GPSS Executive Committee Meeting Minutes – 11/09/2011

Members Present:
Aaron Naumann (President)
Adam Sherman (Vice President)
Colin Goldfinch (Treasurer)
Melanie Mayock (Secretary)
Trond Nilsen (Executive Senator)
Amy Winter (Executive Senator)
Megan Gambs (Executive Senator)
Mateo Banegas (Executive Senator)
Evan Smith (ASUW)

Others Present:
Rene Singleton (SAO Advisor)
Jonathan Winn (ASUW Director of Diversity)

1. Call to Order
Aaron calls meeting to order at 6:09pm

2. Approval of the Agenda
Melanie moves to approve 11/09/11 agenda. Trond seconds. Unanimous approval.

3. Approval of the Minutes from 10/26/11
Trond moves to approve the 10/26/11 Executive Committee meeting minutes. Melanie
seconds. All approve.

4a. Diversity Requirement Proposal
[The diversity requirement proposal was provided via hard copy in the Exec binders.]

Jonathan Winn:
This proposal came from UW organizations, pushing for diversity requirement in
undergraduate education. Asking for 2 diversity courses each 2-5 credits to graduate at
the undergraduate level at UW. This would take effect for 2017 graduating class. A
diversity requirement course would provide students with understanding of human
diversity- such as age, race, etc.

Mateo: what is an alternative diversity learning experience?
Jonathan: study abroad, seminars

Trond: How do you envision appeals for advising process?

Jonathan: We envision something similar to the current process.

Adam: What is the institutional capacity to take on extra students in these classes?
Jonathan: Working with institution to check to make sure there is enough room in these classes.

Adam: Are you looking for general support from GPSS?

Jonathan: During fall quarter we want to gain student support. Next week going through first readings in ASUW Student Senate. After that come to GPSS and have GPSS back it, and then we will go to Tacoma and Bothell campuses to get their approval. Usually if it goes to the Faculty senate, that is where it gets shot down. If only 5% of faculty say no, then it’s over.

Renee: The 5% vote is in their codes

Jonathan: Goal is to get student support. Will go to faculty senate spring quarter.

Evan: Goes to the voting faculty (made up of full-time faculty, tenured faculty), the vote goes out in email. Tough part is majority of faculty is from UW Medicine.

Aaron: Last time this failed was in late 1990s?

Evan: Always failed by voting faculty. A major problem in that these faculty members are in their labs, not aware of campus issues.

Renee: Provides historical context: affirmative action data collection is illegal. This is a diff approach and a diff time.

Melanie: Are there any cons to the proposal?

Jon: What I’ve heard, usually has come from engineering students, that it’s too many requirements. People also ask if there will be enough seats.

Evan: Another argument against it is that the university is saying that the most important thing the university should be passing on from curriculum is diversity, as opposed to something else, like a tech requirement or a sustainability requirement.

Megan: Are you in conversation with administration as to what counts for diversity in each program?

Jonathan: We looked at the current diversity minor and used that definition.

Megan: Requiring 2 classes that are 2-5 credits each, do you think that is too vague?

Jonathan: Goal is not to take total credits, but to take 2 classes, whatever number of credit they are.
Colin: Since 90’s, internet is more advanced, you can put an informational website along in the email to faculty. To address medical and engineering schools.

Mel: Do other universities have diversity requirement?

Evan: Only public university in WA state that does not have diversity requirement is UW. University of Utah has one, implemented under Michael K. Young. Georgia, Berkeley and Utah allow for students to appeal if they take courses in a community college. We took that from these universities.

Jonathan: This is the first time every ASUW Board member has co-sponsored the Resolution. Would really like GPSS support and want any other ideas once this gets through ASUW senate.

Adam: Use of the word class: is that referring to socio-economic? Maybe switching word use to socio-economic background.

Evan: Faculty wonder is this true multicultural education or is there a political agenda at play.

Adam: The more you can frame this as having diversity be integrated with the curriculum you already have. So that it is integrated into what they are interested in.

Colin: Is there a way to make a low cost infrastructure to help? Maybe GO-MAP a good organization to link grad students to helping students find a project.

Rene: Show that some of these goals are also goals of the university and highlight that.

Trond: Would help to get graduate students to make personal contact with faculty before they get the email and vote on this.

Mel: If we want to put this to a vote in the GPSS Senate, then it would have to be January. We could make a quick announcement in the Nov 30 meeting.

Evan: Want it passed by end of quarter so that they have it for early winter quarter.

4b. Legislative Update and Student Engagement

Adam:
Special legislative session starts on Nov 28. Revenue forecast came in, shortfall of $1.4-$1.6 billion dollars, but in effect they are looking to cut 2 billion dollars. This is a revision from the earlier cuts.

What that means for higher ed, looking at $166 million on the chopping block (statewide). UW cut would be $82 million. In the last 3 years, UW funding cut in half, after this, it will be 2/3 or more. At risk are: State need grants, Work-study.
These are some of the bigger ones that we need to be on the defense of this year

Andrew Lewis from ASUW developed a 3 point plan for revenue:
1. close R&D tax break for companies with more than 250 employees. This revenue would be dedicated to higher ed.
2. create community and technical college districts- serve as strong pipelines into the university, this would increase capacity for local community colleges to take on extra students to get 2 yrs general undergrad education to transfer to UW
3. liberalizing the endowments of the universities

There is lots of contention on each one of these bullet points.

Was just in Olympia. Rep Larry Seaquist likes the idea of liberalizing endowments- leverage tuition to take on riskier investments with higher yields. But what would happen if they take on investments that go bad, how does that affect students. Right now we are on government bonds which have a pretty low return.

State and legislative steering committees meeting and focusing on special session and then the regular session. Policy bill will be dealt with in the regular session.

Will be reaching out to student leadership to set up town hall meetings with students, faculty and administration. Administrators will know what the cuts will look like for larger university, faculty- what cuts will look like in classroom, students- what cuts mean to their projects

Trond: How much is left in discretionary budget?
Adam: $8.7 billion

Evan: Legislators ask: Should I fund children’s healthcare or fund higher ed?

Adam: working to get to legislators to not even ask either/or questions. Larry Seaquist will be pushing a sales tax increase. We need to diversify our revenue streams.

Melanie: Are we working with other groups that are pushing for revenue?

Aaron: Tax levy for colleges- Rep Bob Hasegawa thing. Another thing on table is the creation of a state bank that could save us a lot of money. Find a way to deliver low-cost loans. North Dakota is the only other one who has this.

Evan: Not something that ASUW or GPSS can do on their own but partner with other big companies. Not just admin we need to convince but the voting public.

Mel: Who do we ally with- big business or progressives?
What is our internal timeline?
Adam: Legislative Agenda passing November 30

Renee: If you have your agenda, you can go on last year’s but needs something for sure for the next session.

Colin:
1. Get something passed right away so you have something to lobby on
2. We don’t have any constancy in what we are demanding

Adam: Have to view lobbying as a multi-year effort. Consistency is key.

Colin: gives example from Canada (yay!) unifying theme. We need a complement to our messaging. What are the longer economic impacts- Student Debt Bubble.

Aaron: Administrators said student debt was not a bubble.

Adam: Cutting $82 million out of UW. When you cut $82 million, you cut 1.8 billion dollars from economy now.

Colin: Do people buy that stat?

Adam: I think they don't know what it means.

Megan: Have you talked to the alumni association about cuts and what its doing to their degree?

Adam: They are aware that the value of your own degree will go down if the UW starts declining.

Aaron: Admin will stay neutral. They will not come out and say publicly that that is what is going to happen. We do need to press them on that. The question is whether they will get on board with us and say that they need revenue enhancement. This is the tipping point. Erosion of quality of education of UW is happening right now. 30-40% of faculty have an offer to teach elsewhere. Our faculty are being poached.

Adam: Talked to one faculty member at rally today. We need faculty to come down to Olympia with us. Trying to get professors to come to lobby day.

Aaron: Last year, we needed to gain greater predictability at our institution. We didn't offer a policy mechanism. We need to be careful, that people don’t take the need for faculty pay increases onto the shoulders of students.

Evan: Faculty being poached by Google, Microsoft, engineering faculty may lose 20 by spring quarter, to others that can offer 30-40 pay increase.
Trond: Getting stories of businesses working with the UW that have direct economic impacts.

Mel: Nov 30 Senate meeting - small group meetings of how senators can get students engaged.

Discussion of where to focus small group discussions around - student engagement or ideas for policy. Melanie talks about idea of engaging schools that already have happy hours in their depts and then incorporating student engagement there. And coming up with themes and messages.

5a. Higher Ed Summit recap

Aaron: Cost-benefit analysis of Higher-Ed summit. In morning it was packed. Many of the high-profile university administrators attended.

Rene: I think people really wanted to be connected to GPSS.

Aaron: Energy was really fantastic. We registered 85 people who are interested in helping with Lobby Day. Five lawmakers in the room, 3-4 reps from different legislative offices, UW president, a few deans, etc. We had a very high turnout while competing with W Day. Third panel provided us with some info that we need to figure out how to message. Gave us window into intricacies of retention that could impact support of funding of Higher Ed. Institutional messages are unified. Erosion of quality also on record. Overall, very successful. Submitted piece to Seattle Times as op-ed, but was rejected. An editorial had been put in to Times over the weekend, so there was repetition.

Higher Ed Summit needs to be broadened, need to partner with ASUW and Alumni Association, and start a lot earlier. We missed out on the business side. Partner with UW external affairs office. As we move forward, this planning needs to start in the spring before Exec Committee breaks up and officers leave. When you bring in a bunch of new people, harder to see the issues coming on the horizon compared to those that are entrenched in the issues.

Adam: Science and Policy Summit, create links between diff types of promoting.

Adam: Presentations at Science and Policy Summit, how long are they? Can we see “TED Talks” Make this accessible to the general public.

5b. Universal U-PASS Advisory Board: Bylaws

Melanie: Wanted to run these by Exec Committee. Bylaws for the Advisory Board.
Goes over how the advisory board would operate. For 3 main powers, how many votes does it take to do that. 9 voting members. Needs 2 GPSS and 4 ASUW to recommend changes to fees.

Aaron: The bylaws mention hiring a clerk – how would that work? 
Melanie: Trying to balance power of Transportation Services and the student reps. We wanted to put in some type of language that the clerk needs to be responsible to students, not just trans services.

Aaron: Article 6: can one of the student governments pull out of this?

Mel: No, there needs to be a joint withdrawal.

Renee: It has the word if to give ASUW and GPSS flexibility

Aaron: Article 6 needs to have exact language from signed copy of MOU.

Trond: Disagreement already on how to withdraw and the language.

Debate over language and ambiguity of the language on Changes to Student Universal UPASS fee

Adam: What do we want to message to others?

Mel: ASUW members are not very worried about Universal UPASS developing opposition.

Aaron: I think long term viability of this program will be in jeopardy when western dorms come online in 2015. This program needs to be campaigned for every year if you want it to stick around.

Adam: We need to be focused with our messaging.

6. Officer Reports

a. Vice President: Adam Sherman
Kiana Scott (Policy Analyst) is working on research items:
1. Exec administrative pay here at UW as percentage of tuition increases (based on ideas of whose shoulders) Everyone needs to pitch in that this is a public institution
2. Review of institutions and student conduct code
3. Forms of state support out there for graduate programs (Ohio in worse financial situation but investing more in education)

Also put out survey to grad students.
Re-look at the questions we are asking so data is compatible year to year.
Going to as many departments as possible and taking lots of meetings down in Olympia.

b. Treasurer – Colin Goldfinch
- PhD Comics Movie next Thursday
- Vora (Event Planner) currently working on GPSS trivia night for winter quarter.
- Jenn (Office Manager) is working on speed dating
- Kristen (Resource Assistant) is working on financial statements for Finance and Budget Committee, so it is ready for Senate Nov 30th meeting.
- Science and Policy Summit- fundraiser
- Budget Consultation

c. Secretary: Melanie Mayock
- Ad-hoc working group on diversity starting
- Dispute Resolution Advisory Committee - first meeting for December
  - Ombudsman will come
- Judicial committee will be meeting soon
- Ted Chen will be Melanie’s proxy at ASUW Senate Steering Committee
- Jenn Tippins (Publications Assistant) is developing a Communications Plan – we will involve everyone with this.

d. ASUW: Evan Smith
Student Empowerment Banquet was successful. Incorporate Banquet with Higher Ed Summit- OGR would be interested.
ASUW Senate-
- debate over ASUW would endorse “Occupy” movements at Wall Street and in Seattle.
- Course evaluation reform- online system, looking at results from law school pilot program

e. President: Aaron Naumann

Strengthen relationship with faculty
- Discussion of survey to get after the issue of quality education. Get data from students and compare with data from faculty.
  - Figuring out metrics is really hard
Strengthen relationship with graduate school
- Fee-based programs and how those shift from one to the other
Strengthen relationship with UAW
- Student debt burden and send to media outlets (papers)

There are things at fed level causing serious concern
- Senate floated a mini-bus bill to House for a $162 million cut to NSF, which is 13% decrease.
  - Draft notes to constituents on this issue
Adam will sit in on next Board of Regents meeting as Aaron will be away. He will also be sitting in on Alumni Association meeting.

Discussions with external affairs as our relationship is not the best it could be, figure out ways to strengthen our relationship between various offices.

Exploring how to get in to every niche in this university and also to think about reaching out beyond the university in the spring.

7. Announcements
Graduate School has asked us to join “All Hands”. We need to provide a 5 min presentation on what we do, without a powerpoint. This is on Nov 16th 8-11:30am.

8. Adjourn
Adam moves to adjourn the meeting at 8:23pm
Evan seconds.
All agree.