

ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF
WHITMAN COLLEGE
STUDENT SENATE
FALL SEMESTER 2017

IN THE SENATE
ACT SAF17.12

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An Act Amending the By-laws to Remove the Waiilatpu Name from the By-laws

SECTION I TITLE

This act shall be referred to as An Act Amending the By-Laws Article VII and Article XI to Remove the Waiilatpu Name from the By-laws

SECTION II JUSTIFICATION

1. The term “Waiilatpu” was misunderstood to mean “place of the rye grass”. In the Cayuse Nez Perce language, its true meaning is very different. According to one tribal elder’s insights, the name Weyúilet could be interpreted as “place of waving grass.” The original -puu suffix is used to refer to a group of people, suggesting this word may be understood as “people of waving grass.” The yearbook does not claim to represent the Weyúiletpuu, and as such we do not believe that calling our organization “Waiilatpu” is an accurate or respectful tradition. As creators of the yearbook we have the privilege to represent Whitman College’s history in our pages, and we strive to do so with respect and veracity from this point forward.¹
2. The executive staff of the college yearbook has the right to freedom of the press under the 1st Amendment of the United States Constitution.
3. The ASWC By-laws Article X, Section Two, Subsection C states: “All Chief Officers are responsible for the content of their respective Campus Media. Content shall conform to -- and be protected by -- standards set forth by the ASWC By-laws and Whitman College policy as well as local, state, and federal laws, including the First Amendment.”
4. The Editor in Chief and Publisher of the college yearbook, and the chief officers of all Campus Media Organizations, have the ultimate control over the published content of those organizations.

¹See Section V Appendix

5. The actual titles of any of the Campus Media Organizations are not important to the function of the organizations themselves; only their operation as a newspaper, yearbook, etc. defines these publications.
6. The publication's name is thus a part of its content, to be determined by the executive staff of the organization.
7. The ASWC By-laws will not stipulate any particular name for the college yearbook, describing it only as a "college yearbook" and leaving the title to be determined as a content decision by the Editor in Chief.

SECTION III PURPOSE

1. Removing the name Waiilatpu from being connected to the college yearbook.
2. Allow the yearbook the flexibility to continue to be called the Whitman College Yearbook or another name of their choosing.
3. To follow the precedent set by the college newspaper.

SECTION IV FORMAT

This act shall amend the By-laws Article VI, Section One, Subsection C to read as follows:

Section One. Campus Media Organizations

C. College Annual

1. ~~A yearbook, to be known as Waiilatpu,~~ **the college yearbook** will be published every academic year.
2. The Chief Officers, referred hereafter as the Editor-in-Chief and Publisher of ~~Waiilatpu~~ **the college yearbook**, shall be charged with the responsibility of publishing the ~~Waiilatpu~~ **the college yearbook** by graduation week.
 - i. The Editor in Chief shall be responsible for overseeing the design and production of the physical product, working with the production staff on a weekly basis, delegating assignments and enforcing deadlines, and facilitating hiring and training of new staff members at the start of each academic Semester.
 - ii. The Publisher shall be responsible for managing the budget, serving as the primary liaison to external groups such as ASWC, the publishing company, other CMOs, and campus clubs, managing ~~Waiilatpu's~~ **the college yearbook's** governing documents including constitution and By-laws, and managing all advertising and pre-Orders.
 - iii. Both officers shall be responsible for staffing the yearbook.
 - iv. The Editor in Chief and Publisher shall be selected by the Nominations Chair and the outgoing Chief Officer(s) near the end of the spring semester.
3. The Editor in Chief and Publisher shall both serve one (1) academic year.

4. The ~~Wailatu~~ **the college yearbook** must be published in accordance with these by-laws, its own policies, and College policy.

5. In the event that the Editor in Chief or Publisher resigns, the Nominations Committee shall have the power to confirm a permanent replacement.

Section Two. Nominating of Campus Media Chief Officers & Whitman Events Board Chair

A. During the Spring semester, the Nominations Chair shall nominate the Editor(s) for blue moon, Editor in Chief and Publisher of the college newspaper, Editor(s) of quarterlife, and Editor in Chief and Publisher of ~~Wailatu~~ **the college yearbook** to serve the following academic year.

This act shall amend the By-laws Article VI, Section Six, Subsection A to read as follows:

Section Six. Other Funds

A. Lifecycle Fund

1. The Lifecycle Fund shall remain in trust for replacing equipment for ASWC Sound and Lights, the Whitman Events Board, KWCW, the college newspaper, quarterlife, blue moon, the ASWC Office, and the ~~Wailatu~~ **the college yearbook**.

2. The ASWC Finance Committee shall make allocation in its budget each fiscal year of at least 2% of the ASWC operating budget to meet equipment obligation needs for that year.

i. In addition, remaining monies in the accounts of ASWC Sound and Lights, KWCW, the college newspaper, quarterlife, blue moon, the ASWC Office, and the ~~Wailatu~~ **college yearbook** at the end of the fiscal year will close into the Lifecycle Fund.

This act shall amend the By-laws Article VI, Section Seven, Subsections to B and G to read as follows:

Section Seven. Accounts

B. At the end of each fiscal year, remaining balances in accounts will be distributed as follows:

3. ASWC-Affiliated Funds

i. The accounts of the college newspaper, blue moon, the ~~Wailatu~~ **college yearbook**, quarterlife, KWCW, ASWC Sound and Lights, and the ASWC Office Fund will be credited to the Lifecycle Fund.

G. The Nominations Chair shall communicate with and monitor the Campus Media organizations.

2. When necessary, surveys shall be distributed among the appropriate constituents of KWCW, the college newspaper, quarterlife, blue moon, and the ~~Wailatu~~ **college yearbook** to provide feedback for the respective Media Officers.

SECTION IV NOTWITHSTANDING

Should any provision of this act come into contradiction with the ASWC Constitution or By-laws; or should any provision of this act come into contradiction with Whitman College policy; or should any provision of this act come into contradiction with state or federal law, that specific provision shall be considered null and void, while leaving intact all other complying provisions of this act.

SECTION V APPENDIX

Who Are the “Waiilatpu”?

Written by: IPECC Presidents, Spring 2016

The term “Waiilatpu” has functioned as the Whitman College yearbook title since the publication’s inception in 1906. Frequently misunderstood to mean “place of the rye grass” in the Cayuse Nez Perce language, its true meaning is very different.

The words for “rye grass” in Sahaptin and Cayuse languages bear no resemblance to “Waiilatpu.” According to one tribal elder’s insights, the name *Weyület* could be interpreted as “place of waving grass” in Cayuse Nez Perce. However, it is unlikely “Waiilatpu” refers directly to a plant; in Sahaptin and Cayuse, the *-puu* suffix is used to refer to a group of people, suggesting this word may be understood as “people of waving grass.”

For millennia the people commonly known as the Cayuse called themselves *Weyületpuu*. Meriwether Lewis and William Clark traversed this region on their famous voyage across the continent in 1806-07, and wrote of encountering the “ye-E-al-po” or “Y-e-let-pos” people. When Marcus Whitman established his mission in 1836, he noted the local people were known as the “Waiilatpu” and began signing his letters from “Waiilatpu country” or, more simply, “Waiilatpu.” This spelling was derived from Whitman’s attempts to translate the Cayuse Nez Perce language into the English alphabet; the spelling contemporarily accepted among the Tribes is *Weyületpuu*.

The general confusion of “Waiilatpu” being the name of the place where the Whitman Mission was built was initiated by white settlers ignorant of the word’s meaning, and canonized by Whitman College under the direction of President Stephen B.L. Penrose in the early 20th century. By reviving the myth that Marcus Whitman “saved” the area which now composes Washington, Oregon and Idaho from Britain and the “savages” who lived here as far back as we can look into history, Penrose managed to solicit donations from white audiences eager to support a college honoring a “martyr” of the nation. His tale was already seen as factually dubious at that time.

As a community whose namesake intentionally contributed to the dispossession of much of the Plateau Tribes' homeland, it is not fitting for us to use an indigenous name that the Cayuse use(d) in reference to themselves. Historically, this word is not used by the Whitman community with due diligence or respect to the Cayuse; rather, its misuse symbolizes a false and racially prejudiced narrative which overshadows a tragic history.

This year, the Whitman community has begun to critically engage with its past, both what it is—and what it is not. The yearbook does not claim to represent the *Weyüiletpuu*, and as such we do not believe that calling our organization "Waiilatpu" is an accurate or respectful tradition. As creators of the yearbook we have the privilege to represent Whitman College's history in our pages, and we strive to do so with respect and veracity from this point forward. In the next year we will continue to engage with the true history of our name, and re-assess our use of the word "Waiilatpu".

Sources cited:

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Whitman College, Waiilatpu 1906 Yearbook, (Walla Walla, WA: Graduating Class of 1906, 1906), Whitman College Publication Collection, available at <https://contentdm.whitman.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/arc/id/1041/rec/2>

Further reading:

IPECC history booklet, available on request from the current leaders of the Indigenous Peoples Education & Culture Club (IPECC) and in the Whitman College archives.

