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THE WESTERN FRONT

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TUESDAY, MAY 16, 2017

Student convicted of sexual assault readmitted



**Western
Watchdog
Story**

**Erasmus Baxter
Asia Fields
Caleb Huisingsh**

THE WESTERN FRONT

*Content warning:
This story contains refer-
ences to sexual as-
sault and post-traumatic
stress disorder.*

A Western senior who was banned from

campus in winter 2015 after being charged with a felony count of raping another student has been readmitted to the university after pleading the case down to a lesser charge and serving jail time. He is taking classes this quarter, according to the Registrar's office.

Connor Patrick Griesemer, 24, pleaded guilty Aug. 24, 2015 to a gross-misdemeanor charge of fourth-degree assault

with sexual motivation, and was sentenced to 30 days in Whatcom County Jail, according to court records.

Wayne Rocque, Associated Students vice president for student life, criticized the university's decision to readmit Griesemer.

"The readmission of Connor Griesemer is a slap in the face to students that advocate for survivors, as well as sur-

vivors themselves and is a testament to the general complacency that plagues campuses across the country," Rocque said in an email to The Western Front.

Paul Cocke, university director of communications and marketing, declined to comment on the specific case, citing federal privacy law.

Cocke said the readmission process begins with an evaluation of the

situation and the student's ability to re-enter the campus community.

"The Dean of Students Office is responsible to first assess the community safety issue, which is the top priority for the campus, and for the individual to be able to be successful and avoid repeat offenses," Cocke said in an email.

In February 2015, Griesemer was found in violation of Western's

student code on sexual misconduct, according to a university incident report obtained in a Western Front public records request. He was prohibited from contacting the survivor, and suspended from campus through September 2016. However, he was allowed to stay on campus until he finished his last final exam in March, approximately

see *STUDENTS*, page 4

March returns to Mother's Day roots



TOP: A crowd of about 60 community members marched through Bellingham with a Mother's Day message of peace Saturday, May 13. **RIGHT:** Lisa Tenney, with the Whatcom Peace and Justice Center, hugs their child after speaking at the beginning of the march. Initiated by Ann Reeves Jarvis and made official by President Woodrow Wilson in 1914, Mother's Day was founded for mourning women to remember fallen soldiers and work for peace, according to National Geographic. *Read the full story at westernfrontonline.com*

// Photos by Rachel Postlewait



Sexual assault numbers flawed



**Western
Watchdog
Story**

Laura Place

THE WESTERN FRONT

*Content warning:
This story contains refer-
ences to sexual assault.*

The official university data for statistics of sexual assault involving Western students may underrepresent the problem.

The annual Security and Fire Safety Report compiled by the university shows a total of 19 reported cases of various forms of forcible sexual experiences from 2013-2015, with five specified instances of rape.

However, results from a 2016 Western Campus Climate survey show underreporting is a significant issue. According to the survey, around nine out of 10 sexual assault cases involving Western students go unreported.

Numbers in the safety report also leave out off-campus incidents, which the survey shows make up nearly 75 percent of

incidents involving students. (campus climate doc pg G21 and G20)

In addition, incidences of rape within these reports may be higher, as rape was not tracked as a category on its own before the Violence Against Women Act in 2015. Before then, incidents of rape were grouped under the category of "forcible sex offenses," which also included attempted rape, forcible sodomy and forcible fondling.

A closer look at rates of students who access sexual assault resources puts the larger issue of sexual assault into perspective.

Underreporting

The number of students accessing sexual assault resources on campus greatly outweighs the number of cases that end up being reported.

Consultation and Sexual Assault Support, or CASAS, is Western's main confidential resource for students who experience some form of sexual assault. It also

see *UNI.*, page 3



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**WESTERN
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**On stands Thursday
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BRIGHT COLORS ON A BRIGHT DAY



Students create their own tie-dye on the Communications Facility lawn Friday May 12. The temperature reached 59 degrees, according to The Weather Underground. Tie-dye has roots in Asia, Africa and South America. Bellingham has seen 0.16 inches of precipitation in May so far, at this point in April there had been 2.68 inches of precipitation. // Photo by Rachel Postlewait

Cops Box



Ding Dong Ditch

May 7, 2:45 a.m.

Police were called after a resident reported someone knocking on their door repeatedly in the 5800 block of Pacific Rim Way. No suspect was located.

Going Postal

May 8, 8:53 a.m.

A person called police after having received a series of suspicious letters in the 1000 block of N. Forest Street.

Beers and Ball

May 9, 1:09 p.m.

A special occasion liquor license was requested for a kickball tournament on the 500 block of West Holly Street.

Someone's Got a Bone to Pick

May 9, 5:00 a.m.

Bones were discovered in a wooded area on the 4400 block of Gooding Avenue. They have been photographed and processed for evidence.

Poke War Gone Wrong

May 11, 11:13 a.m.

Police were called after a subject received a threat on Facebook.

Balls Back

May 13, 6:02 p.m.

Neighbors in the 1600 block of Iron Street called police to report a particularly rowdy game of beer pong.

Dine 'n Dash

May 13, 7:32 a.m.

Police cited a man for shoplifting after he enjoyed a meal at a restaurant in the 500 block of W. Holly Street and left without paying.

Stolen Identity

May 15, 11:25 a.m.

A resident in the 600 block of 12th Street reported an unknown person attempting to open a credit card under his name.

Doggonit!

May 14, 9:32 a.m.

A man who escaped from a traffic stop was apprehended outside the city limits, thanks to the help of a Bellingham Police Department K9.

Compiled by Hannah Wong

The Western Front

The Western Front
Western Washington University
Communications Facility 222
Bellingham, WA 98225
Newsroom number:
360-650-3162
Email address:
westernfrontonline@gmail.com

Editor-in-Chief

Alec Regimbal

Managing Editor

Natalie Breymeyer

News Editors

Erasmus Baxter

Asia Fields

Features Editors

McKenna Cardwell

Ben Olson

Sports Editor

Hailey Palmer

Photo Editor

Rachel Postlewait

Daily Editor

Alex Halverson

Opinion Editor

Kaitlin Eslinger

Online Editor

Brooke Carlson

Social Media Manager

Laura Ann Poehner

Online Producer

Layne Carter

Copy Editors

Jordan Carlson

Haley Ausbun

Melissa McCarthy

Video Editor

Brie Cleveland

Photographers

Kirstyn Nyswonger

Jonathan Pendleton

Illustrator/ Cartoonist

Shannon DeLurio

Web Developer

Maxwell Prenderghast

Letters to the editor:

westernfront.opinion@gmail.com

Press releases:

wfpress.release@gmail.com

Faculty Adviser

Jack Keith

Jack.Keith@www.edu

Advertising Department

360-650-3160

Advertising Manager

Megan McGinnis

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Illustration on page 4 by Shannon DeLurio.

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University report likely underrepresents sexual assault

continued from page 1

offers services for survivors of other types of violence including domestic violence.

In the 2015 calendar year, 142 students accessed CASAS resources, according to documents obtained by The Western Front from a public records request. The number of reports that occurred that year was 11, indicating that around 92 percent of those students initially seeking resources did not file reports.

For the past five years, the number of students accessing CASAS resources per quarter has been between 25 and 48 students. As of the end of winter quarter this year, 82 students have accessed these services, with 37 students accessing during fall quarter and 45 in the winter.

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services, or DVSAS, is a local nonprofit that provides support services. Karen Burke, executive director of DVSAS, said obstacles arise for survivors because they frequently know their assailant.

"I think that victims are worried about long term implications - if they know that person and they report, what will that look like for them?" Burke said. "It's very frequently within a friend group, or someone in a community that they know casually, and there's the possibility that they might run into them again. And certainly on a campus, more so."

An additional email survey regarding sexual violence was sent out in May 2016 to all students and staff, which 1,358 students responded to.

The survey found that of students who had an unwanted sexual experience, 83 percent (350 out of 420) said it was perpetrated by someone they knew, and 61 percent (258 out of 421) said it was perpetrated by another Western student.

Survey indicates a larger problem

Similar to CASAS records, student responses to the survey show higher rates of sexual violence than what is in the university's Safety Report.

The report states that 14.32 percent of female respondents (121 out of 845) and 18.87 percent of transgender respondents (10 out of 53) have experienced non-consensual vaginal penetration when they were too intoxicated to stop what was going on.

Non-consensual vaginal

DVSAS, explained the vast number of factors that can act as barriers to reporting. For many victims, there ends up being more reasons not to file a criminal report than there are to proceed, Dombrowski said. (justine pg 3)

"Honestly, the reporting process is not survivor-centric. It is long, painful and can dredge up old memories and feelings that the survivor may have left behind them," Dombrowski said. "For someone who has already been through trauma, this is not appealing

were that students didn't think the incident was serious enough to report (307 of 395 students), not wanting any action taken (279 of 396 students) and not needing any assistance (240 of 392 students).

Underreporting isn't the only issue. The Safety Report's analysis of purely on-campus incidents fails to encapsulate the larger problem of sexual assault experienced by Western students.

Off-campus incidents

The results from the survey

not keeping her door locked after an intruder broke into her room and put on her clothes.

"Victim blaming is really what informs rape cultures that exist on campuses across this country," Rocque said. "Western is not an ivory tower. Western is just as complicit in their lack of engagement with sexual assault survivor protection as other campuses across this country."

Results from surveys of other state universities showed similarly low reporting numbers for sexual assault.

Information from official university records

3 reported forcible sex offenses in 2013

5 reported forcible sex offenses in 2014

5 reported cases of rape in 2015

Rape was grouped under "forcible sex offenses" until 2015

102 - 134
number of students who accessed CASAS over the last five years

82
number of students who accessed CASAS this year alone

Information provided by CASAS

Infographic by Layne Carter

27% on-campus incidents

73% off-campus incidents

Information from Campus Climate Report

penetration that occurred specifically through force was reported by 7.04 percent of women (59 out of 838) and 15.38 percent of transgender students (8 out of 52) who responded to the study.

The Campus Climate report goes on to say that of all the students who had unwanted sexual experiences, 8 percent ended up reported to Western resources.

Somewhere within the process of accessing resources and deciding whether or not to take further action, reports are shrinking dramatically.

The Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, or RAINN, reports that four out of five female student survivors (ages 18-24) do not end up reporting sexual assault to law enforcement.

Justine Dombrowski, an advocate for both CASAS and

or necessarily healthy."

Some people may also choose to file a protection order instead, Dombrowski said.

"Most of what I have seen has been filing for protection orders. In these cases, the perpetrator is not charged with anything and does not have a 'conviction' or sentence, but they have restrictions on their freedoms," Dombrowski said.

Dombrowski described how there are extra sets of barriers faced by male survivors due to masculinity standards that lower reporting numbers. Racial minorities also face more explicit discrimination when reporting, as well as LGBTQ and undocumented people, according to Dombrowski.

According to the survey, the three most common reasons for not reporting to Western and local law enforcement

indicate that a majority of incidents did not occur on campus.

Results show that 73 percent (305 out of 418) of unwanted sexual incidents occurred off campus, while 27 percent (113 out of 418) occurred on campus.

The report was featured in Washington State's 2016 Campus Sexual Violence Prevention Task Force Report. The report compiled sexual violence information from various universities across the state.

Western cases

AS Vice President for Student Life Wayne Rocque said victim blaming has impacted handling of many sexual assault incidents at Western. He cited the Highland break-in as one incident of victim-blaming, as an RA was blamed for

Where can you turn for help?

CASAS
(360) 650-3700
OM 558B

Western's Title IX Coordinator
Sue Guenter-Schlesinger
(360) 650-3307
OM 345

Student Health Center
(360) 650-3400

Counseling Center
(360) 650-3164
OM 540

University Police
(360) 650-3911



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ONLINE

Students critical of university's decision

Advocates say Griesemer's return may be traumatic for students

continued from page 1

a month later, according to university records.

The Western Front reached Griesemer via text and he declined to comment for this story.

Western has been under U.S. Department of Education investigation for how it handles sexual assault and misconduct cases since April 2015.

University documents referenced in this story were obtained via Western Front records requests.

Campus Concerns

In his email, Rocque said the AS Board was concerned with Griesemer's readmission.

"There has been a history of the Office of Student Life putting survivors of sexual assault in extremely unsafe and compromising situations," Rocque said. "The Associated Students [Board] and I am appalled at the recent decision to permit this student to attend classes on this campus without being transparent with our student body."

The Western Front has not been able to confirm if Griesemer's classes are on Western's campus or not.

Rocque and the AS Board encourage students to call the Office of the Vice President of Enrollment and Student Services, and the Office of Student Life, to demand transparency in light of this case.

"Do your research about how this university has handled sexual assault in the past and demand answers," Rocque said. "This decision goes against everything the students of Western Washington University stand for. This decision actively works against vulnerable student populations. Those that commit sexual assault are a threat to all students at Western."

Cocke said in some cases, the university lets previously

suspended students return only after those who filed complaints against them have graduated. In other cases, students are allowed to come back to campus and it is the Office of Student Life's responsibility to ensure the students do not have classes together.

"In all cases, every effort is made to ensure that the student/complainant reporting the concern has full access to their educational experience," Cocke said.

However, senior Martín Prado, an advocacy counselor with Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services (DVSAS) and member of Western's Empowerment and Violence Education, said the decision to let a known sexual assault perpetrator on campus can harm students' educational experience.

Prado said not all survivors react the same way, but a major aspect of recovery is regaining control of their lives and the spaces they occupy. He said that can be hard to do when they have to think about turning a corner on campus and running into a known perpetrator of a sexually motivated crime.

"Especially in a learning environment like Western, it would definitely make it harder [to begin recovery]," Prado said. "Of course [survivors] can be successful, but it would be easier to breathe if you knew the perpetrator wasn't anywhere near you, and it would be beneficial not having to worry about them doing it to someone else."

Griesemer was a visual journalism major and has worked on the staff of The Western Front. His major is now undeclared, according to the Registrar's Office.

Given the amount of small group and one-on-one work involved in senior level visual journalism classes, senior Kyra Taubel-Bruce, a visual journalism major, said she

wouldn't feel comfortable sharing a class with someone convicted of sexual assault.

"I worked one-on-one with a classmate in advanced visual journalism to put together our capstone project, and it did involve the two of us going different places, being in his car and being alone," she said. "I probably wouldn't feel comfortable if I knew the classmate I was working with had been convicted of sexual assault."

She said she is personally skeptical of the university's decision based on past handling of sexual assault cases and the ongoing investigations by the Department of Education.

"I want to think they have students' best interests at heart, and they are taking into consideration all the different possibilities and all the different questions that go into the readmission of this student," she said. "But, I think a lot of students would question that based on the university's track record."

University Discipline

According to Whatcom County Superior Court records, Griesemer originally faced a charge of second-degree rape, a felony. Prosecutors said he raped a female Western student following an off-campus party on Jan. 11, 2015.

After meeting with the survivor, Assistant Dean of Students Michael Sledge emailed Griesemer on Feb. 2, 2015 to schedule a student conduct review, according to university documents. The meeting was scheduled for Feb. 5, 2015.

At the meeting with university officials, Griesemer read a prepared statement denying the allegations and said he would not answer any questions, according to the documents.

After reviewing police documents, the university reports

Timeline of the case

Jan 11, 2015: Connor Griesemer arrested on suspicion of second degree rape

Feb 17, 2015: Dean's office sends Griesemer email saying he will be suspended after his last final

Feb 5, 2015: Student conduct meeting takes place after survivor informs university

March 13, 2015: Dean Ted Pratt denies Griesemer's appeal

March 16-20, 2015: Griesemer's suspension goes into effect during winter quarter finals week

Aug 24, 2015: Griesemer pleads guilty for fourth-degree assault with sexual motivation

Oct 27, 2015: Griesemer booked into jail; he was let out Nov 17, 2015

Sept 6, 2016: Griesemer's suspension ends; he is allowed to re-apply to the university

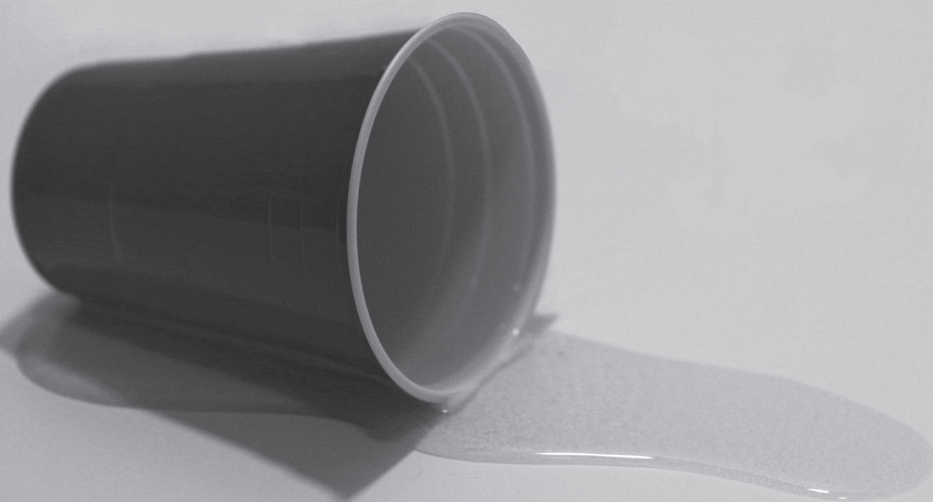
Infographic by
Layne Carter

Information obtained from public records requests and court documents sought out by The Western Front

indicate that Sledge emailed Griesemer on Feb. 17, 2015 informing him he had been found in violation of the student conduct code which states, "consent to any sexual

activity must be clear, knowing, and voluntary."

In the email, Sledge said he found it more likely than not that Griesemer had committed the acts of which he was



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accused. Sledge wrote that the suspension would not go into effect until after Griesemer completed his last final of the quarter. That quarter's finals week went until March 20, 2015 approximately a month after Sledge decided Griesemer would be suspended. The letter informed Griesemer that his suspension would end on Sept. 6, 2016, at which point he could apply for readmission.

Cocke said expulsions at Western are rare and are based on how severe the university sees the offense.

"The student conduct process is intended to be educational at its core," Cocke said. "If the person involved has gone through the process and is demonstrating by their actions they are responding in a positive manner, that certainly will be taken into consideration. But safety always is the top priority."

University records show Griesemer appealed the decision and was denied by Dean of Students Ted Pratt. In Pratt's March 13, 2015 written response to Griesemer's appeal, he called the assault a "bad decision."

"It is unfortunate that you [Connor] are so close to graduation and to have that journey interrupted by a bad decision influenced by alcohol," Pratt wrote. "I hope that this is a situation that is not to be repeated in your life experiences."

Court Decision

Griesemer ultimately pleaded guilty to a lesser charge than the original felony count of second-degree rape. On August 24, 2015 he pleaded guilty to fourth-degree assault with sexual mo-

tivation, a gross misdemeanor with a maximum penalty of one year in jail. The reduced charge meant he was not required to register as a sex offender.

Griesemer was ultimately sentenced to 30 days in Whatcom County Jail and ordered to pay \$2,000 in fines. He was booked into Whatcom County Jail on Oct. 27, 2015 and released Nov. 17, 2015, according to jail records. He was also issued a no-contact order regarding the survivor.

The survivor of the assault graduated in spring 2016, before Griesemer was allowed back on campus, according to the Registrar's office. She sought counseling for post-traumatic stress disorder from the assault and suffered frequent flashbacks and nightmares, according to court records.

University policy change

Multiple complaints have been filed with the Equal Opportunity Office (EOO) since 2012 regarding the Office of Student Life's handling of sexual assault and misconduct cases, as reported by The Western Front in Nov. 2016.

Students were concerned with what they saw as insensitivity and lack of transparency from Sledge during sexual misconduct investigations, as well as light punishments for those found guilty. An EOO investigation cleared Sledge of wrongdoing, but recommended additional training for Sledge on handling such cases.

Responsibility for handling these complaints was moved from the Office of

Student Life to the EOO in September 2016. The university felt this change would be beneficial to students, as it would consolidate sexual assault and misconduct investigations in a single office, Cocke told The Western Front in November. The decision came after an internal review and while a number of investigations into how Western handles sexual assault and misconduct cases were ongoing.

However, some still feel the university's response to concerns has been lacking.

"It has been conveyed to the Office of Student Life and the Vice President for Enrollment and Students Services, Eileen Coughlin, that sexual assault cases have been mishandled a number of times," Rocque said. "There has been little to no tangible action on ensuring the safety of survivors on the Western Washington University campus."

Prado said it is important for the university to have staff that those who have experienced sexually motivated crimes can trust.

"These topics are hard to talk about for many people, so if that trust isn't there, there are going to be large amounts of people not seeking help or resources, and not letting the university know what's going on," Prado said.

Western is currently under investigation by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights. The investigation began in April 2015, after a student sexual assault survivor filed a complaint with the federal government over how the university was handling sexual violence and harassment complaints.

Who writes Western Alerts?

Jane Footh

THE WESTERN FRONT

Recent debate over whether Western Alerts accurately and effectively communicate threats to student safety has led to questions about who actually writes them.

The answer is the Office of Communications, with the help of University Police.

Western Alerts are sent out when there are threats to the safety and health of the campus at large, Paul Cocke, university director of communications, said in an email.

The process of developing the alerts includes using templates, which Cocke said allows them to have the ability to quickly compose messages. The template language is altered to fit the context of the incident.

Some students feel the alerts leave out vital information.

Resident advisors have criticized the Western Alert that went out after Tanner Boyd, a former volunteer track coach, was arrested for allegedly breaking into Highland Hall dorms on Nov. 12, 2016.

The alert said: "University Police apprehended a suspect early Saturday morning in connection with thefts of clothing at the Highland Hall residential complex on campus."

Boyd was allegedly found wearing residents' stolen clothing. As The Western Front

reported on April 25, the resident adviser whose room Boyd broke into felt the alert didn't explain the full scope of the crime.

"Through the years, we have received criticism for information we included in Western Alert as well as information

we did not include," Cocke said. "Western Alerts by their nature are short and concise."

Cocke said this could be result of the 140 character maximum they must be within for the text messages. More detailed alerts are sent out via email, Cocke said.

"It is worth noting that Western sends out alerts far more often than many other public universities, primarily as a safety measure," Cocke said. "Students have told us they feel reassured knowing they will receive a Western Alert about a potential threat on campus."

The Western Alert system also includes posting on the emergency communication and university websites, posting on Western's social media desktop notifications on campus computers and voice messages over Western's fire alarm system.

Cocke said 96 percent of students, 74 percent of staff and 72 percent of faculty members have provided their cell phone numbers to Web4U to receive emergency text messages.



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BELLINGHAM GETS ANIMATED

Anime fans gather to celebrate their passion for animated characters

Rose Carr
THE WESTERN FRONT

Mario, Deadpool and Naruto came to life as anime lovers donned their carefully crafted costumes at the Bellingham Anime Convention.

"I started Bellingham Anime Convention eight years ago at the Bellingham Public Library with 20 attendees," Jennifer Lovchik, registration coordinator and director of finance for the Bellingham Anime Convention, or BA-CON, said. "We are hoping [to see] between 500 and 1,000 people."

Lovchik said it takes her team a full year to plan the event.

The convention hosted a variety of booths including 43 artists, eight vendors and six community tables Saturday, May 12 at Whatcom Community College.

"I like to support people who are passionate about something and I love cosplay personally, I think it looks so cool," Lovchik said. "So many of the teens I work with use this as a way of creative self-expression, so I love to facilitate that. That's where I got started doing it and that's why I continue to do it."

Attendee Bella Henriksen said she spent about \$250 for her full costume. That included specialty beads, vinyl, a wig and contacts. It took her about three months to finish.

"There's craftsmanship, armor, makeup, wig styling, there's even posing in character," Henriksen said. "You have to be a bit of a performance artist. It's transformative."

Anime Vocab

Cosplay: When people dress up in costumes to resemble their favorite characters.

Anime: A Japanese style of animation and drawing.

Henriksen began cosplaying about six years ago when a friend asked her to dress up.

She said she likes doing group cosplays and is slowly getting into cosplay competitions, where one could potentially win cash prizes for work done on costumes.

"I've found cosplaying in general has improved my self-esteem," Henriksen said. "It's improved how I interact with people."

Clare Duncan is a volunteer at BA-CON, and said she was into anime in middle school and early high school. She had friends that shared her same interest and invited her to group cosplay at Sakura-Con, a three-day anime convention in Seattle.

"There's also nostalgia in it for me," she said.

Duncan said she had never been to BA-CON, having recently moved to Bellingham, and said the event was better than she had expected, especially for a local convention, which in general aren't as popular as the larger, more well-known ones.

"I'm impressed by this one. I think it could start competing against some of the bigger conventions in a few years," Duncan said.

Jamie Campbell, founder of Arts by Jamie, has been selling her drawings, pins, bookmarks and fine art prints at conventions since she was 13, when an anime club she was a part of went to a convention. She thought she could try her hand at tabling.

"I've made \$200 to over \$1,000 at conventions," Campbell said.

Campbell said she takes certain things about a convention into consideration, like how long a convention has been around, how popular it is and its overall size.

"[These conventions] mean a lot to me," Campbell said. "It's doing what you love and it's in an environment I'm very comfortable in."

Kate Hinkle is the founder of Wispspit, a company that sells drawings of anime characters and cartoon cats.

"It's been a really good way to meet other artists and other people that are interested in the same stuff as me and to meet people that I normally wouldn't get to meet, because they're interested in my art," Hinkle said. "I get to share that with them, it's important [to me]."



ABOVE: People came to the convention in a variety of costumes. BELOW: Cosplayers sitting together at BA-CON Saturday, May 13. // Photos by Kirstyn Nyswonger



Mario and Princess Peach at BA-CON Saturday, May 13. // Photo by Kirstyn Nyswonger





BLACK HAIR POLITICS



Rahwa Hailemariam
THE WESTERN FRONT

Black hair isn't, and has never been, "just" hair.

Dean of students Ted Pratt was an undergraduate at Western in 1980.

Pratt said, it wasn't until the '80s that black hair products were available in Bellingham stores.

At the time, Pratt and a fellow Black Student Union official decided to go talk to stores in Bellingham about getting black hair-care products, since they couldn't find any to buy for themselves, Pratt said.

The manager of a Rite Aid began taking notes as they gave him a list of products and got in contact with companies that produce black hair products, Pratt said.

"They started a section down at Rite Aid," Pratt said. "And it's been there ever since."

Junior Jasira Andrus said she saw the obvious need for support of the black community in Bellingham, and was inspired to reach out to other black people to talk about hair.

Teaching each other about different hair routines and talking about new hairstyles and products is a way of rebuilding that community here, Andrus said.

"[Black hair] is shown to be dirty, nappy. It's not inherently a bad thing to have nappy hair, that's just a hair type," Andrus said. "Or on the flip side, it's exotified. It's never portrayed as just a part of a person."

A lot of people don't understand that black people's hair is something that has been shamed for a very long time, Andrus said.

"If I was to have my hair natural, in an afro, that could mean I may not be taken seriously in a job interview, or I would get profiled as a not-good person," Andrus said. "In reclaiming the styles, it's a way for us to say, 'No, we're not going to conform.' But it's also a very brave decision for a lot of people."

Freshman Selamawit Abraham said the afro is very political in both Africa and the Americas. Black hair is a policed feature because the dominant culture is afraid of not being able to communicate their power, Abraham said.

Policing black people's hair is also a way to control their class status, Abraham said.

In the United States, everything is so capitalistic that the slightest differences are made to be something people in power are able to profit off of, Abraham said.



Freshman Selamawit Abraham shows off her hair Friday, May 12. // Photo by Rahwa Hailemariam

By belittling an entire group, you have less competition and more chance to profit, Abraham said.

"If you can make an entire group of people feel smaller, they won't try to rebel. They won't try to be your competition, and you've got the entire group of people conditioned to believe that," Abraham said.

Freshman Ivonne Jean did an independent-study course on the politics of black hair in high school. She said having an afro is a challenge to the European beauty standards.

"[Black hair] is like saying that: I'm black and I'm okay with that. And you have to deal with it," Jean said. "It forces space for black culture and black voices, so I think that's why it's kind of met with resistance."

White people aren't as intimidated by afros anymore because, since the invention of perms, some are going for the curly look too, Pratt said.

"All of the things that used to be poked at about us became desirable. The afro was a big part of finding our identity, and displaying it with a sense of pride," Pratt said.

In recent years, the topic of black hair being "unprofessional" or "different" has brought attention to the issues many black people face in their everyday lives and workplaces.

"The afro was a big part of finding our identity, and displaying it with a sense of pride."

Tedd Pratt
Dean of Students

Songs such as "Don't Touch My Hair" by Solange Knowles and books like "The Politics of Black Women's Hair" by Althea Prince have opened up conversations about the topic.

Sophomore Ashley Lockett said viewing straight hair as professional and considering black hair unprofessional is a microaggression, which is a subform of racism.

"In this society, people do anything to kind of uplift the white community, even in forms of hair. They'll try to discriminate against people's hair that isn't the Eurocentric-based hair," Lockett said.



Illustration by Shannon DeLurio

Frontline: Western's greedy business hurts students

Opinions of the Editorial Board

Western is a business. In order to run a good business, costs must be low and profits must be high. Western's sure-fire way to ensure profit is through students' tuition. In that case, it's no wonder student enrollment reaches a new all-time high every fall quarter.

There were 15,332 students enrolled as of fall 2015. Although Western continues to grow, the resources provided to students continues to fall flat.

The Associated Students Child Development Center struggles with the limited space it is provided. Students and faculty want to utilize the center, but the center can only accommodate 59 children. There are 123 children on the waitlist.

The center has the same amount of space available since it opened in 1971, when enrollment was under 5,000.

The need for campus resources grows in accordance with enrollment, yet no change is being made.

This problem transcends the daycare center.

On-campus parking is a problem on everyone's mind, students and faculty alike. Parking passes are oversold annually, and finding a spot after 10 a.m. is near impossible. This comes down to space. Campus is only so big, and only a

set amount of students can realistically claim a parking space.

Western has taken steps to alleviate this issue by providing bus passes and the Lincoln Creek Park & Ride. This, however, forces students to be reliant on the bus system which is gaining its own reputation for being unreliable.

If Western continues to push for increased enrollment every year, the administration needs to make

sure students have the basic ability of getting to campus.

But then again, Western doesn't do much to make sure students can even get into the classes they need to graduate.

Students, especially in STEM programs, are having to deal with bottleneck classes which prevent them from registering for the classes needed to graduate on time. There are too many students in the major

and not enough classes. Students are instead left waiting around, while still taking classes not necessarily needed — still giving Western the tuition money it wants, even if it comes at the expense of students' success.

Student well-being is also neglected. Western's on-campus Counseling Center doesn't meet the national student-to-counselor ratio recommendation. Due to underfunding, the Counseling Center's resources are limited even though the demand is higher than ever.

These resources are included in tuition. Students should have access to them.

There is nothing wrong with expanding our university. The problems lie behind the motivations. Western is a business, first and foremost. The goal of expanding is to further its profits. To keep costs low, the administration aims to spend as little as possible. But if Western can't provide tangible resources for its students, more students shouldn't be admitted. The problem will only get worse.

Until the needs of current students are prioritized, Western needs to put a cap on enrollment. Students shouldn't have to sacrifice necessary resources just so Western can save a buck.

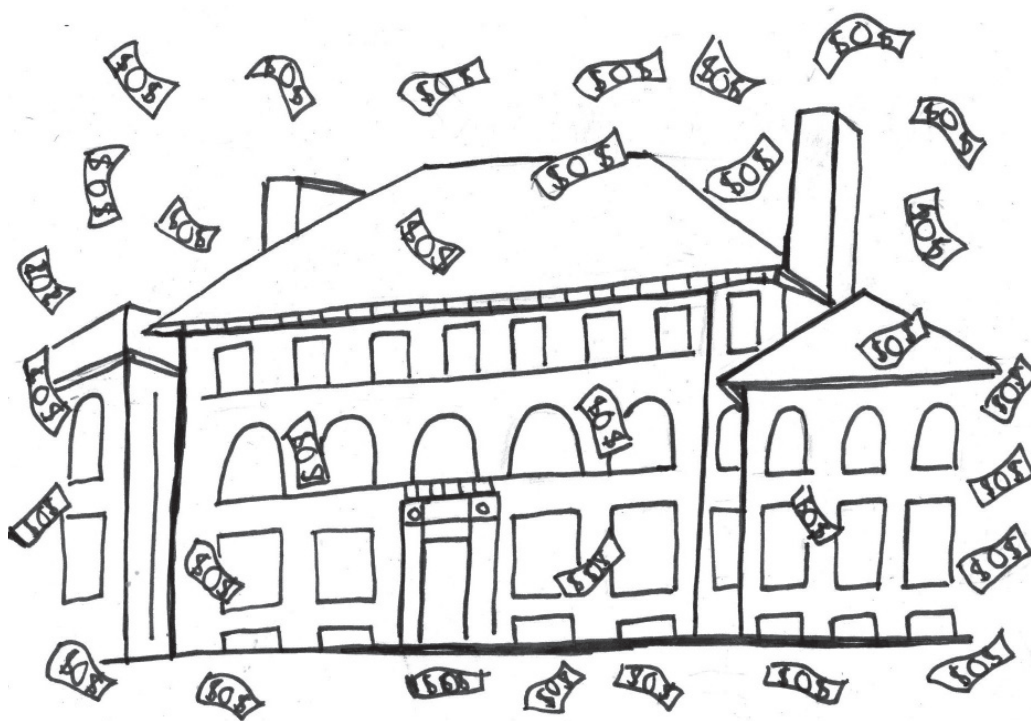


Illustration by Shannon DeLurio

The Western Front Editorial Board consists of Kaitlin Eslinger, Alec Regimbal and Natalie Breymeyer



"I did. I voted for my friends."

Ethan Katz

Senior, manufacturing and supply chain management



"I did, because I wanted to make sure that we still had our transportation next year."

Brenna Roach

Freshman, French



"No, I did not. I'm too busy to even think about other things besides school right now, so it didn't even cross my mind."

Matt Littleton

Sophomore, chemistry

Aggies end men's baseball season

Vikings finish their season with a 17-6 overall record



Men's baseball worked its way through the loser's bracket, but lost to Utah State in the championship game. // Photo courtesy of WWU Baseball

Katie Webber
THE WESTERN FRONT

The Western men's baseball team ended its season with a loss in the regional championship game against Utah State University.

The Vikings competed in the Northern Pacific Conference Regional Tournament

from May 12-14 in Boise, Idaho.

Western began the double elimination tournament on Friday, May 12 with an 11-7 loss against Utah State, which put them in the loser's bracket.

Senior head coach and first baseman Conner Celli said the team fought until the last inning and out.

"After an [hour-long] rain delay and tying it up, it would have been very easy to fold and throw in the towel right then and there, but throughout the year this team did not do that," Celli said.

The Viking's second and third games of the tournament were on Saturday, May 13, with a 13-1 win against the

University of Oregon, and a 24-7 win against their rival, Gonzaga University.

"We rose to the occasion and knew our backs were against the wall," Celli said. "We just didn't want to go home, and we came out, and played like there was no tomorrow."

all wanted to keep going, but in the end, the cards didn't fall our way," Hudkins said.

He said they are going to keep getting better as a team.

"All I can say is next year, we're going to be back in regionals and we hope to take it further than we did this year and further than we did

"We all had an amazing fight. We all had the heart. We all wanted to keep going."

Marvin Hudkins

Second and third baseman

Western played Utah State in the championship on Sunday, May 14, losing in a close 4-3 game.

Junior second and third baseman Marvin Hudkins said it wasn't how they expected the game to go, but they gave it everything they had.

"We all had an amazing fight. We all had the heart. We

last year," Hudkins said. "We hope that the Western legacy will live on and every team from here on out will make it to regionals and hopefully make it to nationals."

The Vikings ended their 2017 season as Northern Pacific North Conference Champions with a final overall record of 17-6.



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NOTICE OF POSSIBLE RULE MAKING

Preproposal Statement of Inquiry (per RCW 34.05.310)

Subject of Possible Rule Making: WAC 516-52-010
Control of Dogs and Other Service Animals

Statutes Authorizing the University to Adopt Rules on this Subject: RCW 28B.35.120

Reasons why rules on this subject may be needed and what they might accomplish: To review and amend Western's rule to address animals and pets on campus, as well as service animals and exceptions.

Process for developing new rule: Agency study.

Interested parties can participate in the decision to adopt the new rule and formulation of the proposed rule before publication by sending written comments or inquiries to Jennifer Sloan, Rules Coordinator:

Mail: Western Washington University
Rules Coordination Office
516 High Street, MS 9015
Bellingham, WA 98225

Email: Jennifer.Sloan@wwu.edu

Opinion: NBA eligibility rules need to change

Current rules for draft declaration benefit no one

Nick Vitalis

THE WESTERN FRONT

Lebron James, Kobe Bryant, Amar'e Stoudemire.

In addition to being stars in the NBA, these players have another thing in common: They were drafted straight out of high school, something not possible today with the NBA's new eligibility requirements.

The rules for eligibility to enter the NBA draft have changed over the years, partially due to the Seattle SuperSonics and hall-of-famer Spencer Haywood back in the early '70s. During that time, you had to be four years removed from your high school graduation to be drafted.

Haywood signed with Seattle just three years from his graduation. After receiving threats to void his contract from the NBA, Haywood sued the league on antitrust grounds. He won his case in the Supreme Court with a vote of 7-2.

After that decision, high schoolers were allowed into the draft, and college under-

classmen were allowed to leave college early. However, not many players actually declared out of high school until Kevin Garnett did in 1995.

Following that, the floodgates opened: Many future perennial All-Stars flooded the league over the next 10 years. When it was time for a new Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), they agreed on a new set of rules that represent the current restrictions: A player must be 19 years old to be drafted, and one year removed from high school.

This has created the current "one-and-done" landscape in college basketball: Talented players who go to college for one year, and then immediately leave for the draft. For some famous programs such as the University of Kentucky, this rule has been used almost to abuse, recruiting top prospects year after year, with most leaving right away.

Almost no one benefits from this system.

College basketball loses under these rules. It hurts the integrity and amateurism of

collegiate sports that has defined it throughout its history. Top school programs are essentially one-and-done NBA mills, grabbing up and churning out prospects for the NBA.

For players who are ready and able, and whose families are financially strapped, spending a year in college is a year where they can't maintain financial stability.

In addition, a year spent in college is a year they are susceptible to catastrophic injury. This would prevent them from ever being able to provide for their family in the way the NBA would allow them to.

Even the NBA doesn't really benefit much. One major reason the NBA did this was to protect franchises from making draft mistakes that hurt the team, selecting enticing high school players who end up not being ready.

However, Tom Ziller of SB Nation performed an analysis of the success rate of top-10 picks and found very little difference before and after the rule change.

It seems, then, the only dif-

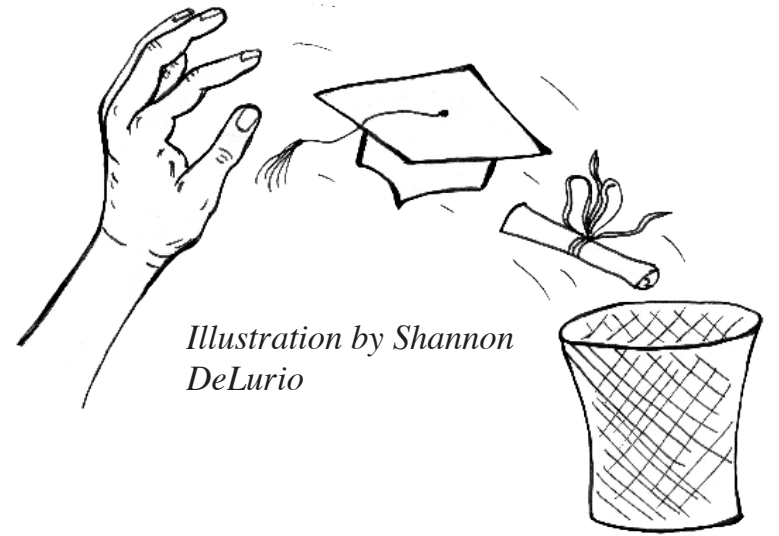
ference is that now, these one-and-done's are more marketed while in college, and therefore easier to profit off once they hit the NBA.

The NBA must change its policy; this much is clear. I think the NBA should follow the MLB's lead on this. Current MLB policy is high schoolers must either be drafted before attending college, or spend three years at a college before getting drafted.

I think this is a best of both worlds scenario for all those involved. Of course, there is

no perfect solution. It just isn't feasible with this many stakeholders. However, the NBA must consider what does the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

For the NBA, the one-and-done system hasn't accomplished its goals statistically. For something they gain so little from, and hurts the sport and players so much, there isn't a reason to keep this policy. In honor of the game, it needs to change.

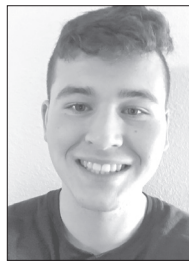


From the sidelines



Brooke Carlson
Online Editor

Every Looney Tunes character from "Space Jam." The beauty of the "Space Jam" crew is the chemistry they have together. They are the prime example of the classic underdog that we've all grown to know and adore.



Jake Gregg
Reporter

Tommy Riordan Conlon from the movie "Warrior." The sheer power in his boxing ability made for some epic scenes. Tommy has an emotional backstory, showing he has a much deeper conflict than just a boxing tournament.



Alex Halverson
Daily Editor

Happy Gilmore from the eponymous Adam Sandler movie. Gilmore's mediocrity in hockey and unconventional talent in golf puts him ahead of both. Admit it, every time you're at the driving range, you take a running start.



Katie Webber
Reporter

Rocky Balboa from the "Rocky" movie series. He is the icon of fictional underdogs, who overcame adversity and poverty to become a boxing legend, national hero and heavyweight champion.

Opinions from The Western Front staff on all things sports

Who is the best fictional sports character and why?

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