



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–LA CROSSE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

2244 THE U 1705 BADGER STREET LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN54601 (608) 785-8775

Student Senate Agenda

Date: **March 10th, 2021**

Time and Location: **6:00pm; Zoom**

- I. Call to Order
 - a. 6:01
- II. Roll Call
- III. Consent Agenda
 - a. Approval of Minutes
 - b. Approval of Agenda
- IV. Guest Speakers
 - a. Jill Billings
 - i. Billings: I know that you have spoken to our new senator, Brad Pfaff. I was talking to him earlier and he sends his greetings. This is a great time to be visiting with you because of where we are with the budget. Here in Wisconsin, it is a biennial budget, so it comes out every two years. It is a good budget for higher education right now. Evers is a governor for education. He had a lot of history with education and understands it well. He was even on campus yesterday. We have Governor Thompson of the UW system, and the governor of Wisconsin, Tony Evers. They were supporting our building and gave wonderful speeches of support. They also talked about how great it is to have the vaccine center on campus. This budget is the largest investment in the UW system in 20 years. Evers understands that investing in education is important, especially with COVID. The budget accounts for filling in the gap from tuition freeze, Bucky's tuition promise, for low-income students and there are funds for expanding program to other campuses. There is also a student loan borrower bill of rights included in there and that require providers to put accurate and complete info to borrowers on payment options. It also creates an office to oversee that. Punishments for those lenders who don't follow the rules. It also includes Freshwater Institute funding. Last year UWL students testified for that funding so it is great to see that coming through. There is also \$10 mil for mental health at UW system schools. I have been talking to students about the lack of access of mental health and he is responsive to our needs. I will talk about the capital budget, including buildings but just after I take a break to take questions here. I know we talked about legalizing recreational marijuana before and that is there, but that is a heavy lift.

Mathu: I guess that some of the spending in the budget is built upon the taxes of marijuana? How much of our higher education budget is from that income?

Billings: Yes, some of the future looks to revenue from legalization. The formula from joint finance is anybody's guess. It is in the hands of that committee right now. There are chances for people to weigh in. There are JFC hearings, three in person and one virtual, in April 9-28. The in-person ones are at UW-Whitewater, UW-Stout, Hodag Center in Rhinelander, and a virtual one on the 28th. Their website accepts comments as well. Assembly democrats are also doing listening



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sessions, the meeting schedule is on their website. At the in-person sessions, there are 100s of people who go you are given two minutes to talk. No feedback or debate. You just have to decide on your commitment.

Jeske: I am not sure if you have the answer to this. With the process of legalizing, what does that mean for people with charges against them for possession or who are currently incarcerated for marijuana use?

Billings: You're asking if they will give forgiveness for things that happened before the change in the law? I am not sure. My understanding is that it doesn't work that way at this point. This doesn't mean that they can't look at that going forward, but for now, yeah. I can get back to you on that if you contact my office.

Julson: You are speaking on recreational marijuana, if that doesn't pass, is there any legislation for medical use?

Billings: There has been legislation partially passed in the past. The author will introduce the legislation again if it is pulled out of the budget. Every session we have her introduce that bill and she will again.

Ericson: I'm curious about what you think is the weakest part of the budget for the UW system and UWL in particular

Billings: I suppose that would be a good transition to the capital budget information I have for you. I sit on the committee who makes the capital budget. It was \$2.38 billion in recommended spending. Half of it is UW system and half is department of administration, that includes a museum, toilets and showers at state parks, and stuff like that. We will be looking at those projects soon, Wednesday we will be taking votes on it. Over a billion dollars of UW system projects including a La Crosse resident hall elevator addition for the lower halls, Mitchell hall HVAC, and Prairie Springs part two. We have another project, the parking ramp by the fine arts building but the governor set that one aside. He wanted all eyes to be on prairie springs part two. We are missing that. We still have a generous amount of projects on the budget. There is concern that not all of these will go through. Republicans think that they don't want to do all the borrowing at this point they are looking at projects to be deferred. We do have to fight for this balance. They look at prairie springs and think that we have that so its fine. It was supposed to be one project, but we were told to split it up. Our healthy enrollment, our number of science majors and majors that stay in La Crosse and in Wisconsin certainly merit this commitment from the budget. I know we are just coming out of COVID, but I think this is a great time to reinvest in our community, contractors, engineers, architects, construction, etc. fuel the economy with COVID-19 and all. My ask for you all is to weigh in as a student senate. I don't know if Brad Korbinger has asked you for a letter of support. We are trying to gather as much as we can. Have you heard about that?



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Ahnen: Yes, we have a resolution tonight pertaining to that. We have it on the table later this evening.

Fisher: Sorry, this is probably totally off topic. You worked with Sita for the women of color scholarship a few years ago. Would you be able to have a further conversation about possibly doing that again?

Billings: Yes, I would love that. Contact my office with that information. I loved that project, and it was an awesome night that we all had together that one time. I would be happy to be a part of that again.

Zwettler: This is off topic as well. With regard to a bill package in senate making it harder to vote and restricting voter ID laws and making it harder to get absentee ballots. If that comes up for a vote, will you work against that?

Billings: I will, I've talked to members on my side of the aisle I've had problems from the beginning with how that meeting was announced, the committee that decided that. They invited speakers that were slanted to one side previously, no time for legislators to ask questions. The Wisconsin election commission wasn't invited to speak. It was very narrow information given. I will absolutely be speaking on the floor in opposition to that. Looking at our statute on elections to see if we have any holes in it. I have spoken on this matter before, and I will be creating a barn burner speech on that. Thank you for having me, I'm sure you have heard multiple times that I am so proud of having this campus in our community.

b. Vicki Markussen

- i. Markussen: I'll just start with my background. I am from Franklin; a suburb of Milwaukee and my husband is from Waukesha. I am a first-generation college graduate; I grew up pretty poor. I was one of the kids who got free lunch and the fire dept thanksgiving. I went to UW Madison; I got many scholarships, and I picked a journalism major. My first job was a tv reporter here in La Crosse, where I met my husband. I then moved on to an organization that unites competitors to get community events and such put together. Then, I switched jobs again to the seven rivers alliance, where the goal is to come together to unify three states and thirteen counties. Our goals of unity also were backed by supporting the workforce, keeping young people here, and to attract certain careers. I then moved to the chamber of commerce. Some of the upper classmen may know Ben, he was my intern at the chamber. We worked to get interns in businesses. I believe that we need interns in many businesses. I was the bridge between universities and businesses to get them in those positions. I also had conversations with getting more diversity not just in graduates, but also into internships. I sat on Joe Gow's committee of connection to UWL. One thing that I worked on a few years ago, was that I advocated for that prairie springs part two that Jill Billings was talking about. I understand the importance of having great facilities on campus because my niece lived with us for 4 years while she went to school here.



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The pandemic has affected every single one of us. We have so many small local businesses, and they employ students and vulnerable populations. Many people who were one crisis away from poverty have seen that crisis in COVID, and things aren't great.

Property taxes is the number one thing I hear going door to door. We hear that there isn't affordable housing for students, certain income brackets are suffering, along with the economy. Homelessness is also one of the top things I hear when I'm going door to door and that has been made worse by pandemic. The services that these people rely upon have been shut down given housing restrictions. Making sure that we get those individuals into shelter soon is a top concern. I have said many times there is a huge impact of students on the community. The big talk is how do we keep you? Not saying goodbye when you graduate, but connecting you to jobs here. I know some of you brought up parking in a meeting before the primary with you all. I won't tell you who in city hall, there is a belief that the city would like to see fewer cars on campus. I went to UW Madison. I know that a lot of people on bigger campus didn't have cars; so how realistic is it to say that people won't have cars here, in La Crosse, with these restrictions?

Mathu: I think it is unrealistic. We aren't an urban area like Madison or Milwaukee with public transit. We should make it easier for cars instead of more difficult.

Ericson: Driving less cars is good for the environment, and incentivizing alternatives to driving is better and creates less cars.

Schweiner: It is hard when a lot of La Crosse isn't walkable, and a lot of people rely on transportation to Onalaska for work. The issue isn't driving to campus, it is that they have it for other purposes, might as well bring it to campus. I know that in order for some students to get better housing, that requires them going further away and so they commute for a better living situation.

Markussen: There is a proposal out there from a few years ago, where the city requires off street parking. Neighbors were concerned that all cars were on the street. What they have learned is that it depends on density. The more efficient thing is housing all in a row instead of housing alternated between parking lots. If you want parking, you are going to have to walk a ways. So, what do you think about having further parking to make room for more housing?

Cayo: That would work for most students, but I would advise against it because students with disabilities will have problems with it.

Ericson: When I looked at your website, you didn't have any info on climate change and environment. How will you protect natural resources of La Crosse including the marsh?



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Markussen: I just updated my website, and I am adding content on my website so I will be sure to put something on there about that. The city has agreed to reduce its carbon footprint by 2050. It is in place, but everything is currently in transition. I will tell you what it was and what it will be. The city is currently doing a survey of energy use. It was looking at facilities and reduce energy use of facilities, fleets, etc. An example is that there are a few busses that are now hybrid or electric. Also includes propane for police. So they can reduce that component. They are also looking at products bought at city hall. The idea was to have citizens getting involved in the plan. The plan had numbers for tangible money savings. That plan is getting scrapped.

A new group is forming a new plan. It will be combined with a comprehensive plan. I know they want to hear from students. Side note: some of you may not know that there are 2 innovators in your community. One is Gundersen with hydro energy, gas from wastewater treatment, so their one hospital is completely off the grid. And Western tech, which really innovates some great sustainability programs.

70% of our businesses are small, with funding potentially coming from federal government to get them access to green technologies. We can look at things like the Trane gigaton challenge, and Chart has purchases hydrogen companies. Take that technology to our other places.

You asked about the marsh. How do we protect it? There is a project out there. The marsh has been abused. There is a clean up of the old bullets from the shooting range. There is an idea for a road from north to south. I hesitated to answer when I was asked a little bit ago if I would support it. I recognize that most people don't want that, so I oppose to it unless it is something nice like a monorail, or elevated road. The north-south road conversation is about fixing safety issues. But we should be fixing existing roads or making a new one. If we don't so a road thru the marsh, can we use existing infrastructure? If they can do that, alternative transportation to whatever route is needed.

Cayo: A couple nights ago I came to the LGBTQ forum and I was curious about why you thought of charities be able to fix homelessness problems when they haven't already.

Markussen: Charities can take private donations, and our city does not have a social services department. We would have to hire in all of those services if we were to do it ourselves. Homelessness has popped up in the last five years, obviously it existed before then, but it has just become more prevalent. The time that the agencies have had to fix the problem is somewhat limited. The counties have given them money to help solve that problem. How do we get all those groups to pull together to solve that problem? Ensuring that as we come out of COVID, there are measures in place so they can accomplish their goals. That is my reasoning.



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Cayo: I do hear what you are saying, and my one concern is that charities add barriers, like sobriety, mental health, etc. Along with the Salvation Army denying housing to queer people. I was denied housing there in Milwaukee.

Markussen: I then would ask you: what is the solution?

Cayo: I support the Housing First initiative. Charities need to be involved, but just not the only thing there. Getting people in houses is the first step because I can't focus on getting a job or getting sober if I'm worried about where I'm going to sleep.

Markussen: I would love to talk to you afterwards. I appreciate hearing those limitations. If we could chat later, that would be great. Thank you all for having me.

V. General Student Body Open Forum

VI. Officer Reports

a. **President:** Cate Wiza

- i. Kyle, Olivia, and I met about increasing pay and we are still looking at that to address the concern of taking a leadership position over wanting to pay for basic necessities. we are looking at long term solutions. I hear your concerns I am working on it.
- ii. Election commission is still looking for a commissioner. I would like to hear from you if you are interested. To be the commissioner, you can't run for a position. Please email me if interested.
- iii. I will start with the JPB update. First, the federal money to UWL goes directly to students is still developing the guidelines and such. Those are one-time funds. More info to come. Looking ahead, 75% of summer courses will be online.
- iv. New business from JPB: Chancellor Gow presented them with a charge regarding strategic plan. He outlined his recommendation for them to consider it. They come back with a recommendation of what to do. Recommendations 1, 2, 3, and 4 passed. The representatives of students opposed passing number four. It basically talks about sustainability. Andrew did his presentation about integration into the strategic plan, and it was wonderful but here is what the recommendation says. And JPB approved this. This basically says that they recommend that JPB collaborate with JCES to identify interim steps before a new plan is made in 2024. They don't want to open this discussion because they are afraid that if we open it up to add things, then more groups will want to add things. They don't want to have a campus-wide discussion to do that. Olivia and I oppose this because. It is disheartening in a sense. It will be three years before we talk about this again. This is just a recommendation; Gow will make the final decision. If you would like to speak, I will take notes and bring those concerns up at the meeting.

1. Ericson: it is underwhelming, and I was disappointed with how they decided to go. But I don't think that this is over yet. JCES and JPB can work together to make this work regardless of if it is in the plan or not.



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- v. I did meet with Betsy Morgan to talk about Respondus. And to do that, I had to learn about the contract. It expires in June of this year. It goes out for bid soon, and that means that it isn't an independent decision that UWL makes. It is the other schools who have Respondus as well. This is five other UW schools in this decision as well. There is a group of people will listen to other options and they will meet to discuss a pricing deal if they go through this. A student will be allowed to be in this group, but it hasn't been formalized yet. It is going to be a review session of their options before June.
- vi. Clear up some misinformation that provost Morgan gave me. So, lockdown browser allows you to not go on internet. The monitor function is the one with the camera and noise, and it does not access or collect data. It doesn't run in the background of your computer. The idea that cheating has stayed the same isn't true. We also talked about Zoom exams, which is where the class takes the exam with cameras on. Another option is Respondus conference tool, but it is brand new. Kristin hasn't tested it yet. It is basically like Zoom. I am not sure about blurred backgrounds because I know that you don't want to show your professors your personal living spaces. It was a really great conversation. If your professor has a policy where you have a flag on an exam and automatically zeros you out, you can appeal and there has to be due diligence. They can't do that. You have a right to appeal your case. You can check out the academic misconduct tab on the website.
 - 1. Zwettler: Thanks for taking time to meet with Provost Morgan and clear up those misconceptions. I know we will be talking about that resolution later. And will work on that according with that new information.
 - 2. Wiza: I did reach out to other campuses in regard to this issue, so there is more information to come.
- b. **Vice President:** Olivia Ahnen
 - i. Sunday trash pickup! Meet by clock tower at 1pm. Remember it is daylight savings so set your clocks correctly! We have never really done anything as cohesive group so we can actually get together.
 - ii. Thanks to those with their cameras on during the guest speaker. I don't care if you have it on for the rest of the meeting, but it is nice to show them that we are listening.
- c. **Director of Staff:** Faith Fisher
 - i. Mainly just working on the Women of Color scholarship. Holly sent out some nice graphics today so hopefully we can get those out for the rest of the week.
- d. **State Affairs Director:** Grant Mathu
 - i. The vaccination center is opening on campus, and that has the county and state working together. Students aren't generally eligible, but they did say that 500 professors and faculty will be vaccinated soon. As for students for vaccines, the department of health has a vaccine registry. Link is in the chat and they tell you when you can make an appointment.
- e. **Local Affairs Director:** Amy Schweiner
 - i. The city's climate action plan steering committee has two more workshops. I can get you information if interested. It is like our strategic plan but for the city and county.



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- f. **Inclusivity Director:** Camoya Evans
- g. **Public Relations Director:** Holly Korfmacher
 - i. Just continue to support and share the women of color scholarship.
- h. **Sustainability Director:** Jake Myers
 - i. Next green fund meeting on Monday!
- VII. Advisor Reports
 - a. Burke: I am just doing what I can to help support Cate and Olivia on their initiatives. As I settle in, my calendar will settle down. If you want me to join a meeting or such, I am happy to do so after these first few weeks. Send me an email and invite me. I will be at SUFAC on Monday, so I am starting to work these meetings in. I will be there on Sunday and Emerson will come as well. If you need anything, let me know!
- VIII. Committee & Organizational Reports
 - a. Zwettler: Free speech has a day and time for mayoral debate: It will be March 25th at 6pm. A survey will be coming out for question submission for the candidates. There will be a live component for questions as well.
 - b. Cayo: The campus climate survey has over a thousand people. Please fill it out. SUFAC didn't meet this week. Also, tomorrow Transform is putting on an event tomorrow at 6pm. If you want more information, please let me know because there is a little care package that goes with it.
 - c. Fisher: I will be meeting with faculty senate tomorrow so if anyone has anything you want me to bring up to them, I can do that. Let me know.
- IX. Unfinished Business
 - a. **SA2021-037**
 - i. Byrne: This is the resolution from the discussion, specifically the Respondus monitor function. I am going to move that we table this, given the updates from Cate until we are able to discuss more.
 - ii. Unanimous agreement to table.
- X. New Business
 - a. **SA2021-038**
 - i. Cayo: As I'm sure y'all know, Wisconsin representatives are targeting trans athletes. If this were to pass, it will bar trans women from participating in women and girls' sports. It would go a long way if we were to disapprove of this. As a campus with a lot of trans and queer folks, it would mean a lot.

Byrne: Is there something that we can do to support it further?

Cayo: For the sake of this resolution, getting rid of the two-week rule would be great. Additionally, on your own time, messaging at your representatives will do a lot. Realistically, governor will veto it if it makes it to his desk, but it shouldn't even be a question.

Zwettler: I support this, and I want it to go forwards as quick as possible. I'm glad KC and Cate have done this. I like the part that says that we shouldn't allow bills of any time like this.



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Cayo: I get that you all support It as a whole, but are there any specific changes?

Wiza: I think that it is important that we continue to have these conversations because it is threatening for students at UWL and other UW systems along with K-12 schools.

- ii. 2-week rule is removed unanimously
- iii. Resolution passes with one abstention

b. SA2021-039

- i. Mathu: This is pretty straightforward; it hits on what Billings was saying. Gov has put forward a budget that looks great for us, but the legislation can take it out. Other schools may do the same thing, passing a resolution arguing for their own projects, so we want to get this out soon. It's not too long to read it through. We tried to do it in a positive and nonpartisan way. Any suggestions?

XI. Discussion

a. Earth Day

- i. Ericson: I have been brainstorming maybe an outdoor movie at the football field, maybe The Lorax or Wall-e. Want to do something for Earth day, but with COVID it is hard. Just start planning now.

Cayo: If we do an outdoor movie, we can partner with CAB because they have a big projector thing.

Byrne: Environmental studies department and Richard Frost are hosting a marsh clean up again, on April 24 or 25.

Ericson: I think it would be great because people would actually show up but I think that we could have some sort of an educational aspect as well.

Burke: We need to have a solid COVID plan in order to get anything approved.

Cayo: National parks have virtual tours going on online, that isn't really a group thing, I guess.

Ericson: Green fund has a video coming too that maybe we could premiere then.

Fisher: Can we make plant things? Or is that too much to have an activity?

Ericson: That would be fun. Maybe talk to botany club?

XII. Announcements

- a. Cayo: Fill out the campus climate survey. Spread scholarship infographics!
- b. Evans: If you do win a gift card, please respond to the email!
- c. Conway: There was a hate crime on Viterbo's campus today. They are having a protest tomorrow at 12:30 if anyone is interested.

XIII. Adjournment

- a. 7:56