



MEMORANDUM

To: GPSS Senate
From: Jake Faleschini, GPSS President
Date: May 24, 2010
RE: GPSS President Jake Faleschini Final Report

This document is my final report to the GPSS Executive Committee after serving as the GPSS President from June 2008 until June 2010. Most of those actions I have taken as President fall under ten general categories: 1) mission and identity, 2) community and socializing, 3) leadership and teamwork, 4) membership and attendance, 5) outreach and partnerships, 6) finances and budgeting, 7) capital and infrastructure, 8) health and wellness, 9) advocacy and lobbying, and 10) management and oversight. I will address each in turn below.

Mission and Identity

GPSS has had an identity problem since its inception. For example, despite the fact that GPSS was established in the 1960s, it did not have a mission statement until I helped write one a year ago. It is a difficult organization around which to form cohesion because the membership changes rapidly and because graduate students have many obligations. Furthermore, GPSS must always explain the added value of having a student government exclusive to graduate students and outside of the union.

Understanding this problem, I entered office with an objective to help GPSS more clearly identify its mission and goals. Over the last two years we have done that by: 1) clearly identifying our mission and codifying it in our constitution; 2) organizing Senate-centric social events where the Senate can form its own identity; and 3) creating better forms of communication between Senators so they can take ownership of the Senate. And in order to better understand the issues that graduate students face, I met with every GPSS Senator who wanted to meet with me while I was in office. Future efforts in this area should continue to build a sense of community within the Senate by encouraging greater participation in internal committees and more socializing and networking between Senators. And future Presidents should continue to keep an open-door policy with the Senate.

Community and Socializing

Under my leadership GPSS has continued its long tradition of creating community spaces where all graduate and professional students can come together to socialize, collaborate, and build a group identity. We continue to host the fall and spring socials that boast attendances of roughly eight hundred students each quarter. And we also host the GPSS Speed Dating event where hundreds of graduate students come to meet their fellow huskies. These events have undoubtedly helped create a community spirit and identity that might otherwise be lost. I have helped plan and organize every one of these activities since I have taken office.

Future efforts should continue to expand GPSS socializing and networking activities. GPSS could, for example, become more involved with planning Dawg Daze and Lawnapalooza with ASUW. GPSS could also, for a minimal cost, add a third social or a second speed dating event. Some Senators have also suggested that we team with local sex shops to offer a graduate student sex education event. Finally, I have worked with the Graduate School to begin plans for an orientation for all graduate students on campus. This would be an ideal opportunity for GPSS to gain greater exposure and create a space for all incoming students to get to know one another. All these are possible areas where GPSS could create more spaces for graduate students to come together.

Leadership and Teamwork

I have spent a great deal of effort over the last three years developing a GPSS team and fostering new leadership in the organization. Some of the current officers are colleagues I worked with before or Senators I took under my wing during my first term in office. And I try to empower as many young Senators as I can so they will someday take ownership of the organization and learn to love serving it. Finally, I try to ensure that everyone on the team feels valued and honored in the work they do, as this is how the next generation of leaders is born.

In the future, GPSS will need to restructure the office to better serve expanding needs. It will need to expand to five officers: a President, a Vice President External, a Vice President Internal, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. But due to budget limitations and staff costs, the office will likely need to reassign the eight staff positions it currently has to cover more territory. I suggest that each future officer has a personal assistant position that helps the officer achieve the main functions of his or her office. And I suggest that the Chief of Staff, Office Manager, and Policy Analyst become “floaters” who serve all officers equally

and report directly to the President. This structure would more closely align us with our national peers and serve the needs of our organization.

Future leadership could do a better job of celebrating things like birthdays and special occasions in the office. Future office budgets should put money aside for small office parties, cards, and small gifts to better celebrate the team's accomplishments.

Membership and Attendance

Over the last two years, GPSS has grown both its membership (110 to 135 Senators in two years) and attendance levels (50 to 70 average Senators per meeting in two years). Much of this growth can be attributed to the exceptional work and dedication of GPSS Secretary, Lindsay Morse. We have continued to outreach to departments that never had representation, like the Business PhD program, and more and more of those Senators are showing up to our meetings each month. These statistics reflect the growing robustness of the GPSS organization. And, in turn, the growing strength of the organization has allowed GPSS to make stricter attendance requirements and get tougher about enforcing them.

I have personally contributed to these successes by making meetings interesting, efficient, and representational. I tried to follow a few rules in running the Senate meetings. First, each meeting should have at least one external visitor to inform the Senate about something that affects their constituents and that they would likely find interesting. Second, except in extenuating circumstances, the Senate should never vote on something it is considering for the first time. I have therefore tried to ensure that someone comes and presents on a controversial resolution at least one month in advance of the Senate making a decision on the resolution. Third, while I abide by The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure (Sturgis) in every meeting, I try also to keep some flexibility to the structure to allow for spontaneity and personal expression. In other words, I have used the rules to assist rather than stifle the Senate. Finally, I try to inject some humor into all of the meetings to keep Senators awake and interested. In sum, while there is no right way to run a Senate meeting, these general rules have served the Senate well and I suggest that future leadership try to abide by them.

Outreach and Partnerships

As in past years, GPSS has collaborated with a number of other organizations over the last two years. We have collaborated with ASUW on many initiatives including the Washington Student Association, Higher Education Advocacy Day, the Fall Legislative Reception, Husky Pride, and the Spring Concert. I have

also spent some time reaching out to local religious organizations to make sure we are collaborating on ways to provide for our students' spiritual needs. And I am in constant communication with leaders in our underrepresented communities to ensure that the University is meeting their needs as well. For example, GPSS recently worked with UW Hillel to sponsor a hugely popular lectureship on gay rights in the Torah. And we have also sponsored events to encourage dialogue and bridge the divide between our Palestinian and Jewish student populations.

The next two years will offer a real opportunity for collaboration with underrepresented communities at UW given that GPSS will be located in Condon Hall with the Ethnic Cultural Center. GPSS should take advantage of the opportunity to partner on events, to expand pipelines into graduate programs, and to strengthen graduate student mentoring. For example, GPSS could work with Eric Godfrey, Sheila Edwards-Lange, and ASUW to co-host weekly Friday afternoon lunches in Condon Hall with various constituencies to talk about the issues the communities face.

Finances and Budgeting

Mainly due to the leadership of GPSS Treasurer, Tim Hulet, GPSS has maintained a consistent, efficient, and transparent budget since I took office. GPSS now publishes its budget online and the GPSS Treasurer now gives regular updates on the budget in GPSS Executive Committee Meetings. GPSS has spent down its reserves to within "normal" parameters for peer institutions by providing more travel and resource grants to the community. And GPSS has reestablished its oversight of the Student Technology Fee by implementing an ASUW joint task force to audit the committee's spending and make recommendations for its future reporting and structure. GPSS could make its budget even more transparent by creating a more interactive budget online.

One area of spending that needs to be well managed over the next year is the Not For Tourists Guide to the University of Washington. This last year GPSS partnered with NFT to make the guide and purchased roughly 2,500 copies for \$10 per unit. We planned to sell the inventory in two years. In the last nine months we have sold roughly 900 copies. Thus, we have maintained enough sales to complete that goal within two years if we sell another 350 copies by September 2010. The next group of officers needs to work with the bookstore to implement a strategy to sell another 350 guides by the end of the summer and another 1200 guides by September of 2011. The officers should also organize for a second edition of the book to be printed and released by September of 2011.

Finally, over the last year GPSS created an external funding source for lobbying efforts by establishing the Washington Student Association “button” on the MyUW class registration page. This button should ensure that ASUW and GPSS will have a constant source of revenue in the future for the Fall Legislative Reception, Higher Education Advocacy Day, Washington Student Association Dues, and the Higher Education Summit. If the monies received from the button are maintained responsibly, they may also someday allow the WSA UW Chapter to endow a full-time student lobbying position.

Capital and Infrastructure

In my two years as President I have provided for the long-term integrity of GPSS by working to build the capital infrastructure that the Senate and the student body will require in the future. I have maintained oversight of the University’s expenditures from the Capital Budget Fee. I have given significant input on and have been a fierce advocate for the new HUB, Ethnic Cultural Center (ECC), and Hall Health buildings. I helped plan for GPSS’s temporary space in Condon Hall. And I have recently worked with the administration to ensure that GPSS is endowed in the next UW Capital Campaign.

Just after I took office, the Regents began to express concern about moving forward with plans for rebuilding the HUB, ECC, and Hall Health during the recession. I argued strenuously that we should continue with the projects and secured promises from the Regents that they would continue with the plans if we scaled them back. So I worked with Eric Godfrey and the Board of Regents to trim down the original design to make it more cost effective. All the while I provided advice on student opinion and worked to secure private contributions for the new HUB to bring down the price for the students.

Finally, I have worked to ensure that the next UW Capital Campaign will include an endowment for GPSS. GPSS will be able to use this endowment to provide for programming, overhead, or for a fifth officer position as discussed above. The aforementioned infrastructure is the foundation that every succeeding generation of leaders will use to better our community. I have worked hard to ensure that the foundation they build upon is strong and I take great pride in that fact.

Health and Wellness

During my term in office, I improved student health and wellness by 1) expanding student health insurance options, 2) improving access to student health care information, and 3) providing a student voice to the administration on health and wellness initiatives. I began working on creating an improved student health insurance plan (now called SHIP Plus) while I was still a Senator from the Law School and

accomplished the goal in September of last year with the help of other dedicated students and staff. Planning and implementing the new health insurance plan took literally hundreds of hours and a great deal of political capital. Accordingly, Matt Erickson, Ping Lin, Eric Godfrey, his staff, and I were proud to accomplish it with hard work and by building on the efforts of two previous GPSS officers, Dave Brown and Sarah Reyneveld.

I also helped create a new “My Health” tab on MyUW that provides students with general information about health care infrastructure and student insurance. The project took over two years and the dedicated effort of a number of Senators and administrators. The Office of Student Life will fund and host the website. And Student Life, Hall Health, ASUW, and GPSS will manage the website’s content. Upon its implementation this spring, the website will help students access the myriad health care institutions available to them on campus.

Finally, by diligently attending the University committees dedicated to student health care improvement, I was a consistent and strong voice for improving health care at UW. I recommend that my successor also makes these committees a priority. Eric Godfrey stated in a personal letter that, “[I] could almost single-handedly take credit for the greatest improvement to student health care at the University of Washington in over a decade.” While these accomplishments are by no means exclusively my own, I am extremely proud of the headway we made on student health during the last two years.

Advocacy and Lobbying

Over the last two years I have advocated for students both to the UW Administration and to external communities. The majority of my official responsibilities focus on internal advocacy. In this regard I have been a consistent, loud, and strong advocate for students to the administration. As the attached record of involvement demonstrates, I have represented the students on literally dozens of university committees, many of which were not required of my position. The most important of those committees include the Board of Regents, the Faculty Senate, the Senate Committee on Planning and Budgeting, the President’s Advisory Council on Enterprise Risk Management, and the Graduate School Council.

I also helped institutionalize the GPSS Annual Higher Education Summit, an event that brings together the internal and external communities each year to discuss issues important to higher education. I personally managed and helped execute the second and third annual GPSS Higher Education Summits. Last year I was responsible for confirming Senate Majority Leader Lisa Brown and Regent Bill Gates as our keynote speakers. With the dedicated work of Liz Williams, Doug McManaway, Dave Iseminger,

Sarah Reyneveld, and the annual planning committees, we branded the GPSS Higher Education Summit as a signature GPSS event with a significant state impact.

The GPSS Vice Presidents for the last two years, Dave Iseminger and Sarah Reyneveld respectively, were primarily responsible for external advocacy. Yet, I also represented the students to the external community on occasion. I spoke at many events around the city and with multiple media sources about budget cuts and how they are affecting the students, I attended higher education advocacy day for the last three years, I significantly contributed to our federal lobbying agenda through SAGE, and I was partially responsible for keeping the Legislature from appropriating the student Building Fee. Finally, for the last two years I have served as a director on the Washington Student Association's UW Chapter. Along with providing for a reliable funding source, we have strengthened the organization by keeping the state organization affordable and accountable to our constituents.

Lastly, with the dedication of one inexhaustible Senator, Nicholas Nasrallah, I helped found a new federal lobbying organization, Student Advocates for Graduate Education (SAGE). In just two years this organization has become a significant player on the national level and has begun to influence policy and policy makers. This spring the organization recognized my dedication when it elected me President of the SAGE Alumni Association.

Management and Oversight

The GPSS President directly manages two staff positions, the GPSS Chief of Staff and the GPSS Executive Assistant. The Chief of Staff was formerly called the GPSS Personal Assistant until I changed the title upon taking office. As discussed above, the Chief of Staff should continue to grow in importance within the organization and be given limited staff management responsibilities. The Chief of Staff should eventually be tasked with implementing the Office's policy agenda as directed by the Senate, the Executive Committee, and the President. Over the last two years I have been exceptionally lucky in the staff I have been responsible to manage. Both Liz Williams and Doug McManaway have served the organization with distinction and deserve the highest of praise.

As the Chair of the Executive Committee and the primary position in the Office, the GPSS President also oversees the other GPSS Officers and the rest of the GPSS Office staff. For example, for the last two years I have regularly checked in on the other Officers to ensure that they are carrying out their duties and are reporting to the Executive Committee and the Senate. Yet, managing other officers is exceptionally challenging at times. Often egos get the better of people and they refused to be managed by their peer.

Furthermore, the bylaws create tension by making the President the primary officer position and yet giving the President little management authority. This has generated a number of conflicts between the President and other Officer positions in past years and in the years I served. In the future, the Executive and Judicial Committees should attempt to resolve this issue by amending the bylaws to give the President more direct management responsibilities.

Conclusions

Over the last two years I have made a lasting and positive impact on student life at the University of Washington. I take great pride in these accomplishments and hope that my successors will give the office the time and dedication it requires to effect change at an institution of our size and complexity. It was only by being responsive, resilient, and professional that I was able to accomplish these goals. Each future student leader will of course bring his/her own set of skills to the position. But I cannot emphasize enough how important these qualities are to push the student agenda forward at the University and in the community at large.

It has been my honor to serve the students these last two years. I have grown immensely from the experience and have learned a great deal in the process. I offer my most heartfelt thanks to the Senate and the Executive Committee for their faith in my leadership and for their unwavering support during the times I struggled.

Most sincerely,



Jake Faleschini
GPSS President, 2008-2010

Record of Involvement

- *Student Advocates for Graduate Education Alumni Association*, Founder and President, April 2010-Present;
- *University Bookstore*, Trustee, March 2010-Present;
- *UW Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS)*, President and Chair, June 2008-Present;
- *GPSS Graduate Student Bill of Rights Task Force*, Co-Founder, March 2010-Present;
- *GPSS Dispute Resolution Advisory Committee*, Member, February 2010-Present;
- *GPSS HUB Transition Committee*, Founder and Chair, October 2009-Present;
- *UW Activity Based Budgeting Steering Committee*, GPSS Coordinator, October 2009-Present;
- *UW Two Years to Two Decades Steering Committee*, GPSS Coordinator, October 2009-Present;
- *Student Advocates for Graduate Education*, Founding Member and Officer, October 2009-Present;
- *UW Student Regent Selection Committee*, Co-Chair, February 2009 and February 2010;
- *UW Distinguished Graduate Mentor Award Selection Committee*, GPSS Representative, February-April 2009;
- *UW Graduate School Dean Search Committee*, GPSS Representative, September-December 2008;
- *GPSS Graduate Program Review Committee*, Founder and Chair, September 2008-Present;
- *GPSS Task Force on Student Indebtedness*, Founder and Co-Chair, September 2008-May 2009;
- *GPSS Executive Committee*, Chair, June 2008-Present;
- *GPSS Summit Steering Committee*, Founder and Chair, June 2008-Present;
- *GPSS Task Force for Student Health Concerns*, Founder and Chair, June 2008-Present;
- *UW Foundation*, Ex-Officio Representative, June 2008-Present;
- *UW Alumni Association (UWAA)*, Trustee, June 2008-Present;
- *UWAA Young Alumni and Student Activities Committee*, Member, June 2008-Present;

- *UW Board of Regents*, Ex-Officio Representative, June 2008-Present;
- *UW Faculty Senate*, Ex-Officio Representative, June 2008-Present;
- *UW Faculty Senate Executive Committee*, Ex-Officio Representative, June 2008-Present;
- *UW Faculty Committee on Planning and Budgeting*, Ex-Officio Representative, June 2008-Present;
- *UW Graduate School Council*, Student Representative, June 2008-Present;
- *UW Advisory Council on Enterprise Risk Management*, GPSS Representative, June 2008-Present;
- *UW HUB Redevelopment Advisory Committee*, GPSS Representative, June 2008-Present;
- *UW Public Ceremonies Committee*, GPSS Representative, June 2008-Present;
- *UW Student Technology Fee Committee*, Ex-Officio Representative, June 2008-Present;
- *UW Use of University Facilities Committee*, GPSS Representative, June 2008-Present;
- *UW Student Health and Wellness Committee*, GPSS Representative, June 2008-Present;
- *UW Student Health Insurance Committee*, GPSS Representative, June 2008-December 2009;
- *Washington Student Association UW Chapter*, Officer, June 2008-Present; and
- *UW Graduate and Professional Student Senate*, Law School Senator, June 2007-June 2008.