Alaska Association of Student Governments
Resolution # 4
WWAMI Funding
Submitted by: Eagle River High School
Submitted: April 8, 2019

Be it resolved by the Alaska Association of Student Governments

1. Whereas, WWAMI stands for Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho;

2. Whereas, WWAMI has five primary goals, which include:
   a. providing publicly supported medical education
   b. increasing the number of primary care physicians, especially in underserved areas
   c. providing community-based medical education
   d. expanding graduate medical education (residency training) and continuing medical education
   e. providing all of this in a cost-effective manner;

2. Whereas, students who enter the program are dual enrolled at UAA and the University of Washington School of Medicine and complete 18 months of medical school;

3. Whereas, Alaska gets 20 seats in the program, receiving about 90 applicants each year;

4. Whereas, WWAMI allows Alaska’s medical students to train all four years in their home state, with their first two years at the UAA campus;
5. **Whereas**, the third and fourth years of medical school is comprised of “clerkship” rotations in different medical specialties;

6. **Whereas**, these clerkships can be taken in any five of the WWAMI participating states, however, students who take the “Alaska track” can take nearly all of these in Alaska;

7. **Whereas**, WWAMI is a medical school program, not a premedical program;

8. **Whereas**, Alaska has a shortage of physicians; specifically primary care, psychiatric care, and emergency medicine;

9. **Whereas**, Alaska needs 60+ physicians each year to meet demand;

10. **Whereas**, WWAMI contributes 14+ physicians each year to help meet this need;

11. **Whereas**, the baseline physician requirement in the United States is 291 physicians per 100,000 people;

12. **Whereas**, all five participating WWAMI states do not meet this requirement;

13. **Whereas**, Alaska only has 264.3 physicians per 100,000 people;

14. **Whereas**, according to Foundations Alaska WWAMI interim director Megan Ritter, no other school in the nation supplies as many physicians as the Alaska WWAMI program;

15. **Whereas**, according to UW's Suzanne Allen, Alaska has the fourth-best return rate for medical school students, behind only Texas, California, and Wyoming;

16. **Whereas**, since its creation in 1971, almost 500 Alaskans have gone on to become physicians;

17. **Whereas**, getting physicians to come to Alaska and stay is a big problem; however, through the WWAMI program and its five-state partnership, students from other states get the chance to visit and work in Alaska;

18. **Whereas**, the State of Alaska funds the WWAMI loans;
19. Whereas, the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE) provides approximately $11.2 million or 579 WWAMI loans;

20. Whereas, about 55 percent of WWAMI borrowers are licensed physicians practicing medicine in Alaska;

21. Whereas, the state pays about half of the tuition for Alaska students in the program;

22. Whereas, graduates who don't return to Alaska are required to pay the state back;

23. Whereas, Alaska Gov. Mike Dunleavy has proposed cutting nearly $3.1 million in state funding for the WWAMI program, which means a 100% reduction in state funds for the second through fourth years of students' medical education;

24. Whereas, if cut, it would make it difficult for the program to survive;

25. Whereas, if cut, Alaska will be the only state to not fund education;

26. Whereas, until the state’s budget is balanced, the funding for the WWAMI program should be cut by 50%;

Therefore be it resolved by the Alaska Association of Student Governments, that we as a collective group support a 50% cut of the WWAMI program in Governor Dunleavy’s fiscal year 2020 budget, rather than the proposed 100% cut.

Works Cited

https://www.uwmedicine.org/school-of-medicine/md-program/wwami

https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/academics/college-of-health/departments/wwami/about-wwami/index.csh.html

Passed unanimously by the 2019 Spring Conference GA at Bethel Regional High School

AASG Vice President, Kyle Hasse

AASG Executive Director, Denise Greene-Wilkinson