

**Western Washington University Associated Students
Legislative Affairs Council
Wednesday, January 14, 2015, VU 567**

Present: Sarah Kohout (ASVP for Governmental Affairs), Heather Heffelmire (Legislative Liaison), Mayra Guizar (Western Votes! Rep), Kendra Thomas (Local Liaison), Cody Simrell, Belina Seare, Sam Goldblatt, Nora Selander

Absent: Katie Savinski, James Mayther

Advisor: Lisa Rosenberg, Assistant Director of Student Activities

Secretary: Lily Jaquith, Board Assistant for Representation Committees

Guest: Adam Schaefer

MOTIONS

LAC-15-W-1 Amend the agenda to include tuition setting authority.

Sarah Kohout, Chair of Legislative Affairs Council, called the meeting to order at 5:05pm

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. Additions and Changes to the Agenda

MO TION LA C-15- W-1 by Kohout

Moves to put tuition setting authority under presentations.

Second: Thomas Vote: Unanimous Action: Passed by acclamation

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

IV. Public Forum

V. REPORTS

A. VP for Governmental Affairs

Kohout said she's planning Viking Lobby Day. She's really excited that everyone at the meeting today will be attending. This going to be a really exciting experience. It's going to be really great. There are a couple spots open if anyone knows anyone that wants to go they should email her.

B. Legislative Liaison

Heather Heffelmire, Legislative Liaison, said she's in Olympia and things are going really well. One thing they'll be looking is SB 5063. That would mandate that 2/3 of all new revenue go to higher education. It would be bad for a lot of other programs. She would encourage everyone to think about that and not endorse it. Something is also coming up about tuition setting authority returning to the legislature, that's something the WSA really supports. It's in WSA guiding principles. She gave testimony today on what the WSA is and it went well. *Heffelmire leaves the conference call.*

C. Local Liaison

Kendra Thomas, Local Liaison, said that city council passed rental registration through the first and second votes. The new city planner has been working on gathering cost estimates. The public comments are a lot of landlords being jerks, they think it's going to raise rents for

renters. The estimate says that it will only cost \$4 more in rent per unit per month for landlords comply. They're working on fine tuning that. The deadline will be August 1 for registration, starting registration on July 1.

D. Western Votes!

Mayra Guizar, Western Votes! representative, said they just had the first Western Votes meeting of the quarter. They did introductions and there were some people from Viking Lobby Day there. They got into their involvement in WSA, where Western Votes stands on campus and with USSA. They went into an ice breaker game. They would try to get a representative to agree that education is a right. Then Oscar Aguirre, Western Votes! president, passed notes with things that people had to convince their legislators to say. Then they went over the actual legislative agenda. It was really good and successful.

VI. Presentations

A. LAC Presentations at Viking Lobby Day

Kohout said for Viking Lobby Day they're going to have LAC members give presentations to give students a chance to hear from the people that drafted the document. They'll have fact sheets available in folders, but it's also good to have someone present it to them. She's wondering if someone wanted to help out more. *Cody Simrell enters*. Kohout said she can send out the [link](#) again to the google presentation that Heffelmire started. Kohout said some questions came up about costs of things. She said she can come up with the cost of the student success from the university, but she's wondering what people thought about putting an estimate of costs on the support for survivors of sexual violence. Guizar said she's sure there are numbers out there. She can reach out to Katie Plewa, Violence Prevention Specialist. She would know the salary of staff and cost of trainings, etc. She would know those number and come up with a ballpark. Kohout said that would be great if possible. Guizar said this is all fairly new. Every campus is different. So in the first few stages campuses will be able to individualize it. Lisa Rosenberg, Assistant Director of Student activities, said the two key areas would be dedicated funding for increased counseling and then the mandatory training program. Kohout said counseling is also included in student success.

B. ASWWU 2015 Legislative Agenda

Kohout said since they wrote the legislative agenda, they haven't gotten to see it. She had to rearrange some of the topics so they would fit in the set number of pages. Thomas said they talked about at the end of each summary having "the ASWWU advocates for," is that okay? Kohout said yes, the board of directors ended up changing that. Thomas said when Heffelmire was talking about the 2/3 thing and opposing it, it seems contradictory to the legislative agenda. Kohout said the issue is with putting a set amount of how much dedicated revenue higher education gets. They don't want it to take away from other social services. Thomas asked if there's another option besides putting a set amount on dedicated revenue. Kohout said she believe Sen. Hill is the one on Ways and Means, this is just his idea with how to fund higher education. There will definitely be other ideas throughout session. They can oppose the bill, support it or not taking a stances is also an option.

C. Tuition Setting Authority

Kohout said tuition setting authority is currently with the university, meaning if they don't get enough funding they could make tuition skyrocket. It used to be in the hands of the legislature, meaning student can hold them accountable. It's hard to hold the administration accountable and they can always blame the legislators for not giving the university enough funding. Heffemire has included a letter about the issue "The Governor has proposed returning tuition setting authority to the leg and away from the university. This completely lines up with WSA's guiding principles and is in, in my opinion, something we should strongly support.

Returning tuition setting authority to the leg would return accountability. Students would have a body to pressure for low tuition and punish when our needs aren't met. We don't have this when the authority rests with the university.

Again, I definitely think this is something we should formally support. If you need more info, I can send more later. It's not a bill quite yet, just something the gov said." Thomas asked if it used to be in the hands of the legislature. Kohout said yes until two years ago. Thomas asked if they know it would make tuition lower or is it just about accountability. Kohout said they can't guarantee it will lower tuition, but it will hold them accountable which makes it more likely for them to not raise it. Goldblatt asked why it was taken away from legislature. Lily Jaquith, WSA VP of Communication, said she can't remember, but it was something the WSA was pretty avidly against last year. Kohout said she wanted the group to start thinking about this because it could get brought up. Adam Schaefer asked if the university wants to have the authority. What's their stance on it? Kohout said she's pretty sure they want it. But she's not sure about an official stance. Jaquith said the Council of Presidents has. Kohout said they like to have the ability to raise it, in case of cutting of funding. It's understandable from their perspective. She's not sure of the argument for the university keeping it besides having the ability to raise tuition when funding is cut. She said they might have presentations like this throughout the session while Heffelmire is down there. They'd be on things that might not have bills, but are ideas to start thinking about.

VI. Information Items

A. AS UW/WSA Affordability Model

Kohout said this has been approved by the WSA to have Affordability as Workability as an affordability metric. This is the response to the question "What is affordable?" The Associated Students of the University of Washington has worked on a model for affordability which is Affordability as Workability. They state that affordability should be how much a student can work at Washington minimum wage at 20 hours a week during the regular year and 40 hours a week during the summer. Thomas said this says minus grants and scholarships and minus parent contribution. So that should be included in the total cost. Kohout said so some students would have that extra contribution so they wouldn't have to contribute as much. Thomas said when she does FAFSA the expected family contribution is \$16,000 and she doesn't get any of that. She thinks that's a huge problem with this. She thought it was just a workability thing. Kohout said that's what they've discussed with UW. It's supposed to be a flat line of the costs for education, regardless of their situation. So she doesn't know why that's there. Seare said so estimated family contribution is to be included in this model. Thomas said that's what it said. Seare said she thought it was the opposite. Kohout said she did too. This is just worded weird. Seare said she thought that was the relief, having everyone will be based on how much they can afford. Guizar said she thinks there's an issue with the wording. Jaquith said the WSA spent months talking about this and they wouldn't have passed it knowing this was in here. Kohout said she will reach out to Austin Wright-Pettibone at UW, he's their legislative liaison and she can ask him about it. They've had many conversations about this at WSA meetings and that was never part of the discussion. It's supposed to be affordable to everyone and that's not a good way to define affordability, which is one of the flaws in the current system because that's not always money your family can actually contribute. Rosenberg said it's interesting that they chose 20 hours instead of 19, because campus jobs don't allow more than 19 hours. Kohout said she thinks they're accounting for off campus jobs. They also considered doing 15 hours a week to under estimate the amount they're able to work. Goldblatt said she thinks you have to work 20 hours to qualify for food stamps, so that might be why they chose that number. Kohout said they can certainly come up with another metric if the committee chooses. Seare asked if they were to do their own model of it to do a survey, something that's more data based. At the September WSA meeting they broken down what went into the median family

income and other models and then make it their own thing. Thomas said she realizes this is only an information item, but will they use it for Viking Lobby Day. Kohout said no. If anyone asks what affordable is, they can answer with this because the WSA has endorsed it. But this isn't currently what Western is currently lobbying on. Thomas asked what it's an information item for. Kohout said it's just for LAC to take a stance on for future lobby days or for Heffelmire to say to legislators that LAC has taken a stance on this. Jaquith said that Seare mentioned more detailed metrics, and there is a giant packet of information on the Affordability and Workability metric that UW worked on. She can send it out to everyone. Kohout said she can also ask Austin what went into the making of this metric.

B. SB 5063

Kohout said this is the bill that Heffelmire was talking about. It would be a good idea for the committee to read over this for any fine print. Thomas said it doesn't specifically mention higher education. Kohout said she wonders if it specifies anywhere. Thomas said it does say support K-12. Goldblatt said in the first paragraph, the supreme court decision they're referencing is a K-12 decision. Kohout said she thinks it does include higher education when they reference higher education. Thomas said what Heffelmire was talking about, with it decreasing money from other social services, it does say that less than 2/3 can be dedicated if there is a need in other programs for that money. It seems like her concerns would be taken care of with that. Kohout said this is something that Heffelmire can talk about next week, things move quickly in the legislature so it may have changed by then. The committee can continue to talk about this, they don't have to take action on it immediately.

VII. Action Items

VIII. Other Business

IX. Next Meeting Date

January 21, 2015 5:00 p.m. in VU 567

X. Adjourn

The Meeting was adjourned at 6:03p.m.