

ASWWU Supports Western Academic Workers United

April 14, 2023

To our peers,

The students of Western Washington University believe in true democracy. Equitable unions allow workers to use their collective power free from repercussion or retaliation. The work of student employees is a large part of what makes WWU a prestigious institution that educates the people of Washington and beyond.

Student workers are doubly vulnerable to, and dependent on, faculty and staff judgement and input. Student workers do not control the conditions that impact their livelihood while they pursue their education. To this effect, a supermajority of academic student employees have founded Western Academic Workers United/United Auto Workers (WAWU-UAW), a union formed by student workers, for student workers, to collectively bargain with WWU and its administration on our own behalf.

As members of the WWU community, we are encouraged to express a democratic voice within the university; as student employees, we deserve a say in the decision-making process surrounding compensation, benefits, and employment protections. The AS Student Government, as student employees ourselves, must act in solidarity with other student groups and organizations to secure equitable conditions for student workers and students At-Large.

Therefore, we, your student government, do hereby declare our support, outright, for the full unionization of the student employees of Western Washington University.

In support of this goal, your student government has passed a resolution that calls upon the university administration to act in accordance with its strategic plan to improve climate and working conditions and, to provide competitive compensation and professional development for student employees, staff, and faculty, and to immediately recognize and begin negotiating, in good faith, with WAWU-UAW.

cc: Our fellow students
Liz Parkes, Director of Employee and Labor Relations
Sabah Randhawa, President
Melissa Nelson, Assistant Attorney General

**A Resolution of the
Associated Students of Western Washington University**

“Recognize and Negotiate with Western Academic Workers United”

WHEREAS, academic student employees – teachers, researchers, tutors, and others who do similar work – do much of the academic labor that

1. makes Western Washington University a prestigious institution and
2. educates the students of Washington state and beyond; and

WHEREAS, a supermajority of academic student employees (ASEs) working for Western Washington University have authorized Western Academic Workers United / United Auto Workers (WAWU-UAW) to represent them in collective bargaining [1]; and

WHEREAS, WAWU-UAW has filed a representation petition with the Public Employment Relations Commission [2]; and

WHEREAS, WAWU-UAW has requested that Western Washington University voluntarily recognize their union [1]; and

WHEREAS, ASEs working at the University of Washington and at Washington State University have a clearly defined right to collectively bargain in RCW 41.56.203 and RCW 41.56.205 [3, 4]; and

WHEREAS, the Faculty Senate of Western Washington University passed the resolution entitled “Faculty Senate Resolution in Favor of Collective Bargaining for Academic Student Employees” on January 23, 2023, with 22 votes in favor and 2 abstentions [5]; and

WHEREAS, with this resolution the Faculty Senate resolved that it supports the right of ASEs at Western to collectively bargain [6]; and

WHEREAS, Western Washington University is capable of voluntarily recognizing WAWU-UAW; and

WHEREAS, the Western Washington University Board of Trustees approved the Western Washington University Strategic Plan for 2018 through 2025 [7]; and

WHEREAS, within this strategic plan, the Board of Trustees asserts its plan to advance Western by “Improving climate and working conditions for student employees, staff, and faculty at all

locations” and “Providing competitive compensation and professional development for student employees, staff, and faculty” [7]; and

WHEREAS, historical improvements to the compensation and working conditions for employees have been spearheaded by collective bargaining [8, 9]; and

DESPITE THIS, Western Washington University has not recognized WAWU-UAW.

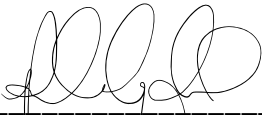
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

THAT, Western Washington University acts in accordance with its strategic plan; and

THAT, Western Washington University immediately recognize and begin negotiating with WAWU-UAW.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Associated Students of Western Washington University Student Senate at their regular meeting on February 22, 2023.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Associated Students of Western Washington University Executive Board at their regular meeting on February 2, 2023.



Rahma Iqbal
Chair, ASWWU Student Senate



Sargun Handa
Chair, ASWWU Executive Board

cc: Liz Parkes, Director of Employee and Labor Relations
Sabah Randhawa, President
Melissa Nelson, Assistant Attorney General

- [1] Western Academic Workers United, *WAWU Request for Recognition*, Bellingham, Washington, 2022.
- [2] Western Academic Workers United, *Representation Petition*, Bellingham: Public Employment Representation Commission, 2022.
- [3] Washington State Legislature, "University of Washington—Certain employees enrolled in an academic program—Scope of collective bargaining.," 2002. [Online]. Available: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=41.56.203>.
- [4] Washington State Legislature, "Washington State University—Certain employees enrolled in an academic program—Scope of collective bargaining.," 2008. [Online]. Available: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=41.56.205>.
- [5] WWU Faculty Senate, "WWU Faculty Senate meeting (hybrid)," 23 January 2023. [Online]. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84h4oGYpUs0>.
- [6] WWU Faculty Senate Executive Council, "Faculty Senate Resolution in Favor of Collective Bargaining for Academic Student Employees - Exhibit D," Bellingham, 2023.
- [7] Western Washington University, "Strategic Plan 2018-2025," 13 April 2018. [Online]. Available: <https://provost.wwu.edu/strategic-plan-2018-2025>.
- [8] M. Walters and L. Mishel, "How unions help all workers," Economic Policy Institute, 26 August 2003. [Online]. Available: https://www.epi.org/publication/briefingpapers_bp143/.
- [9] D. Baker, "Labor Unions: The Folks Who Gave You the Weekend," Huffpost, 7 September 2015. [Online]. Available: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/labor-unions-the-folks-wh_b_8101242.