

**From:** [Eric Haugland](#)  
**To:** [Robbi Goninan](#)  
**Subject:** Deep Concern Over the Defunding of The Observer  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 15, 2025 4:43:48 PM

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Ms. Goninan,

As a proud alumnus of Central Washington University (Class of 2009, B.A. in Print Journalism), and a former *Observer* staff member for eight quarters, I'm writing to express my deep disappointment and concern regarding the committee's decision to fully defund *The Observer*.

The rationale provided—referencing the Killian Guidelines—is not only incorrect, it reveals a fundamental misunderstanding of the very document you've chosen to cite. The guidelines clearly state that salaries "**directly related to the student programs' operations**" are exempt from funding restrictions. *The Observer's* editorial staff are essential to the newspaper's function. They are not being paid to develop curriculum or further academic credit—they are being compensated, modestly, for the significant work they perform producing a vital student-run publication.

This decision is more than a misreading of policy. It is a damaging dismissal of the role student journalism plays on a university campus. At a time when the First Amendment faces increasing threats across the nation, your move to defund an independent student voice sends a chilling message. It undermines the values of free speech, transparency, and student leadership that universities should uphold.

The editorial staff of *The Observer* are not merely students dabbling in a hobby. They are reporters, editors, fact-checkers, and designers who serve the campus community by informing, questioning, and amplifying diverse voices. To eliminate funding based on a flawed interpretation of policy and an even deeper misunderstanding of the publication's operation will be remembered as a profound misstep—one that will echo for years as a case study in institutional short-sightedness.

You have not only failed the students who work tirelessly to produce this paper—you have failed the student body at large by weakening one of its most important platforms.

You should be ashamed.

Sincerely,  
Eric Haugland  
CWU Class of 2009 – B.A. in Print Journalism

