

To: WWU Faculty Senate
From: Bidisha Biswas, Faculty Legislative Rep
Date: March 11, 2024
Re: Faculty Legislative Liaison Report

Bills of interest

[HB 2214](#) permits beneficiaries of public assistance programs, that is, Washington's Basic Food Program (Basic Food) or the Food Assistance Program (FAP), to automatically qualify as income-eligible for the purpose of receiving the Washington College Grant (WCG). The annual list of individuals participating in the public assistance programs can be shared only to the extent allowable under state and federal law. It has been passed by both chambers and is now awaiting the Governor's signature.

[SB 5904](#) extends eligibility for awards under the Washington College Grant, College Bound Scholarship, and Passport to Careers programs from five years or 125 percent of the published length of the student's program, to six years or 150 percent of the published length of the student's program. It has been passed by both chambers and is now awaiting the Governor's signature.

[SB6053](#) enables OSPI to send high school student information to WSAC to highlight financial aid and postsecondary opportunities. There have been some concerns expressed in legislative hearings and by some legislators about having this data available to private nonprofit and for profit institutions. It has been passed by both chambers and is now awaiting the Governor's signature.

[HB 2112](#) requires public and private higher ed institutions to provide opioid and fentanyl prevention education and awareness to students, make naloxone and fentanyl strips available to students, and provide education and training on administering naloxone to staff working in residence halls. It has been passed by both chambers and is now awaiting the Governor's signature.

Other issues

The Council on Faculty (CoF) has begun work on next year's legislative priorities—focusing on finding legislative pathways to guarantee funding for income-eligible students seeking a 4-year baccalaureate degree in our state's public higher education institutions.

In June 2024, CoF will convene a multistakeholder meeting, gathering various actors from across the state, to discuss barriers that prevent our state's students from accessing college. We hope that this will be the first step towards building common ground to improving college enrollment in Washington state.