GPSS Executive Committee Meeting Minutes – 3/14/2012

Members Present:
Charles Plummer (President)
Adam Sherman (Vice President)
Colin Goldfinch (Treasurer)
Melanie Mayock (Secretary)
Trond Nilsen (Executive Senator)
Megan Gambs (Executive Senator)
Mateo Banegas (Executive Senator)

Others Present:
Rene Singleton (SAO Advisor)

1. Call to Order
Charles calls the meeting to order at 5:31pm.

2. Approval of the Agenda
Adam moves to approve agenda
Trond seconds.
None opposed, agenda approved.

3. Approval of the Minutes from 3/7/12
Adam moves to approved the minutes from 3/7/12
Mateo seconds.
None opposed, minutes from 3/7/12 approved.

4a: Tuition Proposals and GPSS Response
Charles:
The Provost is modeling a 10-18% increase for undergraduate tuition.
Would like Exec to chat about GPSS’s path forward. PACS (Provost Advisory Committee for Students) can now directly talk and negotiate with the Provost. What should the GPSS do? What should we prioritize?
Should we get feedback at next Senate meeting?

Adam: Question about issue of predictability: Is there a strategy that this is going to be last big increase for some of the larger ones, or from now on there will be 25% increases every year? Need a steady/predictable rate of increase.

Charles: I can ask provost for particular units but also give to her what we think is reasonable. If we are below our global graduate peers, we can increase those until we are about the same as those.

Melanie: Particularly for specialized programs, we should try to reach out to students and senators in those departments before GPSS makes recommendations. Also, it’s difficult
to have general principles on tuition increases when we just don’t know the trade-offs are.

Colin: Don’t know if we should look at the “global average” to say it is ok to increase tuition. Perceived lack of diversity in the school (of Public Health) if certain populations are more averse to taking on debt.

Charles: The challenge was to cap tuition increases at the ‘global challenge mean.’

Adam: important to compare to peers, but we should also not always be following but should be leaders in a different way.

Trond: The global peer information made sure that there is at least some base number to which we can compare

Colin: global target is also a moving target

Adam: Can you talk about difference between comparing us on a university level and a department level. Are we moving more towards dept level.

Charles: with ABB is that graduate degrees are highly subsidized there will be contention that undergraduate are subsidizing graduate degrees.

Charles: Decide what are our values where tuition is concerned and also looking at how it affects quality of programs.

Megan: Is there any way to campaign to keep cohort tuition pricing? How do students plan for such large tuition increases?

Charles indicates that time for this agenda item has expired. 
Adam moves to add 5 more minutes.
Colin seconds.
No objections, motion approved.

Charles: Idea of different tiers of PhD tuition depending on where students are in their program- taking courses, research, dissertation.

Trond: activity/user fee- having more structure than the arbitrary numbers the provost comes up with. If we knew what services the tuition was buying and why increases were necessary would be easier to sell to services.

Colin: danger of treating higher education as a marketplace transaction- it’s a public good

Adam: making sure we have capacity to look at program specific budgets.
**4b: Communications Plan: Melanie Mayock**

Update on Communications Plan and email style guide that Jenn Tippins drafted in January. Having a consistent format and what kinds of emails are sent out- to senators, just for students, for senators to forward. Also managing frequency. Any comments or questions about emails sent from GPSS this year?

Megan: I think they are much more organized.

Charles: The Grad School has a new blog.

Melanie: Another thing we might want to follow up on is finding out how often senators forward the emails to their constituents.

Adam: There are software programs to see if people forward the emails. Not sure if that is a worthwhile investment.

Melanie: We also have a broader communications plan for GPSS. Will email documents out later this week. Lots of things that could be done but keep in mind our limited resources.

Adam: We need to use The Daily more and reach out to them. The more we can do that the more we can control the tone of the conversation.

Melanie: We need to make clear whose role press outreach is.

Adam: Can we integrate a blog into the GPSS website?

**5a: Restructuring Committee- Discuss Recommendations**

Charles: Let’s walk through some of the take-aways from the Restructuring Committee, including officer hours, community involvement, GPSS knowledge and outreach, institutional continuity, and unsustainable officer compensation.

Officer compensation: Officers can’t leave the union. Charles is reaching out to union to see what is possible. Also thinking about other things we can do.

Let’s talk about Officer compensation and Committees.

Officer Compensation is eating up a large part of the budget. How do we reign that in? Either capping tuition waiver at Tier I, we would need to figure out a way to negotiate that with the union, or we would have to leave the union.

Melanie: I’m in favor of looking into the substance of capping tuition waivers. There is lot less money to meet the goals and mission of the organization that can’t be met if a lot of the budget goes to pay officer tuition.
Charles: Think about how you would like any changes to be instituted.

Adam: I struggle with the idea that so much money is wrapped up in 4 people. And I still want to offer healthcare to staff, hire more staff, and spread tasks out more evenly. I don’t see anything in here that would minimize the amount of work that officers are putting in. I want to make sure being an officer is still an attractive position.

Trond: I generally think getting these 4 positions out of the contract and out of the union is a good move. Use the money to pay for healthcare and create a 5th officer position. Also, we should get rid of travel grants. They don’t benefit the student body as a whole. They are supplementing research programs and depts.

Colin: We should get the most value out of every dollar we spend. Cap tuition of officers, but tuition waivers makes sense to have someone commit to more than just the 20 hours a week as a staff position. Tuition compensation does have a factor in that. I think the staff healthcare issue is one that would be difficult to operationalize.

Charles: The restructuring committee won’t make a direct recommendation, but we should have a deliverable for this year. We should coalesce around a process or an option.

Melanie: Might take another month or two to talk to the union about capping the tuition. Would like Exe Committee to make recommendation this year but not be put into place until next year. I support compensating the staff at a higher level and creating a 5th officer position.

Rene: What are other graduate students getting paid on campus? Come up with a mission as to why staff and personnel should be getting paid more.

Adam: We should make sure our compensation aligns with our values, not just look at what other organizations on campus are doing.

Charles: What do we see as a path forward on officer compensation? Would like Exec to be tasked with looking at this issue and coming up with a way to make it happen. Not clear as to how Restructuring Committee proposals can be implemented. There needs to be some sort of formal presentation to the Senate.

Melanie: We have three more Senate meetings this year. We could have a presentation on April 4th and a motion to have Exec Committee make a recommendation to Senate at the May 30th meeting.

Charles: Sounds like we have consensus that Exec should take this, figure it out, and come back to the Senate.
Trond: limited amount of time, and package it in a way that the Senate can act on this next year.

Charles: Let’s talk about the committee proposals now.

Adam: I don’t think a new lobby committee is necessary, but we can take the ideas behind it and put it into the existing framework.

Trond: the Publicity & Outreach and Website Maintenance Committee can be folded into one.

Charles: University Affairs Committee is one I think we can all get behind.

Trond: We should have metrics for success for each committee.

Rene: I think that some of the committee are more action-oriented. The ones that work the best are Finance and Budget, Judicial, they get to make decisions and they get to leave. Keep that model in mind

Melanie: I feel like that view minimizes what people on the committee do, we need to try to get Senators take on more responsibilities.

Charles: Committee chairs need to do more and we need to figure out how they can integrate with GPSS and the Executive Committee. One idea is having chairs serve on exec committee or having other opportunities to interact with officers or exec committee. What would that look like? One idea is to mandate that exec senators sit on these committees. Another is to grow the size of the exec committee to bring in those other committee chairs.

Melanie: We do need to integrate the committees with Exec, but perhaps not every committee. Another idea is to have committee chairs report to Exec on a regular basis. Also, if committee chairs are also on Exec, that could be too high of a time commitment.

Charles: Time has expired for this item. Adam moves to extend conversation for another 5 minutes. Megan seconds. No objections, motion carries.

Colin: We need to motivate committee chairs to have more investment into the organization.

Charles: Concern that Exec Committee will get too large to be effective.

Rene: Have you thought about compensation for these positions? Charles: Yes.
5c: Legislative Update
Adam - not much is happening. No one from the House is in Olympia. A few Senators are down there talking to themselves. Something is happening behind closed doors, but no one is really sure. We tried to set up a press conference but didn’t happen because of finals week. Student parent, someone who is graduating.

6. Officer Reports

a. Vice President
Already reported.

b. Treasurer (Colin)
For travel grants this round we had 60 applicants. We spread the funds around; average grant was $280. Special Allocations fund has been used up. Money might be transferred from departmental allocations.

c. Secretary (Melanie)
UPASS: recommendation of no exemptions a month ago. We notified people about 2 weeks ago, but we haven’t gotten any responses yet, which might be a good sign. Catching up on various projects over spring break - Communications, Diversity issues, DRAC.

d. ASUW
[Evan is not present]

e. President (Charles)
Student regent selection committee has gotten off the ground. Got some numbers on faculty retention for this year, have not seen as many offers to keep faculty as expected. Because of budget cuts and freezes, we would have seen a jump in number of retention offers made, but we have not seen that. We know how many faculty have left the university. It hasn’t changed much though. We got information from the Office of Admissions for undergrads – saw increases in all categories of applicants except for white in-state students. Huge increase in number of international students applying.

7. Announcements
No announcements.

8. Adjourn
Melanie moves to adjourn. Colin seconds. No objections, motion passes.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45pm.