2014 State Legislative Agenda

As the only graduate and professional student government in the state of Washington, GPSS recognizes the importance of leading the charge in advocating for higher education access and affordability for all graduate and professional students, but especially those at the University of Washington.

GPSS will advocate on a platform of solidarity with our state partner and member organizations: Associated Students of the University of Washington (ASUW) and the Washington Student Association (WSA), when appropriate, and not in conflict with the goals of the GPSS legislative agenda.

The GPSS Legislative Agenda for the 2014 session will focus on the following priorities:

**GPSS 2014 Priorities:**

1.) **State Funding for Academic Excellence.** GPSS supports:
   - The recruitment and retention of diverse world-class faculty and globally competitive students, and underrepresented students, faculty, and staff in graduate and professional programs.
   - Programs that support the continued integration of graduate students in the Washington State workforce.
   - Reinforcing the benefit of the University of Washington and it’s graduates to the economy and vitality of Washington State.
   - Restoration and expansion of financial aid programs that have been cut or eliminated in recent years that supported graduate and professional students.
   - Maintaining the quality of instruction and research by providing academic student employees with competitive compensation.

2.) **Transportation.** GPSS supports:
   - A transportation package that includes a local option for the funding of public transit.
   - Alternatives that would create the necessary funding to prevent service cuts to public transit, should a statewide package not be passed.
   - Solutions for finding ways to expand public transit services.

3.) **Reasonable and Predictable Tuition.** GPSS supports:
   - Policies supporting reasonable and predictable tuition rates, which are crucial for student retention and degree completion.
   - Requirements that all proposed tuition increases are presented to students in a transparent manner for input. Proposals to move programs from state-supported to fee-based should have additional notification and student involvement requirements.

4.) **Student Voice and Shared Governance in University Decisions.** GPSS supports:
   - Direct student involvement in University policies to ensure students are fairly represented in decisions that affect them.
**Additional GPSS Position Statements**

While funding is important and essential to graduate and professional student advocacy efforts, it is important that GPSS focus on changing the conversation to not only be about revenue, and allocation of dollars to the University of Washington for graduate and professional student programs, but also telling the story of how we are creating value for the state, and focusing on issues that graduate and professional students care about. Thus, reinforcing the importance of funding graduate and professional programs at the University of Washington.

**Student Wellness.** GPSS supports:
- Policies that increase the physical and mental health, safety, and well-being of the University community.

**Sustainability.** GPSS supports:
- Efforts to increase environmental stewardship and sustainability on campus.

**Voting Accessibility.** GPSS supports:
- Increased student voting accessibility, including ballot drop boxes on or near college campuses, and extending the deadline date for online voter registration.

**Veteran’s Issues.** GPSS supports:
- Eliminating the state-residency waiting period for qualifying student veterans and regulating “veteran-friendly” University status.

**Text Book Sales Tax Holiday.** GPSS supports:
- Easing the cost burden of students on required class materials.

**Social Impact Bonds.** GPSS supports:
- Exploring private-public partnerships that expand the capabilities of social programs and services, and provide new funding that benefits the University’s programs and students.

We, the State Legislative Steering Committee of the Graduate and Professional Student Senate at the University of Washington submit these items for the approval of the Senate to authorize work on these important issues, and any additional items at the discretion of the Vice President with the approval of the GPSS Executive Board.