Title: RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON'S PLANNED CONSTRUCTION OF A LONGHOUSE-STYLE LEARNING FACILITY

Sponsored and written by: Karen Capuder
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Resolution Number: 5.08-09

WHEREAS the University of Washington, through discussions, and in consultation with tribal governments in the region and Western states, has determined that best practices indicate that high priority should be given to supporting programming and strategies that support the Native American community on and off-campus; and

WHEREAS a campus-based longhouse-style learning facility will serve as an acknowledgement of the First Peoples of the Puget Sound and the greater Northwest, and will help raise awareness about the cultures and histories of regional Native nations and their relationships with federal and state governments and institutions; and

WHEREAS a campus-based longhouse-style learning facility will be a welcoming place for all members of the UW community, and a space which will provide for place-based and cross-cultural learning experiences for all campus community members; and

WHEREAS the University of Washington is dedicated to increasing the recruitment, retention, and graduation rates of Native American students, faculty, and staff; and

WHEREAS the Native American proportion of the population of Washington State is currently estimated at 1.6%; and

WHEREAS the Native American proportion of the population of Graduate and Professional students at the University of Washington is 0.9% in graduate schools and 1.1% in professional schools; and

WHEREAS the Native American proportion of undergraduate students entering UW as freshman during the period 1999-2007 was between 1.1 and 1.3%; and

WHEREAS the Native American proportion of the UW faculty is 0.4%, and at the professional and classified staff levels the proportion of Native American employees is 1.1%; and

WHEREAS the six year graduation rates for Native American students entering in 2001 reveal that the rate of Native American student graduation was 53%, lower by an average of 14 percentage points than any other underrepresented minority student groups (African American, Pacific Islander, and Latino); and
WHEREAS the University of Washington has learned, upon review of other college and university cultural campus center facility program examples, that the construction of campus-based, longhouse-style facilities such as those found at the Evergreen State College, the University of Oregon, and the University of British Columbia (a) have been found to dramatically increase the recruitment, retention, and graduation rates of Native students; (b) contribute to the promotion of academic excellence on the campus for Native students; (c) help draw and retain Native staff and Native faculty; and (d) could improve relations between tribal communities and the University of Washington, as well as contribute to the development of other inter-cultural and academic benefits and research partnerships; and

WHEREAS, with the advent of the University’s First and Second Annual Tribal Leaders Summits, along with strong support from the University President and the Board of Regents, the longhouse project has become an institutional priority,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT the Graduate and Professional Student Senate of the University of Washington hereby professes their support for the construction of a longhouse-style facility on the University of Washington’s Seattle campus.

Presented to GPSS for approval on November 15, 2008
Approved on December 3, 2008