Purpose of Submittal:

AS President Keara Ryan will brief the Board of Trustees on recent activities of the Associated Students.
Dear Trustees,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide an update from the Associated Student Government with the Western Washington University Board of Trustees. Student government has been hard at work over the past few weeks after a pause in operations during winter break.

Student Government Documents

Over the past few months, a small group of students representing the Executive Board and Student Senate have worked together to pass an updated version of the ASWWU Charter. Currently, the Senate President, Gabe Wong, and I are working together to edit the AS Constitution to reflect the Charter and our current operations. We hope to have a constitutional amendment on the 2024 Student Government ballot. I am looking forward to the progress that I can share on this amendment in the coming months, especially with some possible changes to the membership of each body. Additional documents being amended or passed are the Student Senate bylaws, Parliamentary Procedure, and Rules of Operation for both boards. By the end of the year, nearly all student government documents should be updated. I am thankful for the help of everyone involved and am confident the work done this year will set future student government boards up for success.

Lobby Day

I am excited to announce that on February 18th and 19th the Associated Students is taking 80 students to visit Olympia and lobby on issues like the increasing access to the Washington College Grant and housing affordability. In recent years the Associated Students has hosted two separate lobby days, Western Lobby Day and Western Intersectional Lobby Day. Due to budget constraints, we are only able to offer one opportunity for students to lobby. The decision was made to host Western Intersectional Lobby Day as our sole lobby day. We are still working on how we will reflect intersectional identities in the bills students lobby for but are excited to provide this opportunity for students.

WWU Foundation Investment in Fossil Fuel

In January, the Foundation Board responded to the Resolution in Favor of Divestment. This resolution was passed unanimously, supported by the Faculty Senate, and was signed by over 800 students, faculty, and alumni. While we appreciate the response, we are displeased with its content. The student government intends to release a full response, and before then we would like to bring two points to your attention.
First, speaking on behalf of the student government, we are extremely disappointed with the rejection of student and faculty involvement in the RFI process. Previously, students and faculty have been involved in similar processes and the complete removal of their involvement is disheartening. In the memo given we received, it stated, “The Foundation Board’s Finance Committee will not be seeking outside involvement in the industry review process.” No explicit reason was stated. It is disappointing to have the Foundation, a key part of campus, consider students outsiders when students are the beneficiaries of scholarships provided by the Foundation and past students are donors.

Second, the response mentions the intention to create a website surrounding sustainable investments, but we are hesitant receiving this response due to a similar plan being mentioned in the 2021 student-led project, "Investing in our Future: A Plan for Sustainable Investment at Western Washington University". Three years have passed since this plan was mentioned to students, it is disappointing to see us still in the same place, but we look forward to progressing being made around accessing information on sustainable investments.

Student clubs have been the driver of this movement for over 10 years at Western Washington University. It is disappointing to see their concerns not being addressed and progress being setbacks from the rejection of students and faculty in the RFI process.