

**Western Washington University Associated Students
Legislative Affairs Council
Thursday, October 23, 2014 VU 567**

Present: Sarah Kohout (ASVP for Governmental Affairs), Heather Heffelmire (Legislative Liaison), Kendra Thomas (Local Liaison), Katie Savinski, Cody Simrell, Elizabeth Pebley, Belina Seare, Sam Goldblatt, Nora Selander

Absent: James Mayther, Neil Christenson

Advisor: Lisa Rosenberg, Assistant Director of Student Activities

Secretary: Lily Jaquith, Board Assistant for Representation Committees

Guest: Emma Palumbo

MOTIONS

LAC-14-F-9 Approve the minutes from October 16, 2014.

Sarah Kohout, Chair of Legislative Affairs Council, called the meeting to order at 6:05pm

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. Additions and Changes to the Agenda

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION LAC-14-F-9 by Thomas

Approve the minutes from

Second: Savinski

Vote: 8-0-0

Action: Passed

IV. Public Forum

Emma Palumbo said she's here because she's hoping to join the council.

V. REPORTS

A. VP for Governmental Affairs

Sarah Kohout, VP for Governmental Affairs, said she has been working with Belina Seare and Sam Goldblatt on the voter access proposal. She's working with Kendra Thomas, Local Liaison, on Bellingham City Council issues. She's working with registrars' office to figure out the Legislative Action Fund and if it can be assessed correctly. Rock the Vote is next week, instead of the LAC meeting, she encourages everyone to attend.

B. Legislative Liaison

Heather Heffelmire, Legislative Liaison said Rep. Gerry Pollet will be speaking at Rock the Vote. He is the vice chair of house higher education committee. He won the Washington Student Association Representative of the Year award two years in a row. Rep. Pollet is a great ally and has really great things to say to students. She's been working on Western Takes Olympia, the lobbying training before Viking Lobby day. Publicity is in the works. She's now working with the Political Science Association to collaborate. She also had the opportunity to talk about student engagement during her presentation at the Ethic Student Center Conference.

C. Local Liaison

Thomas said she's been working on rental registration since the public hearing is on Monday. She submitted a compromise to city council and will be lobbying for that at the public hearing. She's talking to people about that. The evaluation on Laurel Park is happening this week and should be over next week.

D. Western Votes!

Mayra Guizar, Western Votes! Rep, said at Western Votes they had Kohout and Kendra talk about rental safety and talk about the meeting coming up. They encouraged people to come and speak. Patrick Eckroth, REP Director, and Evelyn Kennedy, Vote Coordinator, put on a training for Trick or Vote. They reminded people to keep costumes appropriate.

VI. Presentations

VII. Information Items

A. Legislative Agenda Item Drafts

Kohout said these are the items they'll be voting on for the legislative agenda. She'll give 30 minutes to everyone to read them. Then there will be 5-10 minutes for questions to be answered. Returned at 6:42 *Pebley enters*. Carver Academic Facility: Heffelmire said she has a couple of comments, under numbers four and nine. She would say it does build a measurable amount of power. It's something all students and community members can get behind it. It transcends all boundaries. There's so many people that can get behind this. While other college campuses aren't affected, they all support each other. There are also other facilities on other campuses in disrepair. If WWU can do this, they can encourage other campuses to make this happen for them. Kohout said she's going to talk to Neil Christenson about adding more detail as well. Selander said under describing the issue, they should be talking about catastrophic failure and that there's a 54% risk of the area getting hit by a 9.0 earthquake every day. Rosenberg said they should double check the amount WWU is asking for. Becca Kenna-Schnek, Director of Government Relations, can provide that. Kohout said she will also double check on some other numbers as well. Goldblatt said it would be interesting to see more statistics and evidence on why and how it is exactly in disrepair. There's more data that can be shown. Rosenberg said under tactics, there should be consideration on how voices could be heard by the governor prior to December. Thomas said she was wondering if they could do dedicated revenue next, because she has to leave. Kohout said that's fine. They'll skip to document 4. Heffelmire said she just wanted to give disclaimer, this is the same proposal that was presented last year. She's using the same presentation. Some of the precise tax information came from Nie Doherty, so she will try to answer the questions as best as possible. It's really just background information. Having dedicated revenue on the agenda should always be one of the main priorities, especially in light of the McCleary decision. This is something WSA will be advocating, it is important that this be on the agenda. Thomas said she thinks that targeting high technology research and development tax loop hole is not what they should advocate for. It's not necessarily a detrimental loophole. There are a lot of benefits to it. She feels like that's something they shouldn't try and hinder. There are other places students can get larger sums from. Heffelmire said they just wanted to give some potential ideas. What they decided as a committee is that it's not their job to decide what will be taxed, that's for the legislature to decide. But it's the idea that higher education does need dedicated revenue. None of these are binding, they are just ideas and probably won't be on the actual agenda. Cody Simrell said they should add that student debt has exceeded mortgage and credit card debt. Kohout said something that she had trouble with is that they don't know how elections will turn out. They don't know who will be in charge of the house and senate. She wondered what people thought about using titles instead of names. She wants to know how the body feels about that. The

body agrees. Kohout said except for Gov. Ins lee because he will remain governor. What is WEA? Rosenberg said it's the Washington Education Association. Heffelmire said she knows people might question an estate tax, but in Washington that would only affect 300 people. Pebley said none of these idea will be included on the actual item. Heffelmire said yes these are all possibilities. Looking at the agenda from last year, members can see how they did it. They picked one or two ideas as an example, but it's nothing binding. Kohout said next is student services/state of emergency. Guizar said she wants to throw out that she worked on sexual violence proposal. She hopes she will help with this one later on. She doesn't want to take credit for it now. Goldblatt said they did it in chunks. Heffelmire said this is the same model that Kenna-Schenk brought to the committee. It allows students to work collaboratively with administration. It's something they've been talking about before she brought it to the committee. Student success isn't determined by only the classroom success. They need to look at the students holistically. To ensure success there needs to be other resources, such as academic advising. This goes for students with disabilities, students with mental disabilities students who are survivors. They need to make sure WWU has adequate advising so students can be successful in and out of the classroom. They provided some statistics showing WWU has a great need for all these things. They speak for themselves. The long term goal is having ample funding, which is vague because WWU can always use more funding. They don't want to limit it. They want to ally with administration. She doesn't think there will be people against the idea, but there are lots of people wanting to take from the pot. Goldblatt said a theme she sought in unifying this is what a diverse and broad group of students this would benefit and what a diverse group of student could rally around this issue. The data is very clear. They have the opportunity to set precedent throughout the country. Thomas asked if funding is allocated to the university and then they specify it is used or does the state decide. Kohout said she believes it's the university that gets to decide. Lily Jaquith, Board Assistant for Representation Committees, said she thinks the state can mandate that money goes certain places. More often than not there ends up being a mandate that is not funded, which LAC would want to avoid because Western wouldn't go through with it without the money. Thomas said she thinks that could be downfall of it if they're lobbying the wrong people. Heffelmire said she does see that this is one of administration's priorities. They won't butt heads. Thomas said she wasn't sure if they would just give the university more money in general or if they would give it specifically for this purpose. Seare said she had a call on similar issue yesterday with USSA. They're looking to make it more inclusive and involve a broader range of students. It will see a lot of editing and ideas coming from the broader base at a national level. *Thomas leaves.* Kohout asked if the group is going to come up with a name or if they would like the body to come up with that. Goldblatt said the group didn't have much time to come up with something together. They're planning to get together and edit the document. It didn't feel right for one person to choose the title. Kohout said she was wondering if sexual assault portion is repetitive with them having a sexual assault proposals too. Guizar said it is should be under student success but with the prevention proposal, it's just expanding and more detailed versus just touching on it in the student success proposal. Kohout said yes that makes sense. When it talks about the need for help for survivors of sexual assault, she wants to include information on trans* identified folks and male identified. Heffelmire said she was looking for statistics for assault on WWU's campus, but she couldn't find it. It definitely should be included and will be. She wants to make sure target is a specific person, or position as they're doing now. Rosenberg said there are some offices that would be able to provide statistics that would prove useful. Goldblatt said she was wondering if it is okay if they show statistics in a chart form. Kohout said yes. Voter access: Kohout said WSA has been lobbying on two particular bills, they are hyperlinked if members want to read them. This is ensuring voter accessibility. One is the motor voter bill, it allows for 16 and 17 year olds to be asked to pre-register to vote at the

DMV. The other would extend voter registration deadlines. Seare said she wants to comment that under number three, wants to emulate what WSA has come up with but wanted to be vague because she didn't have access to some of that information. There will be official titles there. Kohout said the Secretary of State and county auditors are behind these which is huge. Rosenberg said in the description about being able to register 11 days prior to Election Day and in person day of elections. Is it only in person day of elections or is it day ten to the day of elections. Kohout said she believes it is in person all that time but she will look at those bills. Sexual Assault Prevention on our Campus: Savinski said this is what they have so far. They're still trying to hash out what they want the specific ask to be, they want it to be based on specific needs at western. The basic things they're asking for are state support for survivors of sexual assault. They're asking the legislature to take a stand of support or create legislation that would further protect survivors. They talked about how there's a lot of support for this through other campus organizations. Lots of campuses are interested in getting behind this. Guizar said they also talked about what can be done on campus to be on the way to getting there. She will be talking to the title nine coordinator to show them the document and what can be done to work together. She also wants to work with other organizations. Last year she wanted to get a committee together to work on this. There's a lot that could be done in that group. Last year the Sexual Awareness Center wanted to get a resolution done on the board level. Savinski said when they were looking at the data they found on the annual security and fire safety report for Western that numbers are low, meaning people aren't reporting assault instances. She wants to make that clear. They want to figure out what they're doing to prevent people from finding support. If this is supported more heavily then they can fill those gaps. There's quite a bit of victim blaming language in the annual security and fire safety report. Guizar said it's hard to connect the resources they do have and figure out where to begin. Savinski said she thinks people have the assumption that they have to go to the police. All they have to do to tell someone else. Getting help can just be going to the counseling center or somewhere else they can get response. Goldblatt said she really likes the idea of getting a committee together on this issue as a creative tactic for the university. They also don't get a lot of chances to collaborate with each other. It's important to make sure they're not all going in different directions. On the consent resolution that the SAC had thought about bringing to the board, she's talking with the coordinator of the SAC and she has been shopping it around to see if there are further edits to the resolution. She would be a good person to get in contact with because there's quite a bit of contact that could go into this. The SAC has also been working on an educational campaign about victim blaming. Heffelmire said thanks all for their work on this. She added stuff to student success because she doesn't think you can talk about student success without including support for sexual assault victims. She asked if it should be added or stay separate. Savinski said she thinks that depends on what they decide the ask should be. Guizar said they can definitely get together and decide on that. She thinks it would be good to ask for a stance on this and keeping this document doing that. Not just through funding, but through their words. Kohout said she knows California just passed yes means yes and she was wondering if they wanted to include that in the language. Savinski said she's looked really deeply at it. Consent is defined in Washington by giving a positive statement. It doesn't necessarily say it can't be given when substances are involved, but when talking about sexual misconduct it does say you can't be mentally incapacitated. She tried to find specifics of the California law, but had a hard time with it. Kohout said she wants to figure out group captains. Lor Carver Academic Facility it will be Christenson. Lor Student Success it will be Goldblatt. Lor Voter Access it will be Seare. Lor New and Dedicated Revenue it will be Heffelmire. Lor Sexual Assault Prevention on our Campus it will be Savinski. Rosenberg asked in terms of what the council will actually be voting on to be on the agenda, what pieces will be voted on? Kohout asked if is it that the agendas are passed using the issue choosing process and then she writes it up. Heffelmire said

they passed the things they wanted and then as a group constructed the language together. Kohout said to avoid a long discussion, does everyone feel comfortable bringing that in as well? The rest of the information is for records and campaigns later on. The actual agenda is short: what students believe and how they're going to get it done. So then they're not nit picking exactly how to construct it. LAC may see it again if the board doesn't like it.

VIII. Action Items

VIII. Other Business

IX. Next Meeting Date
November 6, 2014

X. Adjourn

The Meeting was adjourned at 7:36