2020–2021
Associated Students of Central Washington University Candidates

Second Public Debate Questions and Responses*

*Only includes questions that couldn’t fit in the time crunch of the debate
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~ This question was asked twice, ten minutes apart, allowing the final question to be omitted.
*Contact information for candidates is after their first answer or if they didn’t answer, on the final page.
*Questions may have been modified for clarification.
Question by Luis Patino

For Student Speaker Candidates: As a current representative we mainly complained about the school. How are y’all going to change this behavior in the upcoming year?

Answers

Josh McRae  
Candidate Senate Speaker

I interpret this question two ways. First, we complain but some senator may feel that we don’t do enough about our issues. Second, we only complain and never talk about all the good the school is doing. To help with both, I want to help bring the senators into what I will refer to as “scientific inquiry” thought process. If someone brings forth an issue at the school, we always want to make sure we hear out those in need. Moving forward, we will take that complaint and ask two key questions that’ll start the process towards finding a solution. Why is this problem occurring within this area of the school? Why isn’t this problem happening elsewhere? Essentially, we want to know what people are doing good, what people are doing bad, and why. Asking why is what starts the communication with other students and admin on campus that creates the connection with other problem solvers and leaders on campus and provides more perspectives for us to analyze.

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Madeline Koval  
Candidate Senate Speaker

With all that is going on, I feel that it is really important to stay positive in our tone and to focus on action instead of complaining. I do agree that with previous senate meetings it can be very negative and non-productive. I plan to lead and guide conversation with strategic positive voice. This way we can avoid the negativity in the conversation and focus on what we are going to do to overcome that issue.

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Question by Anonymous Attendee
(Brandon) As chair of the Services and Activities committee, do you believe it falls on you to have worked with the current office of the EVP staff in order to promote and raise awareness to the S&A committee.

Answer

Brandon Wear-Grimm  
Candidate for Executive Vice President

Hello, I appreciate the question, and this is a completely fair concern to have. Before I begin, I want to sincerely apologize if I misspoke during the debate. I didn’t mean two-worded sentences when describing the descriptions of committees on the ASCWU website. I meant that two or three full sentences descriptions are on the student committee web page which is not enough information being offered to our students when talking about their student fee money. This is millions of dollars we are talking about, and that cannot be fairly shared/described in two-to-three sentences and colorful backgrounds. On top of that, if you wished to reach out to these committees, it’s only a name listed and no way to contact them. Students deserve this information and if elected Exec. VP, I will make sure it is available to all students on our website.

Yes, I am the current chair of the S&A committee and I saw that this was an issue. I know it’s an issue because out of the 47 academic departments, only 22 groups tied to academic departments requested supplementals. Furthermore, 26% of supplementals went to one singular department. This information that does need to be shared with the students. Unfortunately, with limited time and resources, you have to prioritize issues – and believe me, raising awareness is not the only one. This year, I was grateful to help facilitate my amazing committee team members through discussions about addressing issues such as inequality among student fee allocations and restructuring how S&A conducts business. Every year, S&A is flooded with supplemental request that impede on our time to one of our most crucial responsibilities: assess the S&A base funded departments at CWU. Instead, all meetings are taken up by supplemental requests that are only 4.1% of the S&A budget. That means 95.9% of the budget is never truly assessed to see how effective student money is being spent. However, this year we came up with a way to organize the number of requests received and we were able to assess more base funded areas – which we also categorized to increase efficiency. Secondly, when allocating out funds to supplemental requests, there is no structured criteria to evaluate them. Each week the committee faced inconsistency with how the approved/denied requests. Together, we took major leaps and bounds to identify what that consistent criteria would look like. As we speak, the S&A committee is discussing how we will restructure it to limit any external and internal influences that may sway voting as well as creating a requirement document that all requests much meet in order to receive funding. I am incredibly proud of the progress this year’s S&A Committee has made and if elected your next Exec VP, I will be able to dedicate my full time to these issues and make sure awareness of S&A is increased.

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2020 Candidate Responses from the Second Public Debate

Question by Anonymous Attendee
Mickael: Your campaign is focused on transparency, however at the last debate you abstained from commenting on ways in which ASCWU needs to improve. How can we trust that you will answer all students’ questions and be transparent in the future?

Answer

Mickael Candeleria  Candidate for President

[Here] is the link to watch the debate that took place May 13th. From time stamp 1:32:15-1:32:29, Dean Gregg asks the question that was asked in the Q&A section that someone from the audience asked, “We hear people talk a lot about transparency, what exactly didn’t this years ASCWU board do to maximize transparency?” The question was NOT asking how ASCWU can improve, but what this year’s ASCWU board didn’t do to promote transparency. I am currently serving on ASCWU as the VP for Student Life and Facilities and decided to abstain because if I answered this question there would 100% be bias because I am on the board right now. If the question was not about this year’s board than I would have answered the question. I recognized my own bias could have skewed the answer of the question, so I personally abstained from answering the question. Any other questions asked I will answer, I just had to recognize my own bias and remove myself from that situation.

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*Copiable link to the debate that took place on May 13th can be found on page 18
Question by Anonymous Attendee
Mickael, with your roll in Student Life what actions did you take during the student media crisis mentioned in the last question?

Answer

Mickael Candeleria  Candidate for President

Myself, alongside the rest of the ASCWU Board this year, spearheaded by our ASCWU President, Jasmin, met with student media representatives and administration affected by the student media protest behind closed doors. In this meeting, ASCWU acted as neutral mediators to guide and facilitate a healthy discussion with both students and the administration to come to a healthy resolution. Minutes were taken in this meeting and were posted to provide transparency about what occurred in this meeting.
Question by Tierra Willoughby
My question is for the Director of Multicultural Affairs candidates: We know that many Orgs at CWU plan and pay for Traditions Keeper events. If elected, how do you plan on connecting them to resources/departments outside of ESC to help with the financial side of these events?

Answer
Leilani Salu       Candidate for Director of Equity and Multicultural Affairs

I believe that funding is an important concern that orgs are focusing on. With events, conferences, and activities that orgs participate in, it’s another essential aspect that we must include in our conversation. Therefore, I believe that we can alleviate the stresses of funding via:

1. S&A Funding: which is an on-campus resource that student orgs/depts/etc can rely on to fund signature events.

2. Local/Small businesses: there are POC-owned businesses and organizations that are constantly looking for opportunities to get involved in the community and promote their business. Therefore, having them as sponsors would be a great idea to get funding and have promotional opportunities to students on-campus.

3. Funding sources outside of Ellensburg: I believe it’s also important to acknowledge that there is resources which exist outside of Ellensburg that also want to support communities of Washington State. For example, NAPA, aka National Association of Pacific Americans, is a community organization which looks to support Asian/Pacific Americans (API) in various outlets. At my former institution, I was able to get $1,000 dollars in donations from them, using those funds towards expenses to our signature program, PacFest. This organization could possibly benefit PolyCentral, but there is also many other foundations/orgs that are wanting to be involved and support marginalized groups.

All of these sources simmer down to active outreach and being that pipeline to funnel these connections to ESC. If I’m elected, I would like to continue the network which I currently have, as well as expand to benefit the orgs and aide in providing financial relief and lifelong partnerships with the Ellensburg and greater Washington community.

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Question by Anonymous Attendee

To Executive Vice President candidates: With the apparent lack of committee awareness and student involvement among these committees, what will you do differently or improve to ensure students that they can “make change on campus”. [i.e. through events (committees, cookies, and coffee, S&A fair, etc.)] and how will you make sure these committees are being effective.

Answer

Brandon Wear-Grimm  
Candidate for Executive Vice President

Hey, I appreciate this question a lot and I love that you have knowledge of past events put on by the Executive Vice President office. Something that I would love to improve is the Exec. VP’s webpage first. For many students, that is how they learn about what ASCWU does and stands for. When you go to the student committee page, you will get pictures with short descriptions. The website is lacking when you it comes to what each committee has done, what are the impacts on students each committee has, and also what their budget is. I believe by showing the students the impact each committee has, where their money goes – exactly, then that helps make students talk about these committees more. It inspires our students to want to be on these committees, and ultimately, make critical information at Central known and make student much more aware of these committees.

Outside of the website, I believe events (like the ones listed in the question) are essential in creating personal connections with our students. These events should be done every year. If elected your next Exec. VP, I want to help improve these events and make them much more engaging with the student body. Collaborations with student programs and the Director of Student Life & Facilities can help with that discussion and increase student awareness of committees that way as well.
2020 Candidate Responses from the Second Public Debate

Question by Anonymous Attendee

To Executive Vice President candidates: The ASCWU Centers Council was created to ensure university center students voice are included when making decisions that affect them (in S&A, tech fee committee, academic affairs committee, and the budget allocation subcommittee). The EVP chairs the council, how will you make sure they are aware about decisions that impact them and how will you make sure they are taken into consideration when making these decisions.

Answer

Brandon Wear-Grimm  Candidate for Executive Vice President

Again, amazing question and I’m happy the awareness of the Centers Council is growing already. If elected your Exec. VP, I hope to make sure any decision that impacts the students is known, regardless of their CWU location. However, Center students have been left in the dark about where their fee money goes. To be honest, they have all the right to feel that way as it seems like the school has nothing to show for them paying these fees. They’re services & activities are substantially less than at the main campus. These needs and concerns should be brought up in every discussion about the allocation of student money. Nevertheless, it often times is not. That is why I will make sure any decisions that happen at any other committee meetings, senate meetings, or student group meetings that impact the university centers is brought the Centers Council’s attention.

Outside of notifying the Centers Council, next year will be its first year as a student committee ever. With your support, I will work with our Westside Student Life office and university centers to make sure all center students are aware of this leadership opportunity. This position makes them the representative of their entire university center campus and it is crucial that passionate student leaders are found to be representatives on the Centers Council. Once the spots are filled, I will work with each rep very closely to make sure that they are also being transparent about Council decisions with their campus, and that they are known as the main point of contact with the Ellensburg campus.
2020 Candidate Responses from the Second Public Debate

Question by Anonymous Attendee

Question for Student Life candidates: How do you plan on connecting with/supporting ESC Org events like PolyFest, Showtime at Central, and Barrio Fiesta?

Answers

Nathan Rawson  Candidate for Director of Student Life and Facilities

I think connecting with ESC Orgs is a great way to build inclusivity on campus! There are a lot of orgs and clubs at Central that I would like to work with to build our Central family! I think one thing to remember is that in this position I will be supporting not only ESC Orgs but also clubs. I would love to offer the opportunity to any org or club to collaborate and make some amazing events!

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Ashley-Sue Vizguerra  Candidate for Director for Student Life and Facilities

Having worked in Student Life for the last year, I have been able to see the importance for representation and ESC organizations. My plan for supporting and connecting is to be available and approachable for any concerns, questions, or comments. I was to be a backbone for the organizations that work so hard to provide wildcats with support, a place to belong, and education.

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Question by Anonymous Attendee

What institutional issue do you think faces the students most, and how do you plan to advocate for the student voice pertaining to that issue?

Answers

Mickael Candeleria  Candidate for President

The biggest institutional issue on our campus is going to be the ever-rising cost of attending college. Tuition increases on average about 2.5% each year to match inflation, while also student fees are also almost always look at to be increased. CWU has the highest student fees in the state of Washington. In order to advocate for the student voices pertaining to the rising cost, lobbying the Washington State Legislature for a tuition freeze alongside other peer institutions to potentially stop the rising of tuition, but also ensuring the no student fees at CWU increase without providing students more tangible resources that benefit ALL students.

Josh McRae  Candidate Senate Speaker

The biggest issue I see that students face most is the lack of transparency between the administration and the student voice that stems from the lack of communication between student groups and admin. Multiple groups of both student leaders and admin are trying to solve problems within the university at the similar times throughout the year, and when there is no flow of information between groups yet a “solution” is found it often doesn’t solve the issue or makes it worse because a key piece to fully understanding the entire problem was missing. With the multiple issues that erupted from Dining services this past academic year it’s not hard to see real life examples of this.

Nathan Rawson  Candidate for Director of Student Life and Facilities

I think one of the main issues here that we have at Central is lack of knowledge. When I am going to find an answer for a question it seems as though you get bounced from one office to the next. I was attempting to fill out a club request, but I kept getting bounced from one office to the next. No one seemed to know where to get the answer, if we can figure out a way to streamline that process I think a lot more students would be satisfied.

Ashley-Sue Vizguerra  Candidate for Director for Student Life and Facilities

Inclusion and freedom of expression is a topic that colleges have struggled with for many years, all of the Nation. While CWU has made it a mission to have inclusiveness, diversity, and equity and has been a leader in these areas, the voices of students feeling they need more representation within the staff, administrators, and student staff can not be ignored. The upcoming election year and health practices regarding masks will no doubt bring more of these institutional issues forward. I want to use my position to take these student concerns and voices and make sure they are being heard, and not just listened to.
Question by Aurora Rainbolt

Presidential candidates: Our current president was very transparent this year about her weaknesses and what she was able to do. What is one characteristic that you feel will get in the way of leading as a president?

Answer

Mickael Candeleria  Candidate for President

One weakness that I have that I am aware of and am working on is delegating tasks. I am very much so the person who wants to take everything on myself to help alleviate the stress from my team. However, it is incredibly important know my limits as far as what I can take on and then delegate tasks that I can’t handle or tasks that are more of someone else’s jurisdiction to the correct team member.
Question by Eric Bennett
For Executive VP candidates and president: How will you maintain diversity and equity of membership on student committees?

Answer

Brandon Wear-Grimm  Candidate for Executive Vice President

Hi Eric, great question. One responsibility of the Exec. VP is appointing student leaders to the student committees at CWU. Next year, the number of committees will grow with new additions such as the Centers Council. It more imperative than ever to make sure we have a diverse student representation on these committees in order to ensure all student voices, needs, and concerns are addressed when allocating student funds. I hope to maintain the diversity and equity of appointing these students by allowing the students to voice who they would like to be on the committees. The ability to appoint students to these critical, and influential, roles should not be a decision made solely by the Exec. VP. With screening suggestions and final approval by student-led groups such as the Student Senate, the composition of student reps on committees next year will be a collaborative effort of all students on campus. This money belongs to all students and everyone should have the ability choose who stewards it. I believe by doing so, I can eliminate any personal bias when appointing students and guarantee equal opportunity for everybody.
Question by Angela Kyle

CWU does an amazing job orienting Freshmen! Transfer students make up 40% of CWU, how can we be more inclusive for this community of students during the first couple weeks? (open to anyone)

Answers

Mickael Candeleria  Candidate for President

As a former Orientation Leader, I had the opportunity to work two summer orientation sessions specifically for transfer students. One way we can best support transfer students is by encouraging transfer students to move-in early, the same time as first-year students (they currently move-in 3 days later than first-year students), so that they can participate in all Wildcat Welcome Weekend activities to help them transition more to CWU specifically and make connections earlier. We also have a brand new Transfer center that provides support and resources to our transfer students so making sure ASCWU is connecting with the Director of the Transfer center, Megan, and her team to see if there are any other ways ASCWU can support transfer students.

Josh McRae  Candidate Senate Speaker

As it stands, incoming freshmen orientations goes for 3 days while the transfer student orientations only lasts 1 day. As a result, there is a major assumption by the school that causes a severe lack in information being provided to transfer students. That assumption is that transfer students will automatically know what to do at CWU because this ain’t their first rodeo. But mistakes are built on the foundation of assumption. Schools from around the state, the nation, and even the world use different software’s to track assignment, check grades, apply for scholarships, and so much more. A good analogy is just because someone’s eaten an apple before, doesn’t mean they know what a banana taste like. They know both apples and bananas are fruit, and they know how to eat food, but the overall experience of eating a banana will be different than eating an apple. One step I want to take to stop the school from making that assumption is to take the core information that freshmen receive from their University 101 (or equivalent) class and have a webpage available that has the information available to students to reference. Even if we run into situations where we don’t have the resources to make big changes to things (like trying to make orientation last more than 1 day), having something simple that this webpage could provide a platform for students to be educated on important information and have the option to come back and reference it.

Nathan Rawson  Candidate for Director of Student Life and Facilities

CWU does do an amazing job orienting freshmen! I can speak from personal experience on this one as a transfer student from Wenatchee Valley College. I felt as though everything in the first few weeks was geared towards freshmen and not transfer students. I would love to implement more events to where transfer students can get to know each other and build connections. Freshman orientation is three days yet transfer orientation is only 1 day. There was so many things that I did not get to learn during my orientation.
Also during my orientation there were presenters that did not show up to their time slots which made us transfer students feel as though we were not a priority. I would love to see transfer students become a priority and possibly have a longer orientation for them.

Ashley-Sue Vizguerra  Candidate for Director for Student Life and Facilities

Circling back to an answer I gave during the debate, having a group or organization to belong to can go a long way for freshmen. It is important to continue encouraging and to help the transfer center in providing these students with resources. Having transferred from a previous institution myself, it can feel a bit jarring and misplacing to enter a large and close knit university. The first few weeks, especially with the current climate due to covid, will be more important than ever in establishing a seamless transition for these students.

Brandon Wear-Grimm  Candidate for Executive Vice President

Hey Angela, this is a great question. Being a transfer student myself, it felt as though I was left in the dark about many opportunities and resources offered at our main campus. I personally can’t speak on what this process looks like for our online/university center transfer students, but I believe there’s plenty of room for improvement. Traditional freshman has multiple day orientations as to transfer students only getting one day. To add to that, the transfer student orientations have often felt unorganized or second priority to the freshman orientations. I believe a great way for ASCWU to help foster a community for new transfer students is to help support the new Transfer Center in any way possible. Personally, I think we need to help our transfer students by making sure social, mental health, and physical health programs are catered and readily available to these students. Many assume that transfer students will be fine transitioning to Central, but that is often not the case. With collaborations between ASCWU and the Transfer Center, I think we can multiply our outreach to this student population and help make the first step together at making all of our students feel like they’re at home here.
Question by Aurora Rainbolt

President candidates: You notice that your staff member is not doing their job effectively and it is reflecting poorly on ASCWU. What do you do next?

Answer

Mickael Candeleria Candidate for President

I am currently supervising four student staff this year so I have experience supervising and providing leadership to other staff members. If a staff member is not doing their job effectively the first step is talk to the staff member from “CAREfrontation” standpoint versus a confrontation standpoint. Making sure that there is not any outside factors why that staff member is able to do their job effectively and hold myself, as the supervisor, accountable. If there was anyway I could best support that staff member. It is also about being critical in holding my staff member accountable by giving the staff member a written warning and then coaching the staff member with steps they can take to improve themself.
Question by Aurora Rainbolt
President candidates: It is the role of ASCWU to support students even if you disagree with the issue you at hand a great example is student media this year. How do you plan to put your biases aside and ensure it does not interfere with your job?

Answer

Mickael Candeleria Candidate for President

The first step is going to know when I am biased or could be biased and remove myself from that perspective and think about the opinions and voices of ALL students instead of just my own. ASCWU serves as the liaison between the student body and administration so it is incredibly important that ASCWU is neutral in order to positively and effectively communicate with administration and students to create changes on-campus.
Additional Candidates Contact Information

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Additional Question that Went Unanswered

Question by Anonymous Attendee
My question is for CeCe. How would you handle the ASCWU response to the transparency issue you brought up if you were the President?

Copiable Link to the First Debate

https://cwu.zoom.us/rec/play/6ZF-Le2o_Gg3G9ecuASDU_YtW9S0KPqs13Ma8qYOxR62BXdXOGKIN7dBMbCZbEUYw_uY1BEGOAaT6DHi?continueMode=true&x_zm_rtaid=qedJ_ZICTjuCVdGexMkU1w.1589758083213.f0ed4e440bee770936b7125f55839121&x_zm_rhtaid=273