

To: WWU Faculty Senate
From: Bidisha Biswas, Faculty Legislative Rep
Date: February 26, 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.

[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.

[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.

[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.

Other issues

Due to complications in the rollout of the federal Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), Washington's public 4-year institutions have extended the College Decision Day to **June 1, 2024**. This extension is in place to provide students and families with sufficient time to navigate the FAFSA/WAFSA process and make well-informed decisions regarding their higher education pathway. Western's FAFSA information page is available [here](#).

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.