

Virtual WSU Global Campus Town Hall 2019

ANDRIA DONNENWERTH: Good evening, and thank you for coming to our virtual town hall with Dave Cillay, vice president of academic outreach and innovation, and Morgan Atwood, ASWSU Global president. My name is Andria Donnenwerth, and I am the Global Connections program coordinator. At Global Connections, we provide co- and extracurricular opportunities for online students wherever they have an internet connection.

This event will be recorded. So we ask that you stay on mute and disable your video, so that our main presenters can be seen and heard. During tonight's conversation, we will hear insights about Global Campus and answer your questions. We received some questions already from students, but encourage you to continue to ask more by typing them in the chat box.

To keep tonight's conversation productive, please be conscious of the following guidelines. Dave and Morgan are here tonight to address your questions, thoughts, and concerns about issues that impact all Global Campus students. We'll stay as long as you need for your questions, to talk through them. When raising a comment or question, please do not use individuals' names, including those of professors, peers, or staff. If you do have an issue with specific individuals, please bring that concern to your advisor or to Debbie O'Donnell, director of student services.

Please be mindful of the Cougar tradition and use respectful language. If you have any IT issues, please type them into the chat box, and I or another moderator will assist you. Now I'd like to turn the presentation over to Morgan Atwood.

MORGAN ATWOOD: Hello, everyone. Thank you again for coming tonight to the town hall. I wanted to first start off by just talking about myself and what ASWSU Global is. So ASWSU Global is Associated Students of Washington State University Global campus. So we represent all Global Campus students.

I started about a year and a half ago as a senator, and then I became the global Cougar Success Program manager, which is a involvement program. And then I, shortly thereafter, became the director of legislative affairs and spent the session lobbying for Global Campus students. And then I was elected vice president. So that is my history with ASWSU Global-- a lot of positions in a short amount of time. And I'm just really excited, really passionate, to represent you all. And now I'm going to pass over to Vice President Dave Cillay.

DAVE CILLAY: Thanks, Morgan. Yeah, I want to echo that. Thank you all for coming tonight. I'm looking forward to our conversation. They've asked me to talk a little bit about my history here at WSU. So I actually came to WSU in early 2000 to run a graduate program in instructional design. I was going to be here, I don't know, maybe two or three years, and I was going to move on.

Part of my assignment was with this odd program called the Distance Degree Program. And I didn't know that much about it, but it was an operation that allowed students to complete coursework in their degrees at a distance. And the way it worked, it was really interesting. So students would get these study packs. They'd get a bunch of pre-stamped envelopes. They'd work through these study packs, write out their assignment or type out their assignment, fold it up, put it in the envelope and mail it to the Distance Degree Program.

The Distance Degree Program would open up the envelope. They'd look at the assignment, put it in an envelope for the appropriate faculty member, mail it to the faculty member. Then do the-- and then the faculty member would grad it, mark it up, put it in an envelope, mail it back to Distance Degree, and Distance would mail it back to the student. And so that really was the beginnings of this program.

And then we started exploring, so what does online look like? And how do we create an opportunity for students to complete their coursework over the internet, on a computer? And how do we make sure that we get the courses built so that folks who are on-- I don't know if you remember modems, but-- a 14.4 baud modem can still be able to get that coursework. And so we were trying to be really strategic, innovative, but also ensuring that we had access.

So long story short, the Distance Degree Program evolved into the Center for Distance and Professional Education. Then in 2012, we launched the Global Campus. And that really was the beginning of thinking about our online student population as part of a campus, as a unique cohort, a place where folks can come and get a quality, quality education. And as you can see, my two or three-year stint has turned into more like a 17-year stint. I've really enjoyed this place. I love what I do. I love working with the students, and I love the mission of the Global Campus and AOI. So with that, Morgan, I'll turn it back over to you.

MORGAN ATWOOD: Awesome. So our first question-- so I should actually start off by saying that we took all the questions that were submitted, and I compiled them to make questions, based off of the shared themes. If you don't feel like your question was asked, you are more than welcome to type it into the chat box, and we will make sure that it gets answered during that open question and answering forum.

So now to start off the first question, why do you, Dave, enjoy working in academic outreach and innovation?

DAVE CILLAY: You know, it's probably the same reason I enjoy working at a land-grant university. The mission of a land-grant is to provide access to research and education to the citizens of the state. And I think that's just such a noble mission, of trying to find innovative ways to connect the university to the state and individuals back to the university.

From a personal standpoint, it's the students who are part of Global and AOI that are so special. I mean, I get the opportunity to interact with students throughout the year, but especially at our graduation ceremonies. The stories that are told at those ceremonies are so inspiring.

Sometimes it chokes you up. But in the end, we're doing that good work, and it feels good to be part of that.

MORGAN ATWOOD: Awesome. The next question is, how does Academic Outreach and Innovation fit within Global Campus?

DAVE CILLAY: So I guess we should flip that. So Academic Outreach and Innovation is an umbrella organization. And one of the pillars within AOI is the Global Campus. There's also Learning Innovations. There's our Learn 365, which is summer session, winter session, and intercession. Then there's also conferencing and professional education that's part of-- is part of that work.

MORGAN ATWOOD: Awesome. The next question is, what vision does Academic Outreach and Innovation have for Global Campus? And what do you hope to see Global Campus become?

DAVE CILLAY: So that's an interesting question. So the first part is one where we created AOI to create a single door that faculty and students could walk through to understand how to access Washington State University. Before we had AOI, extended sessions and video conferencing, academic technology, and Global Campus were separate units. By pulling those units together into one single organization, faculty who were teaching at a distance, whether it's through Zoom or video conferencing or Blackboard or through summer online in Pullman, they had one place to go. And they could get support in that spot, in that one place.

In terms of what vision we have for Global Campus-- so my vision is that we truly create an engaged student experience. So it's not just about accessing your online class. It's also about accessing all of those experiences that come with a higher education, with relationships, events, activities, participation, service. All of those things need to be part of that campus. And we've got a lot of that now, but I think we can really enhance and grow that experience for students.

MORGAN ATWOOD: Awesome. So the next question we have is, is the university looking at ways to enhance the Global Campus experience through technological means, for example, AR, VR, mixed reality?

DAVE CILLAY: You bet, yeah. We have a unit in our organization in AOI that's charged with exploring these new types of experiences for students. But again, we have to balance, just like I was talking about in the early days of the web, we have to balance access, as well. Some of those activities demand quite a bit of connectivity. And so we want to make sure that we're not isolating individuals by implementing an approach that they can't access.

I'd also argue-- I'd also make the case that the technology is extremely important. But I think we can also enhance the personal experience. It's that human connectivity, that individual that can mentor you, that can instruct, that can connect, that can be a peer relationship. And continuing to find those activities and approaches that build those relationships among, between, our

faculty and students and our students and students, is something we also need to keep exploring, as well.

MORGAN ATWOOD: That's so awesome. I know, for things that I've seen, is that yeah, a lot of universities have been looking at different ways to approach things online, like eSports, and things like that. And I think that's really cool that you are looking into that and seeing that as a possible, one day, being a form of more ways to interact with each other.

DAVE CILLAY: Well, and building on that, it's we are dependent on you all to understand what's working well, what's not working well, what opportunities, possibilities you see, where we might be able to move in that direction. You are an essential part of our future. And so I want to make sure that you are all empowered to identify opportunities that can improve what we do and what you receive.

MORGAN ATWOOD: Absolutely. So if you all hear that, they want to hear what you have to say. So always feel free to reach out. The next question, we'll move on to the next question, and that is, who are our vital competitors at this moment and in the future?

DAVE CILLAY: Yeah. I understand the question. I really don't see competition, per se. And what I mean by that is-- well, let me let me answer that question first, and then I'll get to more of the nuance. When we first started this, we were one of very few universities in the country that offered a degree at a distance. Now if you look around the country, almost every public university has online programs. They do it differently than we do. We do it differently than they do. But there's just more and more acceptance of online education as a valid and quality way to deliver a degree.

And so the marketplace is much bigger than it was when we first started. But I would argue, we're really looking for students that want to be Cougs. They want to be part of this family. They want to be connected through Washington State University. And so there is no competition for that. We are attracting folks that really want to be part of this institution, get their degree from Washington State University, and be part of that alumni for the rest of their life.

MORGAN ATWOOD: And that's a really valuable thing, to think about the fact that your university is not just trying to get anyone. That makes it less about making money, but actually making sure that you're getting a well-rounded university experience of being a Cougar. And the fact that Global Campus is able to bring that to students all around the world is just amazing.

And so I don't see any competition either. It's the type of experience you're going for. If you're going for just a degree, there might be-- there's those places where you're in and out. But this is really you're here for the experience and to have the education brought to you.

DAVE CILLAY: Yeah, yeah, that's right. I mean, we have a saying here. We don't say it too publicly, but we don't want students that want to click a button and get a degree. We need

students that have strong educational goals. They know where they want to be, and they want to be part of this university.

I got my PhD from Washington State University. And it's amazing. I travel all over the place. And I tell you-- if I have any Cougar gear on, I can guarantee you that almost one person, maybe more, will give me a Go, Cougs. We're everywhere. And it is a family. It's fun.

MORGAN ATWOOD: I love that. And it's cool to think about, at least from what I've noticed, a lot of faculty, administration, and staff-- a lot of them also got their degrees at Washington State University. So we have the Cougar spirit, and we want to stay with it.

DAVE CILLAY: Yeah.

MORGAN ATWOOD: So the next question is, which name do you like better-- WSU Online or WSU Global Campus? ? Why

DAVE CILLAY: OK, well, I think WSU Online is more descriptive. But I prefer WSU Global Campus. It really describes what we are, right? You're not just coming to get a degree. You're coming to a campus, and that campus is filled with all types of diverse experiences that you don't necessarily get just in the classroom. The classrooms are very important, but this is a holistic, engaged experience that is reflected the moniker Global Campus.

MORGAN ATWOOD: Absolutely. I agree. And looking at our demographics, we have students all over the world. So really we are global. And that really is the name that describes us so well.

DAVE CILLAY: I agree.

MORGAN ATWOOD: So the next question is more situation-- well, it's more about the experience through learning. And it's-- Global Campus students sometimes feel like, since they are not on campus, they're forgotten about, when it comes to Washington State University system. What is being done to ensure that our campus's needs aren't being overshadowed?

DAVE CILLAY: Yeah, that's right. And we do we do hear that comment from time to time from in courses, outside of courses, in services. I guess I can assure you that AOI and Global Campus staff meet with personnel in the WSU system to make sure that the services provided to Global students are on par with the services provided to campus-based students. I will say that there are, hopefully, situations that don't always mirror that. What I would encourage you to do is let your advisor know when you have a poor experience with a particular service. And then we can work to address that with the director of that service, wherever that service lives.

MORGAN ATWOOD: Awesome. And I can really attest to that. Just serving as president, I have seen Academic Outreach and Innovation work tirelessly, meeting with administration, really advocating for us at all times. They really do care about the student, and that is what comes first, is all of us. They want us to have the best experience possible, and they're willing to work

as hard as they can and as hard as possible to make sure that that is equitable and to all the other campuses.

DAVE CILLAY: I appreciate that, Morgan. The other thing I'll say-- the fact that my title is a vice president-- and it's great for me-- but I think, more importantly, it gives me access to the highest levels of administration here at the University, so that when I do understand and hear those issues, I'm able to take that to the president's cabinet or to the provost council, and I know I'm being heard. So I think that's a statement by the University that this Global Campus is extremely important to the University and our mission.

MORGAN ATWOOD: Awesome. We all really appreciate you working so tirelessly to really advocate for us.

DAVE CILLAY: Thank you.

MORGAN ATWOOD: Oh yeah. The next question is about an experience with instructors. So it says, many of the instructors from my online classes have been based on a physical WSU campus and do not always understand the unique challenges facing online students. Is there currently a training program about effective online teaching practices that includes an overview of the unique concerns facing online students? If so, is it a required training program? And if not, is there plans to instigate one?

DAVE CILLAY: Yeah, that's a great question. So our approach right now is one where every faculty member who designs a course works with an instructional designer or web developer, videographer, ADA compliance folks. And as they're walking through the course development experience, the focus really is on the student. We're not trying to translate a face-to-face experience into the online environment.

What we're trying to do is create that core space that fits that course and the online experience for our students. And so that's really where the faculty member gets an understanding of how to be effective in the online class. There is no mandatory training. So if a faculty member doesn't necessarily develop the course, they may not have walked through that process. We do reach out to those faculty to help them understand how to be effective online. We have talked about making it mandatory, that if you're going to teach in the Global Campus, you're going to go through this training program.

The other challenge we have-- and it's more philosophical than practical-- is we try to mirror the expectations in Global just like we would on Pullman. And there is no mandatory training for Pullman faculty or Vancouver faculty to teach in a classroom. So does that set us apart? And again, I know that's more philosophical, but we've really tried to not implement anything that makes us look different, right? But I do think there will come a time where we will look at some mandatory trainings in the online space.

MORGAN ATWOOD: Thank you so much. I have a follow-up question. So if someone is experiencing issues with an instructor, what do you suggest their course of action be?

DAVE CILLAY: So there are a couple of paths. If you're having a issue with an instructor, contact the instructor. Oftentimes, faculty, they don't realize, recognize, that an individual is having a problem with a particular track that they take. And I find faculty, for the most part, pretty open to having that conversation, as long as, like Andrea said in the beginning of the conversation, do it like a Cougar. Be respectful. Make it informational. Don't make it personal. Talk about the issues that you're having and work with the faculty to resolve those issues.

If you find that you can't find common ground, you work with the department chair. So go to the chair and talk with them about the problems you're having with that particular faculty member. And then you also have access to your advisors. And if you're able to make us aware of issues, we can work-- we can reach out to individual faculty to help them understand best practices for a particular problem that they may be having.

MORGAN ATWOOD: Awesome. Thank you so much. The next question is, have there been any thoughts to having virtual classes, maybe utilizing something like Zoom, to create more of a college classroom experience? And then, I find I am more involved and interested in a class the more interaction I can have with a professor, even if it's just watching a prerecorded video of a lecture.

DAVE CILLAY: Yeah, so I think there's two parts to that question. So we do have a number of courses that have free preloaded video lecture content in them. But every course is different. Some courses don't, some courses do. It really comes down to the preference of the faculty member of how they want to build their content, through our instructional design group.

The other, the second-- or the first part of the question was about synchronous connections within the online courses. We've talked about this for some time. We're interested in it, but really, what we're finding from our advisors, is if a course does have a synchronous component, most students won't sign up for it. And so those courses don't fill, and then they don't make. And so we've really been hesitant to put that synchronous activity into many courses, because really, students are voting with their feet for that type of experience. They really need something that's asynchronous that allows them to work at their own pace.

MORGAN ATWOOD: Absolutely. I've found that from personal experience. I have a similar outlook, in that I like to be able to do things on my own. I do like the video lectures, though, because I feel like sometimes, things are better explained by a video or a lecture than reading it in a textbook.

DAVE CILLAY: You bet. You bet That's right. And we are encouraging our faculty to use Zoom for virtual office hours. That's one things that we're really-- we're really pushing.

MORGAN ATWOOD: Oh, that's exciting. I love that virtual office hours, because you can just go in and talk to your instructor and get some help.

DAVE CILLAY: Right.

MORGAN ATWOOD: So the next few questions are about Blackboard, the core space. The first one is, why does the Blackboard calendar not reflect the classes and not able to sync?

DAVE CILLAY: So you're putting me on the spot. This is down in the weeds. So I don't have a huge technical explanation. What I understand is that the Blackboard calendar has serious limitations. And so that's just not, from my understanding, is we're not able to fix that.

I know that we are piloting another LMS, that has a more robust calendar system. So we're optimistic, if those pilots go well, we'll have a new LMS, where we can address that issue.

MORGAN ATWOOD: Oh, that's so exciting to hear, because I've heard from my own, just from talking to students, from my own experience, that Blackboard is great, but they don't update it frequently. It looks like the next question is, when you subscribe to a class discussion on Blackboard, and it emails you, can this have the course name in the email somewhere? They are getting very mixed together, and they don't state which class the discussion topic is from.

DAVE CILLAY: So again, in the weeds, but I'll give it my best shot. My understanding is that the class title is actually in the subject line. The problem is-- or not the problem. It's in the middle. It's in the middle of the subject. So it starts out with a similar beginning as all the other discussions, but you can find that class title in the subject line in the middle.

MORGAN ATWOOD: Awesome. Yeah, I found that, too. It's hard to see. But there's different ways to Blackboard. So what I do with the calendar is I just go in and set my own, on my own, little calendar on my phone. I just create reoccurring tasks. For example, I have a discussion post due every Wednesday and a discussion reply due every Sunday. So what I do is I go in and create on my calendar just a repeating task. It's every Wednesday-- Political Science 404 discussion due. And that's what I found has been really useful. And then I make it alert me, too, so that I don't forget either.

[CHUCKLING]

DAVE CILLAY: That's great.

MORGAN ATWOOD: And like Andrea said, Global Campus is really always on the-- they're looking for new tech. They're looking for the best new things to really make Global Campus the best it can be for students. I really appreciate that. So the next question is actually-- so it looks like, for right now, all the questions for Vice President Cillay have been answered. So I was going to talk about ASWSU Global a little bit and answer some of those questions. And then we'll have an open Q&A.

So the first question is, what is ASWSU Global, and how do they fit in with Global Campus? So I talked about it a little bit earlier. But ASWSU Global is the student government. And we're behind the face-to-face events, like Rendezoo, Wild Waves. There's also a Student Summit-- it used to be known as Rendezoo, but it's now the Student Summit-- and different events like that.

And then, we also have offer reimbursement that many Global students really use-- so technology reimbursement, hygiene reimbursement. We have a mental health reimbursement, proctoring reimbursement. And there's more. I don't have a list here, but just tons. And you can always go onto our website or go on to [? Engage ?] to look at them.

Another thing that we do is we try and advocate for our students. So we really want to be a voice for the students. So if students feel like they would like to see something different, or if they would like to say that they like something, they can always reach out to us, and we can go and talk to administration, like Vice President Cillay, and really address those things. Because sometimes they're just a miscommunication or simple things, like Vice President Cillay was saying, that an instructor might not realize that they're doing something. And so we just really want to serve as a voice for the students and really help make Global Campus the best it can be for all of our students.

The next question is, how can I get involved? So there's a lot of ways that you can get involved with ASWSU Global. You can come to our senate meetings, which are on the first and third Tuesday, at 7:00 PM Pacific Standard Time. There is a Zoom link on our website, and there's also on our Facebook. There's also some committee meetings. We have a resources meeting on the first Wednesday of every month and then a student involvement meeting on the-- not first, second, second Wednesday of every month, and then a student involvement meeting on the second Thursday of every month, as well.

And then you can always attend events. You can always run to be on senate. We also have a judicial committee and an S&A fee committee. So check out our website. Check out our Facebook for ways to get involved. It's really, really rewarding to be a part of ASWSU Global and really get to just connect with other students. So that is the end of my questions.

DAVE CILLAY: So let me add, Morgan. ASWSU Global is essential to the success of the Global Campus. So if you're not involved, I strongly encourage you to get involved. That organization not only helps us understand how we move forward, but also creates innovative ways to connect students to one another and to the University.

I'd also say-- I've looked around the country-- and again, I haven't explored every university-- but my understanding is we are the only four-year public university that has a student government dedicated to its online campus. Other universities have online students part of a student government, but they don't have their separate student government to address solely the online issues. So we're unique, but you're also extremely, extremely effective. And so I want

to thank you all for taking the time and expending the effort to making us better than anybody else in the country. Go Cougs.

MORGAN ATWOOD: Oh, go Cougs. Thank you. We really appreciate it. It's all thanks to Academic Outreach and Innovation and student involvement for really allowing us to grow and really providing us the support to grow and flourish into this great organization. If no one else has any questions, I just wanted to thank you all. And thank you so much, Vice President Cillay, for taking the time to really answer all these questions and give us a better look on the other side of Global Campus, on the other side of the screen.

DAVE CILLAY: You bet. You bet. Well, I want to thank everybody-- great questions. I really enjoyed myself. And again, if you leave this session tonight, and something comes to mind or you experience something and you've got an idea, connect with me. Shoot me an email. And my door's open. So I'd love to hear from you.

MORGAN ATWOOD: Awesome. Thank you again. And thank you, all, for coming.

DAVE CILLAY: All right, have a good night, everyone. Talk to you soon.