

Legislative Agenda 2013-2014

Public higher education institutions provide jobs, innovation, and economic stability essential for the future competitiveness of Washington. State funding for higher education has an exponential return on investment and is an integral part of long-term economic growth. The future of Washington depends on the strength of higher education; investment in public higher education is an investment in the people of Washington. On behalf of over 40,000 students, the Associated Students of the University of Washington (ASUW) holds the following legislative priorities:

STATE FUNDING:

The University of Washington is a fundamental investment in our state's economy and people and must be properly supported by state funding. The recent state appropriations increase has been a vital step in the right direction and has allowed for a tuition freeze. These funding increases have created an opportunity to begin relieving the burden on students, but more action is necessary in order to reverse the trends of rising tuition rates and decreased financial aid caused by past higher education funding patterns. The ASUW believes the legislature needs to commit to stable, long term funding for higher education, while exploring innovative funding models. All revenue generated by the University of Washington should remain under University control.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION:

The ASUW believes in a world-class higher education system that offers the opportunity for the personal development and the attainment of a degree for all students. The ASUW stands behind a consistently high-quality University of Washington degree and the balancing of traditional education with innovative instruction to achieve the greatest student success. The ASUW supports attracting, retaining, and developing diverse, globally competitive students who are prepared to contribute to the growth of Washington State.

COST OF EDUCATION:

The ASUW advocates for policies that provide affordable, reasonable, and fair tuition for Washington state residents, non-residents and international students. We strive for greater access to higher education through lower tuition costs. We favor state and campus policies that encourage predictability in any changes to student expenses. ASUW supports complete student control over all student fees.

FINANCIAL AID:

The ASUW believes the best form of financial aid is affordable tuition. However, state financial aid programs are pivotal to fulfilling the University of Washington's commitment to the accessibility of higher education. We believe in promoting financial aid literacy for students and

their guardians. The ASUW supports legislation on lowering the interest rates of student and parent loans. The ASUW supports exploring creative ways to increase financial aid to students with the greatest unmet need without decreasing existing aid to students, including those served by the State Need Grant. The inability to pay should never be a barrier to higher education.

SHARED GOVERNANCE:

The ASUW advocates for proactive, direct, and institutionalized student involvement in matters related to university policies, especially those concerning tuition or fees. Student participation at every level is critical to ensuring that students are fairly represented.

DIVERSITY:

The ASUW supports a holistic approach to university admissions and believes that learning from those who have diverse experiences, beliefs, and perspectives is an essential component of a quality education. We support funding outreach programs and resources for underrepresented communities. We advocate retaining and expanding the diversity of the student body, faculty, and staff.

TRANSPORTATION AND SUSTAINABILITY:

The ASUW supports affordable, environmentally sustainable, and accessible transportation services for all students. We believe in the University of Washington's commitment to teaching, researching, and practicing environmental sustainability.

WELL-BEING AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:

The ASUW advocates for policies that promote the physical and mental health, safety, and well-being of the University community. We support the protection of the civil rights and liberties of students, faculty, and staff. We support policies that strengthen the University of Washington's student voice, lobbying abilities, and voting accessibility.