

## **GPSS: 2009 Legislative Session Final Report**

Vice President David Iseminger

While it is hard to declare "victory" after a legislative session with the fiscal constraints such as existed in the 2009 Session and where the University's operating budget was cut ~25%, the GPSS did enjoy a high success rate on achieving legislative agenda goals.

Legislative bills addressed 14 different issues contained within our legislative agenda. Out of these 14 issues our specific interest prevailed on 8 issues (10 assuming the Governor signs both the UW Human Rights Center and Global Asia Institute bills). This represents **an incredible 71% success rate for passing or defeating bills.** *We were able to effectuate change on all but one issue!* I testified on your behalf over 20 times.

Unfortunately, the issues we failed to achieve our primary objectives on were some of the most important issues to us – including tuition setting authority. However, even when our preferred options of "cap or kill" were not followed we were able to make significant gains in favor of our interests. In addition, while we were able to discuss the important issues of child care and mental health the fiscal realities of our state economy simply did not afford the Legislature the ability to appropriate funds for these issues at this time.

For the interim and next session, I advise GPSS to watch closely and work hard on the following bills:

- HB2118 – Convening a Tuition Policy Advisory Board
  - While the bill specifically includes a graduate student and the assessment of graduate student tuition/debt we must work to eliminate special interest group membership such as the WA Independent Colleges (private schools) who have a vested interest in a high-tuition model
- SB5780 – Granting Building Fee Authority to Governing Boards
  - Oppose this bill granting fee setting authority to the Board of Regents to ensure all capital projects do not become the fiscal responsibilities of students
- SB5502 – Primary Care Physician Tuition Waiver Bill
  - Support by working to narrow the definition of primary care to address concerns of the House Higher Education Committee
- HB2021 – Addressing Financial Aid
  - Review the new law and RCW to work to refine financial aid further
- HB1296/SB5495 – Rental Housing Inspection Rights
  - Oppose this bill limiting a tenant's third party inspection rights of rental units and could jeopardize safe living conditions for students who rent
- HB1841 – Adding a Faculty Member to the Board of Regents
  - Support by lobbying the Senate Higher Education Committee

Further, key allies on important issues to us include Representatives Roberts and Driscoll for child care issues and Representatives Liias, Hasegawa, Anderson, and Senator Becker on tuition issues.

*It has been a pleasure working for and with you this year!*

## GPSS: 2009 Legislative Session Final Report – Specific Bill Outcomes

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#### Good News

- SB5078 granted building fee setting authority to the Board of Regents but was *defeated* early in session. These helps prevent the state from shifting the burden of funding capital projects on college campuses onto students!
- HB2118 established a tuition policy committee. We were able to amend the committee charge to include graduate tuition/debt issues and add a graduate student member to the committee. The bill was *defeated* though which is good because special interest groups promoting high-tuition were included as members.
- We helped *defeat* the House budget proposal to transfer building account money (generated from our tuition dollars) from the universities to the state general fund.
- HB1025 *passed* and requires the disclosure of textbook information (authors, editions, ISBN, etc.) four weeks before classes start. It also requires faculty to adopt free textbooks and online materials whenever possible.
- SB5776 *passed* and enshrines in state law that students have a right to use voluntary student fees for the purposes of lobbying.
- SB5952 *passed* and expands state hate crimes law to include “gender identity and expression.”
- HB1296/SB5495 was *defeated* and would have limited third party inspection rights severely curtailing renter’s rights.
- SB5172 & SB 5177 create the UW Human Rights Center and the Global Asia Institute assuming the Governor signs both bills. Private fundraising efforts are authorized for these programs.

#### So-So News

- SB5734 relating to tuition setting authority *passed* the legislature. The original bill authorized unfettered local control forever. The final bill added the following protections: 1) a 4-year sunset clause; 2) discussion of tuition and financial aid with student governments; 3) financial aid reporting; and 4) requires money from tuition increases over 7% be applied to instructional costs, libraries, utilities/maintenance, and financial aid while also requiring cuts to instruction be proportionally less than administrative costs. The law also requires an audit of the 4-year higher education system but this may part may be vetoed by the Governor.
- HB2021 revamps financial aid and we worked hard to prevent the state from marketing federal loans as a “financial aid opportunity” to students. We were unsuccessful in preventing private loans from this marketing strategy.
- SB5502 *failed* and it would have created a tuition waiver for medical students going into primary care if they pledge to work as a primary care physician in Washington two years for every year they received the waiver. We were about to prevent a funding mechanism where tuition costs were shift from one student to another.
- HB1841 *failed* and would have added a faculty member to the Board of Regents – though we were able to put in certain safeguards about conflicts of interest and limited the term to 3 years.

#### Bad News

- SB5760 *failed* and would have lessened contracting restrictions for smaller public works projects where minimal state funding is utilized.