

From: [Sean Bessette](#)
Subject: Disheartening S&A Proposal to Defund Student Media
Date: Friday, April 4, 2025 5:07:35 PM

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Hello all,

It's beyond disheartening to see Central Washington University's (CWU) student media publications may no longer exist due to the preposterous proposal by CWU's Services & Activities (S&A) committee to defund The Observer and Pulse Magazine.

My name is Sean Bessette, former Editor-in-Chief and proud alum of The Observer. I spent five quarters on staff at The Observer, from Fall 2020, my first quarter on campus, to Winter 2022. The Observer shaped me into the communications professional I am today, and I can credit my success to the experience I gained at The Observer.

But, this isn't about me. This is about all students, current and past, that have been impacted by the opportunities presented through student media. This is about future students, who would no longer have the opportunity to participate and grow in a student publication. This is about CWU's campus community, and the fantastic coverage from these student publications for **110 YEARS**.

I urge CWU's S&A committee to reverse course on the proposal to defund student media. This blatant attempt to silence student voices cannot continue, and I hope the committee can continue to fund these publications properly for generations to come.

From: [Sean mcgee](#)
To: [Robbi Goninan](#); [Erin Sargent](#)
Subject: Fund CWU Student Media
Date: Friday, April 4, 2025 7:58:36 PM

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Hello. I hope you're both doing well. My name's Sean McGee and I'm writing to the both of you this evening to urge you to continue funding PULSE, The Observer, and 88.1 The 'Burg at the levels they've asked for.

I'm a proud alum of CWU and I know many people that are/were part of PULSE, The Observer, and/or The 'Burg. They're some of the smartest, most talented and hardest working people I met while at Central and defunding any one of these organizations, let alone all three, would be, at best, embarrassing for the school and at worst, actively harmful.

The Observer, The 'Burg, and PULSE have won numerous awards over the years. Defunding several student media organizations that have brought national acclaim and positive attention to CWU over the years would be, to put it bluntly, embarrassing. It strikes me as a bad PR move but I majored in communication, not PR, so maybe I'm wrong.

The worst case (and, in my opinion, most likely) scenario is that it actively hurts the students, staff and everyone who cares about Central Washington University. The Observer and PULSE, specifically, have published important investigations into things going on at CWU, including as recently as this quarter, when The Observer published an investigation into perceived mistreatment of student-athletes by the newly hired track and field coaches. Without these outlets, who's going to shine a light on potential abuses of power or corruption at CWU? Stripping these outlets of their funding wouldn't help anyone at CWU, it would only hurt them. It would tell people that CWU isn't interested in the truth, just protecting those in power.

To wrap this up, defunding (and that's what it is, let's not pretend like the little funding you've offered is anywhere near enough for them to continue doing what they do at the level they need to do it) student media at CWU would protect the wrong people and send the wrong message to those people and it would just be a terrible PR move to defund organizations that have brought so much positive attention to this school. You said it yourselves when you said that defunding The Observer "feels wrong and sad". That applies to not just The Observer but Pulse and The 'Burg, as well. Student media at CWU deserves to be properly funded. So please do it.

Go Wildcats,
Sean McGee
Class of '24

From: [Mariah Valles](#)
To: [Robbi Goninan](#)
Subject: Re: Defunding The Observer and Pulse Magazine is a threat to campus community, legacy
Date: Tuesday, April 8, 2025 8:44:53 AM

Hey Robbi,

Thank you. My request is that S&A fund these publications to be digital only. Going cold turkey without time to make a plan is reckless and irresponsible. Can you add this to what you read!

Thank you

Mariah Lane

On Tue, Apr 8, 2025 at 8:18 AM Robbi Goninan <robbi.goninan@cwu.edu> wrote:

Good Morning Mariah,

Thank you for your email. I will be sharing it with the S&A Committee at tonight's meeting as communications received.

Thank you,

Robbi

From: Mariah Valles [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 4, 2025 3:24 PM
To: Robbi Goninan <robbi.goninan@cwu.edu>
Subject: Defunding The Observer and Pulse Magazine is a threat to campus community, legacy

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Hi there,

The Central Washington University Services & Activities committee has plans to defund The

Observer and Pulse Magazine. Think about how that sounds. This isn't just a headline, this is a gut punch to the history of students in the past, present and future.

Let me be blunt: The Observer is the reason I am where I am today. In June, I'll hit the five-year mark working in news professionally—and it's not because of my degree. It's because of the experience I gained during my three years working at The Observer. Without that, I would not have had the foundation to build a successful career in journalism.

But beyond my personal success, the *impact* of The Observer cannot be overstated. It's a living, constantly-adapting historical document that has served this campus for decades. To defund it would be a direct attack on student journalism and, by extension, the entire student body. The Observer has a motto: "*By the students, for the students.*" That isn't just some slogan. It's the heart and soul of the school's community. By defunding student media, you silence students.

We're about to celebrate 110 years of The Observer's publication. *One hundred and ten years.* If the S&A committee follows through with this decision, they will not only undermine a pivotal part of this university's legacy—they will be making a catastrophic mistake that will hurt current and future students.

I understand costs are increasing, and budget cuts are necessary, but the S&A committee recommends 88.1 The 'Burg (which is not technically student media) receive \$407,000. The Observer and Pulse? \$3,100 combined. Hmm.

We cannot allow this to happen. I truly hope this is some sort of misunderstanding and the committee chooses to be on the right side of history.

Please feel free to contact me should you have questions. My phone number is (206) 402-9046.

Thank you,

Mariah Lane

From: [Bjorn Pellmyr](#)
To: [Robbi Goninan](#)
Subject: Re: S&A Committee alumnus
Date: Tuesday, April 8, 2025 9:41:34 AM

Thank you so much! If you'll forward it to the committee as a communication received, I should probably put it in more concrete terms. Something like:

"Dear S&A Committee,

First of all, I want to acknowledge the work that you've put in over the year and the stress you're probably under right now. My name is Björn Pellmyr, and I was an S&A committee member during the last base funding deliberations in 2021. I know you've been prepared for this already, but I wanted to share with you some of the things I learned from that experience that might help you out.

- We also had to make cuts, although nowhere near as significant as what you've been asked to make. I know that you don't *want* to slash funding - it's not like there are any organizations that are somehow "not deserving" - and neither did we. I'd strongly encourage you to work as hard as you can to make sure that organizations can still function, even if not at full capacity.
- For the organizations that are cut, it's not always the end of the road. There are other funding sources. After our deliberations, I reached out personally to the organizations we'd reduced funding to and tried to work with them to secure other funding sources. That may not always be possible, but it will help lessen the blow.
- When we announced our planned cuts, there was understandably a lot of frustration. Officially, we didn't allow public comment during deliberations, *but* we did move to have a single representative deliver a prepared statement to us. That kept things quick while still allowing us to hear public opinion. Make sure you ask Robbi about procedure, though!
- Remember that organizations previously funded by S&A do get preference in future allocations. Once finances get better, it will be *very* helpful if you have kept a record of which departments used to be funded, so that they can get back into the S&A fold. It may even be possible to make a binding commitment for future S&A committees.
- Above all else: don't beat yourself up over the job you have to do. You are the right people in the right place for the right job. I found that what helped me cope with the difficult choices we made was simple: doing everything I could to help these organizations keep *some* funding or possibly get funding from another source. You are here to help, and you can show that - both to others and to yourselves - by doing what you have to do in *the most compassionate way possible*.

Thank you for your attention, and thank you for your work with S&A. Please take care of yourselves during the deliberations."

I apologize if that's a bit much to read out, but if you'd like, I can put it in .doc format for the committee to read. I found the most difficult thing for me was coping with having cut funding to people, and this is my attempt to alleviate that, both for the committee members and for you brave advisors. Take care!

Best,
Björn Pellmyr

From: Robbi Goninan <Robbi.Goninan@cwu.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, April 8, 2025 8:17 AM
To: Bjorn Pellmyr [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: S&A Committee alumnus

Bjorn,
Thank you for your email and for sharing your memories with the S&A Committee. I will pass your email along as communications received at our meeting this evening.
You are correct, I did used to work within Campus Activities and now overseeing S&A. It's been a great learning experience and always wonderful working with such dedicated students. I am glad to hear you are well!
Take care,
Robbi

From: Bjorn Pellmyr [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 7, 2025 8:09 AM
To: Robbi Goninan <Robbi.Goninan@cwu.edu>
Subject: S&A Committee alumnus

Dear Robbi,

Hello! I don't know if you remember me, but my name is Björn Pellmyr; I was a member of S&A Committee from 2020 to 2023, when Joey Bryant and Lacy Lampkins were the advisors. I think at that time you were part of the SURC team and/or Campus Activities - I remember speaking with you a few times - but I don't recall your exact position, which I apologize for! I saw that you're now the advisor for S&A, which I wanted to congratulate you on; I hope you enjoy the role!

Since we're in another quadrennial cycle and there's likely a lot of stress going around, I wanted to ask if the next meeting (April 8th) will be a regular meeting or full-on funding deliberations. I'd like to pop in via Zoom and speak briefly to the committee members - they're

likely under even more stress than the 2020-21 S&A team was under - if that's possible. Is public comment still possible via Zoom?

I hope you're doing well and that S&A isn't too rough this year. Even if remote public comment isn't workable, I hope you and the committee know that, at the very least, there's people who have experienced the challenges of the base funding allocations - and we're in your corner.

Best,
Björn Pellmyr