



**ASSOCIATED STUDENTS
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON**

OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

BRYCE MCKIBBEN, DIRECTOR

January 20, 2008
MEMORANDUM

TO: Friends and Colleagues, ASUW Board of Directors
FR: Bryce McKibben
RE: Legislative Update
Week 1

Greetings! **As of last Monday, January 14th, 2008, the 60th Session of the Washington State Legislature has convened.** I am writing to you today to keep you updated on the state of ASUW lobbying efforts. This year, I am especially lucky to have had the pleasure of serving as the Director of the Office of Government Relations (OGR) during the previous term, 2006-2007, and to be working closely with the Washington Student Lobby. The last legislative session was truly remarkable; the Legislature and Governor listened to the concerns of students, put forward a record investment in higher education, and passed a number of bills that benefitted students' concerns around issues like tuition, financial aid, debt, voting accessibility, to name just a few.

The 2007 Legislative Session will be hard to beat; the 2008 Legislative Session is a "short" one – they meet for just 60 days instead of 120 – and legislators and the Governor will be thinking closely of reelection battles. However, we have geared up on some important issues of concern and we intend to win some significant victories for students in 2008. Additionally, ASUW continues to think actively of the ways in which we can mobilize the student vote in 2008.

I hope I can replicate some of the last term's success. One of the things I am most proud of is the frequent and honest communication that I provide to the student body about the developments in Olympia and beyond. As always, it is deeply important to me that you feel included and knowledgeable about how ASUW is representing your interests. Therefore, I will continue my efforts to summarize our lobbying activities – and this is just the first installment. I hope these updates are useful to you and that you will distribute them widely. Furthermore, I hope you will take interest in OGR and the work that we do. Only with an engaged student body will we create the change we need to make higher education more accessible and affordable, to enforce student rights, and to ensure that we are receiving the highest quality education.

Washington Student Lobby (WSL) Training

Prior to this week of legislative action (during the second week of January), I was participating in the annual joint training for student lobbyists hosted the Washington Student Lobby. The liaisons from each of the schools represented in the WSL convene the week prior to the start of the Legislative Session and are collectively trained by the WSL's part-time lobbyist and advisor, Steve Lindstrom. It is a chance for the liaisons to develop a good working relationship, get acquainted with the legislative process, and absorb tips and tricks about the legislative environment. Additionally, we used the week to hold several meetings with staff from the Higher Education Coordinating Board, Higher Education Committees, Governor and Secretary of State's offices, and Council of Presidents. Although I attended training last year, I was once again present in order to be an active and contributing member of our close-knit Olympia team. This week, we also began to identify legislative priorities and strategize on known issues and legislation.

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Issues

A. Policy

The issues of policy in which we are following include:

SUPPORT

Childcare Grant Program (HB 2582 / SB #####)

Childcare for student parents is the top priority for students during this legislative session. It has become an enormous barrier to access in higher education – in fact, it is the third greatest barrier, behind cost and distance. As a first step in building additional state support for childcare, the Washington Student Lobby and ASUW are working on reforming the state childcare grant program administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) and State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). At issue is the fact that the program administers two year competitive grants that are not reliable for campus centers. There is no consistent state support for childcare for student parents of any kind.

This bill would reform the grant program into a match to student contributions to childcare. Collectively, students statewide contribute over \$2.1 million in self-assessed fees for childcare every year at the public four-year institutions. At the UW, we contribute more than \$860,000 per year in student fees to support the childcare centers and voucher program. Additionally, this bill includes a reporting provision that will force the state to gather even more persuasive data on the need for childcare access. This bill is a key component of generating state support for childcare.

SUPPORT

Campus Safety Legislation (HB 2648 / SB 6328)

The tragedies at our own campus with the murder of Rebecca Griego and the atrocities at Virginia Tech have made campus safety a top legislative priority. After many months, Senator Jeanne Kohl-Welles and Representative Deb Wallace have introduced their campus safety legislation. This bill makes some minor steps towards enhancing campus safety by requiring institutions to develop campus safety plans, evaluate the effectiveness of such plans, and update the legislature or their activities to address unmet safety and security issues.

SUPPORT

Voter registration and information activities (HB 2917 / SB 6698)

This bill would mandate collaboration with student governments for voter registration activities and ask that voter registration forms be placed in places of prominence on campus. This bill would provide state reinforcement of student efforts to engage their peers, especially when it concerns the distribution of forms at the beginning of a new school year (such as with First Year Programs) and in on-campus housing.

SUPPORT

Absentee ballot drop-off sites (HB 2843)

In an ongoing effort to make voting easier for students, the Washington Student Lobby drafted legislation to enhance access to drop-off sites for absentee ballots. These sites would be like mailboxes, but ballots placed in such sites would not require postage. However, this bill is being met with skepticism and concern from county auditors, who would be responsible for funding such drop-off sites and who have concerns about the security of such sites.

SUPPORT

Student free press (HB 1307 / SB 6449)

This bill gained significant attention during the last legislative session, when it was introduced by Representative Dave Upthegrove. Court rulings since 1988 have increased the abilities of school administrators to censor student newspapers with prior review at both the high school and college level. The premise behind this legislation is that a high school or college administrator or official cannot censor a student newspaper simply because they do not “like” the story – they can do so only if the story is libelous or profane. This bill increases the civil rights of students by enhancing the Constitutional protections that should be applied to all ages. The bill will be met with stiff resistance in the Senate, but is supported by a new and popular member of the Senate (Sen. Joe McDermott).

SUPPORT

Allowing campuses to ban firearms (SB 6304)

It is University of Washington policy that firearms are prohibited on the campus. However, this policy and those at other campuses have never been validated, authorized, or reinforced by the state. This bill does not specifically ban firearms from the campuses, but could provide additional legal backing for any potential court challenge to campus regulations.

SUPPORT

Business occupation and tax credit for student loan repayments (HB 2673)

Financial aid is not frequently given great attention during short legislative sessions. However, this legislation does not specifically require state appropriation but would adjust tax policy. The bill would give tax credits to businesses who hire graduates from colleges and universities in the State of Washington with student debt and who also pay off the debt of said hires. It is unclear whether this bill has enough support to gain momentum this legislative session, but could be aided by attention legislative advocacy from business students and students who are about to graduate with debt.

SUPPORT

HECB 2008 Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education (HCR 4408 / SCR 8412)

This bill approves of the HECB's 2008 Master Plan (found [here](#)) and asks for updates on implementation. After a legislative mandate passed in 2007, the plan now sets a 10 year, rather than 4 year, plan for the higher education system. Students were represented in the development in this plan and the Washington Student Lobby provided testimony and written input. Notably, the plan addresses the need for additional financial aid for the middle class, addressing transferability issues, and providing access to high quality childcare for student parents, among others. I encourage you to check out the plan and see what's in it. We expect there will be some amendments to the House Resolution that establish legislative "policies" which expand upon the underlying themes of the plan.

SUPPORT

Guaranteed capital funding for higher education (HB/SB #####)

This bill has yet to be introduced. In 2003, the Washington State Legislature adopted the "Building Washington's Future Act," commonly referred to as the "Gardner-Evans Proposal," provided dedicated capital bonding authority for addressing higher education capital needs - specifically for \$750 million dollars in state general obligation bonds to be used over a six-year, or three biennium, period (2003-05 through 2007-09). This additional source of higher education capital funding has, over the past two and current biennium, helped address many, but not all, needs. The collaborative efforts of the representatives of the WSL, HECB, COP, and SBCTC have resulted in a proposal to re-authorize the "Building Washington's Future Act." The proposal seeks \$1 billion for funding capital needs over a three-biennium period (2009-11 through 2013-15). The new proposal has earned the support of Governor Gary Locke, and hence is commonly referred to now as the "Garner-Evans-Locke Proposal."

NEUTRAL

**(WSL
SUPPORTS)**

Student Trustee Position at Bellevue Community College (HB 3015 /SB 6699)

This bill establishes a two-year pilot project for a student trustee at Bellevue Community College, with an evaluation due to the legislature in December 2009. Currently, only the public baccalaureate institutions have a student regent/trustee position. BCC has over 36,000 enrolled students, is beginning to offer four-year degrees, and has one of the most active and established student governments in this state.

NEUTRAL

Faculty on Governing Boards of Higher Education (HB 2948 / SB 6390)

This bill increases the size of governing boards of higher education by 1 member, which shall be a faculty member nominated the "governing body" of the faculty (i.e. Faculty Senate). Unlike the student member, the faculty member would be a permanent appointment except in the cases of regular term expirations. The Council of Faculty Representatives first introduced this proposal during the 2007 Legislative Session. The ASUW and WSL remain neutral on this legislation.

B. Budgetary

The budget allocations which we are requesting include:

SUPPORT Childcare Grant Program (\$4.2 million combined for four and two-year institutions)

Additional support for the program is the second part of addressing the need for childcare (second to the legislation). We have made a full ask to match student contributions for childcare, which amounts to about \$2.1 million each in both the four and two-year institutions). The 2008 Supplemental budget ask is for a one year amount. Whatever is not met during the supplemental year will be asked for during the next biennial budget presented in 2009. The biennial budget request from the Washington Student Lobby will be for \$8.4 million.

The funds given to the program during this supplemental budget will be redistributed in the middle of the grant cycle to campuses in order to immediately address the access problem. Several legislators with influential positions on the fiscal committees have expressed support for our efforts, but have made no commitments on a specific number.

SUPPORT UW Childcare Center (\$250,000 operating, \$1 million capital)

This is an institutional request to address the need for childcare at our campus. The waitlist at the University of Washington Seattle Campus is the longest in the state, for students, faculty, and staff. In particular, a capital request has been made to either renovate or expand UW's on-campus childcare center.

SUPPORT Mental Health (\$245,000 operating)

Mental health is a key component of services to students, and is particularly important to addressing campus safety. The UW request is for an additional 3 FTE's for PhD-level counselors. Each licensed psychologist provides a wide variety of services to positively impact the mental health of the University of Washington campus community. Tangible impacts anticipated by adding the psychologists include approximately 50 additional direct individual student therapy hours available per week and a total of approximately 400 additional students per year having access for assessment, triage, and intervention.

SUPPORT Husky Stadium (\$150 million from sales tax debt retirement funds)

The UW is seeking to extend some of the taxes now being used to pay off debts from Safeco and Qwest fields. Those include taxes on hotels, car rentals and restaurants in King County. Please read more about the proposal [here](#) and [here](#).

C. Other details and the Week Ahead

During the first week, I met with key Representatives and Senators on the Higher Education Committees and the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the fiscal committees. I attended "opening ceremonies" on Monday, and on Tuesday, January 15th, the Governor delivered her annual State of the State address. You can read a transcript of the address [here](#).

This coming week, the House and Senate will hold hearings on the campus safety proposals. I will testify on this legislation. Also, look for legislation to be introduced which expands the state's domestic partnership program – created just last year, with limited rights for gay and lesbian couples. A concerted lobbying campaign to generate support for the student free press legislation begins this week, particularly in the Senate.

You can see the schedule of Legislative Committee hearings [here](#).

And don't forget, **UW LOBBY DAY** is going to be on **Tuesday, February 12th, 2008!**