GPSS Senate Meeting Minutes

Wednesday February 19th 2020, 5:30 pm HUB 332

**Members present:**

* GPSS President Giuliana Conti
* GPSS Vice President of Internal Affairs Matt McKeown
* ~~GPSS Vice President of External Affairs Maggie Dunham Jordahl~~
* GPSS Secretary Leslie Michaud
* GPSS Treasurer Shane Schrader
* Executive Senator Chris Boylan
* Executive Senator Michael Diamond
* Executive Senator Andrew Shumway
* ~~Executive Senator Jackie Wong~~
* Executive Senator Jacob Ziegler
* ASUW Representative Cooper Robertson

1. **[Action] Call to Order 5:35pm**

**Giuliana Conti** called the Senate meeting to order at 5:35pm.

1. **[Action] Approval of the Agenda 5:35pm**

**Giuliana Conti** entertained a motion to amend the agenda. **Shane Schrader** motioned to amend the agenda to change the Budget Timeline Update from an action item to information only. **Jacob Ziegler** seconded.

**Giuliana Conti** entertained a motion to approve the amended agenda. **Anthony English** (Pharmacology) motioned. **Alexander Novokhodko** (Mechanical Engineering) seconded.

1. **Guest Speaker – Rickey Hall 5:37pm**

**Giuliana Conti** introduced Rickey Hall, the Vice president for Minority Affairs & Diversity and the University Diversity Officer to the Senate.

Since joining UW in 2016, Rickey Hall has had oversight of the university’s progress in diversity and works to ensure and facilitate an integrated vision and shared responsibility for diversity. Rickey stated that the Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity (OMA&D) which was formed in 1968 is one of the oldest university diversity offices in the country. OMA&D is concerned with all areas of diversity on campus including student, faculty and staff diversity, curriculum, research, outreach, and climate which are seen as intertwined and interdependent.

One of the main goals of the OMA&D is to promote student success by providing comprehensive academic services such as teaching, mentoring, academic counseling and skill building for diverse student populations and economically/ educationally disadvantaged students. Programs include College Access, Student Services and Academic Support, Graduate and Professional School Preparation, Assessment and Evaluation and Early Identification Program.

Rickey also highlighted UW’s campus facilities that help foster a diverse academic environment: the Samuel E. Kelly Ethnic Cultural Center, a community center and theatre dedicated to student leadership development and the wəɬəbʔaltx Intellectual House, a gathering space that supports the American Indian and Alaska Native students.

As the University Diversity Officer, Hall leads diversity, equity and inclusion efforts across the three UW campuses and serves as a resource to leadership across the campuses in managing larger diversity-related issues. There is a tri-campus Diversity Council co-chaired by Hall and the Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Advancement as well as a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee established by the Board of Regents that meets quarterly to discuss matters relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion for faculty, students, staff, and in procurement and contracting.

**Poll Everywhere Question:** What steps are being taken to make engineering and lab sciences more accessible for students with disabilities?

**Rickey Hall:** I have been in communication with our ADA coordinator. There is a lot of attention around accessibility issues. I am aware that there are spaces on campus which are not very accessible – we are starting to have conversations around that. I will make note of this and take it back to our ADA coordinator.

**Poll Everywhere Question:**What efforts are being taken to improve the recruitment and retainment of diverse faculty? How can we, as students, help advocate for this cause?

**Rickey Hall:** This is a challenge for academic institutions across the country. I urge you all, as graduate and professional students to think about taking on teaching roles in academia upon graduation to address this issue. Institutions need to be very intentional while hiring and to that end, I am having ongoing conversations with faculty.

**Poll Everywhere Question:** Could you comment on what diversity trainings faculty are required to participate in and how this varies by department?

**Rickey Hall:** While there are several optional offerings, it is a challenge to mandate diversity trainings for faculty. We have begun distributing more funds to academic departments and units that would like to have their own trainings, as I have found that more people tend to attend tailored/ department-specific events. This provides a more effective, two-pronged approach to increasing participation in diversity trainings in addition to hosting University-wide events. We are also working in conjunction with the Office for Faculty Advancement (OFA) to diversify faculty by addressing issues such as bias in the search process, promotions of underrepresented groups, etc.

1. **U-PASS Update 5:55pm**

**Matt McKeown** provided an update on U-PASS. Matt noted that the U-PASS Advisory Board held an open meeting on Tuesday, February 18th to gather student feedback on the proposed U-PASS fee increase of $2/quarter. He provided a brief history and overview of U-PASS as well as the benefits of U-PASS versus ORCA.

U-PASS provides members with unlimited rides on regional buses, commuter trains, UW’s evening shuttle service (NightRide), light rail and water taxis as well as discounts on vanpools/ carpools. The U-PASS does not cover travel on Washington State Ferries. Most students on the Seattle campus are automatically enrolled in U-PASS given that all students who pay the Service & Activities Fee (SAF) are automatically enrolled into the program and a mandatory fee of $84 per quarter appears on tuition statements.

U-PASS was started in 1991 by strong student leadership that identified the need for a subsidized transportation pass to improve access to campus and reduce traffic and environmental impacts. A combination of factors later led to drastic increases in U-PASS costs in 2009-2010 from $49 to $99. This drove the creation of a special Student Transportation Taskforce (STT) which worked to establish the current Universal Student U-PASS and advisory board as a means of controlling spiraling transportation costs. In 2015, the advisory board considered and approved the first rate increase to $84/ quarter.

U-PASS is not fully funded by student fees alone which account for only 66% of the total funding. There are two other components of the funding block – a subsidy from the University’s office and planning committee that is capped at $1.8m accounts for approximately 10% and parking support from the Transportation Demand Management makes up the remaining 23%.

The universal student U-PASS program anticipates changes to its revenue streams for FY21 driven by several factors– (i) increased transit costs with Light Rail expansion, (ii) increased administrative costs (CPI/ service costs) and (iii) University program subsidy policy changes, which collectively jeopardize the program’s ability to remain in compliance with the terms outlined in the current U-PASS Memorandum of Understanding. Maintaining the current fee level of $84/academic quarter will not be able to meet the required reserve balance of one twelfth of operating costs in FY21, putting the program at a deficit of nearly $2m in FY21 and nearly $5m in FY22.

The U-PASS student advisory board recommends an amendment to the current MOU that increases the U-PASS fee to $86/academic quarter to cover program costs in FY21 and to maintain the required reserve balance of one month of operating costs. This fee increase will take effect in Fall 2020 and remain valid until June 2021, allowing for the U-PASS student Advisory Board to revisit fee levels for FY22 after more ridership data and information regarding university subsidy policies become available.

**Olivia Sanderfoot** (Environmental and Forest Sciences): Can we send these slides and the proposed resolution to our constituents for information and/ or feedback?

**Matt McKeown:** Yes, I will share the materials.

**Theodore Cohen** (Molecular Engineering): Do U-PASS taps take into account transfers?

**Caryn Walline** (Commute Options & Planning Manager): Transfers are worked into the U-PASS program, the same way as an ORCA card works.

**Britahny Baskin** (Neuroscience): Point of Information – what is ORCA Lift?

**Caryn Walline** (Commute Options & Planning Manager): ORCA Lift is a reduced fare transportation option for people who qualify for lower-income rider fees. Students who qualify for the Husky Promise Program currently qualify for ORCA Lift.

**Terrence Pope** (Psychology): How will the proposed fee increase impact ASEs?

**Caryn Walline:** ASEs are a part of the fully subsidized U-PASS model, which is paid for through the University benefit load. So the increase in fee would not change anything for ASEs.

**Colin Trobough** (Jackson School): It seems that a major reason for the fee increase is due to the Light rail expansions which will continue to happen through 2021 and beyond. How can we manage these costs given that they are expected to keep increasing with more expansion and usage?

**Matt McKeown:** We are in conversation with representatives from the Central Budget Office regarding lobbying for changes to the existing cap on University program subsidies, so that we can get a larger portion of the U-PASS funding from the University. One of the main reasons for passing this resolution only for one year is to allow the advisory board to make a more informed decision once they are able to collect further data, keeping in mind that the primary goal is for U-PASS to be the most affordable transit option for students.

1. **U-PASS Resolution First Reading 6:14pm**

**Matt McKeown:** We are asking you to review the U-PASS resolution and provide your comments/ feedback on the language in the document. I will share the MOU as well (it is currently available online on the U-PASS student advisory board’s website). The MOU itself is really strong, so we do not need to amend it.

**Giuliana Conti:** We are requesting your feedback within the next two weeks so that Matt can review any comments with the rest of the U-PASS committee and ideally, we can vote as a majority at the next Senate meeting.

**Matt McKeown:** The resolution ultimately has to be signed by Giuliana Conti (President of GPSS), Kelty Pierce (President of ASUW), Denzil Suite (Vice President for Student Life) and Anne Eskridge (UW Transportation Services Director).

**Michael Diamond** (Atmospheric Sciences): We should expand on the reason for the revenue streams changing for the sake of posterity because this will not be intelligible years from now.

**Emily Brown** (Neuroscience): Point of Information – does the U-PASS committee have to bring the resolution to GPSS and ASUW to get approval for the fee increase?

**Matt McKeown:** The MOU has to be signed by the four aforementioned people for the fee increase to take effect in Fall 2020.

**Dorian Alexander** (English) motioned to extend time by 2 minutes. **Andrew Shumway** (Earth & Space Sciences) seconded. No objections.

**Dorian Alexander** (English): If we can increase student fees related to U-PASS, why can’t we change the central administrative fees?

**Matt McKeown:** We don’t oversee the fee structure of the central office, so we cannot make that decision.

**Julia Overfelt** (Evans School): What happens if the resolution does not get passed?

**Matt McKeown:** The U-PASS program will be functioning at a budget deficit and we will be in direct violation of the MOU that states that we need 1/12th operating revenues.

**Alexander Novokhodko** (Mechanical Engineering): How possible is transparency regarding expenses of the U-PASS program and its revenue streams – is there an easy to understand graph of where money is coming from/ going that we can share with our constituents?

**Matt McKeown:** I will coordinate with Caryn to get you that information.

1. **Elections Guide 6:25pm**

Fiona Murray and Andrew Shumway provided an update on the elections guide.

**Fiona Murray** (Evans School): We have been working really hard over the last few months to incorporate feedback from last year into this year’s elections guide. Some of the things we changed are the dates to reflect the current year (2020-2021), we sent all the updated job descriptions to current officers, we changed “efficient” to “accessible” since it’s a more salient term. We also added a blurb about official elections email being archived in Section 1.1.

**Aaron Yared:** Would it make sense to create an official email address to handle elections-related correspondence for the sake of posterity within the organization?

**Giuliana Conti:** That is a great suggestion, we will action that.

**Fiona Murray** (Evans School): We also changed Diversity Committee to Equity and Accountability Committee to reflect the recent name change.

**Emily Brown (Neuroscience):** Point of Information – I am curious why running for an officer position requires very little funding

**Giuliana Conti:** In comparison to ASUW elections which are wide and cross-campus, and hence require a substantial amount of expenditure on advertising through posters, etc., GPSS does not do that. People usually spend under $10, oftentimes only printing one-pagers on the day of elections.

**Theodore Cohen** (Molecular Engineering): Regarding the archives for elections being subject to public records, does student-to-student communication also fall under this requirement?

**Giuliana Conti:** GPSS is subject to public records but I am unclear whether student-to-student communication in an official capacity (like elections chair) is also subject to public records. I will clarify that and get back to you.

**Olivia Sanderfoot** (Environmental & Forest Sciences): I had a question about the revised job descriptions. I don’t think it is very clear how duties of the President are allocated between the VP of Internal Affairs and VP of External Affairs in the event that the President vacates office.

**Andrew Shumway** (Earth & Space Sciences): Should the President vacate the office, the VP of Internal Affairs assumes the office of the President. If the VP of Internal Affairs cannot perform the duties, it is passed on to the VP of External Affairs followed by the Secretary and Treasurer.

**Olivia Sanderfoot** (Environmental & Forest Sciences): As the language stands, it sounds like both the VP of Internal Affairs and VP of External Affairs are sharing the responsibilities of the President.

**Olivia Sanderfoot** motioned to amend the language of the elections guide to more clearly reflect that the VP of Internal Affairs assumes the office of the President in the event that the President has to vacate office. **Jacob Ziegler** seconded. No objections.

**Alexander Novokhodko** (Mechanical Engineering): if it is true that both the Senate as well as student-to-student communication in an official capacity are subject to public records, we should plan to transition emails from student’s inbox to a shared mailbox given that these emails will be deleted after a certain amount of time after graduation with the new email modernization plan.

**Julia Overfelt** motionedto change the elections email address from student’s inbox to a shared mailbox to remain in compliance with the public records policy. **Theodore Cohen** seconded. No objections.

**Fiona Murray** (Evans School): We also changed the language in the elections guide from “mandating” to “encouraging” interested candidates to communicate their intentions to seek office to the Elections Committee as early as possible.

**Britahny Baskin** (Neuroscience) motioned to amend the average number of working hours for officers to 20 hours/ week. **Alexander Novokhodko** (Mechanical Engineering) seconded. No objections.

**Jacob Ziegler** motioned to extend time by 10 minutes. **Michael Diamond** seconded. No objections.

**Alexander Novokhodko** (Mechanical Engineering): In the event that someone is accused of violating the non-endorsement rule, does GPSS have a judicial committee to oversee this?

**Fiona Murray** (Evans School): Yes, we do have a judicial committee to resolve such matters.

**Julia Overfelt** (Evans School): Are sitting officers not allowed to endorse candidates in their professional capacity?

**Andrew Shumway** (Earth & Space Sciences): That’s right, they cannot do that.

**Emily Brown** (Neuroscience): Is the 4/15 elections date the same every year?

**Fiona Murray:** No, this is just for the 2020-21 academic year. The elections committee will amend relevant dates every year.

**Andrew Shumway** (Earth & Space Sciences): The Officers shall be elected by a simple majority of members with voting rights. If there is no majority vote, we will use the rank-choice voting methodology.

**Alexander Novokhodko** (Mechanical Engineering): There are multiple methods to do rank-choice voting. Can you specify what exact type of rank-choice voting ?

**Andrew Shumway** (Earth & Space Sciences): It is all specified in detail in the bylaws.

**Fiona Murray:** We added a section for candidates to include the dates of meetings that they have attended in the candidate form as well as a section for justifying not having been able to attend meetings. We also added a section about summer work requirements.

**Julia Overfelt** (Evans School): Is there a space to mention that you are a Senator who is running for an Officer position?

**Andrew Shumway** (Earth & Space Sciences): We maintain the full roster of Senators, so we will be able to identify you.

**Olivia Sanderfoot** motioned to amend the elections guide to clarify that interested candidates must provide evidence of registration within a Graduate or Professional School program in the upcoming summer or fall quarter of the academic year to demonstrate eligibility for candidacy. **Alexander Novokhodko** seconded. No objections.

**Jacob Ziegler** motioned to vote on the amended elections guide. **Becky Tran** seconded. Majority vote to accept amended elections guide. No objections. **Cooper Robertson** (ASUW) abstained.

1. **Executive Senator Elections 7:00pm**

**Chris Boylan** (Marine and Environmental Affairs):Jacob Ziegler and I are both resigning our Executive Senator positions this quarter and Michael Diamond will be leaving the following quarter. So there are two openings immediately, and a third opening coming up very soon. We want to let you know ahead of time, so you have ample time to reflect on the positions and make an informed decision about running.

**Jacob Ziegler** (Chemistry):We will hold elections for the two openings at the next Senate meeting in two weeks’ time, but there is space available today if you are confident that you would like to be nominated or if you know someone who wants to be nominated.

**Julia Overfelt** (Evans School): POI – is this for the rest of the school year?

**Chris Boylan** (Marine and Environmental Affairs):It is a two year maximum term. In the past, folks have been nominated on the spot in a meeting, but we don’t necessarily want to force you to take that nomination so we are giving you a two weeks’ notice.

**Jacob Ziegler** (Chemistry):The role requires abi-weekly commitment on the Executive Board which holds meetings every other Wednesday in the HUB. Executive Senators are also compensated with an extra $150 per quarter for going above and beyond a regular Senator. This is great way to understand the student-university relationship structure more generally represent the Senate’s voice on the Executive Committee. Should you have any questions, feel free to email Chris or myself.

**Giuliana Conti:** I feel very blessed to be able to work with our Executive Senators. If anyone is interested in running for this position, I highly recommend that you attend the Executive Board meeting next Wednesday to get an idea of the nature of these meetings. It is an immense professional development experience to get to work with people from diverse backgrounds and experiences to come to an agreement on issues that impact graduate and professional students greatly. We are trying to create a diverse and productive culture within our Executive Committee.

**Jacob Ziegler** motioned to extend time by 1 minute. **Chris Boylan** seconded. No objections.

**Julia Overfelt** (Evans School): Point of Information – how do officer elections work alongside Executive Senator elections?

**Andrew Shumway** (Earth & Space Sciences): You can decide to run for a position up until the day of elections.

**Terence Pope** (Psychology) nominated himself. **Jacob Ziegler** seconded. No objections.

1. **Budget Timeline Update 7:09pm**

Shane Schrader provided an update on the budget timeline.

**Shane Schrader:** The Officer’s proposed budget has been submitted to the Executive Committee who will review it on 2/26. On 2/28, the Finance & Budget Committee will review the same.

During the first two weeks of March, the F&B and Executive Committees will be going over the budget and make suggestions to come to an agreement. We will then have a Senate meeting on 4/1 to collectively vote on the budget. Finally, I will present the budget to SAF on 4/17 for review and approval.

**Julia Overfelt** (Evans School): What happens if SAF rejects the budget?

**Shane Schrader:** We will have to internally redo the budget and it had to go back to Senate to be voted on.

1. **President’s Poll 7:10pm**

**Giuliana Conti:** Please answer the President’s Poll – we are trying to gauge your familiarity with your respective constituents’ student body who are parents and/ or caregivers or international students. There are two different committee-related events taking place and I would like to gather accurate data so that I can speak confidently on your behalf.

1. **External Update 7:11pm**

Aaron Yared (Policy Director) provided an update on external matters.

**Aaron Yared:** The undocumented student loans bill (SB 6561) got voted out of the Senate with bipartisan support and is now in the House. This is huge and we are very excited about this. Executive session was just announced for SB 2252 which would require student health programs to have abortion services if they have maternity services. ESB 6492 is the first new law to come out of our 2020 session. This is a tax restructure to guarantee money for WA College Grant, which was passed last year. 2-year schools, vocational degrees and undergraduate degrees are free if the family income is below 50k/ year, and there are discounts up until family income is 90k/ year.

**Aaron Yared:** Grad Day on the Hill was a great success! Thank you for those who attended and helped increase visibility for graduate students. We got to work with students from WSU and WWU to show a united front to legislators. This really helped to lay down the ground work for further efforts in the coming months and the upcoming academic year.

**Giuliana Conti** thanked the external team for their hardwork in putting up an unprecedented first year of Grad Day on the Hill.

1. **Events Update 7:15pm**

**Giuliana** Conti provided an update on key upcoming events.

**Giuliana Conti:** GPSS is hosting a happy hour before the Karamo Brown event at Meany Hall on Wednesday, 2/26 from 6:30-7:30pm. You must have a ticket to the event to be able to join the happy hour. Trivia will be making a comeback on Thursday, 3/12 at Denny Hall Room 303 from 4:30-6pm.

1. **Announcements 7:16pm**

**Giuliana Conti:** Please fill out the equity survey from Union – it is instrumental for the Union to understand how ASEs are experiencing equity so that they can use the information to advocate on our behalf.

**Cooper Robertson:** There is a Senator in the Undergraduate Student Senate who is sponsoring legislature around the executive compensation of the Provost and the President of the University. I am passing on this information on their behalf to see if anybody in GPSS is potentially interested a co-sponsoring a joint resolution.

**Colin Trobough** (Jackson School): One of the comments I have coming out of Grad Day on the Hill is that Senators really want to hear from graduate students, so if you know of anyone who is interested in testifying on any of the bills, the legislature really encourages students to speak up.

1. **Adjournment 7:19pm**

**Giuliana Conti** entertained a motion to adjourn the Senate meeting. **Jacob Ziegler** (Chemistry) motioned to adjourn the meeting. **Chris Boylan** (Marine and Environmental Sciences) seconded.