An appeal by the Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) to Washington State Governor Jay Inslee to call a special legislative session in November of 2013 and a call to the Washington State Legislature to pass a transportation package that includes the option for the local funding of transit.

WHEREAS the Washington State Governor Jay Inslee has called a special session to commence on Thursday, Nov. 7th 2013.

WHEREAS members of the Washington State Legislature assert that they are committed to ensuring access to education for students; and

WHEREAS transportation is essential for the public’s access to education; and

WHEREAS transit provides social and environmental benefits to the common good, including access to education and employment from low-income areas, as well as decreasing emissions and traffic congestion; and

WHEREAS the GPSS views transit as a vital service to the University of Washington’s research and teaching missions, University of Washington’s core value of environmental sustainability, the economic prosperity of the surrounding region, and the common good; and

WHEREAS the current level of transit service is already underserving the region’s demand by approximately 10%; and

WHEREAS the current level of transit service is already underserving the region’s demand by approximately 10%, already stifling educational opportunities for University of Washington students; and
WHEREAS the King County Metro faces a 17% budget cut beginning in September 2014, with a $75 million shortfall, 600,000 hours of service cut, and up to 74 routes eliminated;

and

WHEREAS the King County Metro’s transit service is an economic priority to the state, providing over 65 million trips to and from school and work; and

WHEREAS public transit saves King County Metro riders $367 million annually in time and fuel costs, while taking approximately 175,000 cars out of traffic congestion per day; and

WHEREAS the proposed budget cuts facing King County Metro will add approximately 25,000 cars to traffic congestion every day, inhibiting the fluidity of the state’s economy; and

WHEREAS King County Metro has done its part by increasing fares by 80% since 2008; and already exhausted efficiency measures, including reducing labor costs, reducing capital investments, and reducing operating reserves used for emergency situations; and

WHEREAS University of Washington students depend on King County Metro for over 6.2 million rides per academic year; and

WHEREAS 78% of UW students and faculty utilize their U-PASS to commute to work and school; and

WHEREAS many routes serving the University District area, including the 48, 65, 67, 68, 70, 71, 72, 73, 271, and 372 -- are at risk of having reduced service; and

WHEREAS the University of Washington has contributed to the mission of creating sustainable, long term support of transit, by approving a universal U-PASS, a collective agreement to support affordable transit in the Puget Sound region; and
WHEREAS it is unlikely that legislators will reach a deal on transportation before King County Metro cuts will go into effect, if they do not act in a special session; and

WHEREAS public transportation in King County affects constituents from every legislative district in Washington State.

And THEREFORE, be it resolved, that the Graduate and Professional Student Senate formally recommend to the Governor and the Washington State Legislature:

THAT the GPSS formally recommends to the Governor that a special legislative session be called in November of 2013 to approve a transportation package for Washington State; and

THAT the GPSS formally recommends that an option for local funding for transit be included in the approved transportation package; and

THAT the GPSS urges State legislators to take into consideration the impact that would be felt in the Puget Sound region if King Country Metro proceeds with the proposed budget cuts, and the widespread effect it would have on the economic health of Washington State; and

THAT the GPSS urges State legislators to take into consideration the contradictory message they would be sending constituents if they don’t find a sustainable solution to fund public transit, which is an imperative component of increasing access to higher education, which many state politicians have made the assertion that they are committed to; and

THAT the GPSS directs the Vice President to forward a copy of this resolution, with an accompanying cover letter, to the offices of Governor Jay Inslee; House Transportation Committee Chair Judy Clibborn, and Vice Chairs, Jake Fey, Marko Liias, and Luis Moscoso; Senate Transportation Co-Chairs Curtis King and Tracey Eide; King County Executive Dow Constantine; King County Council, Randy Hodgins, Vice President of the University of Washington Office of External Relations others.


“UW UPASS Advisory Board Annual Report 2013” http://www.washington.edu/facilities/transportation/commuterservices/policy/u-pass_ab#other

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“What will happen if the congestion reduction charge is not approved?” King County Metro. http://metro.kingcounty.gov/am/future/PDFs/p2_Metro_route_list_17percent_reduction_062411.pdf

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