



April 9, 2024

WWU Operational Student Employees:

Abbi Matthews, Rec Center Instructor
Abby Place, Recycling Center
Adele Delignette, Housing Facilities Assistant
Aodhan Jibril, Resident Advisor
Alejandro Garcia, Environmental Studies Dept
Augden Hayes, DAG
Basil Hinds, Facilities Custodian
Clover Dorland, Residence Desk attendant
Colleen Ryan, VU Gallery
Dylan Wilson, Facilities Grounds Crew
Eli Graves, Public Safety Assistant
Elias Medley, Recycling Center
Emily Kessler, Campus Rec Aquatics
Ethan Martez, Public Safety Assistant
Josh Kutzke, Performing Arts Center Stage
Kai Russell, Resident Advisor
Kaylee Thomas, WWU Foundation

Lily Storbeck, Resident Advisor
Lorayne McAteer, VU Tech Crew
Meagan Brown, Performing Arts Center
Mica Della Sala, Music Department
Moose Abou-Harb, Outdoor Center
Morgan Nichols, VU Information Desk
Peter Bagdovitz, Public Safety Assistant
Olive Salas, AS Communications Office
Rachel Silzle, AS Productions
Sam Stark, Rec Center Desk Attendant
Savannah Tello, Compass 2 Campus
Shan Robinson, Recycle Center
Shane Reynolds, Public Safety Assistant
Stephanie Lark, Campus Rec Aquatics
Wyatt Roberts, Public Safety Assistant
Zoe Cowan, Outdoor Center

WAWU Operational Student Employees
104 W Magnolia St.
PO Box 2784
Bellingham, WA 98225
westernacademicworkersunited@uas4121.org

Dear WAWU Operational Student Employee Organizing Committee:

I have reviewed your letter, dated February 28, 2024, and have shared it with University leadership. While we appreciate you reaching out to us on this issue again, our view has not changed: we believe that action by the Legislature conferring bargaining rights to operational student employees is a necessary prerequisite to recognizing such a bargaining unit at Western Washington University.

As we explained in our letter of December 18, 2023, it is the Legislature that determines which classes of public employees are eligible to form bargaining units in Washington, and which rules will apply to unit formation and bargaining for those employees. The

Legislature expressly declined to extend bargaining rights to operational student employees when that issue was placed before it this legislative session. Particularly with the Legislature having just rejected proposed legislation on this point, we do not share your view that, in the absence of a prohibition, the University is free to extend bargaining rights to new classes of employees, nor do we believe that the parties can or should proceed without a statutory framework for doing so. The Eastern Washington University example you offer is a cautionary tale. You are correct that EWU once operated outside of the Legislature's direction to recognize a faculty unit. But when bargaining rights were ultimately extended to university faculty by the Legislature, those rights did not match the agreement the union and the EWU had adopted, meaning that the process of union formation had to begin again for a new and different bargaining unit and the parties' collective bargaining agreement was effectively voided.

If and when the Legislature extends bargaining rights to operational student employees, the University will be prepared to follow the legal process it adopts. Until then, the University remains committed to ensuring that all of its employees – represented and non-represented alike – are treated fairly and equitably.

Respectfully,



Liz Parkes
Associate Vice President, HR
Western Washington University

cc: Sabah Randhawa, President
Kerena Higgins, Assistant Attorney General