The Macklemore Proposal

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I. Background

Seattle based hip-hop artist Macklemore has been releasing music since the early 2000’s. Over this time he has gained a significant fan base, particularly with those in the Northwest. His debut studio album, *The Heist*, was released October 9th, 2012 and within the first week sold 78,000 copies. It was number one on the US iTunes downloaded songs list as well as number two on the US Billboard 200 during that first week. Recently released singles “Same Love” and “Thrift Shop” have combined for over 35,000,000 views on YouTube. Since the release of *The Heist*, Macklemore has been on tour across the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. On October 30th, 2012 he preformed his hit single “Same Love” on the Ellen Degeneres Show; important to note, it is the music video for Macklemore’s “Thrift Shop” that is routinely played on the scoreboard at EWU football games as well as its signature elements played by the EWU Marching Band.

II. Purpose

Previous elections have failed to attract significant participation from the student body. Over the last six years EWU has averaged 11.78% voter turnout. Elections from 2009 to 2011 show incredibly low turnout with participation at 7.50, 7.00, and 7.05 percent respectively. In order to increase voter participation and education, this proposal outlines an incentive-based concert featuring Macklemore. Students who vote in the elections would receive first choice on seating as a reward for their participation. We feel that if students have an incentive to be involved with the elections, then we will drastically increase the number of Eastern students who vote.
III. Importance

Part of the mission statement of ASEWU is to create an “informed, and unified voice.” By providing students with an incentive to vote we should see a drastic increase in the proportion of students voting. Increasing voter participation is an imperative, as it directly determines student government members as well as the acceptance or denial of EWU policy referendums. As Director of Elections, my primary objective is to “increase the voting turnout of the student body for on-campus residence, off-campus students, and the commuter population.” The afore-mentioned concert would meet this objective by creating interest and “buzz” about the upcoming student election. An artist with a following like Macklemore will create student participation on a level EWU has never seen. As shown in the table below, recent elections have failed to invoke significant participation from student body. Based on the turnout of previous years, we have therefore not created the “unified voice” that ASEWU seeks from its constituents.

The publicity gained from an event of this magnitude would be incredibly valuable to our University. Advertisement over the course of winter and early spring quarter would provide ample opportunity to inform students of the elections and subsequent concert. A concert of this magnitude would showcase our institution’s platform of “Students First,” proving our commitment to the desires of our students while also accomplishing ASEWU goals which are, at their most fundamental, the goals of the student body.

IV. Plan

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) has agreed to compile a list of names and ID numbers of all individuals who participate in the general election. On the day of the concert, students who voted would simply bring their ID card to the venue at a designated time before general admission. Those working at the entrance would compare the ID number on the student’s card to the list provided by OIT, and if the ID number provided by the student appears on the list then the student would be granted access into the venue prior to students not designated on this voters list. After a set time, seating would then be open to all EWU students to gain admission by presenting their student ID card. A system set up this way would not allow for fraudulent entry to the concert, ensuring only EWU students can attend, and incentivizing student participation in the voting process without sacrificing voting integrity.

Projected dates for the concert would be either May 29th or 30th and the venue would be Reese court.

The ASEWU Superior Court has stated that an incentive-based concert would in no way be in violation of any of the ASEWU by-laws pertaining to elections. Also, steps have been taken to ensure the event is in compliance with Risk Management policies and procedures.

To address security concerns, 10 Pro Staff security personnel will be hired to check bags at the entrances to ensure that alcohol, drugs, and other banned substances do not enter the venue. Additionally the Pro Staff members will be positioned in front of the stage, ensuring the safety of the artist and other musicians. Stanchions will be rented to create a barrier between the front of the stage and the crowd. Once general admission to students begins, entrance personnel will use the ID card machines, like the ones used at EWU football games, to ensure entry is limited to students of EWU. We are committed to
making this event is a memorable experience for EWU’s students, while ensuring their safety and security.

V. Budget

In order to put on a concert of this magnitude we are asking for the Services and Activity Fee Committee to provide $58,250. The breakdown of funds is as follows:

- Artist guarantee – $40,000 - $50,000
- Booking agent – $4,000 – $5,000
- Facilities set up (stage, lighting, sound, etc.) – $1,000
- Security - $750 (10 Pro Staff security personnel)
- Other associated expenses (to include lodging, travel, other equipment rental) - $1500

Additionally, $5,000 from the ASEWU elections budget has been dedicated to the event, with Eagle Entertainment providing for the logistics of advertising, staffing, and promotion.

VI. Goals

Macklemore’s artistic style of music speaks to a wide demographic of EWU students and advocates for civic action. For example, his song “Same Love” was written in support of same-sex marriage and the recently passed Referendum 74; other singles (“The Town” and “My Oh My”) are written based on Macklemore’s experiences growing up in politically active Seattle, and “Otherside” chronicles his addiction and recovery from OxyContin abuse. Macklemore brings a progressive message to the students of EWU that would not only present a method of positive life choices but also promote civic turnout.

As Eastern Washington University continues to see record enrollment and growth, it is imperative that we stay on par with events comparable to what other Universities are conducting. Over the past year, Macklemore has performed concerts at WSU, UW, the University of Portland, and the University of Nevada at Reno. In 2013 he is scheduled for shows at Washington University in St. Louis and the University of San Francisco. The University of Nevada at Reno and Washington University in St. Louis have enrollments of 15,549 and 14,070 respectively, which present a near equivalency to EWU’s enrollment of 12,130 students. Schools like the University of Portland and the University of San Francisco actually have smaller enrollments than EWU with 3,911 and 9,799 students respectively. Other Universities with similar or smaller enrollment have allocated resources necessary to put on an event like this; it is my hope that, as EWU continues its new progress to solidify itself as a prominent University, we make first-class events such as this a regular service to our students. Macklemore represents an entry-level start financially while, at the same time, bringing a AAA performance in terms of what our student body desires.

VII. Conclusion

As Director of Elections, I feel it is of the upmost importance to increase voter turnout. It is unacceptable to see percentages of students voting in the low teens. If we hope to implement new policies that will affect all students (e.g. amnesty or tobacco free), we must find a way to get more students involved in the
process. As the data reflects, traditional measures have failed to create any kind of lasting impact on voter turnout; now is the time to try new and innovative measures to increase involvement. I strongly believe if we fail to take advantage of the unique and overwhelmingly efficient opportunity presented by Macklemore’s performance, then we will destine ourselves for another year of mediocre voter participation.

This event confirms the goals and missions of ASEWU, EWU and the student body as a whole. It will be unlike anything ever done at EWU and reiterates the University ethic of commitment to its students. Without exception, the students who have been informed of the possibility presented by this proposal have shown support and excitement. Based on this reaction, it is our heartfelt estimation that we will not only see a drastic increase in voter turnout, but also a more positive outlook by students toward their student government, the management of their finances, and the University as a whole. The benefits to an event like this are endless and we are confident that when this concert occurs there will be overwhelming excitement and involvement from the student body. It is time to implement action that finds overwhelming enthusiasm in the student body; this is the perfectly appropriate and most elegant venue.