

First Reading: August 30, 2016
Second Reading: September 6, 2016
Pass: September 6, 2016
Other:

Bill 3-16-F Bill to Financially Support and Partner with Western Kentucky University Student Legal Services

PURPOSE: For the Student Government Association of Western Kentucky University to financially support and partner with Western Kentucky University Student Legal Services.

WHEREAS: The mission of Western Kentucky University (WKU) Student Legal Services (SLS) is to provide WKU students with affordable access to legal services, and

WHEREAS: According to the WKU SLS website, “Our primary goal is to assist students in responding to legal problems that may be adversely affecting their well-being or otherwise interfering with their academic studies or goals. We particularly strive to assist students in resolving problems for which it would otherwise be difficult or impossible to obtain legal services at affordable prices. Assistance with legal problems is an essential service for students because legal problems can jeopardize a student's academic performance, development, and ultimately, the student's retention at WKU. WKU SLS assists in alleviating these problems in order to maximize the quality of student life and helps Western Kentucky University to accomplish its goal of student retention and enhancing the quality of student's University experience,” and

WHEREAS: WKU SLS is located in Tate Page Hall, Room 252, and, also according to the WKU SLS website, the office includes “an office for the clinic supervisor, a reception area for interns, a records room and two consultation rooms. In addition to this area, a small lobby is available for clients to wait for their consultation,” and

WHEREAS: Also according to the WKU SLS website, “Any student, full time or part time, is eligible to the services provided through Student Legal Services. If the issue is an ongoing legal problem, the student must initiate contact with the SLS Clinic during a time in which they are currently enrolled as a student,” and

WHEREAS: Last year (August - April) according to Julie Shadoan in Paralegal Studies, WKU SLS served 42 students, provided external referrals to another 28 students, provided educational programming to 11 University Experience classes, supervised 3 student interns, and conducted an estate planning workshop that resulted in the creation of 40 Digital Asset Directives and 52 Living Wills, and

WHEREAS: The WKU Student Government Association (SGA), on November 11, 2014, passed Resolution 7-14-F, in which the Purpose Clause stated “For the Student Government Association of Western Kentucky University to support the implementation of a student fee to financially support Western Kentucky University Student Legal Services,” and

WHEREAS: Because WKU SGA’s preferred student fee to of \$2.00 per semester (\$4.00 per year) to finance WKU SLS was never enacted, WKU SLS does not currently have the funding necessary to provide students with affordable access to legal services, and

WHEREAS: WKU SLS currently does not have a guaranteed source of funding to cover malpractice insurance costs, totaling \$2,500.00 per year. The American Bar Association defines legal malpractice as any act which is negligent or wrongfully executed by an attorney who causes monetary damages to his/her client. Legal malpractice can be perpetrated in any field of law. Insurance coverage may be purchased to provide monetary recourse for victims of legal malpractice. If a lawyer does have legal malpractice insurance typically the legal professional's insurance company will either defend the client's former attorney against the claims or allot resources to pay the client in the event that the defendant is found liable to the client, and

WHEREAS: Although it is not required by law, all practices are strongly encouraged to have this coverage, and

WHEREAS: In an effort to prioritize programs that have the capacity to greatly benefit students and provide a much-needed service, WKU SGA will pledge an annual commitment of \$2,500.00 (\$1,750.00 from Executive Discretionary Funding and \$750.00 from Legislative Discretionary Funding) to WKU SLS. WKU SLS will then designate the \$2,500.00 to finance malpractice insurance costs for the 2016-2017 year, and

WHEREAS: Precedent exists for such an act: WKU SGA has partnered with WKU Parking and Transportation Services (PTS) in recent years to provide students with the SGA Safe Ride/Purple Line Service, costing WKU SGA \$15,000.00 each year. In order for PTS to receive this funding, each Executive Cabinet in WKU SGA must determine if they want to finance this service; similarly, this WKU SGA/WKU SLS partnership will work the same way in order to continue to provide this service for students, and

WHEREAS: An effective partnership with WKU SLS will enable all students to afford legal services and legal counsel, which is a much-needed service at WKU.

THEREFORE: Be it resolved that the Student Government Association of Western Kentucky University to financially support and partner with Western Kentucky University Student Legal Services.

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