GPSS Senate Meeting – February 29, 2012
Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order
Charles Plummer, President, calls meeting to order at 5:34. Recognizes new Senators.

2. Approval of the Agenda
Eder Sousa, Aeronautics & Astronautics: Moves to approve the agenda.
Sarah Bergman, Earth and Space Sciences: Seconds.
No objections, motion passes.

3. Approval of the Minutes
Yasmeen Hussain, Biology: Moves to approve the minutes from the Feb 1, 2012, meeting.
Michael Hutchins, Earth and Space Science: Seconds.
No objections, motion passes.

4. UW-Tech Wi-Fi update/ STF Surplus
Charles Plummer, President: Introduces guest speakers from UW-IT. He notes that the Executive Committee will be voting next week to approve STF money for the project about to be discussed. Charles can field any additional questions after the talk.

The floor is taken by David Morton, director of mobile technology for UW-IT, and Colleen Butler, project manager for the Wi-Fi refresh project. David and Colleen provide the following presentation:

This project of updating Wi-Fi throughout campus is now in its second year, rolling into its 3rd in July. They need to update this technology to new meet standards. The goal is to upgrade the network to 802.11n. This allows more users on the network and gives better coverage. It also allows the expansion of network coverage, geographically.

Funding is being provided on Seattle campus by the UW Technology Recharge Fee (paid by departments) and Student Technology Fee surplus funds. $1 million in funding was received for this process last year. The whole process is expected to cost around $4 million. They asked for the student portion to pay for about 1/3 of the cost, when students are about ¾ of the users on the network.

The upgrade is necessary because of the demand. Usage is doubling about every 12 months. More and more devices are on the network—on average 2.5 devices per user. Five years is an average re-fresh cycle. This seems to fit well within technology cycles and new developments in technology as well. Of course, all of the new technologies are backwards compatible. Now, we see about 65,000 unique handheld devices on the network, which is a lot for 40,000 students. 140,000 unique devices, in total, are visible on the network as well.

The upgrade has already begun. Over 3000 802.11n access points have been installed in 105 buildings across all 3 campuses. They hope to have 5000 in total when the refresh is done. There is a lot of focus on student areas in assuring network coverage. They have
also upgraded the infrastructure that supports and runs those access points—13 controllers.

A map was provided showing the areas that have been upgraded and those that are going to be upgraded in the next six months or so. The HUB and new res halls are not being included in this project because they don’t fit with the timeline of this project (ie they are still being built). The health sciences building is lagging behind in the upgrade, because it is hard to perform installations there as there is asbestos all over the place. They are working hard to make it happen though. In addition to common areas and dining halls, libraries were one of the first targets of this project. They have also added coverage in the By George Café, Res halls, Mary Gates, South Campus Center, I-Court, etc.

They are using a “rip-and-replace” method, and then will be going back and filling in access holes in the network after the fact. They hope to expand coverage to buildings that had no service before and improve outdoor coverage as well, though this is challenging and expensive. Part of the reason why buildings were left out of the service loop before is because they are hard to install this sort of technology in. Examples of such spaces include the IMA, Kane Hall, Schmitz, and the Health Sciences Complex.

David asks asked whether it is a priority for students to have outdoor Wi-Fi access on campus.
Responses mixed, but many nods and yeses. David mentioned that as students have and use more handheld devices, constant coverage throughout campus, this will become more important.

Chris Lizotte, Geography: How are holes in signals found/how is signal strength measured?

Colleen: People are actually walking around with network analyzers.

David: They are also working on developing an app that allows people to “check in” and report poor signal or signal holes around campus.

Yasmeen Hussain, Biology: How big is the coverage area for each of the devices?

David: Quite big, but the issue is not only coverage, it is also capacity. Similar problems with user glut are occurring on cell networks as well.

Yasmeen Hussain, Biology: How will this new technology get around the system of too many users clogging up the network, as has happened to some phone companies.

David: Wi-Fi operates on two different bands. There are more channels available in the new 5GHz base. The controllers listed in the upgrades are going to manage these kinds of adjustments in order to handle user demand and data flow throughout the Wi-Fi network.

Megan Gambs, Oceanography: Last slide was talking about other places to consider—the bus stops would be a great place to add network
David: we are looking at that, actually.

Charles Plummer, President: People can forward additional questions or comments from David and Colleen to Treasurer Colin Goldfinch.

5. Bylaw Suspension and Election Announcement.
Trond Nilsen, Industrial and Systems Engineering: GPSS annually elects officers – this usually happens in May. This year, we have the strategic planning ad hoc committee as well, which might be making changes to the way officer structure works. There could be jobs created, removed, tuition waiver removed, etc. So we can’t predict what will happen in May, and we therefore don’t have the elections packets ready.

Trond and Hunter Marston (Jackson School, Southeast Asia Studies), chair of the elections committee, recommend that they suspend the portion of the bylaws that says that GPSS has to produce the elections packet 2 months before the elections. They hope mean to have packets ready 1 month before the elections.

There are 2 sections in the bylaws that are of interest. The first says that the elections packet will be submitted to GPSS senators 2 months before the election. The second one is more complicated because they can’t suspend the whole clause, they just want to deal with the wording to allow for April instead of March. They are posted in the presentation. Trond asks for questions. There are none.

Charles Plummer, President: Entertains a motion to temporarily suspend the first bylaw. Article 6 section E, Clause 2, letter b.

Trond Nilsen, Industrial and Systems Engineering: Moves to suspend GPSS bylaw Article 6 Section E Clause 2 Letter B.
Hunter Marston, Jackson School – Southeast Asian Studies: Seconds.

Jonathan Kocarnik, Public Health Genetics: Proposes a friendly amendment — say “temporary suspension, to be lifted following the elections in May”

Trond Nilsen, Industrial and Systems Engineering: That language isn’t needed.

No objections, the motion passes.

Charles Plummer, President, entertains a motion to suspend second bylaw, Article 5, Section G, Clause 4, letter c.
Hunter Marston, Jackson School – Southeast Asian Studies: Moves to suspend bylaw Article 5 Section G Clause 4 Letter C
Trond Nilsen, Industrial and Systems Engineering: Seconds
No objections, the motion passes.
Trond Nilsen, Industrial and Systems Engineering: He understands that the elections committee plans to have a packet available by April 4. Last year’s packet is available for viewing on the GPSS website, for those interested. Please run. Competition is good.

6. Strategic Planning and Ad Hoc Committee findings

Charles Plummer, President invites the entire committee to the floor. Adrienne Sussman (Psychology), Ted Chen (Bioengineering), Wes Kovarik (Jackson School – International Studies), Moroni Benally (Native American Studies), Kristen Hosey (Nursing), Colin Bateson (Mechanical Engineering)

Jonathan Kocarnik, Public Health Genetics, stays seated.

The members of the Ad Hoc committee gave the following report:

The Committee surveyed stakeholders for GPSS – senators, graduate and professional students, registered student organizations that receive GPSS funding, travel grant recipients, GPSS officers, GPSS committees; they have also been doing research about graduate leadership at other universities. The committee meets once per week for 2 hours or so, and have been doing so since the beginning of the quarter. About half of the senators have responded to surveys and about 800 other grad students.

Problems that were found in Senate structure include:

- how information is disseminated about GPSS;
- articulation of the mission of GPSS;
- lack of clarity on what GPSS does/is trying to do, among the student base;
- distribution of work load among the officers;
- GPSS being reactive, in terms of receiving a high work load and not always knowing where to direct it (ending in a lot of work being given to very few people);
- the need for more efficiency in GPSS;
- the need for stronger relations to staff, committees, and other constituents;
- senators are feeling under involved;
- 70% of students interviewed have had no interaction with GPSS other than a singular social event (ie speed dating, social);
- many senators want a more significant presence on campus;
- lack of continuity year to year, due to staff turnover;
- lack of social cohesion among senators and GPSS members;
- no coffee at senate meetings - give senators sad-face.

Suggestions for change that the committee has been considering include:

- Social events and things for senators;
- changes to the bylaws to lighten the workload. Specifically, they want to suggest a new officer position: VP of university affairs. It came up at the last senate meeting that being VP is now currently a full time job, what with spending so much time in Olympia, etc. So, the new staff position could handle more things on campus, help rallying folks around particular issues in Seattle. Literally, they want to give the VP’s job to two people. With current budget cuts, the agenda in
Olympia is so important that they really need as many resources focused on this as possible.

Chris Lizotte, Geography: Doesn’t the committee want someone to lighten the workload of the president? Because these things listed are all internal affairs.

Ad Hoc Committee: This is more about organizing for lobbying. This could also be a two year position, because it takes more than a few months to make the relationships that are necessary down in Olympia. The idea is to work with the VP making sure we are doing the best job lobbying for UW in Olympia and DC as we can.

Nicole Secula, Music: Sounds like you are looking for a mechanism more than a person. Do we really need a person, if we can create a program or email listserv, etc., instead? Would that allow us to avoid funding a new job?

Ad Hoc Committee: Definitely. Any mechanism would be good. Supporting the VP with a committee was also discussed. But the committee also wants someone who can be in the VP position for two years. In the hopes of attracting someone to do that, though, GPSS needs to lighten the load on the VP. This position doesn’t necessarily have to be filled by a senator. A committee or work group could be organized from the general grad student body.

Nathaniel McVicar, Electrical Engineering: it is hard for the VP to go to Olympia and be here in Seattle, so why not let the new position deal with Olympia and lobbying and let the VP be here?

Ad Hoc Committee: That is a different way of structuring, or perhaps a different name for the same structure. These are all possibilities. We are trying to focus on the workload of the VP primarily. Other universities have this second position somewhere in their structure as well.

Matthew Sousa, Business school: The VP is busy right now because the legislature in session. Is the demand for this new position year round, or only during this time of year?

Adam Sherman, Vice President: “I have an opinion.” Even though there is a scheduled legislative session, the interim period, which leads up to it, is when you need to be building relationships with legislators. Then there is work afterwards as well. It will be heavily concentrated on winter quarter, of course, but at the same time, there is a lot of organizing that needs to happen on campus leading up to that. And spring quarter is when federal lobbying is done, so there is demand there too. So, prep work and student organizing will fill out the year. We need to have a year-round presence in Olympia and in DC.

Melanie Mayock, Secretary: She has a slightly different take than the presentation. She thinks this would take the highest load off of the president. Presidents have reported working 60 hours a week or more. The president should be overseeing the whole organization. A new VP of university affairs could take some of the campus-side issues off of the president’s shoulders, which is really needed, and takes some load off of the VP as well.

Ad Hoc Committee: It was also discussed that GPSS officers should have decreased compensation—decreased to tier 1 levels only. They also recommend the formation of new
committees: a lobbying committee, a social committee to take load off of the treasurer, a media committee for outreach to the student body and other stakeholders. Creating more leadership positions would help get senators more involved. Each committee should have an elected chairperson. At the moment, at least 1 officer is expected to sit on and chair each committee, which is inefficient. There should also be an orientation committee, to introduce GPSS to new students. Also, there should be an orientation process for new senators. Currently about $70,000+ per year goes into tuition coverage for officers. The treasurer decides on the budget for next year by making a rough guess on what kind of people will run for office. They have to guess what tuition tiers each officer will be in. There are three tiers for pay, and then additional ones for dentistry, law, etc. The only way to be able to hire an additional staff member would be to decrease the tuition waiver for officers. The trade off, though, is that this is a disincentive to run for GPSS office. The second option would be to decrease officer compensation to tier 1. This would bring in enough money to bring one person on. But there is still a variable disincentive to run across different departments at UW. The third option is to keep everything as it is and then focus on committees and senate involvement instead, to help lighten officer load. The committee is still seeking input on these recommendations. All recommendations will have to be voted on by senate as well. They have looked at other public research institutions, and others have lower compensation, but lighter workloads. But no other university is a perfect comparison to UW. There are many different ways to do this, and many of them have been considered. The committee has also been considering how changes could affect different individuals with respect to their own financial security, TAship and RAship opportunities, etc., which may variably incentivize or disincentivize involvement in GPSS at this level. There will be a meeting of these committees over spring break to finalize all of the recommendations and present a full proposal to senate in April.

Kimberly Schertz, Law School: Can you demonstrate tuition waiver recommendations visually? It is tough to understand exactly what the recommendations are.

Ad Hoc Committee: The total budget is around $300k. Tuition waivers are around $73k. Nearly half of the budget, including tuition waivers, goes to supporting staff. They are still crunching numbers.

Skylar Olsen, Economics: She would also be interesting to know the proportions of graduate students that fall within each tier. We need to know exactly how the incentives are changing for which student/department.

Nathaniel McVicar, Electrical Engineering: It would also be good to know percentages of students in each tier over the last 5 years, so that patterns in the changes of these divisions can be determined.

Ad Hoc Committee: They thought about this as well. They want to know what students are likely to want to hold office.

Jonathan Huang, Epidemiology: He agrees with others who say it is to better plot out and quantify these incentives. This would help the senate make an evidence-based decision. But also we shouldn’t lose the big picture, which is to take a look at the fundamental mission of GPSS.
Why should students come here? That message can drive the roles for the exec committee, etc. That is the critical question. Hopefully student feedback will allow recommendations on this.

Ad Hoc Committee: There seems to be some informal mission that GPSS is following. We haven’t articulated it yet, but it’s not the mission as currently formally stated. Once we figure that out, we can recommend a full mission based on feedback. With this mission in hand, we can be more strategic when approaching the budget, trying to meet specific goals.

Trond Nilsen, Industrial and Systems Engineering: What about officer salaries? Have you considered dropping waivers and increasing salaries? Currently salaries are similar to TA/RA salaries. But you could increase the salary pay, so that payroll is more predictable.

Charles Plummer, President, asks for motion to increase time for this agenda item

Chris Lizotte, Geography: Moves to extend this agenda item by 5 minutes
Megan Gambs, Oceanography: Seconds.
No objections, motion passes.

Nicole Secula, Music: Recommends that he committee send out catalyst survey based on this information presented tonight so that senators can respond to it and so that the committee can have senate reactions in hard copy.

Ad Hoc Committee: Yes, We’ll do it. All the information presented today, and will create open survey spaces for senators to leave comments.

Brook Sattler, Human Centered Design and Engineering: Sad to hear about cutting tuition waivers. Many students are giving up TA-ships and RA-ships which would have tuitions waivers when they accept office. Should we allow officers to have these other GSA appointments in order to get tuition waivers?

Ad Hoc Committee: They entertained the idea of dropping tuition waivers, but the committee isn’t currently leaning that way. They mostly wanted to bounce the idea off of the senate.

Yasmeen Hussain, Biology: Asks the committee to clarify the recommendation for tuition waiver decrease.

Ad Hoc Committee: There were three options: drop, decrease, and leave as is. We are talking about option one right now.

Nathaniel McVicar, Electrical Engineering: What about dropping tuition and increasing salary?

Ad Hoc Committee: Salary raises will be considered if we drop the tuition waiver.

Kimberly Schertz, Law School: What about dropping a percentage of tuition?
Ad Hoc Committee: Another issue is stability in the budget from year to year. This problem would still exist if we don’t know what the budget would be, so if we drop to tier 1, some would have tuition covered, some not totally, but budget planning would be improved and this pressure eased. Tier 1 students are also the students who are most likely to have their tuition waived by a TA-ship or RA-ship, so they would have almost no incentive to have tuition dropped

Trond Nilsen, Industrial and Systems Engineering: One currently can’t old an officer appointment and a GSA appointment at the same time, is that right?

Ad Hoc Committee: They think that’s right.

7. Legislative Update
Adam Sherman, Vice President, gave the following report:

Lobby day happened. Over 200 students came down, both grad and undergrad. Many people spoke to their legislators from their home districts. Had some great guest speakers come and talk about their priorities, etc.

Most policy bills that directly impact students didn’t make it through. Policy bills are those that do not cost any money, it is just a shift in what grad students can/can’t do. One was introduced by Evan Smith, ASUW university affairs director, which was trying to get students more involved in the planning and budgeting phases of major universities. UW admin has been good at involving students, but we wanted to insure that for other campuses as well. That will come back out during the next legislative session. The second had to do with student auditing, gaining student access to university historical documents and archives, records, etc, to have the same perspective as administration when going into budgeting talks, etc

One bill dealt with student comment periods during regents meetings, and this passed. Andrew Lewis and Adam were able to help pass a provision that says that any time the Regents want to pass a new fee, they have to give 21 days-notice, which allows students time to put forth policy alternatives. There was another bill put forward by Senator Frockt about financial aid counseling. Students should have a right to know and get counseling about the financial burden they are taking on when they take out loans and other financial aid packages. They should be educated on the impact of the money that they will be taking out and the earning prospects that are available to them after graduate in order to pay off that debt.

The budget allocations, so far, are looking more positive than what the governor proposed. The governor had originally proposed $160 million in cuts, getting rid of work study program entirely, which is the last form of state financial aid for graduate students, as well as suspending the child care matching grants, all while increasing funding for engineering degrees. The house produced their proposal last week. The senate budget is next. House budget called for $65 million in cuts to higher education, which includes $30 million in cuts to 4 year institutions and $13.5 million in cuts to UW. $7.8 million is going back into engineering programs in Washington, and $3.8 million of that going to UW specifically (Adam thinks that the other half is going to WSU). The work study
program is preserved. The child care matching grant is preserved. To fund this, they make $10 million in cuts to state need grant, which hurts undergrads, which is a mixed blessing and is not good for university culture overall.

The senate released their budget yesterday. This version is way better than the house version. No cuts whatsoever to higher education. Right now there is no guarantee that the senate version is going to pass, so now is a very important time to put pressure on your representatives. In the senate budget, there is an increase to community and technical college funding by $4 million and an increase of $1.9+ million to 4 year institutions, $1.6 million of which is going to UW. These increases are earmarked toward specific programs—especially an emphasis on aerospace programs thanks to pressure from Boeing. The state need grant and work study and child care matching grant were 100% protected. These things are now on the radar of senators, which is a very good thing. We must now fight for them. Email, call, write letters, send postcards, write op-ed letters in the newspaper. Adam also invites you down to Olympia anytime. He will set up meetings with people who are on the fence.

Chris Lizotte, Geography: He is overjoyed by senate budget, but whence this revenue to preserve all these programs?

Adam Sherman, Vice President: The state doesn’t know what revenue will look like next year. There is a push for a rainy day fund, but senate says it’s already pouring. Revenue has been slightly up in the last couple of years. They are counting on the economy to continue to recover. Democrats in both the house and the senate are willing to defer $330 million dollars in payments to school districts to fund their proposed budgets. They are deferring payments to them by one day to kick the can down the road into the next fiscal year. School districts have come out in favor of this, because they get no cuts either. Everyone just hopes that this is all solvable next year when the next fiscal year rolls around. The state has constitutional obligations to fund k-12 education. This has been a Supreme Court issue, recently.

Kevin Cummings, Educational Psychology: Is the reality of no cuts to higher education coming at the expense of k-12?

Adam Sherman, Vice President: No. In the senate budget there were no cuts to either. People are just using money that was already there differently.

8. Dean Search
Charles Plummer, President: UW will soon be losing deans in the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Nursing, and Engineering. Charles needs to fill a student position on the committee for the College of Arts and Sciences. Who would be a good candidate? Please send suggestions or nominations to Charles via email.

Charles also went to board of deans meeting last week and proposed the creation of planning and budgeting councils in all of the colleges and schools in the university. Some schools are stepping forward to pilot the program. As he learns which colleges and schools will be involved, he will
be circulating the information and seeking students to be involved in this kind of work, looking at 5, 10 year plans for the school, putting input on budget, etc.

Trond Nilsen, Industrial and Systems Engineering: Which schools are piloting?

Charles Plummer, President: We don’t know yet. He is waiting to hear back from the Chair of the Board of Deans.

Melanie Mayock, Secretary: Some colleges were listed in The Daily

Charles Plummer, President: That info, he is pretty sure, is incorrect.

9. SAGE update
Adam Sherman, Vice President: SAGE, the Student Advocates for Graduate Education, is a coalition of schools nationwide that UW decided to join to try to affect graduate education on the federal level. Every year, students spend a few days on the hill in DC, talk to legislators. He and others will be in DC the first few days of next quarter as well. They will be focusing on F-1 visas for education and ensuring that they are regulated fairly, as well as the visas people use to stay in the US and work after graduation. They will also focus on federal research funding. They try to maximize the amount of money in those pools.

10. Announcements
Melanie Mayock, Secretary: There will a tour of the new HUB for senators. The GPSS office will be back there next year. This will be sometime in April. There is space for 8-10 folks. Might be first come first serve. Also, they are looking for a meeting space for next quarter. This space is not ideal. We’ll let you know what happens and were we move to before April 4.

Kelsey Knowles, Student Regent: Thanks to everyone who came to the health forum. This announcement will be repeated at the April 4 meeting as well: on April 5 there will be an additional public forum to provide comments to the Regents, 2:30-4:00. It will be open to the entire university community on budgetary matters. Look for an email.

Chris Lizotte, Geography: serves on Dispute Resolution Advisory Committee. The committee was formed a few years ago to provide process advocates for students dealing with disputes in their department. The services have been used zero times. Now they are doing a self-audit to examine the need for the committee and existing resolution procedures across campus. Please go back to departments and talk to your constituents if they have been involved in some kind of dispute process and whether that process worked at all. Please report back any findings to DRAC. Look for an email.

Charles Plummer, President: The Ad Hoc Committee meets at 4:30 on Thursdays. Feel free to stop by. Other committees are also open if you want to come and observe.
11. Adjourn
Colin Bateson, Mechanical Engineering: Moves to adjourn the meeting.
Michael Hutchens, Earth and Space Science: Seconds.
No objections, motion passes.
Meeting adjourns at 7:10.