A Guide to Student College Councils

Overview

The Associated Student of the University of Washington (ASUW) & the Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) have encouraged the formation of college-level student councils to advise the Deans of colleges on issues of planning and budgeting as well as provide input on course and program fees per Administrative Policy Statement 33.1 (User Fee Approval Policy). Such councils may also monitor and review programs or projects within the College. Further duties may be delegated to councils by the Deans of colleges or existing student government associations within your college.

College Councils are a way for students to get involved in policy decisions and make sure student concerns are addressed by your College’s administration. This is a tangible way for students to have a more direct impact on their education. Many College Councils that have already been established are beginning to have an impact on important issues. Some potential issues that may be of interest to you include:

- Should the college prioritize faculty retention in its budget?
- Should the college invest more in new technology to improve the student experience?
- Should graduate student tuition levels be increased, stay flat, or be reduced, and what are the consequences of that decision?
- Should the college be investing in more student support services such as academic advising or career services?

Currently, most of these decisions are made by administrators without student input. ASUW and GPSS believe that these administrators have the best of intentions, but could benefit from understanding how the decisions they make will impact students. The

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1 http://www.washington.edu/admin/rules/policies/APS/33.01.html
The purpose of these Councils is not only to increase the student voice, but also to make sure we are helping administrators make sound decisions based on full information.

**Major Deliverables**

Here are some of the baseline action items that we believe will maximize the success of each College Council. **When finished, these should be sent to or presented to the Dean and, if possible, PACS, so that we can get a sense of the varying values of the students in each College.**

1. **Publish a set of budgeting principles that outline the student priorities for your college.**

   Budgeting is a process of determining values, so making student values as clear as possible will aid the Dean in incorporating them into the budget. Some example principles might be things like “The College should seek to expand and improve career services whenever possible” or “Expansion of TAships should be a first priority when seeking to improve the academic quality of the College”. Here is an example of PACS’s budgeting principles from last year:
   
   [https://docs.google.com/a/uw.edu/document/edit?hgd=1&id=1_C_uSWmkoeh8Cl2-meltB0cEo_XdNde5or19sOp6Jao](https://docs.google.com/a/uw.edu/document/edit?hgd=1&id=1_C_uSWmkoeh8Cl2-meltB0cEo_XdNde5or19sOp6Jao)

2. **Publish an official recommendation to the Dean on their annual budget narrative.**

   For PACS, this took the form of a simple letter to the Provost outlining our thoughts on her various funding proposals. Each Dean will have various things they are considering investing in, and this is an opportunity for your Council to put your responses to those things in writing. Here is a link to our recommendation from last year:
   
   [https://docs.google.com/a/uw.edu/document/edit?hgd=1&id=1eywktrd2kT5A3DwlCD-prjVztFpK4g5_T_qzvQUOQ](https://docs.google.com/a/uw.edu/document/edit?hgd=1&id=1eywktrd2kT5A3DwlCD-prjVztFpK4g5_T_qzvQUOQ)

**Composition**

The composition of each College’s Student Council will be unique to that college and should be designed to meet the needs of the students in that college. Each college has its own structure. Some schools, such as the School of Law, have very few structural divisions. One possible Student Council structure in such a program could look like this:
● 2 first year JD representatives
● 2 second year JD representatives
● 2 third year JD representatives
● 1 LLM representative
● 1 GPSS representative
● Ex-officio members: Dean Testy or designated Associate Dean

However, other colleges such as the College of Education have several structural divisions and serves both undergraduate and graduate students. To accommodate these structural divisions the College of Education’s Student Council has adopted the following structure:

● 2 Associated Students of the College of Education (ASCE) representatives
● 4 Master In Teaching / Master of Education representatives
● 2 Doctor of Education / Ph.D representatives
● 3 at-large Undergraduate representatives
● 1 ASUW representative
● 1 GPSS representative
● Ex-officio members: Dean, Associate deans, ASCE leadership

This demonstrates that the structure of a college council can vary a great deal from college to college. **What matters most is that your Student Council's structure is reasonably representative of the students within the college or school.** If you need assistance in developing the structure of your college council, please feel free to contact us by emailing one of the people listed below.

**Relationship to PACS**

The Provost Advisory Committee for Students (PACS) was established during the 2011-2012 academic year through the joint efforts of the ASUW and GPSS. Its purpose is to advise the University of Washington’s Provost on the following subjects:

● University’s annual budget.
● Tuition levels and state tuition policy proposals.
● Financial aid.
● Long-range budget and allocation planning, with reference to student concerns.
● Admissions and enrollment management.

While PACS has been relatively successful in advising the Provost on these issues, we realize that it does not have access to information about how certain policies and tuition
proposals within the colleges would impact students. It also realizes that it does not have the institutional capacity to fully represent students from each of the University’s sixteen academic Schools and Colleges. ²

To accomplish this, it will be important to establish formal lines of communication between your college’s Student Council and PACS. Therefore, we recommend that each Student Council designate one or two people who are charged with serving as the official liaison between your Student Council and PACS. PACS will work with this liaison to accomplish several goals:

- Make sure the Student Council has the support it needs to be successful.
- Establish times for the Student Council to present its priorities and concerns to PACS so it can incorporate those concerns into its recommendations.
- Share valuable information PACS thinks is relevant to the Student Council.

There should be a direct line of communication between PACS and your college’s Student Council to make sure it can accurately represent your college’s priorities. PACS will also serve as a facilitator, helping Student Councils connect with each other and share best practices.

² http://www.washington.edu/discover/academics/departments/
Support
We are here as a resource for you. We can help you if you need more information on:

- The university’s budget development process and timeline.
- How other student councils are structured and communicate with PACS.
- How central administration’s policy proposals that are available to the public might impact you.
- Where to find more information to help you make informed decisions and recommendations.
- Possible ways to reach out to your constituents.
- Anything else we have not provided for you here.

We are very excited to be building a new infrastructure across campus that will change how the university does business. It will institutionalize the student voice; not only empowering students but also empowering university administrators and ensuring that we work collaboratively to find solutions to our challenges together.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Evan Smith, ASUW President
(asuwpres@uw.edu)

Michael Kutz, PACS Chair and ASUW Director of University Affairs
(asuwbdua@uw.edu)

Adam Sherman, GPSS President
(gpsspres@uw.edu)

Elise Randall, GPSS Director of University Affairs
(gpssua@uw.edu)