

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

Present: Sarah Kohout (ASVP for Governmental Affairs), Heather Heffelmire (Legislative Liaison), Kendra Thomas (Local Liaison), Sam Goldblatt, Nora Selander, Haley Newhouse, McKenzie Dent

Absent: Luciane DeAlmeida, Adam Schaefer, Mayra Guizar (Western Votes! Rep),
Belina Seare, Cody Simrell,

Advisor: Lisa Rosenberg, Assistant Director of Student Activities

Secretary: Lily Jaquith, Board Assistant for Representation Committees

Guest:

MOTIONS

LAC-15-S-5 Approve the minutes from April 16, 2015.

Sarah Kohout, Chair of Legislative Affairs Council, called the meeting to order at 5:00pm

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. Additions and Changes to the Agenda

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MO TIONLA C-15-S - by Goldblatt

Approve the minutes from April 16, 2015

Second: Heffelmire

Vote: Unanimous Consent Action: Passed

IV. Public Forum

V. REPORTS

A. VP for Governmental Affairs

Kohout said she was in DC last week lobbying on the federal agenda this committee drafted, as well as some of the administration stuff. They had a meeting with the Department of Energy, they talked about the energy institute that's on campus. They met with Representative Jamie Herrera Beutler, Rep. Derek Kilmer, Rep. Rick Larsen, Rep. Suzan Delbene, Senator Maria Cantwell and Sen. Patty Murray's staff. They were really good meetings. Rep. Delbene was the most receptive. She really wanted to see somethings happen. Rep. Herrera Beutler had some push back on increasing federal aid, she just wants to get to the root of the issue of the rise of cost in higher education. She's looking at a bill to have students see their debt advisors more often. To see how much debt they're in while they're still in school. They had really good meetings. Thank you to everyone for their work on their agenda. She's been working on a Washington Student Association proposal and preparing for the WSA General Assembly. She's also on hiring.

B. Legislative Liaison

Heather Heffelmire, Legislative Liaison, said she was on a call this morning with administration and other higher education stakeholders. The legislative session is supposed to end tomorrow, but because they haven't come to an agreement Governor Jay Inslee has called a special session. He can set all the parameters for that. They go on for 30 days. It will be a lot of about the budget. They're stopped right now because there's not a lot of agreement right now. The special session will go until the end of May and there may be another one that will go until the end of June. The special session starts on Wednesday, April 29. Higher education looks really good in both budgets, they just need to get them passed. She's thinking about an event on campus about the state of higher education. If anyone has any ideas for that, she'd be happy to hear them. She's not positive if she'll end up doing it.

C. Local Liaison

Kendra Thomas, Local Liaison, said she met with a lot of city staff and university administration. There were a lot of important people there. They talked about rental registration and all the consequences of policies. That included what might happen if there are displaced students. They aren't expecting much of that, only one percent of residences to be deemed unhealthy to live in. For the school, they discussed having school housing as the place for where students go if they have to leave their apartments. They started talking about the education for students and tenants. They talked about the local agenda and how they want to institutionalize that. They talked about different things for summer start. They will be developing a focus group within the university. It will be a lot of administration and her position and hopefully the Legal Information Center Coordinator. It was very exciting. A lot of people seemed really supportive of the things on the local agenda.

D. Western Votes!

Kohout said there was no meeting this week because of the AS vice president debates.

VI. Information Items

A. Legislative Affairs Council Budget Policy Update

Kohout said she was looking thought some stuff and did some edits to the budget policy. The changes are really minimal. Folks should keep in mind that the in the rhetoric they're trying to avoid the word lobbying. That's really not what they do and there are legal things around that. She changed lobbying to advocacy and she edited out some old language. It was really minimal. Is anything else anyone wants to change? Lisa Rosenberg, Assistant Director for Student Activities, said one thing is that it references voluntary student donations in a few places. Like in the very first sentence. And there are a couple places where it refers to money donated, they could change that to fees collected. In the second paragraph, it talks about the purpose of the LAF "is to ensure students are represented in the legislative process, and are able to effectively advocate for affordable, accessible and, quality higher education." Some of the things that LAC has done are beyond that. She doesn't know if it should have something a little more relevant to that. Kohout said something like issues that are affecting students. Thoams said or something about students' rights. Rosenberg said in non-discretionary, it says all non-discretionary items are subject to approval by the board of directors. She's not sure if removing items is subject to the board. Kohout said she likes checks and balances, but she's not sure if they board would have the expertise to do that. Rosenberg said maybe there should be clarity in language then, one way or the other. Kohout said it would be good to clear that up and she can bring it to the board just to do it. Rosenberg said the reference to sunset clause might be confusing if people don't know what that means. They could just take that out. Maybe something more like non-discretionary items are ongoing unless removed by a 2/3 vote. Sam Goldblatt said she wonders if changing the non-discretionary should be subject to the board's approval. She thinks it should be. She thinks a way to better phrase it would be to

say “all changes to non-discretionary allocations are subject to approval by the board of directors.” Kohout said the word subject makes it seem like she only brings it to them if she wants to. Rosenberg said saying it must be approved. Thomas said it only talks about removes it is a 2/3 vote of the council. It makes it sound like adding items to the non-discretionary are only subject to approval of the board. Goldblatt said it does say that earlier, that it has to be approved by the LAC as a reoccurring expense. Thomas said maybe they could move it then. Rosenberg said for the discretionary sections, she wonders if there needs to be something about the summer. Kohout said that’s in the charge and charter, but maybe it needs to be in here. Rosenberg said so maybe they could put that in there. Kohout said she can add that to the discretionary part. Thomas said she knows her job may change, do they have to change it in the charge and charter? Kohout said that’s on the next person in the position and the board in the summer.

B. VLD Board Assistant Updating Job Description

The committee updated the job description for VLD board assistant.

C. VLD Board Assistant Non-Discretionary Fund

Kohout said this will have to go through the board. This does need a 2/3 vote. The position was extremely successful and it will help in the future. Thomas asked if the funding for VLS non-discretionary Kohout said that comes from her own budget. There is no discretionary/non-discretionary in that budget. Rosenberg asked if she is proposing it as “up to 60 hours” or with a specific number, just because the minimum wage will go up and it’s important that they stay on track with that. Kohout asked if the job description changes have to go through personnel committee. Rosenberg said yes, but what she’s talking about would be considered non-substantive. So it would take one meeting and then go to the board as a consent item.

VIII. Discussion Items

A. Conference Committee

Kohout said she wants to get this done because USSA Congress is coming up. Goldblatt said they kind of put together a taskforce for this. It’s just going to take a couple weeks before they bring it as an information item. They could put it together and bring it to next week as an information item. It seems like with this document there’s criteria and processes for figuring out conference attendance. They talked about having two sections. They looked specifically at changing #4 and #5 so it’s closer to AS hiring language. They’re also thinking about what it means to promote diversity and inclusion and how they’d like to see that portrayed in people applying for conference attendance. They also talked about figuring out more preferred qualifications and weighting qualifications. Number 8 says priority may be given to those who haven’t attended before. And they were thinking about giving priority to those who don’t have other means of getting funding to the conference. They were thinking that depending on the year there would be different opportunities for people to get different funding. Kohout said they just need to know by May 28 how many people they will be sending to congress. Thomas said they were going to say on #7 “shall abstain.” Heffelmire asked why was that decided. Thomas said that’s just what’s happened in the past. That’s kind of vague. They should just decide one way or the other and this is probably the most ethical way. Goldblatt said it would be good just to have stronger language one way or the other. Haley Newhouse said she would like to be on the taskforce to revise this.

B. USSA LegCon Reflections

The committee looked at reflections from the USSA LegCon.

VIII. Other Business

The committee decided to vote to endorse WSA legislative proposals at the next meeting of the legislative affairs council.

IX. Next Meeting Date
April 30, 2015

X. Adjourn

The Meeting was adjourned at 6:12