

New Faculty Senator Onboarding: State Legislative Overview

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WSU Faculty Representative to the State Legislature
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Primary Duties of the WSU Faculty Representative to the State Legislature

- Serve as a conduit of information between the state legislature and WSU faculty (i.e., be the “eyes and ears,” and occasionally the “voice,” of WSU faculty in Olympia).
- Advocate in Olympia (primarily) and across the state of Washington for public higher education generally and WSU faculty interests specifically.



“Council of Faculty” (COF) = Faculty Legislative Reps from the state’s six, 4-year public institutions

- Dr. Matt Altman (Philosophy), CWU
- Dr. Bidisha Biswas (Political Science), WWU
- Dr. Steve Bollens (School of the Environment), WSU
- Dr. Michael Craw (Public Administration), TESC
- Dr. Beth Ebel (Medicine), UW
- Mr. Sam Ligon (English), EWU



Partnerships and Communication

- Faculty Senates of the six, 4-year public universities
- Council of Presidents (COP)
- Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC)
- College Promise Coalition (CPC)
- House and Senate “Higher Education” Committees;
House Appropriations and Senate Ways & Means
Committees
- District legislators (49 senators and 98 representatives)



Odd-Year vs Even-Year Legislative Sessions

- Odd numbered years (e.g., 2027) are 105-day sessions to consider the biennial budget (e.g., 2027-29) and major policy legislation (avg = 2,400 bills; 460 passed)
- Even numbered years (e.g., 2028) are 60-day sessions to consider adjustments to the biennial budget (the “supplemental budget”) and “minor” policy legislation (avg = 1,500 bills; 312 passed)

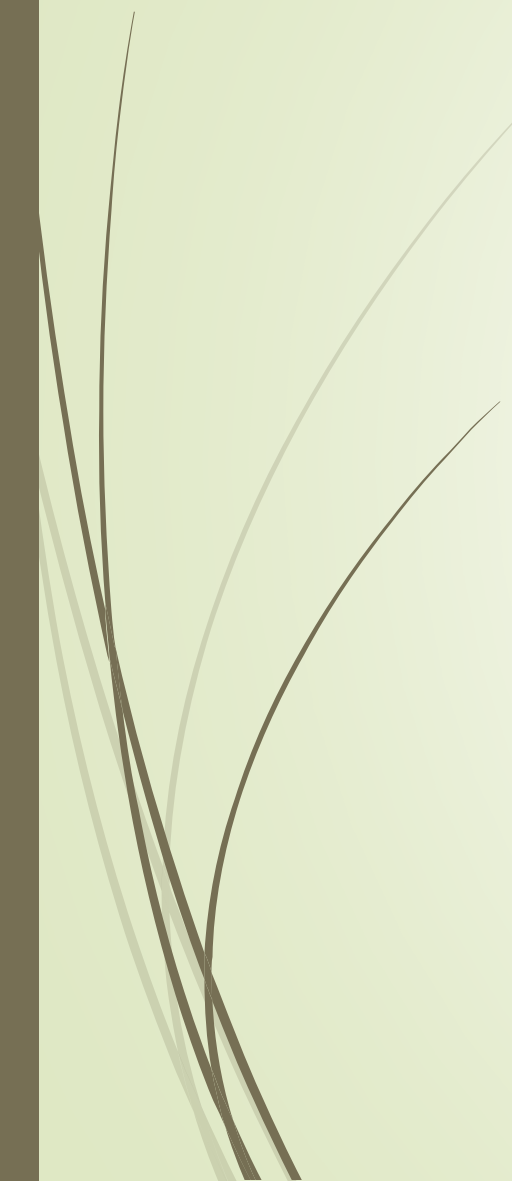


How can you, as a faculty senator, express your view about particular legislation?

- As a private citizen, you are encouraged to contact your elected officials, but WSU policy is that employees should not present their personal opinions as representing the university (i.e., employees should not use their WSU affiliations or any state resources in contacting or otherwise interacting with their elected officials).
- As a WSU faculty senator, you can contact the Faculty Senate Steering Committee and/or Executive Committee to express your interest or concern with any particular legislation or issue. (Indeed, it is the Steering Committee that empowers the Faculty Representative to take a particular course of action with the state legislature in Olympia.)
- Contact your Chair or Director, so that they can work through your Dean, and ultimately the President, who empowers the WSU Office of State Relations to engage with the legislature on various issues and legislation.



Going Forward ...

- COF is the voice of all faculty of the six, 4-yr public institutions
 - Timely and effective communication is crucial! (Things happen very fast in Olympia! I am in email correspondence with Faculty Senate Steering Committee on daily-weekly basis.)
 - Faculty are welcome to attend public Senate and House hearings (TVW) and visit/tour the Capitol
 - Legislative bill tracking (<https://app.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/>)
 - Feel free to email (sbollens@wsu.edu) or call me (360-608-6893) anytime
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Thank You!
Questions?