



**ASSOCIATED STUDENTS
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON**

OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
BEN GOLDEN, DIRECTOR

December 7, 2005

TO: ASUW LSC
FROM: Ben Golden, OGR Director
Re: Senate Committee Days Update

I'll keep this one much shorter than the last – I'm going to try to do weekly updates along these lines (I'll try to do them just before LSC so y'all can stay up to date). I have also been asked to keep a blog and I may also be asked to list most of my activities and how they apply to the Legislative Agenda. LSC: your thoughts? My goal is to keep the reports like this as informative as possible...

I had 1-on-1's with Senators Shin, McAuliffe, Schmidt, Weinstein, and Pridemore. Additionally, I attended the Senate Education committee meeting (they discussed mostly WASL issues).

I finally got into our WSL office – it is about the size of our current HUB office, but now I share it with 4 other student lobbyists. I continued to meet with many Legislative Aides, other lobbyists in higher education, and so on. I checked out my apartment – \$375/month, but unfurnished and none of the internet/utilities/etc. are covered. It's about 5 blocks from the capitol – and big enough that people can stay over comfortably (need to testify in the morning, want to help with reports, skip school to help lobby in Olympia, etc.)

The Code of Conduct is being pushed really strongly in the House – but it needs Senate support to get through. The Senate is fairly indifferent, so they might just do whatever the House does. Still, I encourage everyone to get people calling their legislators to fight this – it may be out of control by now, but it is important to let our voice be heard! Also, I'd like to reiterate the potential value of having ASUW community relations reach out to off-campus communities to cut this off.

I had some really great conversations about tuition models. Everyone understands the burden it puts on students, but we're also asking for increased funding for maintaining our academic excellence – legislators are asking us to tolerate a happy-medium, or come up with our own proposals (the problem is finding where the additional money would come from). Also, Senator McAuliffe, the Senate Education chair, is really interested in simplifying the financial aid system – contact me (or even her) with ideas. I also met with several other student lobbyists to discuss ways to bring back something similar to the Promise Scholarship.

Once again, diversity issues were touched on without receiving great interest for the coming session. Legislators were more interested in finding creative ways to expand higher education accessibility. The general consensus remains that this is a year of small battles, with next year the unveiling of sweeping proposals. In response to my asking the legislators about "our role as students," I am repeatedly told that we need to continually tell our stories so that policymakers understand our situation beyond just



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numbers and inputs. Thus, it appears that much of my time will be spent relaying those stories and providing that human contact to the very human issue of higher education.

Further, I want to add that our three offensive projects (student regent reform, voting outreach, and textbooks) are all getting positive responses. Being able to produce legislation that works for everyone may be a longer process than would fit into a 60-day session, so I may be laying the groundwork for bills next year. Still, we will keep talking with the right people and taking these things step by step (for instance: student regent – Governor’s Board and Commissions office; voting – Secretary of State; textbooks – WashPIRG and publishers). All of these things are very time-consuming to pull off, as it is difficult to concentrate on these narrow topics when dealing with so many small but necessary tasks.

Finally, I would like to throw my full support behind the efforts to ensure a responsive student lobbyist as well as finding ways to clarify the intent of the Legislative Agenda and to improve OGR for future years. I hope that these efforts will not replace the duties that need to be served to be effective, and that the motives are more directly addressed for the purpose of the task force, but the support of OGR behind an endeavor to improve student voice is surely present.

Ben Golden
ASUW OGR Director