



ASSOCIATED STUDENTS
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
BEN GOLDEN, DIRECTOR

December 21, 2005

TO: ASUW LSC, Board of Directors
FROM: Ben Golden, OGR Director
Re: Finals and winter break update

Yo. I promise to try to keep this one shorter...

The US House of Representatives recently passed a budget conciliation bill 212-206 that included almost \$13 billion in cuts to student loans (by freezing the rates). The Senate then passed it 51-50 (VP Dick Cheney flew back from Pakistan to cast the tie-breaking vote). A minor procedural move by Senate Democratic leadership has stalled it temporarily, but it looks as if the student aid cuts are going to happen. I have been updating the LSC list-serve with reports and contact information – if you would like to be added to this list-serve, let Tyler know at asuwoqr1@u.washington.edu.

Washington Learns is a task force asked for by Gregoire and mandated in last year's legislature to take a broad look at education, from early learning through higher education. It is finally picking up steam and last Monday's meeting laid a lot of groundwork for the year ahead. The funding subcommittee is relying on a consultant to formulate what the cost ought to be to educate a student, and to find a sustainable funding model – high tuition is certainly a likely candidate, as much attention in WA Learns has been placed on improving early learning, WASL, and community colleges. I recommend that in the spring months we can get a greater presence at these meetings (especially those with open dialogues – I was speaking up a lot on Monday because there was practically no student voice).

Lee and I had a very productive meeting with President Emmert and his state lobbyist, Randy Hodgins. They have promised to help us fight the code of conduct (attached is a letter the administration has sent out). We are essentially close allies on all issues except for funding models – a discussion that will really pick up after session.

Lee and I also attended the last part of a WSL meeting on December 10th in Cheney. For such long travels right before finals, the meeting was relatively useless (they have the potential to do a lot – just a lost opportunity). I consider my role in WSL to be very similar to that of the US in the UN – reform it with tough love (but hopefully legally).

We are waiting for everyone to return to Olympia after the New Year to proceed on a few more specific issues. Meetings with the Secretary of State's office are scheduled to discuss greater voting outreach – we may ask for UW to do something internal in the short-run, but work with Sam Reed's office for something in the long-run. Also, our student regent application reform idea is likely to get accomplished – it may even be expanded for deciding the new HECB student representative.



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Gregoire intends to keep most of the \$1.4 billion surplus for a rainy day fund. Nonetheless, there will still be about \$500 million in new spending – and higher education sees a tiny fraction of that. See the attachment from Randy Hodgins for information about that (still, the battles are usually over what is going to get cut – so there are merely additions). Check out <http://www.washington.edu/about/staterel/> for other related information. Also, the Senate Minority Leader, Bill Finkbeiner, has stepped down from his leadership post. Many are now speculating on whether or not he will change his vote on equal rights legislation (such a bill failed by 1 vote last year).

OGR has hired a new research assistant: Joel Murray. We are happy to have him on the team and are excited to put him to work (he has already been helpful as an ex-officio member of LSC and on leadership in ATN!).

Lobby Day is tentatively scheduled for February 1st. That is earlier than usual, but that is a good thing if we can pull it off. Tyler is in charge of that for OGR. Angie Wallace and Nick Peyton have been quite helpful in getting the ball rolling as well – and I know that LSC and ATN! will make us proud in making the event another success.

My work cell phone is now 206 409 6574 – please abuse it during session. I will be moving into my unfurnished apartment on January 1st and 2nd – if anyone has extra furniture or is bored and wants to help move stuff to Olympia, please let me know.

OK – so it's not actually any shorter than the previous two updates, but there is so much going on! Please stay engaged throughout session, contacting me with any questions and bringing news from these reports back to constituents. Thank you, and have a very merry non-denominational holiday break.

Ben Golden
ASUW OGR Director