



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–LA CROSSE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

2244 THE U 1705 BADGER STREET LA CROSSE, WI 54601 (608) 785-8775

Student Senate Agenda

Date: **Wednesday, October 21st, 2020**

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

- I. Call to Order
 - a. 6:01
- II. Roll Call
- III. Consent Agenda
 - a. Approval of Agenda
 - b. Approval of Minutes
- IV. Guest Speakers
 - a. Brad Pfaff
 - i. Pfaff: I am a candidate for state senate, in this district including the city of La Crosse with about 180,000 people. I am running because I believe that we can do better. There is too much division in Madison, and they are driving people apart and creating unnecessary divisions. I want to tip my hat to all of you. This isn't an easy year. These situations are unprecedented. I congratulate you for your leadership role and I ask for you to consider inviting me back to continue to keep talking with you hopefully as a state senator to hear your stories. I believe that higher education is important. It is a large investment for the betterment of the state. I want to make it more affordable. In order to do that, it takes budget priorities in Madison. It is also important that we encourage other areas. I would like to work with you when it comes to internships, job trainings and other things like that so that as a state and with the private sector, we can find good opportunities for our students. I want to hear ideas for a smooth the transition from high school to college. We want to make sure that students graduate in 4 years with a bachelor's degree we want to make sure that there are opportunities for college credit in high school. I would be happy to take questions, but first, I want to remind you to vote on November 3rd, or early voting, absentee ballots.

Ericson: I am passionate about sustainability and the climate crisis. In La Crosse, we have seen a lot of representation of people's interest in climate issues through protests by all groups of people. Can you speak to how you will address that in your state senate role?

Pfaff: Excellent question thank you! Climate change is real, and we need to deal with it. Number one- listen to science. Lead and don't be afraid. There is the potential for economic development in a sustainable way. I worked for our state government and travelled around to see it all. We can sequester carbon in our farm fields, put renewable energy sources on barns. We make a lot of food in our processing facilities. We can capture energy in that food processing and put that into the grid. Work with the agriculture equipment industry to make their products more fuel efficient. We are an engineering and manufacturing state. We know how to do this. We can come together and overcome those who say that we can't do it. Make sure our homes, have efficient options in roofing and construction. For example, the windows in dorms, construction of buildings, to



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–LA CROSSE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

2244 THE U 1705 BADGER STREET LA CROSSE, WI 54601 (608) 785-8775

make sure that everything is as energy efficient as possible. We need to provide incentives to make sure industries are operating sustainably. Even insurance companies are very interested, and we just need to work together. Avoiding the issue of climate change and saying it's not real is just avoiding the problems all together. Ask the farmers in Vernon county where the flooding has been awful the last 3 out of 5 years if it is real. I believe in science, technology, and engineering. I believe in you. All the processes that we can do but there are opportunities to do more. I want to talk to you more about this Andrew, but in the interest of time, I will stop there.

Ericson: There are a lot of cows here in Wisconsin and we know about dairy's contribution to climate change. How do you balance decreasing carbon emissions while maintaining dairy farmers' interests?

Pfaff: It can be done through science, research, food nutrition. We can change what we feed and expect from our animals. We can do more in terms of application of animal waste in a way that replenishes the soil. Recapture methane. I want to be able to find balance and work within the marketplace economy. I think there are ways to make sure that we can have animal agriculture and continue to move forward to leave this Earth better than what we found it. When I worked for the state, I was asked to serve on the climate change committee. Unfortunately, that was cut short, but I hope to work with them in the future to make sure we are sustainable.

Zwettler: Students struggle to pay bills when they are working. I looked at your website and you stress the importance of fixing the student debt crisis. I guess I am wondering how you plan on doing that.

Pfaff: I don't have all the answers. I want to work with you. I want to advocate that the federal government needs to give the flexibility to refinance student loans. I want to work to drive down the cost of attendance. I want to figure out what we can do more of so students can get a bachelor's degree in 4 years. I know that what I said doesn't solve the issue. But I know that the Governor's task force digs into this issue that I want to join as a senator.

Navoichick: If elected, how do you plan to work across the aisle?

Pfaff: When you get elected, you are working for all your constituents. All the people you represent. Not just those who voted for you. There are things that rise above the ideology of a party and that is the fact that you are elected to serve the best interests of all the people. I will work with everyone. If they want to come forward with making healthcare and higher education affordable, transportation, economy, or anything to better our state, I am interested, and I will work with everyone. But you have to let them know that. Have an open door policy. Have strong beliefs and let them know that you realize that you represent everyone. In order to get anything done, you can't ignore the other side. You may not be able



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–LA CROSSE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

2244 THE U 1705 BADGER STREET LA CROSSE, WI 54601 (608) 785-8775

to get exactly what you want, but at least you will get something by just working together. You won't always get a touchdown; you just need to move the ball down the field. I have respect for those who serve in their seat and I want to work with everyone.

L'Ecuyer: I think it's great that education is important to you because it is important to me. My mom is a special ed teacher and when I go home to Missouri, I am a preschool teacher. Teachers play a great role in education, but they aren't treated well, and the unions are necessary to fight for their rights. The right to work act has decreased that ability and I was wondering where you stand.

Pfaff: I am proud to be endorsed by the Wisconsin and local education association. And I do understand the importance of educators because my wife is a teacher. We need to recognize how important education is to our future. It doesn't just allow us to grow as humans and a society, but it is an economic tool. One of the best investments we can make is to invest in education- short- and long-term returns. More money needs to be put in the classroom. We need to make sure that funding is being sent to the classroom. We need to close the achievement gap. I have been meeting with a lot of people and they all say that the zip code shouldn't matter. Every student should succeed. Special ed is a hard job so thank your mom for all her hard work. We need to make sure that there's money for head start, pre k has come a long way but we can do more. We need to look at the education budget and give those areas the funding they deserve.

L'Ecuyer: thank you for noticing the head start program because I lot of people don't realize how great that is.

Wheat: I am going to be a future educator. Hopefully next year by this time, I will have a classroom of my own and I am happy to hear your plans about education, but I am wondering how you will bridge the achievement gap.

Pfaff: First thing I am going to do to close the achievement gap is to acknowledge that there is one. Bring parents, educators, to the table to listen and educate me on this issue. Next, we need to put the resources into it so that it can be fixed. Paraphrasing what Governor Evers said: we need to connect the dots and realize that money put in here will grow other areas- economy, industry and so much more. I don't have the answers, but I know how important it is. Invite me back next year, I hope I will be a senator and be able to talk and learn from you, your students, and your colleagues. There isn't a simple answer to your question, but I believe that everyone needs to sit at the table.

Cayo: I was wondering about your action plan related to COVID 19.



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–LA CROSSE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

2244 THE U 1705 BADGER STREET LA CROSSE, WI 54601 (608) 785-8775

Pfaff: We need leadership. National and state governments have failed us. The state senate hasn't met since April. Too many people have lost their lives or jobs, seen their hours cut back. Too many families have struggled with childcare. Too many people aren't able to see their loved ones because there still is a pandemic because there is no leadership. First, we need to stop the spread; I know you all know this but wash your hands, social distance and wear a mask. For some reason wearing masks has become political and ideological when it really shouldn't be. We need to realize that we can't walk away from science. It will take all of us working together to stop the spread of this virus. There is strong science, there will be a vaccine. Our ancestors during WWI and WWII they came together. They bought bonds to come together to stop the enemy. Our leaders have split us apart. There may be things that I do that you won't understand or agree with, but I want us to come together. Politics of division does no one any good.

Xiong: In light of the recent news, we see a lot of issues of police brutality. I know we have a large popularity of Hmong folks and other people of color here in La Crosse. What would you do to amplify the voices of the marginalized?

Pfaff: I believe in an open-door policy and welcoming people to come to the table and talk. Being civil. I want to make sure that I am a senator for all the people of this district. There are things that I don't know and need to learn. I work with and hear from community advocacy education and law enforcement officials. I want to make sure the law enforcement agencies get the money they need to have the training so that people have equal opportunities, and we stop seeing these incidents. There is a lot I need to learn but I want to be able to work with and listen to everyone.

Ott: Partisan gerrymandering is an issue, especially in Wisconsin. The supreme court said that it is the job of the state and local governments to deal with it. The current make-up of our senate makes that difficult. What do you think needs to be done?

Pfaff: As a state legislature, I don't want the legislature to have a part of this. Do it like Iowa, where they have a nonpartisan board that draws the lines. The representatives shouldn't be able to choose their constituents, it should be the other way around- the constituents should choose their representatives. We all have to live with this for the next ten years. Going back 232 years, James Madison and our founders would be disgusted that is happening, I want citizen input. I want the people to be at the table. Look at the model in Iowa and do what they did. I think that we need balanced districts in which people have to compete and run for office. I agree with what you said, What we have right now is wrong and I will not support maps like those drawn in 2011.



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–LA CROSSE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

2244 THE U 1705 BADGER STREET LA CROSSE, WI 54601 (608) 785-8775

Mathu: You served on county board and have been active on local governments. I was wondering, with these experiences, where do you stand on tax levy limits? What would you do if elected?

Pfaff: That was put in place recently- for those who don't know, a levy limit is saying that a local government can only raise so much money through taxes. It makes them be as efficient as possible with their money. That is a good thing, but we need to make sure that we recognize the facts that we have a rising population and aging public infrastructure. I believe that we need to make sure that we are stewards of taxpayers' dollars. We need to work closely with local units of government and recognize what is happening. It isn't easy to be a representative right now, with COVID and the economy looking like it is. And because of that, I think that the president needs to bring the senate and house together to pass another CARES bill to get money back to our workers and local units of government. We need to recognize that the local governments are being asked to do a lot in response to the pandemic and they need funding. To answer your question, Grant, we need to use any tools we put in place. Recognize growth in community and depreciation of public infrastructure.

I have a request- vote for who ever you want. I hope you do vote for me, but you should at least vote. It is your civic duty and right. If I get the opportunity to be elected, I would love to come back and hopefully meet in person to discuss things again. You are an important leadership position and I wish you good luck with this semester and the rest of your education.

V. General Student Body Open Forum

a. Diversity and Inclusion presentation- Camoya Evans

- i. Evans: I'm Camoya, I use she/her pronouns, and this won't be long. I just want to go over a quick training PowerPoint with you. We will begin with UWL's Land Recognition Statement. What I wanted to talk to you about today is cultural humility. The process is best used to self-evaluate and to be critical of the way you see the world. This is what it really means. It may seem like you never have done this but activities like a privilege circle and identity wheel allows you to see what you have. And that is just the start of your social justice journey. The first step. You have to understand how your identities interact with one another. It is something our campus does a lot of. I know personally, I have been a part of these activities a lot. We do that well, but I know that the big thing that is lacking is something that a lot of people forget is that they forget to continue. It isn't just a simple "yes I know and understand" but we need to continue to evaluate how those elements of your privilege affect your relationship impacts interactions with people of other identities. For an example, there were a lot of conversations around police brutality and black lives matter this summer. For some people, that sounded like "I'm not racist because I don't agree with what is happening". But that isn't enough. Just saying that isn't enough. Acknowledging your privilege and then saying that you aren't racist isn't enough. Binary ways of conceptualizing these issues (good /bad or racists/not racists) are one of the main parts of what prevents us from seeing them. Look at how you are benefiting, contributing, and enabling the system. That is super uncomfortable. Saying that



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–LA CROSSE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

2244 THE U 1705 BADGER STREET LA CROSSE, WI 54601 (608) 785-8775

you aren't racist isn't true because you do enable the system to operate the way that it does. This is the continuing aspect of cultural humility. What does this mean for your position? It should be everyone's job, even though I am the inclusivity director, everyone needs to be inclusive. Every resolution, every meeting, every problem you look at, it is important that you need to evaluate how you operate on this campus, so you are successfully representing everybody. I think that we can have a small group breakout room to think about our privilege and how to hold yourself accountable.

- ii. Discussion: Think about your identities and discuss how to continue to actively involve social justice within your roles as senators. As well as how you can hold yourselves accountable for continuing to be critical of the way you see the world.

Ericson: I think that going out to try and find issues before they become national news. I'm not sure how you do that but being proactive is one of the best ways to do things as a senator and think about how justice interacts with the world.

Xiong: I know for sure that my community and constituents are raised in a homophobic community so for my role personally, use my PGP's and have the conversations that need to be discussed about gender roles

Evans: Especially as a diversity senator I'm representing these people so it is easy to think "I am already good" but you really need to realize that there are other issues related to inclusivity and dive into the issues and have the conversations that need to be had.

Zwettler: going back to what Brad Pfaff was saying, we need to represent everyone. As senators, it is our job to listen and understand what everyone says and where they are coming from. We need to listen to them and see what we can do to help them

Fisher: Personally, I have an interesting perspective because I am adopted, and my parents are white. They have privileges, and that I don't have that stuff. I have some privilege and I have been able to do things, lots of opportunities. Like Camoya said, being aware and talking about this is hard. I know a lot of adoptees don't understand, but when you have to discuss how your white parent are against your own rights, and need to advocate for your community, it can be tricky but important.

Cayo: For me, a lot of my interaction with social justice movement is within the queer community. In queer spaces there is a lot of need to call people out and in, microaggressions need to be addressed right away, even if confronting your friends is the first, hard step for being a good ally. An important piece of advice is to make a space for black and brown voices. Just listen and do research later if you are told that you did something wrong. Marginalized people must be tired of explaining their identities to people. They aren't educators. Just listen to what they have



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–LA CROSSE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

2244 THE U 1705 BADGER STREET LA CROSSE, WI 54601 (608) 785-8775

to say and Google it later.

Evans: what everyone said is right on the point. Thank you, KC for bringing up allyship. With the self-evaluation, with trying to help as much as you can, but you need to be a good ally. Not to take up space. This summer there were a lot of protests and there were a lot of white people on the front lines and the support is good and you want to help but sometimes you have to reel it back and continue to question everything while letting those who are marginalized take the lead.

VI. Officer Reports

a. **President:** Cate Wiza

- i. You need to attend your committee meeting. If you have a schedule conflict, just send Olivia and I an email and we can work with you. If you don't show up, they can't do their jobs because there is a quota in order for voting to happen.
- ii. Get your flu shot! There are options at the student health center, where they don't take insurance, but Walgreens does- just make sure you bring your prescription card.
- iii. Early voting starts this week! Quick and easy! Drop off absentee ballots.

b. **Vice President:** Olivia Ahnen

- i. If you can't make it to a meeting, Facebook message or email me. Also, if you came late, and missed attendance, talk to Cate and not me because it is her job to keep track of all that.

c. **Director of Staff:** Faith Fisher

- i. A lot of people in the surveys wanted to know if they can get a student list. CVA and college of science and health told me that they won't give a list. CASSH said that their senators get a list.
- ii. Wiza: For the CVA, it's best to go to the clubs and get a list from each of them. Make your own list. Yes, you won't get everyone, but you will get a lot. Or show up to those org meetings and let people know that you are there for them and that you represent them.
- iii. Fisher: Email and stay in contact with your deans! I had a meeting with the dean of CASSH and he said that they would like you to come directly to him to talk. Also, do people want me to create language to send to their dean and then you can use that? If you want to do that, email me.
- iv. Camoya and I are working on the fundraising for women of color scholarship. We have a plan and know what we are going to do but I will let her talk about that

d. **State Affairs Director:** Grant Mathu

- i. Make sure to vote!
- ii. Friday, 12:00 there is a march to the polls. Go from the union to the city hall to vote early.

e. **Local Affairs Director:** Amy Schwiener

- i. Early voting at city clerk's office until the 30th!

f. **Inclusivity Director:** Camoya Evans

- i. Diversity senators- we have a meeting with vice chancellor Stewart on Monday. If you can't make it, send me your questions. If you want to join, email me and



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–LA CROSSE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

2244 THE U 1705 BADGER STREET LA CROSSE, WI 54601 (608) 785-8775

- you can come as well.
- ii. Women of color scholarship, we have an idea of a starting point. It is open and if anyone wants to help or just want to know how fundraising works, this is a good place to start. Please let me know
 - g. **Public Relations Director:** Holly Korfmacher
 - i. Social media content about the election and voting. Any ideas for her or anything to promote, send it to her.
 - ii. She is going to decorate the office so if you want to help, let her know
 - h. **Sustainability Director:** Jake Myers
 - i. If you have ideas for green fund, meetings Mondays 2-3.
- VII. Advisor Reports
- a. Ringgenberg: Not much today! I will answer any questions though. Not much has changed since last week. Cate should be applauded for being on channel 8.
 - b. The COVID numbers are good and the students seem to be good. Hopefully that continues.
 - c. Dr. Vitalliano will be here next week so enjoy that opportunity to ask him good questions.
- Cayo: theoretical question- reached out to cashier's office asking to waive the late fee for tuition payments with all that is happening. Is there anything we can do? Like writing a resolution?
- Ringgenberg: you can express interest in the issue and talk to Dr. Hetzel. Bottom line, it is up to him.
- VIII. Committee Reports
- IX. Organizational Reports
- a. Xiong: side note- make a mini thing, since Halloween is coming up, about "these costumes are okay, these aren't" and here is what we are wearing.
- Ahnen: Maybe you should get in contact with Holly.
- b. Cayo: Allyship training at the pride center on Friday! Check Instagram and Facebook for zoom info.
- X. Unfinished Business
- XI. New Business
- XII. Discussion
- XIII. Announcements
- a. Wiza: I am proud of all of you for being a senator and serving and participating in all this stuff during a pandemic. I see the hard work and I recognize it and take this weekend for yourself and remember that you are doing a great job.
 - b. Cayo: Link in the chat for a voter caravan. I know I mentioned that a little bit ago. Saturday. Driving thru disenfranchised areas of La Crosse. If you want to contribute your vehicle and time, fill out this form that I put the link for in the chat.
 - c. Zwettler: COVID policy research committee meets tomorrow at 12:30. Reach out to me with issues!
- XIV. Adjournment