

2015 State Legislative Agenda

As the most robust and largest graduate and professional student body in the state of Washington actively advocating for graduate students, 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.

GPSS will advocate on a platform of solidarity with our state partner 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.

The GPSS Legislative Agenda for the 2015 session will focus on the following priorities:

GPSS 2015 Priorities:

State Support for Academic Excellence and Predictable Tuition

- GPSS advocates for no cuts to be made to the University of Washington in order to keep UW a top public university that provides opportunity to the people of Washington and serves as an important economic driver. State support is also essential to prevent drastic graduate tuition and fee increases.
-

Fair and Competitive Compensation

- GPSS supports salary increases for Teaching and Research Assistants who provide crucial services that allow the University to function. TA and RA compensation, along with reasonable responsibilities and expectations, are critical factors in the ability for the University to compete for top graduate students.
- The quality of the faculty is directly related to the quality of the university, and GPSS supports salary increases for UW faculty in order for the University to remain competitive and keep our top faculty. This is a top concern for graduate students as many PhD students choose a university in which to attend based on the faculty member in which they plan to collaborate.

Keep the Pipeline Open by funding the State Need Grant

- Fund the State Need Grant so that the people of Washington can come to college and move on to graduate school regardless of their parent's economic background. Many Washington graduate students were recipients of the State Need Grant and are able to attend graduate school in part by not having even larger undergraduate student debt, thanks in part to the State Need Grant.

Maintain funding for UW Medicine in Spokane and Increasing Medical School Opportunities and Residencies

- GPSS supports maintaining funding that has been allocated to WWAMI in Spokane to remain with students at UW Medicine in Spokane. Money traditionally allocated to support UW medical students should continue to support UW medical students. GPSS also supports increasing the number of medical students in Washington. Additionally, GPSS supports increasing the number of medical residencies in Washington, which is vital to increase the number of medical doctors practicing throughout Washington.

Additional GPSS Position Statements

Transportation. GPSS supports:

- A transportation package that includes a local option for the funding of public transit.

Fee-Based Programs. GPSS supports:

- Student input in shaping any University policies on fee-based programs.
- Moving programs back to being state supported if they receive new state funding.

Student Voice and Shared Governance in University Decisions. GPSS supports:

- Direct student involvement in University policies to ensure students are fairly represented in decisions that affect them

Student Wellness. GPSS supports:

- Policies that increase the general health, safety, and well-being of the University community.

Sustainability. GPSS supports:

- Efforts to increase environmental stewardship and sustainability on campus.

Financial Aid. GPSS supports:

- Restoration and expansion of financial aid programs that have been cut or eliminated in recent years, including the Washington State Work Study Program, the Child Care Matching Grant, Future Teachers Conditional Scholarship and Loan Repayment, Health Professions Scholarship, and Graduate Fellowship Trust Account.

Voting Accessibility. GPSS supports:

- Increased student voting accessibility, including ballot drop boxes on or near college campuses, and extending the deadline date for online voter registration.

Text Books. GPSS supports:

- Easing the cost burden of students on required class materials.

We, the State Legislative Steering Committee of the Graduate and Professional Student Senate at the University of Washington submit these items for the approval of the Senate to authorize or work on these important issues. Any additional items are at the discretion of the Vice President with the approval of the GPSS Executive Committee.