



Associated Students of the University of Washington

Legislative Steering Committee

October 22, 2025 | Husky Union Building 121 | 5:00 PM

The ASUW acknowledges the stewards of Coast Salish lands, the lands on which we currently sit, and the UW occupies. We acknowledge the original and current caretakers; Duwamish, Suquamish, Tulalip, and Muckleshoot nations and peoples.

[Join via Teams](#) | ASUW Legislative Steering Agendas and Minutes

Call to Order

Brandon calls this meeting to order at 5 pm.

Roll Call | 15 total. *11 voting. 7 quorum | # present (P). # excused (E). # absent (A).

P | *Chair, ASUW Director of Legislative Affairs - **Brandon Elliott**

P | *ASUW President - **Nandana Jaideep**

P | *ASUW Director of University Affairs - **Kate Lawson**

A | *ASUW Director of Diversity Efforts - **Valeria Zoe Perez-Leyva**

P | *ASUW Asian Student Commission Director - **Anya Saxena** (tardy)

P | *ASUW Senate Vice Speaker - **Joseph Riggio**

P | *ASUW Senator - **Jenna Miller**

P | *At-large member - **Dania G Cuevas Sandoval**

P | *At-large member - **Desire Santillano**

P | *At-large member - **Gavin B Cruz**

P | *At-large member - **Mahika Malladi**

P | ASUW Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs - **MJ Mencias**

P | Community Organizer - **Kaitlyn O'Connor**

P | GPSS Director of External Affairs - **Annika Peterson**

P | SAO Advisor to OGR - **Christina Coop**

Approval of the Agenda

MJ motions to approve.

Joseph seconds.

Agenda approved with unanimous consent. 8.o.o.

Approval of the Minutes

None.

Introductions

Brandon says the Legislative Steering Committee meets to review the Legislative Agenda that he has been researching and creating over the summer. He explains that the Legislative Agenda dictates ASUW's lobbying priorities at the state level. He asks everyone to introduce themselves.

Brandon introduces himself as a third-year student majoring in political science. He says he is the OGR Director of Legislative Affairs.

Kaitlyn introduces herself as a third-year student majoring in political science. She says she is the OGR Community Organizer.

Annika introduces herself as a second-year graduate student working on her master's degree in public administration. She says she is the GPSS Director of External Affairs. She explains, due to a conflict, the GPSS Senate Director will be taking over for her starting next week.

Zoe introduces herself as a first-year graduate student working on her master's degree in urban planning. She says she is the GPSS Senate Director.

Desiree introduces herself as a second-year student majoring in psychology. She says she is an at-large member of the committee.

Gavin introduces himself as a first-year student majoring in public policy. He says he is an at-large member of the committee.

Joseph introduces himself as a fourth-year student majoring in political science, sociology, and LSJ. He says he is the Student Senate Vice Speaker.

Christina introduces herself as the Assistant Director of Membership and Organizations at the Student Activities Office.

Dania introduces herself as a third-year student majoring in biology. She says she is an at-large member of the committee.

Mahika introduces herself as a first-year student majoring in public policy and public service. She says she is an at-large member of the committee.

Ashwin introduces himself as a second-year student majoring in economics and data science. He says he is the ASUW Director of Internal Policy.

Towa introduces herself as a second-year student. She says she is not an official member of the committee, but she is an OGR intern.

MJ introduces herself as a first-year graduate student working on her master's in public policy and administration. She says she is the OGR Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs.

Nandana introduces herself as a fourth-year student majoring in economics and data science. She says she is the ASUW President.

Jenna introduces herself as the elected Student Senate representative to the committee.

Kaitlyn says **Kate** is having technical difficulties and cannot use her microphone on Teams.

Brandon says **Kate** is the ASUW Director of University Affairs and the liaison to OGR.

Legislative Agenda Drafting

Brandon explains what the Legislative Agenda (LA) is and how it guides ASUW lobbying efforts. He says that he has identified and researched around 14 priorities in addition to several position statements for the LA this year. He says the committee will have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss each priority.

- Draft 2025–2026 ASUW Legislative Agenda

Brandon reads Section 1, “Protect and Promote Access to Quality Education” aloud.

Brandon explains that the Washington College Grant was reduced by 10% last year. He says funding for crucial programs like Bridge Grants and the graduate student loan program. He adds that there was also a 1.5% cut across all higher education programs in the state.

Ashwin clarifies if the University is currently funded by 40% state support and 60% tuition.

Brandon says yes. He explains that in addition to the state pulling back more funding from the University every year, the state has also passed legislation putting a cap on how much the schools can raise tuition per year. He says this has resulted in a gap in the amount of funding the University has overall. He says this priority is reasserting that the University needs funding and higher education programs need more support.

Mahika asks if there is more disparity in funding for undergraduate or graduate students.

Brandon explains that undergraduates have typically benefited more from financial aid programs in the past. He adds that the state currently doesn't offer any non-loan options for graduate students. He says that issue is present on the GPSS LA, and ASUW will continue to support them during this upcoming legislative session.

Mahika asks what the justification behind cutting the graduate student funding options was.

Annika says she isn't sure.

Brandon reads Section 1, "Workforce Education Investment Account (WEIA)" aloud.

Brandon explains that WEIA was established by various leaders in higher education and the business sector in 2019. He says that WEIA was established primarily to fund the Washington College Grant. He explains, however, due to the state's recent debt, WEIA has been used to make up for losses and is being used for things it wasn't intended to be used for. He says it has been used for employee compensation and the UW Center for Behavioral Health and Learning. He explains that even though the cap for WEIA was increased, funding is actually not increasing for students because they are being used elsewhere. He explains that it is important for them to ensure that there is a portion of WEIA protected and required to be used specifically for programs like the Washington College Grant and the graduate student loan program.

Brandon reads Section 1, "Textbook Tax Exemption and Promotion of Open Educational Resources" aloud.

Brandon explains there was a Bill for this priority last year, House Bill 1751, to make course materials tax exempt. He says HB 1751 was unsuccessful due to the state's budget deficit. He explains, however, he has been floating around the idea of using WEIA funds to make up for the loss in revenue from tax exempt course materials.

Gavin asks if the tax exemption would specifically be for UW Bookstores or if it would also extend to private third parties.

Brandon explains this would attack all Washington State educational materials, not just UW Bookstores.

Brandon reads Section 1, "Research Funding" aloud.

Brandon explains that the Undergraduate Research Collective opened under the Office of Undergraduate Research recently, and their program provides a direct path for students to still do research in the face of recent budget cuts. He says they are also advocating for overall support for UW Medicine, since they are losing a lot of Medicaid funding that previously covered them.

Joseph says he knows a lot of cuts to research have come from STEM fields, but he asks if they have considered advocating against research cuts to programs in the College of Arts and Sciences as well.

Brandon agrees. He says with the Evans School having to scale back some concentrations because of cuts, he sees the importance of protecting research outside of STEM fields. He says he is open to adopting the language in this priority to include CAS research.

Brandon thanks SARVA and QSC for their longstanding efforts on this priority. He reads Section 2, “Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness” aloud.

Brandon explains that OGR achieved a big victory last year with the passage of Senate Bill 5355, which requires there to be a 24/7 sexual assault hotline on the back of student IDs. He adds that SB 5355 also prevents Universities from having survivors of sexual assault sign NDAs. He says, however, not all aspects of SB 5355 survived, and they will continue to advocate for the elements that were cut.

Jenna asks if **Brandon** would consider adding memoranda of understanding to this part of the LA.

Brandon says yes.

Mahika asks when the 24/7 hotline will be put on the back of student IDs.

Brandon says it should be going into effect next year.

Brandon reads Section 2, “Expanding Access to the Students Experiencing Homelessness Grant” aloud.

Brandon explains that he used to live in Poplar, where the UW Food Pantry is, and he saw the demand for the Food Pantry firsthand. He explains that he just had a meeting with Joel Anderson from WSAC, who informed him that Representative Leavitt will be running a bill to expand access to the students experiencing homelessness grant. He explains that there is a lot of data that backs this program up on its effectiveness and retention, which bolsters its reputation in the legislature.

Brandon explains that Section 2, “Post-Undergraduate Unemployment Exemptions,” was proposed by the Student Senate Chair, **Erick Jacobsen**.

Erick explains that he noticed that former, graduated UW student employees are not eligible for unemployment insurance because working for a university is exempt. He says non-students who worked for UW are eligible for unemployment insurance. He explains that it would not cost that much, because public universities only pay back

what is used by former employees instead of paying a lump sum for unemployment. He explains that on-campus employment is convenient and necessary for some students, and it should be covered.

Brandon echoes **Erick's** point. He adds that the RCW that makes former student-employees exempt has inequitable language detailing the age of students.

Brandon reads Section 3, "Supporting Students with Dependents" aloud.

Brandon explains that the discrepancy and how much the cap program provides as opposed to what the reality is of childcare was brought up by **Towa**. He adds that the last session featured a Bill that would have given priority class registration to students with dependents, but it was rejected. He says last year's sponsor will probably pursue this policy again.

Zoe asks about the number of students that have dependents.

Brandon explains that he will contact **Helen Garrett** from the registrar's office to confirm that figure.

Brandon reads Section 3, "Supporting Undocumented Students" aloud.

Brandon says he hasn't been able to fully research this as much as he wanted to, but he wants to see more notifications making undocumented students aware of whether or not they can apply for WAFSA.

Joseph asks if there have been any conversations about protecting personal identifiers of undocumented or immigration status students.

Brandon says yes. He explains that he originally had it in this section, but after some conversations, they concluded it would be better to keep it broad and defend against all protection of student data, regardless of immigration status.

Brandon reads Section 3, "Supporting Financial Literacy Education Initiatives" aloud.

Brandon says that since **Ashwin** just added this, he can't fully speak on it.

Brandon reads Section 4, "Campus Decarbonization" aloud.

Brandon explains that last year, the UW State Relations team had a large ask of \$300 million to go toward these loop systems, but the legislature could not grant it because of the deficit. He says this specific ask is far less money, but it will have a more immediate effect on decarbonization.

Lela explains that the green smokestack on campus burns fossil fuels that run through pipes to heat campus buildings. She says that accounts for a large amount of UW's emissions. She explains that they are trying to make UW meet its current decarbonization goals sooner than the currently proposed timeline of 2050.

Brandon says this is the ICA's only budget request this year, which will increase their chances of receiving funding for this. He says it is important to have sustainability reflected at the highest level on the LA every year because it is a common-sense issue that, as a public research institution, they can rally behind.

Brandon reads Section 4, "Artificial Intelligence Property Rights" aloud.

Brandon explains that while this priority originally stemmed from a post he saw, it also came from a student who expressed concern over a fake social media account that created fake, explicit images of them. He says the state has already expressed a desire to create a criminal remedy for this issue, but not civil remedies, which they are advocating for in this priority.

Joseph asks if they want to include "large language models" in the language and include advocating for protecting student data from being used to train AI models.

Brandon agrees and says they can include that.

Brandon reads from Position Statements, "Native Student Tuition Waivers" aloud.

Brandon explains that WSU currently offers native student tuition waivers, and he wants to ensure UW can be added to the conversation for native student tuition waivers.

Brandon reads from Position Statements, "Public Transportation" aloud.

Brandon explains that if there is any legislation that comes up related to public transportation, it is common sense for them to lobby for it.

Brandon reads from Position Statements, “Data Privacy” aloud.

Brandon explains that the Washington Department of Licensing, which has a contract with LexisNexis, was caught under fire after giving information to ICE. He says that while there is no evidence of the UW Libraries’ contract with LexisNexis going to ICE, the direct partnership with LexisNexis raises concern. He explains that he wanted to include this in the undocumented student section, but he believes they have a better chance of getting something passed if they advocate for protecting all student data.

Brandon reads Position Statements, “Asynchronous Work Opportunities” aloud.

Brandon explains that this came from WSA Legislative Priorities, who spoke with a student who was affected by a lack of asynchronous materials, forcing him to drop out. He adds that he originally had this as a state priority, but later changed it to a position statement, since this is an institutional-level ask first.

Discussion Items

Brandon explains that the next meeting will be in HUB 307. He asks the committee to go through and make suggested amendments to the LA prior to the next meeting. He says they will need to pass the agenda next week because they are set to present it to the Student Senate on November 4. He says he will send out a survey, and as committee members, they are responsible for promoting it. He adds that the Legislative Reception is on November 19 in the HUB North Ballroom from 6 pm – 8:30 pm.

Gavin asks if there is an update for Huskies on the Hill.

Brandon explains they will hold tri-campus meetings to discuss Huskies on the Hill after the LA passes. He adds that groups at Huskies on the Hill will be smaller this year, so their lobbying is more effective. He says that there will be three training meetings to help inform students who will attend.

Adjournment

Joseph motions to adjourn.

Gavin seconds.

Meeting adjourned with unanimous consent at 6:01 pm. 7.0.0.