MEMORANDUM

To: GPSS Senate and Executive Committee
From: Melanie Mayock, GPSS Vice President 2012-2013
Date: June 14, 2013
RE: GPSS Vice President Report 2012-2013

Introduction
The GPSS Vice President serves as the chief legislative advocate for UW graduate and professional students at the state, federal, and local level. My primary goals this year were to restore state funding to higher education, improve affordability for graduate and professional students, and strengthen student involvement on legislative issues.

Major Activities and Accomplishments

Voter Registration & Get Out The Vote
Under the lead of Organizing Director Brian Moe, the Vice President’s office mounted a voter registration and Get Out The Vote campaign during summer and fall quarters. GPSS volunteers registered 318 students to vote through class presentations, student orientations, TA outreach, signature gathering in Red Square, and other activities. After the voter registration deadline passed in early October, we held several phone banks to remind students to vote.

Higher Education Summit
GPSS Held the 6th Annual Higher Education Summit on November 13th, under the leadership of GPSS President Adam Sherman. I organized the panel discussion on state funding, which included Senator Andy Hill, Representative Ross Hunter, and myself, moderated by Enrique Cernas. The panel had a lively discuss on the state budget and college affordability, and the session was attended by dozens of students and administrators and covered in the Daily.

State Legislative Steering Committee
The GPSS State Legislative Steering Committee (SLSC) works with the Vice President to develop legislative positions and organize student participation. Members of the committee in 2012-2013 included: Caitlin Connelly (Genome Sciences), Nathaniel McVicar (Electrical Engineering), Clarissa Marks (Evans School), Patricia Atwater (Health Services), and Chris Erickson (Evans School). SLSC organized voter registration activities, developed the State Legislative Agenda, and helped plan and evaluate Lobby Day, among other activities.

State Legislative Agenda
The GPSS Senate approved the 2013 State Legislative Agenda on November 28th, 2012. The agenda included four legislative prioritie: 1.) State funding for higher education; 2.) Reasonable and predictable tuition for graduate and professional students; 3.) Financial aid; and 4.) A student voice
in University decisions. The Agenda also includes additional position statements on academic excellence, student wellness, transportation, sustainability, and voting accessibility.

**State Policy and Legislation:**

1.) **Fee-based programs**
GPSS worked with Representative Gerry Pollet to introduce legislation, HB 1669, to provide safeguards for students moved into “fee based” programs, including notification and protections against huge tuition hikes. Companion legislation, SB 5713 was introduced in the Senate by Senator Kohl-Welles. An article in the Seattle Times on January 14th (“UW grad students want fewer fee-based programs, tuition rollback,”) helped pave the way for a receptive audience in the legislature. I testified in support of the bill at hearings in the House and Senate Higher Education committees, along with two students in fee-based programs, Patricia Atwater and Michelle Dillon. Working with students in affected programs, we gathered 20 letters from students and faculty in support of the bill and delivered them to legislators. Both bills passed committees unanimously. HB 1669 passed the House floor on March 4th with a vote of 84-14; however it missed the cutoff for a vote in the Senate by about two minutes on April 17th. Rep. Pollet has expressed interest in re-introducing the legislation in the 2014 session.

2.) **Student Advisory Councils:** GPSS worked with ASUW and WSA to lobby for the successful passage of legislation to authorize student advisory councils at four year universities in the state. HB 1331 passed the House on February 20th by a vote of 95-1 and was amended to HB 1736 which passed the Senate on April 17th by a vote of 47-0 and was signed by the Governor on May 10th. The bill ensures that the UW’s Provost Advisory Committee for Students (or PACS) will continue in its role of advising the Provost on budget and tuition matters throughout future UW administrations.

3.) **Health Professionals Financial Aid:** GPSS advocated in support of Senator Frockt’s bill (SB 5615) to start a fundraising program for the Health Professionals Scholarship and Loan Repayment program. This program provides financial aid to health professionals who practice in under-served areas in Washington state. The program has been largely defunded by the legislature since 2010. This legislation directs the Washington Student Achievement Council to raise funds from private sources to rebuild the program. The legislation passed the House and Senate and was signed by Governor Inslee.

4.) **Higher Education Funding/ Budget:** GPSS advocated for new and dedicated revenue to higher education. I participated in a press conference with ASUW on November 13th, in which we called for a state capital gains tax to fund education. The event was covered in the Daily and the Seattle Times. Both the House and Senate original budgets restored funding to higher education, but did not make up for past cuts. As of June 14th, a final budget has not been passed by the legislature, which has entered its second special session.

5.) **Graduate Tuition and Financial Aid**
Graduate tuition has been locally controlled for over ten years, and there is no appetite to institute legislative caps on graduate tuition. Further, since there are dozens of categories of graduate and professional tuition at the UW alone, trying to address the issue legislatively is a challenge. I started the year with the assumption that if we could restore funding for higher education, that would
moderate increases in graduate tuition. However, the link between state funding for higher education and graduate tuition is not clear, and certainly not as strong as the link between state funding and resident undergraduate tuition. I learned this in part through my attendance at the Provost Advisory Committee for Students meetings. In winter quarter the Deans of each college make proposals for graduate and professional tuition levels for the following year, long before the state budget is passed. When I inquired if the amount of state funding would impact these tuition proposals, I did not get a clear answer, but it seemed unlikely. Because of the structure of tuition categories and decision-making at UW and the legislative focus on resident undergraduates, it is a challenge to advocate for state funding or legislation to control graduate tuition hikes. I testified in support of Rep. Pollet’s bill, HB 1624, which would set a target rate for resident undergraduate tuition, and urged that the bill be amended to include controls on graduate tuition.

There is very little need-based financial aid for graduate and professional students at the state level. The primary programs are State Work Study, the Child Care Matching Grant Program, Future Teachers Loan Repayment, and Health Professionals Loan Repayment. I testified in support of new financial aid options for graduate students, such as a low-interest loan program. The state has already set up the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP), but has not funded it. Unfortunately, because of the state budget shortfall and the legislative priority on resident undergraduate financial aid, this issue did not garner major attention this year.

6.) Childcare Assistance for Student Parents: GPSS worked with Representative Marcus Riccelli to introduce legislation (HB 1873) to fund the Childcare Matching Grant program with dedicated funds from the State Lottery unclaimed prize fund, and to expand the program to community colleges. Companion legislation was introduced in the Senate by Senator Ranker (SB 5730). The bills did not get hearings, but garnered several co-sponsors and likely helped ensure that the current level of funding ($150,000/biennium) was maintained in the state budget proposals from the Governor, House, and Senate.

7.) International Student Tuition Surcharge: Draft bill S-0713 from Senator Rodney Tom would establish a 20% surcharge for all international students at public universities in Washington state beginning in the 2013-2014 school year. The draft bill was heard in the Senate Higher Education Committee on February 14th and I testified in opposition. International students bring value to the Washington’s public universities, including a diverse perspective in the classroom and research skills. Furthermore, there’s concern that the funds would not go to benefit the students who are paying and that this would price international students out of the market. On April 3rd, SB 5893 was introduced by Senator Hill, which would also institute a 20% surcharge. As of June 13th, the bill has not moved.

8.) Faculty and Staff Salaries
In early 2013, UW faculty and many staff had been without a raise for four years, and GPSS was concerned that this would harm morale and the ability to attract and retain top faculty and staff. I testified in support of state funding for faculty and staff raises at several committee hearings and lobbied individual legislators on this issue. Neither the House nor Senate budget proposals included state funding for faculty pay increases. The House budget allowed for a tuition increase for resident undergraduates, which likely would pay for faculty pay increases; the Senate budget did not.
9.) **Transit funding**: GPSS advocated in support of legislation to allow local funding options for King County Metro, Pierce Transit, and Community Transit, all of which face major cuts in service that would impact UW students. I testified in support of several transit bills, including SB 5861 to provide local funding options for King County Metro, SB 5793 to provide transit funding options in Pierce County, HB 1954, the transportation funding package that provided local transit funding options in all three jurisdictions. I also participated in a Transit Lobby Day on April 23rd in Olympia and testified at a King County Council hearing on Metro cuts on May 14th. GPSS engaged graduate students on the issue of transit cuts through emails, social media, presentations at Senate meetings, and class announcements. In addition to generating emails to legislators, we got over 10 graduate students to attend the King county Council hearing. As of June 13th, it is still unclear whether a transportation funding package will pass, and if it does, what measures it will have for transit funding.

**Lobby Day**

GPSS put on a successful “Huskies on the Hill” UW Student Lobby Day on February 15th in conjunction with the ASUW. Seventy-eight graduate and professional students attended the event and lobbied on four priority GPSS issues: fee-based programs; new revenue to fund higher education, childcare assistance for student parents, and affordable tuition for graduate and professional students. We organized a Student Poster Session at Lobby Day, with approximately ten students displaying posters for legislators and staffers to peruse. GPSS representatives also attended the 43rd district and 46th district Legislator Town Halls in March.

**WSA Re-Affirmation**

This year the Washington Student Association UW Chapter had to gather signatures and win a ballot measure in order to continue collecting a voluntary student fee for its activities. WSA-UW’s budget pays dues to WSA for GPSS and ASUW; previous to the local chapter’s existence GPSS paid dues to WSA directly. WSA-UW also provides funds for events like Lobby Day. GPSS worked with WashPIRG to gather 7,223 student signatures to place both organizations on the ballot; the measure won with over 70% of the student vote. Organizing Director Brian Moe was the major force in GPSS’s work on signature gathering.

**Federal Issues**

Kiana Scott and Matt Souza continued in their roles from last year as SAGE (Student Advocates for Graduate Education) delegates and co-chairs of the Federal Legislative Steering Committee (FLSC). SAGE had three priority issues this year: preservation of research funding, easing the burden of student debt and taxes, and immigration reform. FLSC drafted the GPSS federal legislative agenda which was approved by the Senate on February 13th. The agenda has four priorities: funding for federal research projects; financial aid and access; improved efficiency; and academic excellence. I participated in the fall SAGE conference in Ann Arbor, along with GPSS President Adam Sherman. The conference had some discussion of federal legislative issues but focused primarily on sharing best practices in graduate student government. In April I attended the SAGE Days on the Hill in Washington, D.C. along with Adam Sherman, UW Student Regent Chris Jordan, and SAGE delegates Kiana Scott and Matt Souza. Kiana and Matt coordinated with UW Federal relations staff to set up meetings with the Washington state delegation; we met with staff for Senator Murray, Senator Cantwell, Rep. Del Bene, Rep. Kilmer, Rep. McDermott, Rep. McMorris Rodgers, and Rep Heck.
GPSS Legislative Press Hits, 2012-2013:

- **UW faces potential cut to federal research funding**, The Daily, 8/14/12
- **Washington state two-thirds tax law in court**, Seattle Times Letters to the Editor, 9/28/2012
- **UW students want Legislature to raise revenue**, Seattle Times, 11/13/2012
- **Sixth annual Higher Education Summit examines online learning** ..., The Daily, Nov 13, 2012
- **ASUW Lobbies for income tax and shared governance legislation**, The Daily, 11/13/2012
- **More graduate programs switch to fee-based model**, The Daily, 11/27/12
- **UW research threatened by federal fiscal cliff**, The Daily, 12/2/12
- **Washington public-university presidents propose tuition freeze**, Seattle Times Letters to the Editor, 1/9/2013
- **UW grad students want fewer fee-based programs, tuition rollback**,” Seattle Times, 1/14/2013
- **Representatives, students address goals for legislative session**, The Daily, 1/15/13
- **Sen. Murray proposes capitals-gains tax**, Seattle Times Letters to the Editor, 1/29/2013
- **Legislation would regulate use of fee-based graduate programs** ..., The Daily, 2/12/13
- **Legislation suggests 20 percent surcharge for international students** ..., The Daily, 2/14/13
- **Two-year proposal would raise graduate tuition for some programs** ..., The Daily, 2/19/13
- **Graduate students, administration compromise on fee-based** ..., The Daily, 2/21/13
- **Legislation seeks financial-aid funding for health-care professionals** ..., The Daily, 3/5/13
- **GPSS senate leaders lobby in D.C. | The Daily**, The Daily, 4/21/13
- **Balancing the budget | The Daily**, The Daily, 5/13/13
- **GPSS names legislator of the year**, The Daily, 5/22/13