University. Kohout asked if it will still be in Washington DC. Guizar said yes. They also talked about bids for congress for next summer. University of California Irvine hosted last year. Campuses from central and eastern United States are eligible. They voted on a board-staff liaison. They will be doing communication between staff and board. They are looking for folks for a position on the veterans outreach caucus. They've written several solidarity letters. Feel free to talk to her if someone wants to know more about what's going on. Every month they have at least two conference calls. Heffelmire asked if a campus host if you hosts USSA congress do they have to pay registration. Guizar said she can ask.

#### C. USSA Action Agenda Items

Guizar said during USSA congress students have the opportunity to draft action agenda items and then they are voted on later in the conference. The ones that were voted on this year were "Ending Campus Sexual Assault on Our Campuses" and "A State of Emergency." Hopefully they will be working on both of these at WWU this year. Seare asked if they got a clause worked out on mental illness in the "State of Emergency" AA. Guizar said they haven't yet. Christenson asked if she can explain the board's decision on such strong language in "State of Emergency" AA. Guizar said this was written by those who drafted this, so congress voted on the language as is. It wasn't a decision of the board, but of the delegations at plenary. Christenson said the general tone of it is perhaps more strongly worded than he would put it. Guizar said this is a big issue that affects a lot of people. Folks who have personally gone through these things believe this needs to happen because these universities don't have the resources. Seare asked if she thinks there should be a document showing the intent behind the language. A statement from USSA breaking it down. Christenson said he would appreciate that. His other concern is that any legislator that wants to see it that is not a traditional ally would be off put by it. His concern is from a political standpoint. Guizar said the language is for campaigns on campuses so the people seeing this will be students on campuses. This won't be seen by legislators. Christenson asked if there is a specific bill for the sexual violence AA. Guizar said she's sure there is, but not from what she knows of. The legislative director will look at that. He's been working on other areas right now. Kohout said sometimes it is more of a campaign for students to rally around on campus. Goldblatt said it talks about having a strategy chart, does that exist? Guizar said yes, she's sorry didn't attach it. She can definitely get that back to everyone. Mayther said she said the universities weren't made for underrepresented students, what does she mean by that? Guizar said support that students of color need isn't the same. As a first generation student, her parents never went to school. A lot of folks in underrepresented communities go through the same things. Heffelmire said there's stress that comes from being a student of color on a predominately white campus. A feeling like they don't belong here and that there's not a place for them. It shapes the college

experience. So maybe if they don't feel like they're in a state of emergency, those folks definitely feel like they are. They have to think about this nationally. Mayther said he's trying to understand more about it, what actionable items can be done? Heffelmire said using Washington as an example, affirmative action, need-based financial aid and more academic advising. Setting up resources. Mayther said he doesn't think that only affects students of color. That affects everyone. Heffelmire said yes but students of color are vastly more affected. Savinski said it's systemic in our education system. They don't encourage young students of color to go to college because it will be hard for them to get there. It's changing, but it's very slow. It's not just college campuses, but it gets worse when students get here and they don't have anything there to support them. Seare said she just hopped on this action agenda. This is more campus based, there will be days of action. Just to validate what people are feeling, campuses first and then maybe statewide. Will be conference calls on the issues biweekly open to anyone. *Heffelmire leaves*. Christenson asked how much do they think is actually lack of understanding rather than apathy. Guizar said she doesn't think it is apathy, it's definitely a lack of understanding and a lack of resources. She definitely thinks it's a lack of understanding and being able to rally around this issues. That's what USSA is about, having the tools to work on this. Thomas said something that she has come across is people not understanding the concept of privilege. Being more self-aware of that can help combat the issues. A couple of schools have done freshman required classes about privilege and equality. That is something that could be helpful. She thinks it's definitely a lack of awareness. These are action items, does TAC have to take any action or is it just what USSA working on. What does the term action mean for TAC? Guizar said as a USSA member they have the resources to actually put these things into action on campus. It can be whatever our campus wants it to be. It does not have to be an action TAC has to take. *Seare leaves*.

**D. Issue Brainstorming (Part Two)**

Kohout said she wants to talk about what has already been proposed. Selander said she is interested in campus sexual assault. Goldblatt said she wants to jump on voter access. *Pebley leaves*, de la O wants to join on student success.

**VIII. Information Items**

**IX. Action Items**

**A. FXTACF Budget**

Kohout said the fee is being assessed incorrectly. It was supposed to be assessed for all students, but it's only being assessed for students taking six or more credits. She's working on it but they will have a little less than originally thought. This budget is going off the idea that they have \$39,000. Kohout said she's reviewed the budget set up by herself and Morgan Burke, AS Business Director. Goldblatt asked if USSA comes to them with the campaigns or does a student do that. Kohout said it would be both, but there is also a student use fund. Guizar said she wants to make sure that she's keeping TAC updated because she's using TAC money. Rosenberg asked what areas have seen reductions. Kohout said unfortunately student use, lobby days and TegCon. Mayther asked how much they have right now. Kohout said since they haven't paid any membership dues there's actually quite a bit. They have about \$22,000 in the account, including reserves. Mayther said but they can't count that money because they can't use reserves. Kohout said they can use the reserves, but those are kept to pay membership dues in case of emergency. Mayther said so assume the revenue is coming in and they don't have a problem paying membership dues, how much money would they have. Kohout said it would be the total of non-discretionary, about \$20,000. Christenson asked when the non-discretionary items are paid. Kohout said they have 40 days to pay the USSA membership and WSA dues are paid in two parts, one in the next few weeks and then in May she thinks. Christenson asked

if she could provide an estimate of how much the committee has available for this quarter's discretionary fund. Kohout said they pay things via credit card, so they pay for things and then get the revenue in. Rosenberg said as long as they know the money is coming in from somewhere by the end of spring quarter within a few hundred dollars, the AS Business Director can approve funding requests beyond what is actually in the account. Kohout said so it doesn't matter quarter by quarter. Mayther said by the end of this year they'll have \$20,000. Christenson asked for the entire academic year how much they will have for discretionary items. Kohout said \$20,000. Thomas asked how much of this is spent on campus. Kohout said student use, campaigns, and trainings can all be on campus. That would also include access to lobby days. Most of this is for legislative capacity and increasing representation. Thomas said if there is something the Tegal Information Center was doing something with the upcoming proposals, would that come out of this fund? Kohout said yeah it could. Thomas asked if the city were to open negotiations with the university, would that come out of this fund? Kohout said probably not. Thomas said so if the TIC were to do something outside of its normal function regarding rental registration that would require funding in the future, would that come out of this fund? Kohout said that would probably come out of something the operational enhancement from the Associated Students.

*MOTION LAC-14-F-7* by Christenson  
Moves to approve the 2014-15 FXTACF Budget  
Second: Mayther Vote: 10-0-0 Action: Passed

**B. USSA Travel Request**

Guizar said nothing has changed except that the prices of flights have gone up. She will put a lot of effort into fundraising.

*MOTION LAC-M-F-8* By Christenson  
Approve USSA travel funding request for Mayra Guizar.  
Second: Mayther Vote: 10-0-0 Action: Passed

**X. Discussion Items**

**XI. Other Business**

A. Coffees, Cookies, and Committees October 23<sup>rd</sup> at 4:00 p.m. in VU565

Kohout said she encourages members to attend the Coffee, Cookies, Committees event on October 23.

B. Supplementary Meeting Time

Kohout said there wasn't a new time that worked for everyone, so they will push back the meeting that will approve the legislative agenda.

**XII. Next Meeting Date**

**October 23, 2014**

**XIII. Adjourn**

*The Meeting was adjourned at 7:35p.m.*