MEMORANDUM

To: GPSS Senate
From: Sarah Reyneveld, GPSS Vice President
Date: May 24, 2010
RE: GPSS Vice President Report 2009-2010

1. 2010 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA
KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Drafted and adopted a 2010 State and Federal Legislative Agenda. For the first time in recent history, GPSS drafted, approved and lobbied Congress to support the GPSS Federal Lobbying Agenda.

BACKGROUND: The GPSS Vice President’s Office began researching and drafting the 2010 Legislative Session Agenda in October. A Legislative Steering Committee (LSC) composed of nine senators\(^1\) met four times to advise the Vice President on the direction and substance of the Agenda. The committee members were elected during the October 7\(^{th}\) Senate meeting. The committee members reviewed and commented on several drafts of the agenda before it was finalized, presented, and adopted at the December 2\(^{nd}\) meeting. The legislative agenda prioritized funding graduate education at a level competitive with the UW’s Global peers, sustaining graduate student financial aid, and providing reasonable, predictable graduate tuition. The 2010 Legislative Agenda also included the first federal agenda in recent years.

The following is an excerpt of the state and federal legislative agenda:

*The University of Washington Graduate & Professional Student Senate (GPSS) represents the 12,000+ graduate/professional student body and consists of over 120 elected or appointed representatives from each of the graduate/professional degree granting programs. Unfortunately, the University of Washington received a 26% cut to its operating budget for the 2009-2011 biennium. This significant decrease in state funding may impede the graduate schools’ ability to attract top students, engage in cutting edge research, and remain competitive in the global economy. The funding decrease may result in cuts to Research Assistant (RA) and Teaching Assistant (TA) positions and increase the teacher/student ratios for undergraduates. GPSS urges the legislature to make no additional cuts to the higher education budget in the 2010 session. GPSS supports additional revenue for graduate and*

\(^1\) Maren Anderson (Scandinavian Studies), Gary Brattin (Music), Rick Cruz (Psychology), Russell Hugo (Linguistics), Marc Jaffrey (Earth and Space Sciences), Andrew Kosydar (Biology), Aaron Naumann (Anthropology), Trond Nilsen (Industrial Engineering), Charles Plummer (Earth and Space Sciences)
professional education to ensure that Washington remains competitive in the new
global economy and meets the recommended goals of the Higher Education
Coordination Board (HECB).

2009 Session Top Priorities

Fund Graduate and Professional Degree Production at Levels Competitive with
our Global Peers

*GPSS supports state funding for graduate and professional degree production to
meet the HECB’s Strategic Master Plan goals
  • Washington currently ranks last out of all of the Global Challenge States
    (GCS) in graduate degree production.
  • Increase graduate and professional degree production to meet the 50
    percentile of the GCS states in accordance with the HECB Master Plan.
    This will require an increase of 8,600 higher-level degrees by 2018.
  • Increase graduate and professional degree production in high demand
    fields, specifically in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
    (STEM) to better meet the needs of Washington employers and to
    stimulate economic growth.

Sustain or Expand Current Levels of State Support for Graduate and Professional
Student Aid Programs

* GPSS supports increasing access to financial aid, in-state and non-resident
  tuition waivers, work study, and fellowships and grants for both domestic and
  international graduate and professional students
  • In-state and non-resident tuition waivers are vital to maintain access to
    graduate and professional education for students of all income levels.
  • The state should reinstate funding for the Graduate Fellowship Trust
    Account, which was cut in the 2009 Legislative Session.

Reasonable, Predictable, Tuition

* GPSS supports restrictions on tuition setting authority for graduate and
  professional students by establishing a tuition rate cap that does not exceed the
  median tuition of the HECB 24, mandatory financial aid increases that are
  proportional to tuition increases, and consideration of how tuition increases will
  impact recruitment and retention
  • Tuition is the greatest barrier to higher education degree completion.
    Therefore, reasonable and predictable tuition rates are crucial for student
    retention and degree completion.
  • All proposed increases to graduate and professional tuition should be
    presented in a transparent manner for student input and comply with the
    appropriate administrative and legislative process.

2. GPSS THIRD HIGHER EDUCATION SUMMIT “RESPONSIBLE
   INVESTMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION”

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:
In collaboration with the GPSS President’s office, the GPSS VP’s Office helped execute the Third Annual GPSS Higher Education Summit entitled Responsible Investment In Higher Education. I successfully prepared briefing material, messaging, questions and secured panelists for the panel “Funding Sources for Higher Education: Maintaining a Leading and Accessible Public University.”

Background: I began work on the GPSS Summit as a member of the GPSS Summit committee during the summer of 2009. Throughout the summer and fall I drafted the first draft of the GPSS Summit abstract, worked on messaging and questions for the first panel "Funding Sources for Higher Education: Maintaining a Leading and Accessible Public University", and secured the participation of key panelists including HECB Executive Director Ann Daley, Senator Kilmer, and Representative Scott White. I was also helped secure the attendance of over 10 legislators including Senator Shin, Representative Williams, Representative Hasegawa, etc. The GPSS Policy Analyst and Legislative Assistant prepared research and fact sheets for the Summit, and assisted in coordination efforts. In addition to helping prepare and execute the Summit, I was part of the host committee for the Student Advocates for Graduate Education (SAGE) 2nd Annual Conference during the weekend of October 30-31st. In future, GPSS should expand efforts to involve student leaders in the planning stage of the Summit and increase student participation in the Summit.

3. 2010 SESSION LEGISLATION AND BUDGET SUCCESSES

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- **Successfully lobbied for the passage of SB 6409, which directs state lottery funds to higher education.** I worked with the Associated Students of the University of Washington (ASUW), and the Washington Student Association (WSA) to advocate for the passage of Senate Bill 6409. SB 6409 directs a portion of the state lottery revenue to the Washington opportunity pathway account to fund higher education. The bill directs $15 million towards the account in the next fiscal year and includes mechanisms to increase lottery revenues for higher education through a targeted marketing campaign.

- **Successfully lobbied to secure inclusion of graduate students in tuition restrictions in SB 6562.** I successfully worked with Senator Kohl-Welles to support an amendment to include graduate students in the 9% tuition restrictions in SB 6562. I also worked with Representative Anderson to amend Representative Wallace’s striker to SB 6562 to include professional students in the tuition restrictions and performance agreements language. While SB 6563 died in the House, it will likely be reintroduced next session with the graduate student language intact.

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• **Successfully lobbied to reinstate 70% of 23.5 million State Work Study program in the final budget.** The Governor’s proposed Book 1 budget eliminated funding for the State Work Study Program. Advocacy from GPSS, ASUW and WSA contributed to the reinstatement of 70% of the funding for the State Work Study program, the largest state aid program available to graduate students ($23.5 million).

• **Proportional Cuts to the UW Operating Budget.** The UW received a 6% cut for this year. This was slightly larger than expected but the state cuts were proportional across public institutions. The budget amounts to a 30% cut over two years; the maximum permitted under stimulus fund provisions.

• **Elimination of the transfer of student building fees to the state operating budget.** A measure proposed in the House to transfer student building fees to the state operating budget would have meant another $18 million dollar cut to the University’s budget. GPSS worked in collaboration with ASUW to prevent the transfer of building fees to the state operating budget.

**BACKGROUND:** GPSS lobbying efforts proved successful on a number of fronts during a historically challenging special session. I focused my lobbying efforts on individual or group meetings with legislators, and coordinated advocacy efforts with the Washington Student Association (WSA). Throughout session, I testified weekly in front of one or more of the following committees: Senate Higher Education and/or Workforce Committee, House Higher Education Committee, Senate and House Ways and Means Committee.

4. **GPSS HIGHER EDUCATION ADVOCACY DAY (HEAD) AND GRADUATE STUDENT FINANCIAL AID ADVOCACY**

**KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

• The GPSS VP Office executed the GPSS/ASUW Higher Education Advocacy Day (HEAD) with over 100 graduate and professional students meeting over 70 legislators.

• Organized a successful Rally at the Capital Steps that was attended by over 200 students, and received statewide media attention in the Seattle Times, The Olympian, KOMO 4, and KIRO 7.

• Increased student advocacy efforts through letter and email writing campaigns targeting key legislators. Over 200 letters/emails were addressed to targeted legislators urging reinstatement of funding for graduate financial aid programs including State Need Grant, Work Study and Child Care.
BACKGROUND: The Vice President’s Office was responsible for organizing lobby day. The GPSS Legislative Assistant worked with the ASUW Office of Governmental Relations (OGR) to schedule and organize over 70 meetings with legislators. The Vice President, GPSS Policy Analyst, and GPSS Legislative Assistant worked as a team to prepare talking points, message and outreach to media, recruit the graduate student body, and organize a rally at the capital steps. The message of the rally was to reinstate funding for critical financial aid programs including the State Need Grant, State Work Study, and Child Care. Featured speakers included Senators Kilmer and Senator Kastama, Governor’s Higher Education Policy Advisor Leslie Goldstein, and student speakers. The rally culminated with the delivery of petitioners urging the protection of higher education funding with over 8,000 signatures from the American Federation of Teachers and Washington Student Association (WSA). While GPSS succeeded in expanded participation in advocacy, participation could be further improved among graduate students. In future, the VP Office should expand upon the advocacy day coordinator model piloted in the 2009-2010 academic year to increase participation in advocacy day.

The GPSS office organized, wrote and facilitated the delivery of targeted letters and emails to over 200 legislators in higher education and budget leadership. The letters primarily focused on the preservation of graduate financial aid programs such as State Work Study, Child Care Matching Grant, Future Teachers Loan Forgiveness Program and the Health Professionals Loan Repayment Scholarship Program.

5. FEDERAL LOBBYING SUCCESSES

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- **GPSS advocated successfully for the inclusion of a provision to protect student health insurance in the U.S. Senate health-care reform bill (S. 1796).** I worked with GPSS President Jake Faleschini, Law School student Patrick Loney, and SAGE to successfully correct an omission regarding limited duration products in the bill.

- **GPSS advocated successfully for the passage of the Student Aid and Financial Responsibility Act (SAFRA).** GPSS worked with ASUW and student advocates across the country to advocate on behalf of this important measure. As a result, the Income Contingent Repayment (ICR) was expanded for graduate students.

- **As delegates to SAGE, GPSS made progress lobbying Congress on the following key graduate issues: 1) Immigration and visa reform, 2) Restoring the tax-exempt status of graduate scholarships and fellowships, and 3) Forgiving the tax-exempt amount of the Income Contingent Repayment (ICR).** Specific to immigration reform, GPSS lobbied to reform H-1B visa criteria, in support of creating an uncapped exemption for professionals who have earned a U.S. Master’s degree or
higher (MD, JD, Ph.D) in training, as well as maintain the Higher Education Community’s exemption from the H-1B Visa capitation. GPSS also lobbied to strengthen the F-1 Visa application and renewal by expanding the duration for multiple entry visas, modifying off-campus work allowances, and granting temporary withdrawal for All But Dissertation (ABD) students.

**BACKGROUND:** The GPSS VP’s Office was involved in the planning, research, and lobbying for the SAGE Washington DC week in early April. The Office contacted key legislators to schedule appointments week, performed background research and completed a position paper on immigration reform. The conference involved delegations from all of the SAGE affiliates and brought timely exposure to policy issues such as student loan reform, TA/RA tax reform, and problems within the H1B and F-1 visa programs. GPSS took a particularly active involvement in drafting and formulating SAGE’s immigration reform policy in response to concerns of UW graduate students experiencing difficult F-1 visa regulations. The GPSS Policy Analyst researched this issue and drafted the Immigration Reform white paper.

**6. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

**KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**
- **81 percent of GPSS Committees successfully filled.** As of May 2010, GPSS recruited and filled the vast majority of committee appointments.

**BACKGROUND:** From the summer of 2009 to the spring of 2010 I interviewed over 50 candidates for committee positions. In collaboration with the GPSS President’s office GPSS appointed 81 percent of the committee appointments. The GPSS Legislative Assistant assisted in recruitment, scheduling and coordination of the GPSS committee appointment process. In future, to increase committee participation, the role of the GPSS President, and/or GPSS Legislative Assistant, and/or other GPSS staff should be expanded to ensure continued coordination of committee recruitment efforts during the Legislative Session.

**7. Media Hits and Communications.**

**KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**
- **Seattle Times, UW students rally in Olympia to support Higher Ed**
- **KOMO News, Concerned UW students demand action from lawmakers**
- **The Olympian, Students rally across state, Gov. Gregoire pledged to restore cuts**
  http://www.theolympian.com/2010/02/06/1128103/students-rally-across-state.html


• Etc, etc, etc.

BACKGROUND: The GPSS VP’s Office made it a priority to communicate legislative goals to the student body, UW Daily and greater Northwest media. A sampling of the media hits is above.

STAFF SUMMARIES:
GPSS POLICY ANALYST CAM CLARK:
The GPSS Policy Analyst worked on a variety of projects and initiatives over the 2009/2010 school year. These included the following:

Research Support for the GPSS Legislative Agenda – The Policy Analyst conducted background analysis, informational sheets, and searched for new issues to assist in the facilitation of a legislative agenda. In particular, the analyst wrote the first drafts for a GPSS federal agenda.

Research support for 2010 Legislative Session – The Policy Analyst was involved in researching emerging bills of interest. These included analytical comparisons of tuition policy bills and drafting of language for amendments. Additionally, the session involved coordination with the Office of Institutional Studies at UW and the WSA to fully understand proposed tuition bills and keep the office abreast of changes and emerging support. Deliverables included informational fact sheets, peer institution tuition analyses, and sample amendment for bills.

Graduate analysis of the campus wide student survey – A campuswide survey was issued to both graduate and undergraduate students focusing on the effects of budget cuts. The policy analyst conducted a quantitative breakdown for graduate students from the survey and presented the results in a Powerpoint at a Senate meeting.

Preparation of legislative testimony and powerpoint updates – The Policy Analyst drafted and researched testimony for the vice president’s office to be presented in
front of the state legislature. The testimony focused on the importance of the graduate financial aid programs and the need for predictable and regulated graduate tuition increases. The Policy Analyst also created Powerpoint legislative updates for the Senate Meetings.

*Federal policy analysis and white paper*- The policy analyst researched, conducted interviews, and wrote both an informational memorandum and white paper on concerns surrounding single entry restriction for Iranian student studying under an F-1 visa. The memo was circulated internally and the white paper was used in the SAGE Washington DC lobbying efforts.

**GPSS LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT(S) DEVRA DENSMORE/KATIE CLEARY:**
The GPSS Legislative Assistant worked on a variety of projects and initiatives over the 2009/2010 school year. These included the following:

*Assist in planning UW Lobby Day in Olympia*– The legislative assistant worked with representatives from OGR to plan the UW Lobby Day. This involved scheduling appointments with legislators, recruiting student lobbyists, and providing training sessions for attendees. It also involved logistical preparation, such as the creation of folders for lobbying materials and student/legislator appointment schedules, email correspondence with attendees, and the provision of transportation, t-shirts and lunches. The GPSS LA was also responsible for facilitating connections with campus groups, including student groups, representatives from each graduate school, and staff and faculty organizations.

*Assist with the administration of committee appointments*– The legislative assistant was responsible for scheduling appointments with potential candidates to serve as GPSS representatives on university committees. The LA also drafted committee appointment letters to be sent to committee chair and appointee, and updated the committee page on the GPSS Web site to reflect any positions filled.

*Conducting research on legislative issues and preparing briefs*– Assisted policy analyst in preparing Aid & Tuition Handout for Higher Education Advocacy Day (HEAD).

*Assisting in the creation of the 2008-09 GPSS legislative agenda and attending the GPSS Vice President’s Legislative Steering Committee meetings*– Assisted in staffing and communications for the LSC committee meetings.