GPSS recognizes an opportunity for Washington to address the graduate and professional student debt crisis by providing low-interest state loan options for graduate and professional students. Most graduate loans provided by federal aid may barely cover tuition and force students to take out high-interest private loans. GPSS supports conducting a study on the feasibility of a graduate aid program through the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP). Lower, more predictable interest rates will help alleviate existing burdens for graduate and professional students, and create more spending opportunities that positively contribute to the state economy.

GPSS supports increased access to mental health resources in universities across Washington State to address the prevalence of mental health concerns among graduate and professional students. These resources include, but are not limited to, increased training and financial resources to address mental health. We encourage the State to pursue legislation that improves counselor-to-student ratios and allocates state funding for at least one counselor per university who specializes in veteran mental health.

GPSS recognizes that existing sexual assault prevention and response measures on campuses are insufficient. We support the implementation of mandatory training programs for all students, faculty, and staff. These trainings should provide the necessary skills and resources to prevent and respond to sexual assault. The State should also require the implementation of effective reporting tools that accurately represent the number of sexual assaults occurring on campuses while maintaining the privacy, safety, and autonomy of survivors.

GPSS advocates for a health insurance mandate that requires state universities to offer affordable health insurance plans to all graduate and professional students. Graduate and professional students are often ineligible for state-sponsored programs, are too old to remain on parents' plans, and lack options to purchase affordable private plans through universities. GPSS supports the reinstatement of a health insurance mandate for all universities, including expanded access to existing plans that are now only open to graduate and professional student employees.

As the largest and most robust graduate and professional student body in the state of Washington actively advocating for graduate students, the Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) recognizes the importance of leading the charge for higher education access and affordability for all graduate and professional students, especially those at the University of Washington (UW). GPSS advocates in partnership with the following state and member organizations: Associated Students of the University of Washington (ASUW), and the Washington Student Association (WSA), when appropriate and not in conflict with the goals of the GPSS legislative agenda.
**GPSS supports increased access for:**

**Underrepresented Communities**
Expanding outreach, pipeline programs, and other resources will increase equitable access to higher education for underrepresented communities at the UW and beyond.

**Students with Disabilities**
Promotion of accessible infrastructure and streamlining the application and transfer process will expand support and protections for students with disabilities.

**Student Caregivers**
Initiatives that increase availability and lower the costs of student resources will contribute to more equitable support for student caregivers and their dependents. Limited availability, long wait lists, and high costs prevent student caregivers from obtaining care for their dependents or obtaining on-campus housing.

**Student Voices**
All state task forces, committees, commissions, and other advisory boards or councils should include at least one undergraduate and one graduate student to ensure student representation.

**Open Science**
Free access to all scholarly peer-reviewed articles, grey literature, and research data to increase public knowledge of scholarly work, better support reproducibility, and promote higher quality scholarship.

**GPSS supports increased state investment in:**

**The State Need Grant**
Full funding of the State Need Grant attracts, retains, and develops diverse, globally competitive students and faculty who contribute to the UW’s state, federal, and worldwide impacts. Support for the State Need Grant gives students greater ability to achieve their full academic potential, many of whom attend graduate school at the UW.

**Predictable Tuition**
State support is essential to prevent drastic graduate and professional tuition and fee increases. Increased funding to the UW’s state-supported budget ensures continued affordability for graduate and professional students and maintains the UW’s contributions to the Washington economy.

**Financial Aid Resources for Self-Supported Program Students**
As of the 2016-17 academic year, 32.5% of all graduate students at the UW were enrolled in self-supported programs, some with debt as high as $100,000. Resources should be established to ease this debt burden on self-supported program students and provide long-term financial stability.

**Expanded UW Health Science Programs to Aid Underserved Populations**
Continued funding and expansion of cost-effective, top-ranked training programs is essential for UW students who are committed to serving in communities with greater healthcare needs. These programs will build regional healthcare networks by improving healthcare provider recruitment and retention, as well as increasing resources for new healthcare providers to practice in rural and underserved communities.