Spring 2010

SB20-09/10: WWAMI Program

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The Associated Students of The University of Montana

Resolution Regarding WWAMI Program

March 10, 2010

Senate Bill SB20-09/10

Authored by: Kip Barhaugh, ASUM Senator

Alison Kilts, ASUM Senator

Sponsored by: Matthew Fennell, ASUM President

Jake Armstrong, ASUM Business Manager

Whereas, the Wyoming Washington Alaska Montana Idaho (WWAMI) partnership started in 1973 with The University of Washington School of Medicine.

Whereas, The WWAMI program allows for medical students in said western states to pay in-state tuition at The University of Washington Medical School.

Whereas, the number of WWAMI students from Montana started out at 10 in 1973 and was increased to 20 in 1975. It has stayed at this number since then, despite previous economic hardships.

Whereas, Montana currently ranks 43rd in the US in medical school seats per capita.

Whereas, currently in Montana 55 of 56 counties are designated in whole or part as health profession shortage areas.

Whereas, The National Health Service Corps currently lists 59 primary care openings within the state of Montana.

Whereas, Idaho cut WWAMI student seats to 16 some years ago and it took 20 years to restore these student seats back to the original 20.

Whereas, the Board of Regents is looking to cut the number of Montana WWAMI seats by two. This will reduce the number of sponsored students to 18 in order to address the Montana University system budget shortfalls in the coming fiscal year.

Whereas, these projected cuts come at a time when the Montana physician healthcare workforce shortage is a significant issue. There are currently 9 Montana counties completely without primary care physicians.

Whereas, this shortage is expected to worsen in the coming years and for the last 5 years, the WWAMI program has worked to funnel new physicians into these rural areas.

Whereas, programs like, The Montana Targeted Rural Underserved Track (MT TRUST), which works to return WWAMI students into rural areas of Montana, and The WWAMI Rural Integrated Training Experience (WRITE), which places students in rural clinics for 5 months of education and continues to expand.
Whereas, the Montana WWAMI program brings back 60% of doctors to the state.

Whereas, WWAMI has in the past headed, and continues to head, efforts to return Montana medical students to these rural areas to meet the physician demand throughout the state.

Therefore Let It Be Resolved that the Associated Students of the University of Montana (ASUM) and the students of The University of Montana do not support the cut of Montana WWAMI student seats proposed by the Board of Regents.

Let It Be Further resolved that this resolution be sent to each regent on the Board of Regents, President Dennison, and President Cruzado of Montana State University.

Passed by Committee: _________________________, 2010

Passed by Senate: _____________________________, 2010

__________________________________________  ______________________________________
Andrew Dusek,                                 Emily May,
Relations and Affairs Chair                  Chair of the Senate