

**Graduate & Professional Student Senate**  
GPSS Executive Meeting-18 February 2015

**Attendants**

GPSS President Alice Popejoy  
GPSS Vice President Alex Bolton  
GPSS Secretary Natalie Gordon  
GPSS Treasurer Douglass Taber  
Executive Senator Yasmeen Hussain  
Executive Senator Eddie Schwieterman  
Executive Senator Elloise Kim  
Executive Senator Evan Firth  
SAO Adviser Rene Singleton

Meeting called to order at 6:41 by meeting chair Alice Popejoy

**Reading of Agenda**

Yasmeen moved to approve the agenda, Eddie seconded.  
Agenda for the meeting approved without objection.

**Approve of Minutes**

Yasmeen moved to approve the minutes. Eddie seconded.  
Minutes approved without modification.

**Transportation Services Update - U-Pass**

Committee introduction: Alice, Elloise, Doug, Yasmeen, Alex, Natalie, Evan, Eddie

Transportation Update: Michelle Rhoads & Celeste Gilman

- Celeste: U-pass program has been around since 1991, and has been a Universal benefit since 2011 when the program was experiencing some financial difficulties. Back then we made a commitment to not adjust price, and we were able to keep the price stable for 4 years. We worked with and collaborated with the advisory board, and they agreed to a rate of \$80/quarter for the coming year and \$84 for the following year. We are available for any question you have.
- Eddie: It's great that we are getting new services, with light rail and all, but it seems to me that there are going to be more students taking more trips, and I was under the impression it would actually reduce the price since there will be more students using the service. Can you break down where the majority of increase is coming from?
- Celeste: Approximately  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the increase comes from increasing rates. Even without the effect of additional services, we still needed to look at increasing fee. We have built in some discount factors with the pricing agency. On average a trip cost us \$2 a trip.

- Michelle: There is a discount through the Universal Program. Without this program the discount would not be available to students as an option.
- Celeste: The city's priority is to increase services so there are fewer passengers left out. They want to make more services available late at night, and expanding service
- Yasmeen: How is this going to affect the students who fought to get the metro funding pass? I am worried to take that November election and say "good job, we had that passed, but we are also increasing your fee." It might feel like a betrayal for students.
- Celeste: Increasing fares is the reality in the region. How would you frame the discussion to students?
- Yasmeen: Increase fares once we see an actual deficit first.
- Michelle: We are projecting a deficit this coming year actually.
- Celeste: When the U-Pass became universal, one of the things we established then was a U-Pass trust. When there are more revenues than expenses, those revenues are sent to central administration and saved. Student funds are available for stabilizing rates. It's good business to have some money in the reserve. We look at what's a responsible level to maintain the trusts- we have an obligation to not exhaust the trust. But even just dipping into the trust, the smaller that trust, the more conservative we need to be in our projection. Maybe we can defer the increase the first year. But the next year we might be looking at \$8, \$10 increase. We wouldn't have that cushion.
- Michelle: The two year time period seems more sustainable. The advisory board debated all the scenarios. Whether we should have all \$8 increase now or have a step up each year, and this is what the advisory board feel that would make the program sustainable and make it an operating state.
- Alex: What is our leverage when we are negotiating with the transportation agencies. It seems like if there is a fare increase, we kind of just have to deal with it.
- Celeste: My experience has been the opposite. The fact that students have stepped up- we value this program so much- that we are going to speak up. The transit agency, they are not operating a for-profit service. They want to have lots of people benefiting from it. So when that commitment from students gains the commitment from transit agencies, it raises the standards of the whole structure and it's been a very positive thing
- Evan: Are the current fee increases projected to add more money to the student trust?
- Celeste: The funds from the first year would go towards the spending fund, and those from the second year would be building up the student fund.
- Michelle: The funds students pay into stay under their control. The advisory board closely monitors the financial reports to ensure the money is being spent carefully
- Celeste: 10% of funding comes from central transportation administration, 30% comes from transportation demand center, and the rest comes from the u-pass fee.
- Alice: Do faculty pay the same rate as students to access the U-Pass?
- Celeste: \$130/quarter. We are also looking for significant increase to address the increase in fare.

- Alice: Josh came here in last week's senate meeting
- Celeste: What Josh is talking about is a transportation demand fee- we put a firewall between the two programs (universal U-pass and transportation demand fee) that was an approach that would be stable and sustainable in the long term. The staff and faculty program is lagging behind students, but it's facing financial challenges. One of the possible options is making the faculty-pass universal as well. This Universal program is a great model for the faculty/staff program
- Alice: We as an executive committee have the authority to approve the posed fee. Does anyone have any feelings that folks were concerned about this?
- Yasmeen: I know folks just wanted to have the communication over.
- Eddie: I remember you saying to the senate that there will be another discussion on the U-Pass. That could possibly have discouraged people from voicing their concerns.
- Rene: U-Pass fee has not gone up for 4 years; I am thinking that the executive committee and senate should vote since it will become a mandatory fee. We should handle our governance with more participation
- Natalie: Does it have to be in a form of resolution?
- Rene: It can just be a vote or a stroll poll. I want to make sure that everybody can be okay with the decision that we make.
- Alice: My concern is that if we vote on it tonight, and senate votes against it, we will -
- Yasmeen: We are guided by the senate in the bylaws. When does the decision need to be made?
- Celeste: By this quarter
- Alice: We will forego the decision item? We will wait until the senate votes on it?
- Eddie: RCW 28B1510- it's up to interpretation whether we were the student government.
- Alice: Under that language, I would be comfortable voting now and voting it again in the senate
- Yasmeen: I wouldn't be comfortable with it. What's the benefit of doing it now?
- Alice: It sounds like a consensus. Thank you for coming. Sounds like next week we will have a vote from the whole senate.
- Natalie: Do you want to have people come back next week? It would be good to have our exec liaison with Celeste or Josh to answer questions.
- Michelle: Concur with the informed decision making process.
- Eddie: Perhaps a handout on the great values of U-pass.

### **Fee-Based Program Ad-Hoc Committee**

Senator from statistical committee came to talk to me. Early January I followed up with the subcommittee but never got a response. This member no longer has the desire to fulfill the responsibility. My thought on it is that clearly the faculty senate is not being as proactive as we would like it to be - not just regarding fee-based programs. We keep hearing the creation of fee-based program- if there's a set of criteria that GPSS can sign on to, it would put some teeth

behind my objection. I feel passionate about this; I think we should create an ad-hoc committee for fee-based programs

- Yasmeen: Are you expecting people who already talked to you? Or are you expecting a presentation and overview?
- Alice: I think there needs to be a short overview.

### **Washington Student Association Dues**

WSA is our broader group that all public state funding universities come to for lobbying. 10 years ago there was a flat fee. Somewhere along the line it went from flat fee to FTE fee. They do a SAF request now in most schools. - We still do this through the STAR system. 15 is what we can safely promise- what we got agreed to on Saturday is a \$15000 cap per campus. Right now it only applies to us and WSU. We will pay it through STAR funding. When the transition went from flat fee to FTE, there was a general assembly set up; one of the agreements is that if there's a general assembly, our voting would go down. One option being thrown around is potentially changing the donation system from "opt-in" to "opt-out". That would also bring in revenue

- Eddie: What would our full amount be under this
- Alex: 40000 with ASUW and GPSS
- Yasmeen: What is the percentage of students voluntarily paying the \$3?
- Alex: Well we have about 24,000 in total. So probably only a bit over 9%
- Yasmeen: So this is an information item, why are you bringing this information to us?
- Alex: I just want everyone to be aware of this program, because we had no idea who agreed to the change, so the more people know about it...

### **GPSS Organization Structure Reconstruction**

There have been a lot of communication problems- and we feel that there is a more efficient way for the organization to work. One of the things we talked about is taking some duties off our officers. The consensus from our staff is pretty good, and Alice put this into this slide.

- Alice: Of all the paid positions, there will only be one position that is being created- the director of peer mentoring- specifically dedicated to grads guiding grads. Because without a home now, being run by two volunteers. Four of the officer positions will not be changed.
- Eddie: Election items have been approved already.
- Alice: I want to bring this up to exec so we can discuss it. Once you see the whole structure it would make more sense and be more sustainable. There are a lot of crossed-wires currently, part of it is because we have a structure that is set up for failure/ I really want us to think about it based on the context and history of GPSS. The way that GPSS is structured creates a lot of chaos
- Elloise: Before we go in and get more information, the packet is already approved.
- Alice: It's already approved by the committee, not yet the senate.
- Natalie: According to our bylaws, the election packet needs to be approved by the senate.

- Rene: Every Time there's change, there's no transition between people who are newly elected. You don't have time to work out the details. May I suggest taking your ideas, and combining it with people who are running the place? Having another transition- as soon as July arrives- the burdens will falls on others.
- Natalie: If at the end of this, we decided to hash this out in spring quarter with the people who are elected... they can decide.
- Doug: If the people who are elected see this, people would understand why this is good.
- Alice: We have level of officers, we have level of directors. It's going after the ASUW models. It works very well because they have different directors working on many different issues. Director of legislative Affairs would take vice president's role to go to Olympia. We will have a staff person who will report to the president. This may not be a whole-year position. They would be in Olympia in the winter. The president's job is outward facing- so it's more like Christina's job. Going to Olympia and faculty meetings. The vice president's job would be to serve as the deputy of the president on GPSS. So they would be responsible for overseeing the Directors of Event and Outreach, and Director of Peer Mentoring. The vice president would be the person in charge when the president is not available. The Director of event and outreach is a combination of Angela's and Rod's jobs. And the communication director will do what Cynthia does and have more advertising effort put in. So the travel grant chair would help the
- Treasurer with the burden. The Secretary will keep track of executive liaisons and work with the information specialist to ensure that all information is on our website. We will bring up diversity in the university affairs position. The University Affairs director still goes to SCPB and the policy analyst still goes to FLSC and SCLC. So the differences are
  - Consolidation of events coordinator and organizing director positions
  - Creation of director of legislative affairs to take on current vice president roles
  - Redistribution of executive branch responsibilities between president & vice president
  - Expansion of the budget specialist position to director of finance, new responsibility
  - Creation of director of peer mentoring and administration

### **Question Time**

- Evan: It looks like offloading entire Vice-president's job into one quarter into one staff member. That seems like a big job for vice president.
- Alice: But you redistribute the responsibility to director of the event and outreach
- Evan: All the legislative duties seemed to be taken off Alex. It's interesting that the only one staff member is doing this.
- Alice: The director of Legislative affairs isn't the new vice president. He is just taking over the legislative affair part of duties
- Evan: You are allocating a lot of duty that would normally be under an officer. GPSS senate all of a sudden no longer has a say in Olympia.

- Alice: So there is a possibility that there is an election process in the director selection. I think currently the way its functioning is not sustainable. This isn't ideal, but this is an idea coming from staff comment, feedback, and the history of GPSS. I think having VP being MIA has been an issue; I would rather have a staff member MIA.
- Eddie: Electing vs. non-electing. We don't have senators chairing the committee. I think having the chair be senator or elected by the senate is important. If we were to elect these directors- if we are giving them tuition waivers- it would completely destroy our product (Alice: we are not) It might also be hard to provide the right incentive to run for election. If we do that for the director, they got elected in the spring; they leave in the summer or autumn, which would create chaos. My impression of ASUW is that director positions are kind of the same. But they seem to have two tiers now.
- Alice: I have a solution to that: the only one that needs to be elected is Director of legislative Affairs director in fall quarter.
- Rene: Here is what I see the downfall as - I think the treasurer needs to be the one who chairs the travel grants. You need an elected person to monitor the meetings, and others are there to assist them.
- Doug: I think chairing the committee would be fine. That would make it easier to focus on quite a few different things for treasurer.
- Eddie: I wonder what the problem with
- Evan: In previous years, there have been bad chairs that just don't show up and not held accountable for their responsibility. Chair would actually go do things that they are not allowed to do but still go do it anyway
- Doug: accountability- If an unpaid chair does something wrong, no one would be held accountable for it. It's also a lot more visible for people who want to reach out
- Yasmeen: I have always thought of the President as internal, and the VP as focusing on legislative affairs How much time do you spent doing University affairs.
- Alice: Half of my time spent on university affair is appointing people to committee. Emailing committees, reaching out to people. If that part of university affairs is under the secretary, it frees up a lot of time. In addition to development and alumni relationship ...
- Yasmeen: Would the director of development fall under president?
- Alice: Marlee is working on grads guiding grades and the counseling center. So it's development for GPSS. We essentially don't have a leader in office. There is no chief of staff- this way there will essentially be- either coming from president or vice president. So the programing is done by VP, and outreach is done by president.
- Elloise: Hearing what the director of development is doing now- I know recently liaisons are pretty much being left to do what they want to do- I think exec liaisons should go to university development director.. In terms of the kind of work and the reliance- director of development might be more relevant than the secretary.

- Eddie: The election packet needs to be approved by next meeting. And according to our bylaws our budget has to be approved soon. I just don't think we are in the position to implement them before we approve the election packet.
- Alex: I appreciate everyone realizing that something is wrong structurally. I have trying to think about what make sense. I think having an internal VP and outside VP might be the way to go for it. I know ASUW is trying to do the opposite which makes it so people only go to Olympia once or twice..
- Evan: I appreciate the concept of getting the president more involved with the external facing job and representing GPSS.
- Alice: I think logistically it will be a challenge for bylaws, but I do think that we have an opportunity here to set ourselves up for future success. I think our lack of transition last year is so atrocious and marked. I think next year's officers won't be in the same situation we were facing at all.
- Evan: I do appreciate the president being able to work on the outside of UW, and I also appreciate the idea that the president focus on some inside stuff. Instead of redistributing responsibility and staff, it might be easier to just create another VP logistically and bylaw speaking.
- Alice: So logistically speaking it might become more expensive. But we are consolidating the event coordinator's job and the organizing directors
- Elloise: Elected officers are working way above the hours. We should specify which area each officer wants to concentrate on. One person can be really specialized in matters in Olympia and one person can be specialized in internal matters and then they can just communicate with each other. It might be okay if the VP just kept doing external Olympia mater and President concentrates on internal matters.
- Alex: I think it's tricky having an officer down in Olympia, and there's a lack of communication.
- Yasmeen: There seem to be a lot of structural things that our organization needs to work on. Is there an action we can take? This idea converged today- and we just started talking about this today, and I think hasty decisions would make it a disaster.
- Natalie: What if we partnered with officers who are elected for next year so they can solidify what would work for them while having our opinions and feedback.
- Alice: But none of it would happen if we don't take action to change it now. I propose that we push the election date back until we can figure this out.
- Eddie: I absolutely reject the idea of holding off the election results.
- Eddie: I think reorganizing the staff doesn't necessary need to have an impact on the officer. It might be good to do some re-thinking on staff restructuring without implementing the same for officers. My level of comfortableness is that there is a lot of disagreement here with the details, if not the concept. It would also basically be illegal, because we are basically violating the bylaws.

- Alice: Last year they broke the bylaws to have the election early. I think we are overburdened and inefficient...
- Evan: I haven't heard any staff objection or rejection. I think separating this from officer overall would be fine.
- Alice: Staff problem is connected with the officer charges. Every year staff is being restructured- it's not the staff, it's the officer responsibility allocation. It's not going to change until we fundamentally look at the way each officer functions.
- Yasmeen: Structure change really doesn't ... change anything. I suggest doing the staff reconstruction before...
- Alice: Cutting the discussion off. Sounds like election committee is moving forward with the description. I guess I am just really disappointed that there are no more discussion on an issue that is so fundamentally inherent to the organization

### **Resolutions coming up & Senate Agenda**

- Natalie: Child care access. Open source textbooks
- Alice: Alex, are you sponsoring that? 15mins?
- Yasmeen: Formation of Ad-Hoc Committee on fee base program.
- Alice: Do we have a spotlight?
- Natalie: Husky Real Food Challenge by Dani Gilmour
- Yasmeen: Should we vote on the U-Pass?
- Alice: Action item on Advisory Vote to Executive Committee on U-Pass Fee. Should we say 15 minutes?
- Eddie: Action Item on Approval of GPSS election packet.
- Alice: Where?
- Eddie: Anywhere.
- Alice: So before we approve this agenda, I want to take a vote to see who feels 100% comfortable moving forward and approving the election packet and basically dropping the whole discussion of the re-structuring.
- Natalie: Is there a way that we can keep the commitment going and be responsive about not hashing out this change in a short time?
- Elloise: But you can still communicate with them, what has not been done well, and what can be improved. The problem is if you restructure now, it's not sure whether they would take it as...
- Eddie: I think it's an unfair characterization to say we can't move forward with the changes and the conversation. I think the description- the biggest problem is the role of vice president. I feel uncomfortable announcing the election and describing the officer position.
- Alice: We discussed in exec that we weren't going to have a full description of officers in the meeting before. You approve the election packet that outlines what people are doing to the senators... we might get a different .....

- Doug: Would it be possible to go ahead with the election, and collaborate with the officer who are elected and go over the process and discussion we just went through and then bring it to the senate? I think they would be open-minded to that option.
- Even: More than just talking to elected officers, you can talk to all the incoming-potential officers.
- Alice: If we know we are going to change it... if we know there is a need to change.
- Yasmeen: Then we can have the people who are elected to make that decision

### **Exec senator report**

- Eddie: Official appointment of member for ad-hoc to STF> me and Yasmin and Kyle and Doug were the one who were appointed. So I just wanted to make sure that its official. Another thing is about the election packet, Louis is the chair, and Natalie now has the packet. The packet is mostly like last year, aside from the date. The last thing is about an Ad-Hoc committee on student grievances- Because some people brought up that there are a lot of students who are also working- there wasn't the level of willingness to be a part of the committee.. So there's that.
- Evan: Travel grant went well. We have about \$6000 of the funding given out now, but we have about \$8000 leftover now for spring. There were a couple of hiccups but...
- Alex: Things are heating up in Olympia. There seems to be consensus on the tuition freeze. They would pay for it, but there still needs to be discussion on this. The medical school issue is also heating up. Tomorrow morning, there is a bill- healthcare- potentially increases more opportunity for students who are in healthcare in the WWAMI program.
- Doug: Travel grants have been going well. We are looking for ways to cover those gaps in the timeline for giving out grants, to make sure there's no excellent candidate falling through. SAF has been going well- F&B is going well. We have so many applications from RSOs, some from departments, and we need more for Diversity funds.
- Natalie: We are working on giving away money for diversity funds. We had our second campus conversation last night. Very excited it was covered on the Daily. Brian Tracey has done a great job chairing my committee.
- Evan: does Brian have an official title now? How would we find a new Brian next year?
- Natalie: The way it's done now is the committee comes up with topics, and members commit to leading their topic of interest.

### **Adjourn**

Alice move to adjourn

Evan so move, Doug seconded