



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, December 9th, 2020**

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

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Consent Agenda
 - a. Approval of Agenda
 - b. Approval of Minutes
- IV. Guest Speakers
 - a. Jill Billings
 - i. Billings: Thanks for inviting me! I know it is getting close to finals, so I won't take too much time. I just wanted to stop by and say hi and ask for your help. I am excited to be elected again after being in the position for 9 years. My district includes all La Crosse universities, so I represent you. I really appreciate the value of higher education in our community. Hopefully, we can meet in the future again, but for now, I want to highlight where we are in the legislature with the budget. We have a 2-year budget here in Wisconsin and we are in the beginning part of that. Departments have all put their stuff together and the governor is doing listening sessions. I think we have to really advocate hard for prairie springs part two this year. We had a healthy budget last time, and Evers created that. This year with COVID, I am concerned that I think that there are some people who would like to just look at renovations instead of new buildings. The governor is doing one of his listening sessions on higher education on next week. If you could check out that, it would be great to have students there, advocating for Prairie Springs part two. This information is all on his website, but it is Wednesday, the 16th at 6pm over Zoom. The way these go, they are grouped by their subject, for example, higher education. They start with the governor talking about what his goals are and then break into small rooms. There is a governor's advisor or staff member in each room to take ideas down and report back to him. If you aren't swamped with finals, please get on that meeting, raise your hand right away and get the word in that we need our science building at UWL that we have been waiting for over a decade for. It is important to our school. We have rising student enrollment and rising number of science majors. The old building is falling apart. Any stories, information, or anything, please share that! Also, most of our majors stay in Wisconsin, so this building is a good investment for Wisconsin in general. We want the governor to include this project in his budget. After those sessions, he will make the budget and give it to the legislature in February. At that point it is in the hands of the joint finance committee. I talked with the committee last night and they know the process so that we can all be weighing in equally.
I am on the building commissions committee and I am the chair of the higher education subcommittee. I will be bringing in Senator Pfaff and we are going to fight. It is going to be a tight budget this year. After the swearing-in January, and I'm not sure how that will look, I want to be on that committee again because I think it is important. I am working as well on a clean water bill and a bill on safe



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harbor for kids who have been human trafficked; however, a lot of the beginning of the session is about the budget- not a lot of movement on legislation. I just hope that we get a good budget through.

Wiza: With the pandemic, we can't go to the capitol and lobby in person. That is a challenge for us, so how do we navigate virtual lobbying and what are the best practices for that?

Billings: We are in the re-organization process and trying to figure all this out. Certainly, contact the governor's office through email or call and express your opinion. That is always good to do. Also, attend the meeting on the 16th. Listening sessions would normally be held in person. But it will be different this year. After that, keep up with emails, phone calls and then start contacting members of certain committees. If you as a group would like to get a meeting with a committee, that would be worthwhile even if you just talk to staff. I would invite members to come look at Cowley. That is something we can organize through the Provost or Chancellor. We could also possibly do a virtual tour. Bob Hetzel has some photos and such so he might be able to throw a video together. We could make a video with students comments on the need for a new building. I've toured it a couple times now and I know how badly we need this. Just be creative on reaching out. The important thing is to the constant stream of contact. Send petitions, presentations, get them in a Zoom meeting, anything so they know that you are there. Get the word across of the importance.

Ericson: There's been a system-wide petition that has formed for the divestment from fossil fuels by the UW system. We have been struggling to find any info about their amount or endowments or anything. Do you possibly know anything about that stuff?

Billings: A few years back, when I was on the state buildings commission, I asked what we are doing for renewable aspects on campuses. I found out that Governor Walker didn't want to spend money there, so that line item was left blank. When Evers was elected, he allocated funding for those areas. I know that most renewable things on campus were paid for by students. People always talked about it, even touring students would ask and here we were, not funding anything. I was happy when he put some money in that line item, because that is a value to many people, and we aren't doing a great job right now. I don't know the foundation part of that, it is outside of my area of expertise. I could do some digging for you.

Ericson: We are just concerned that some part of the UW system's endowment is invested in fossil fuel companies and we don't want them to do that, we are fighting for divestment from those companies. In order to make a convincing argument, we need values on how much it currently is.



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Billings: I can have my staff take a look at that. SWIV will be able to take a look at all that and get back to me. I think that this is a great initiative. If you want to contact my office, that would be great. See what we can do on that.

Zwettler: Regarding the tuition freeze, do you have a sense of how much longer that will be here, repealed in 2 years or if it will just be repealed in 2023?

Billings: I won't give too much about that. It would be interesting to being that up at the open forum on the 16th. I am not sure what the governor is going to do on that. I talked to him a few weeks ago, but that was mainly about the parking ramp. We didn't talk about tuition freeze. When he proposes the budget, we are going to have to see. We are in a different situation now, due to rainy day funds and such. That has been built up by balanced budgets coming in better than suspected. With COVID though, is going to be tough next year. It is going to be tough and also tough to make predictions.

Zwettler: If the state won't fund the new Prairie Springs, could students have the option to fund it themselves? Because with the tuition freeze, that would be hard.

Billings: There has been debate about that. I have suggested a study on what is done in the funding buildings. Is it fair that a class can vote yes on a project and then the compel students for years in the future to still pay for it? I want to know how much is currently being funded that way. We just need to learn more and look at things deeper to make better decisions for the future. I'm thinking on that right now, and a lot will be considered. It's just a matter of if the money is going to be there. After the recession, we delayed projects for years because they wanted to build up the rainy-day fund. This let to not much being invested. I have toured some really bad buildings and I hope that we can get this one fixed! I always love to hear from you all. Contact my office if you need anything else!

V. General Student Body Open Forum

VI. Officer Reports

a. **President:** Cate Wiza

- i. Surge testing has been extended to the 22nd. Encourage everyone to get tested!
- ii. I sent emails out to all of you with information about the UC director and violence prevention. There are student senate specific times for UC: Monday the 14th, 3:40-4:30, Tuesday the 15th same time. Similarly, for the violence prevention specialist interviews: December 11th at 2pm, Monday the 14th at 2:00 and Wednesday the 16th at 2:00 also. VPS also includes an open presentation at 10am.
- iii. CAB is looking for videos from students highlighting their experience this semester. I will send the link after the meeting.
- iv. Vitaliano has an alcohol task force and would like a student voice; send me an email and I will get you involved. It is led by the Dean of Students and Lisa Weston of res life. It will be a low key, small commitment meeting, they just want a student's perspective.

b. **Vice President:** Olivia Ahnen



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- i. Submit your feedback for our meeting set up. Please be honest about it all- you won't hurt any of our feelings.
 - ii. I sent out an email today to those who haven't submitted a website bio or headshot so please do that ASAP. Staff will be updating that over break so we want to have that done.
 - c. **Director of Staff:** Faith Fisher
 - i. I met with Jenna, who works at scholarship foundation and we talked about doing a crowd founding event for the WOC scholarship. Once the applications for that go through, we will start working with her to get content and reach out to the public to see if they are interested in donating.
 - d. **State Affairs Director:** Grant Mathu
 - i. Legislative affairs committee met with Billings talk about budget, tuition freeze and what we can do to advocate for infrastructure improvements.
 - ii. On 12/16, the governor and lieutenant governor will be taking public comments on education. If you want to hop on, please let me know and I can get that information to you.
 - e. **Local Affairs Director:** Amy Schweiner
 - i. City council meeting tomorrow. The only major things are that they approve grant for body cams on La Crosse Police Department. Also, extending the emergency order for 180 days which essentially means that city buildings will be closed in person for 180 more days.
 - f. **Inclusivity Director:** Camoya Evans
 - i. I have been talking about campus climate survey. I got a few emails about it from students about it. Basically, the UW system mandates that all campuses must produce the survey in the spring semester. It will be sent out in the spring: we are looking at February 15th- March 30th. Questions will be pertaining to campus life, classroom climate and stuff like that. Senator Cayo is the student rep for that, so feel free to ask them or email.
 - g. **Public Relations Director:** Holly Korfmacher
 - i. Next week I will post a finals graphic and over break I will post a few happy holiday things.
 - ii. This is more an update for the executive cabinet: I was on a call with the campus police and I have an update since some parents would like to see some blue light systems off campus, but the blue lights have only been used twice since they were installed. This is a good thing, since it shows that we are a safe campus but it also means that it wouldn't make sense to install them elsewhere. And if we did, we would need to work with the city and that would be difficult.
 - h. **Sustainability Director:** Jake Myers
 - i. Have a good week!
- VII. Advisor Reports Advisor Reports
 - a. Ringgenberg: There will be no late-night breakfast this semester, but we will have a little surprise to be picked up during dinner hours at any dining location on the 16th. I would also like to just reinforce what Cate said: The director search means that you are picking the person who will be joining you on Wednesday nights. Go to these forums and give your voice so they pick someone you feel can do the job. That's all I really have- good luck on finals and we will be excited for your return in February.



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Ericson: I have been to a few open forums and there was the opportunity to provide feedback, but I am wondering what student senate has in the form of say in this matter.

Ringgenberg: I hope that Olivia and Cate will be talking with Vitaliano and giving him your opinions that he will consider.

Wiza: Yes, we do provide feedback. And I relay that to him, and he seems receptive to it

Xiong: That is good because even if we don't make the decision, if we are able to communicate with those who do, they will think about us when they decide.

VIII. Committee Reports

- a. Ericson: JCES met last Friday and we are working on a couple things: the first is making an argument to get sustainability into the next strategic plan. We also talked about hiring a possible social media and advertising specialist for the Green Fund.
- b. Cayo: The Title IX committee is looking at making the policy more transparent, they asked me as a student for ideas about what would make it easier to understand. If any of you all have an idea, please let me know so I can let them know. I am also a student on campus climate survey committee and in other years, we have given out incentives, like an iPad or something, but that seems a little callous in light of the pandemic so we were thinking about maybe a gift card for food or something? Please let me know what ideas would make sense in the light of the pandemic.
- c. Schauberger: Also at legislative affairs, we talked about what if the best way to get in touch with representatives and possibility to reaching out to legislative affairs committees at other campuses to do that. We want to get Prairie Springs part 2 done.
- d. Strzyzewski: I am on textbook rental committee and they had some information on the \$90 refund and we also discussed the students who aren't on campus who need to ship their books back and pay for that themselves. Something we were talking about for the future is virtual textbooks and whether or not students would like that.

IX. Organizational Reports

X. Unfinished Business

a. SA2021-028

- i. Cayo: SUFAC was tasked with deciding which large grants would make it this far and this one did. It passed through senate last year and there were complications, so it is back now. If we pass this now, it will never come back. If you have any questions, Senator Ericson or I can answer them.

Ericson: First information point: I found the original author of the grant and reached out to him. He said that he found out that if the green fund didn't fund this project, it wouldn't get done. Also, I found out that every time a conventional light bulb is replaced, it costs \$50. On top of that saved cost, the LED bulbs will save 5,000 kilowatt hours- \$500 in savings for energy; but the ROI won't be seen for years. I would like to start a discussion to see if we think that this is something that students should be funding. What I'm thinking about is that most of the costs aren't related to energy savings, it is going to the poles and such. Is this a good use of student funds?



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Zwettler: I believe the green fund is capped, yes? So if this doesn't approve, would the green fund be over the cap and if so, what would happen?

Ericson: Currently, we have \$115,000 and around \$55,000 is added each semester. We had a \$40,000 grant pass already. If we don't pass this, we will end up at around \$130,000 next semester and won't hit the cap.

Cayo: Although we may not be reaching the cap, there have been years in which there were no green fund grants and that could happen next semester and we need to be mindful of that. SUFAC was also concerned about whether this was something on which we should be spending money. Personally, I want this to get done and I don't want it to come back to senate. They won't do this without us and even though I don't think that we should be spending money on aesthetics, it should be done.

Ericson: The green fund should be advertised, maybe we add a section that they have to put signage to make sure that students and the green fund are recognized and that this wasn't something that the university did. Curious about what you think about putting signage and making that a stipulation the resolution.

- ii. Cayo: I am in favor of adding another whereas about signage. If we pass this, students should know. I would like to make a motion to add this.

Cayo: Dr. Larry, can we make the university pay for it?

Ringgenberg: I would have no issue with this especially since it isn't big money.

Wheat: Personally, I don't like how it says "under the condition that..." because that sounds really forceful. Is that something that we would be willing to change?

Ericson: I like this, and I think that they should be forced to do this as a stipulation for the money. I'd say that it is on purpose and maybe that is harsh but yeah, we kind of want to be.

Zwettler: I support that language as well. That is an essential part of this resolution. Expressing that we want to recognize that students are putting the money forward for this goal.

Document addition passes unanimously

- iii. Resolution passes with two abstentions

- XI. New Business
- XII. Discussion



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XIII. Announcements

- a. Ericson: Christmas is coming up so if you are looking for presents, try to make sustainable choices and shop at places that do that! Avoid plastic, go second hand and such. Lots of great small businesses in La Crosse that do this sort of thing.
- b. Cayo: Reminder that there are still scholarships on the website that you can apply for! And there's still money on CARES act so when you apply, say that you use it for rent/food, not tuition and it will practically be yours.
- c. Byrne: Do your SEIs and tell your friends to they are really important! Deadline is the 16th.

XIV. Adjournment