Candidate for President: **Aaron Yared** (He/Him)

Spring Cleaning→Connect→Build

I. **Roll Out Strategic Planning Phase One**

One of the main projects that our current President has been working on revolves around creating and implementing a Strategic Plan for GPSS to use moving forward to ensure that GPSS is consistently keeping its priorities straight and always making the best effort to represent our constituents. As President, I will implement Phase 1, planning and executing. One of the biggest problems that all student governments face is being consistent over multiple years. By executing this plan, we can become much more effective and efficient.

II. **Improve GPAA Relations**

After everything that has happened during legislative session this year and the COVID-19 crisis that we are currently going through, the major theme I have noticed is that we struggle to know what our constituents are going through and how they are being affected by policy changes both in the legislature, and within the UW administration. While all of our senators do their best to provide clarity on this issue by reaching out to their constituents, the truth is that some of our graduate schools do not have any representation at all. After asking executive board members about this, the problem seems to stem from the simple fact that they do not know that we exist. Part of the reason for this is because we do not have a very strong relationship with the Graduate and Professional Advisors Association or with GPA’s in general. They are a vital resource that we can use to raise awareness and reach those graduate students who are interested in being senators for schools that are not currently being represented. As President, I will improve this relationship so that we can expand our reach to get more of our constituents the help and representation that they need. The more voices that we have involved, the stronger we are when we come to the table to ask for things like increased healthcare and mental health resources.

III. **Continue to Improve GPSS Branding and Awareness**

Adding on to the last point, the other reason why many of our constituents may not know that we exist is because we have not been able to reach them through our own efforts. We have made outstanding progress this year in our outreach, but we still have a long way to go. As President, I plan to continue these efforts by working with my fellow executive members and staff to continue creating high quality events and creating spaces for graduate students to continue their growth and showcase all of the amazing work that they have been doing.

IV. **Increase Diversity in Faculty and Staff for Graduate Programs**

Both at Bothell campus and here at the Seattle campus, the number of faculty and staff of color are few and far in between. For students of color like myself, it can be very hard to want to continue coming to school every day when we feel like there is nobody around us that we can relate to. There have been many students of color I have heard from, both at Bothell and Seattle, who have expressed how alone they feel because they do not have access to faculty or staff who look like them and can relate to them. As President, I want to work with the senators of each of the graduate schools as well as our Equity & Accountability committee to ensure that each school is making efforts to diversify their staff and faculty to better reflect their student population. One possible solution is to have each school hire an officer of equity and inclusion that will be responsible for making sure that they are doing just that. I am sure that this will no doubt be a slow-moving process, but with the strategic plan also being in place we will be able to be consistent with whatever momentum we manage to build next year.