Purpose of Submittal:
AS President Glory Busic will brief the Board of Trustees on recent activities of the Associated Students.
Dear Members of the Board,

The Associated Students Executive Board has been working very hard throughout the year to meet and push for student needs at Western Washington University. Some of the topics that the Executive Board have been working on are listed in this report. If you have any questions about any topics or are interested in discussing them more, please contact Glory Busic, the Associated Students President.

1. **Students for CHOICE**

   On Monday, January 31st, 2022, students protested in Red Square and virtually for safe, inclusive, and accessible learning. CHOICE stands for: Coalition of Home/Online Individual Choice + Equity. Since Western’s decision to announce the return to in-person learning, despite the COVID-19 Omicron Variant, many students have felt unheard and a lack of care from administration about their health and safety. Students have been sent emails saying that if they feel uncomfortable going to class, there is simply nothing the administration can do to help them. If retention is a goal of Western’s administration, then this reply to students does not seem to match that goal. Cases in Whatcom County are still very high, and although the Omicron Variant may not be as severe as past variants,
there is no guarantee of its severity on everyone. On top of this, if a student is sick, it may be difficult for them to access their course work as not all professors are as accommodating as others and there seems to be no set standard or policy. Lastly, many students may have trauma from living through a pandemic. Many may have had people in their lives die due to COVID-19. Saying that students must come to class in-person at this time or drop-out does not feel like an inclusive, equitable, or viable option. CHOICE is demanding that there be better hybrid accommodations and accessibility expectations for courses. They are also demanding that there is compensation and support for professors’ extra work to accomplish this. The Associated Students Executive Board and Senate stand with and support CHOICE.

2. **Water Access on Campus**

As a Board, we have been in communication with Housing and Dining staff, among other stakeholders, about water access at Western Washington University. As you most likely know, Western has a plastic water bottle ban, which we as a Board fully support as it was pushed for by students. However, because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic, concerns about lead in the water, and other financial barriers, such as not being able to afford a reusable bottle, we feel that we need greater access to water on campus. With the help of professional staff, we are in contact with the current beverage provider, Walton Beverage, about ways in which we can introduce canned water, or other more environmentally friendly options for an affordable price. Along with this, we are asking to see steps taken towards increasing awareness for students of water refill stations with better mapping of their locations. We hope lead
testing will be finished soon. During Western Lobby Day, student representatives lobbied for House Bill 1139 to be expanded.

3. **Earth Day / Week is Underway**

As a Board, we have started brainstorming ideas for Earth Day/Week events. The Board’s goal is to center BIPOC voices and BIPOC involvement in environmentalism. We recognize that often Earth Day topics are very white-centered, so we feel that it is necessary to plan Earth Day events which reflect and bring this topic to discussion. We have been in contact with a variety of local organizations such as Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association and Ridwell as well as student groups on campus. We will give more updates as we get closer to Earth Day.

4. **Investing in a Self-Operated Dining System**

The Executive Board would like to reiterate that the 2018-2019 Student Senate, 2019-2020 Student Senate, and 2020-2021 Student Senate as well as the Executive Boards for each academic year all collaborated with Shred the Contract or even wrote resolutions in support of a transition away from contracting with Aramark and investing in a self operated dining system. The support continues with this year’s cabinets. Additionally, the Student Senate has a sub-committee dedicated to Shred the Contract related topics. The student body’s government is still interested in the potential of self-operation. We, as a Board, will help with advertisement to the student body for the upcoming town halls/ focus groups regarding dining values and interests. However, we want to restate the student government support for divesting from prison system affiliations and investing in a self-operating dining system. This support has lasted many years through new leadership, reflecting how important these goals are to the community.
5. **Family Workspaces**

The Associated Students Executive Board has been working with Counseling, Health, and Wellness alongside Space Administration to secure Haggard Hall 250 or 350 for student parents to comfortably access campus resources and bring their children in the event they are unable to secure childcare for the day. Priorities for this safe space include accessibility to transit, natural daylighting, nearby restrooms, a changing table, proper air filtration, as well as diverse and inclusive children's books. We would also like to include a mural done by Western students and colorful artwork to liven up the space and bring an important sense of identity to the sterile environment. Appropriate directional signage is underway. We strongly feel the creation of this space contributes to the mental health and wellbeing of student parents.

Sincerely,

The Associated Students Executive Board