

GPSS Senate Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 26th 2022, 5:30pm at HUB 332 and via Zoom

Members present:

GPSS President Aaron Yared

~~GPSS Vice President of Internal Affairs Gabrielle Rivera~~

~~GPSS Vice President of External Affairs Payton Swinford~~

GPSS Vice President of Equity & Inclusion Meshell Sturgis

GPSS Vice President of Finance A.J. Balatico

GPSS Senate Clerk Janis Shin

~~Executive Senator Marty Varela~~

Executive Senator Britahny Baskin

~~Executive Senator Ashlee Abrantes~~

Executive Senator Malikai Bass

ASUW Director of Internal Policy Nicole Hishmeh

Associate Director of Student Activities Rene Singleton (present)

Associate Dean of Student and Postdoctoral Affairs Bill Mahoney (pre

~~Husky Union Building Executive Director Justin Camputaro~~

1. [Action] Call to Order 5:41pm

Aaron Yared called the meeting to order at 5:41pm.

2. [Action] Approval of the Agenda 5:42pm

Pratima KC (Environmental & Forestry Sciences) moved to approve the agenda. **Malikai Bass (Museology)** seconded. No objections.

3. [Action] Approval of the Minutes 5:42pm

Greg Papp (Marine & Environmental Affairs) moved to approve the minutes. **Pratima KC (Environmental & Forestry Sciences)** seconded. No objections.

4. [Information] Land Acknowledgment 5:42pm

Britahny Baskin gave the land acknowledgment.

The Graduate Professional Student Senate acknowledges the indigenous peoples of this land and the land, which touches the shared waters of all tribes and bands within the Suquamish, Tulalip, and Muckleshoot nations and the Duwamish peoples whose lands

the university currently occupies. It is everyone's role and responsibility as guests to understand how their impact entangles the caretakers.

Britahny Baskin addressed the discussion about land acknowledgements in the GPSS Discord. She said that there were some links to rent payment sites, and asked people to check out the Discord if they were interested.

5. [Information] Icebreaker 5:43pm

Aaron Yared had been able to tell President Cauce and provost Richards that graduate students wanted to still remain online. He said that he had been able to amplify graduate voices so that they were not for naught.

Aaron Yared recounted how he had asked how people felt about the way UW had handled COVID at the last meeting. He said that the Senate's feedback had been interesting and helpful and that he was able to relay the Senate's thoughts to the President and Provost a couple days later.

6. [Information] Senate Check-in 5:43pm

The Senate check-in question was "How do you feel about the amount of time administration has given us to transition between being in-person and virtual? How much time would you need to feel comfortable about transitioning?" Senators responded through Poll Everywhere. Aaron Yared responded to the Poll Everywhere comments.

Aaron Yared said that whether students preferred learning virtually or in-person, they could all agree that the changes had been very jarring and erratic. He said that he would not be surprised if there was one more shift that happened later in the year. He said that these shifts might cause anxiety and invited all senators to share their thoughts.

Aaron Yared said that to his understanding, the administration was trying to supply masks. He said that he had brought up to the administration that it was difficult to predict what it would be like if everyone returned to campus. He said that the administration cited the numbers. He said that his discussion also covered that the timing of the transition was bad, considering midterms. He said that this was a common sentiment across both undergraduate and graduate students, across all three campuses. He said that he was getting restless in his apartment and empathized with those who wanted to be back in person.

Aaron Yared noted that the administration sent a communication to instructors that it was up to the departments to decide how to host classes. He said that this was frustrating for students, but was in accordance with academic freedom. He said that the GPSS was fighting to bring attention to the issues of disabled students. He said that these conversations did not seem to get anywhere. He agreed that the administration needed to do more to recognize that some of the

issues that disabled students were facing were exacerbated by the administration's erratic decisions.

Aaron Yared asked if anyone knew if their department had the capability to do hybrid. He said that the law school was not equipped to deliver hybrid classes and that they had openly accepted the fact. He said that the professors who required people to come in person generally used Zoom on their laptop, which did not help during lectures that utilized PowerPoint. He said that it was impossible to see the presentation screen through Zoom and hard to hear what the professor was saying if they stepped too far away from the podium. He said that he would be interested to hear if any other schools had been able to host hybrid classes in a decent way.

Rachel Jecker (Medicine) said that the medical school's whole core curriculum was delivered hybrid last year. They said that every year, the same courses were offered in the same quarters and that the school had saved all the pre-recorded lectures and class materials. They said that when the school administration had decided to host classes online for the month of January, the medical school had had the capability to deliver everything all online, all in-person, or a mix of both. They said that all the classes were recorded and posted online for their core curriculum. They said that challenge was within the elective classes because the availability of a hybrid option in elective classes depended on what room the class was assigned to and the individual professors' ability to use technology. They said that one of their electives was fully virtual and that one of their professors that was currently virtual was fighting tooth and nail to get students back into the classroom.

Aaron Yared said that his first thought was to hire an assistant if there was a faculty member that was not tech savvy, but acknowledged that this would turn into a funding issue. He said that things got more and more bureaucratic which was annoying.

Chianaraekpere Ike (Law) said that she was in a global innovation exchange at UW's Bellevue's tech campus. She said that lectures had been delivered in a hybrid format. She said that 4-5 students joined remotely and that the other students attended in-person. She said that the class had the technology and staff members to have a successful hybrid class. She said that there had been glitches at first, but it turned out okay. She said that since the lectures were recorded and uploaded for the remote students after the hybrid class. She added that it was a master's level class.

Davon Thomas (Public Administration) said that he and Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration) had met with the dean of their school in the last week and that the dean had told them that she had hired a technology advisor who would help coordinate technology for professors in the Evans School. He said that she had mentioned that she knew other departments that were larger than the Evans School still only had one technology advisor. He said that he was unsure of how much work the new technology advisor had done. He suggested that other students ask their deans or their staff departments to ask if they have done that. He said that if they have not, then they should.

Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration) said that he was an instructor for two undergraduate sections and that he was willing to provide a hybrid option, but that the department had told him that he could only host classes in-person and that under no exceptions could they host a hybrid option. He said that he had mentioned this in the GPSS Discord, and that he had some students who could not get back into the U.S. He said that these students were being told that they had to drop this class or that they were not enrolled this quarter. He said that it was unfair when instructors were willing to provide a hybrid option. He suggested that the GPSS explore a policy that allows instructors to provide hybrid options if they wanted to. He said that he was told that he could not do it because it was an equity issue and I think it's unfair.

Aaron Yared acknowledged Matthew Mitnick's (Public Administration) frustration and asked if the decision was a department-level decision. He said that the GPSS had tried to push the administration to create a minimum expectation for all departments to adhere to so that there was consistency across the university. He agreed that it was an unfair situation and thanked everyone for their input and comments.

Aaron Yared said that he had a meeting with President Cauce next week, and that he would raise the points made in this conversation.

7. [Information] Transportation Services Presentation 5:56pm

Caryn Walline introduced herself as the Assistant Director of Transportation Services at UW. She said that the purpose for the visit was to present the department's initiative to build a more sustainable financial model for UW transportation services on the Seattle campus. She said that this initiative only pertained to the Seattle campus and that each campus had their own independent transportation services departments that set parking rates and U-PASS rates for those locations.

Caryn Walline gave an overview of transportation services. She said that the office had different areas of responsibilities on the Seattle campus and said she would explain why the department was currently looking at a new funding model and what some of the proposed finances and funding levers were. She said she would also give a recommendation to the Board of Regents at their March meeting and said that she would answer people's questions and hear their feedback at the end.

Caryn Walline said that the Seattle campus transportation services maintained and operated all of the parking areas on campus as part of our operational budget each year. She said that this included about \$1 million that the department put into deferred maintenance to help with maintaining the lots. She said that there were a number of garages on campus that were built 40 to 50 years ago and needed maintenance. She said that the department also managed all of the parking permits on campus, event parking on campus, and the citation program. The department administered and promoted transit and other sustainable transportation options

such as the U-PASS program. She noted that the student U-PASS program was governed by the student U-PASS advisory board and that the board was the one who set the student U-PASS fees. She said that the transportation services department managed the program and the contract with the transit agencies. She said that she acted as the advisor to the student U-PASS advisory board.

Caryn Walline said that the transportation services department also managed carpools and vanpools coming to campus, all bicycle parking facilities and pathways, and on-campus micromobility options such as electric bikes, scooters (coming soon), and walking. She said that the department maintained the Burke Gilman trail through campus. She said that the department also provided the fleet and shuttle services that supported students, faculty and staff coming to the campus for official business.

Caryn Walline said that the transportation services department had spent the last year looking at a new funding model because it would not be able to maintain a sustainable funding model moving forward if it did not do anything. She said that one of the issues was that the parking revenue was continuing to support transit. She said that as new lightrail stations opened and transit continued to grow over the next four to five years in the region, those transit costs would go up significantly, and the current parking revenue could not support this growth.

Caryn Walline said that the transportation services department had about \$1 million in its budget each year to spend on deferred maintenance. She said that this allowed the department to only provide minimal deferred maintenance options for campus. She said that as a self-supporting unit on campus, the transportation services department needed to break even on its budget. She said that the current funding model was considered unsustainable because parking usage and revenue was shrinking while U-PASS usage and cost was increasing. She said that part of the UW's 2019 master plan was to reduce campus parking spaces from 12,300 spots currently to 9,000 by 2028. She said that this meant the transportation services department would have a reduction in its capacity and opportunity to generate revenue by 25%. She said that while reducing the number of parking spots was great for the environment and encouraged people to use public transportation, it would have a negative impact on the department's budget. She said that the department's deferred maintenance backlog continued to grow and impacted the department's ability to provide safe and effective infrastructure for its customers.

Caryn Walline said that the transportation services office had started providing a fully subsidized U-PASS program to classified staff in bargaining agreements starting in 2019. She said that this included the UAW academic student employee union. She said that since then, there had been continued pressure to provide a subsidized U-PASS to other faculty and professional staff on campus. She said that based on these pressures, the department did not have the option to do nothing.

Caryn Walline said that the transportation services office had a list of priorities when it came to funding itself. One was that the department needed to continue to contain its operational costs.

She said that the department had worked to reduce its general operational costs to be as lean as possible and that it was the leanest it could be in order to continue to maintain the customer service levels that the campus community expected. She said that the department was also looking at the principle of reducing its dependence on parking revenue to meet its other campus master plan requirements. She said that one option that the department was considering was making the U-PASS a benefit to faculty and professional staff, thus moving those costs away from transportation services and employees, and moving the cost to the benefit load. She said that the benefit load was associated with all salaries on campus and that the U-PASS would become a benefit like medical benefits.

Caryn Walline said that another one of the transportation services office's priorities was making sure that the U-PASS program broke even. She said that transit costs were currently increasing, and were being significantly subsidized through the parking revenue. She said that the department needed to smooth out rate increases for several years for both parking and the U-PASS program. She noted that the UW had had two parking increases in the last ten years, both of which were significant increases in price.

Caryn Walline said that the transportation services office also examined its increase in spending for deferred maintenance and other strategic initiatives that would address some of the UW's critical infrastructure needs. She said that her department analyzed and evaluated its funding model for the next five years. She referred to the slides and said that based on the department's current model, it was anticipating a slight deficit in its net position. She said that the deficit would continue to grow starting in FY24. She said that because the department was a self-sustaining unit, it had to break even each year and was unable to run a deficit, which meant that the department had to address its current funding model.

Caryn Walline said that some of the deferred maintenance and strategic initiatives that the transportation services office was looking to implement with an updated funding model included things like safety, concrete, parking lot striping, and wayfinding. She said that the department currently had a priority deferred maintenance backlog of \$6.7 million for the Seattle campus. She said that these projects included repairs and upgrades to the garages and the UW's tower garages, as well as some major fire system upgrades for the Stevens Court and Portage Bay garage. She said that the department had conducted a benchmark study a few years ago that estimated that the department's total deferred maintenance backlog for the assets that the department maintained was at \$23 million. She said that this study only included the department's physical structures, such as garages, and excluded parking lots. She said that the actual deferred maintenance cost was likely higher than that \$23 million.

Caryn Walline recommended that the transportation services office increase its capital spending to address some of these critical life deferred maintenance by \$1 to 2 million/year and start to address some of its other critical strategic initiatives, including safety and security in our garages and parking lots. This would include looking at ADA and some other remediation in the parking lots, as well as bicycle parking on campus. She said that there were a number of

different strategic initiatives that the department wanted to fund with the increased capital spending.

Caryn Walline said that the transportation services office had looked at the potential funding levers to create a sustainable funding model moving forward. She said that her department had reviewed three levers: 1) providing a fully subsidized U-PASS for faculty and professional staff because it would move their expenses to the benefit load, 2) reallocating transportation demand management revenue, and 3) increasing parking fees on campus by 2 to 4% over the next four years.

Caryn Walline explained that any time someone parked on campus, 55% of the parking revenue collected went into the transportation demand management fee which was traditionally used to support U-PASS and on-campus shuttle programs. She said that the department was planning to cap the annual transfer to the student U-PASS program at \$2 million starting next year in fiscal year 23. She said that based on the cost estimates run, the department would not hit the cap from fiscal year 22 through fiscal year 26. She said that the student U-PASS program would not see any changes from that. She said that the transportation services office was also considering eliminating the transportation deferred maintenance contribution to its shuttle programs. She said that if the transportation services office did nothing, then it would continue to run a deficit through fiscal year 26. She said that moving only one lever would not provide a sustainable funding model on its own. She said that combining levers 2 and 3, reallocating the transportation deferred maintenance funding and increasing parking and U-PASS fees, would result in a positive net position by fiscal year 23. She said that additional funding was still required to address the deferred maintenance and critical infrastructure needs that we have on campus.

Caryn Walline said that combining all of the levers together by moving the faculty and professional staff to the benefit load, for their UPASS program, reallocating the transportation deferred maintenance, and increasing the parking and UPASS fee would provide additional funding. She said that based on this projected estimate, the UW facilities, finance, and transportation services offices were making the recommendation to move forward with the option of combining all three levers with a 4% increase in parking rates. She said that the transportation services office planned to cap the transportation deferred maintenance allocation at \$2 million for the student U-PASS program and for its shuttle service. She said that the transportation services office was looking to increase parking fees by 4% over the next four years, which would allow it to increase the deferred maintenance and strategic initiative spending to \$2 to 3 million a year.

Caryn Walline said that the transportation services office had been soliciting feedback from all over campus. She said that it had met with President Cauce and Provost Richards to have initial discussions around the proposed funding model. She said that the president and provost had been generally supportive but asked the office to continue to have conversations with other campus stakeholder groups. She said that the office had met with ASUW yesterday and would be meeting with the U-PASS advisory board next week. She referred to the slides which

featured a list of the student groups that the UW had already met with. She said that there would be a public hearing on February 22 where anyone could come and provide feedback about the proposal.

Caryn Walline said that she put an email address in the chat. She said that people could email the office with feedback, especially for those who were not able to attend the public meeting. She said that the transportation services office would present its proposal to the Board of Regents on March 10 and that the Board would decide whether to approve the new funding model. She said that the transportation services office planned to implement the funding model on July 1 of this year if the proposal was approved. She invited everyone to ask her questions.

Aaron Yared read questions submitted by the audience.

Question: I'm confused how the deficit of \$36,000 is going to change to more than 4.5 million. Would you clarify that?

Caryn Walline said that the reason that the figure would go up so much in fiscal year 24 is because the transportation services office was anticipating a significant increase in transit costs based off of new Light Rail stations opening, both to the north and to the east. She said that the office ran transit cost projections based off of the U-PASS program's historical growth as well as the growth from the opening of new Light Rail stations. She said that the cost projections were based on the ridership that Sound Transit anticipated with the opening of the Light Rail stations. She said that fiscal year 23 did not show a deficit. She stated that there was a significant reduction in transit costs due to COVID because fewer people were taking transit during COVID. She said that this reduction in cost was an anomaly.

Question: How will the \$2 million cap reduce the deficit if the cap will not be reached before 2026?

Caryn Walline said that the reason the transportation services office was recommending a \$2 million cap for the transportation deferred maintenance to the student U-PASS program was to maintain budget expectations. She said that transit costs were unpredictable and depended on ridership. She said that putting a cap on the allocation would allow the office to maintain its budget and understand where its budget and operating costs would be.

Rachel Jecker (Medicine) said she wanted to advocate on behalf of medical students as strongly as they possibly could. They beseeched the transportation services office to not reduce funding to the shuttles. They said that the medical students used the shuttles on a daily basis to fulfill their core curriculum. They said that medical students were required to commute from the medical center to Harborview Medical Center, and that removing the shuttle would remove the students' primary mode of transportation. They said that they would hate to see the commute from the medical center to Harborview as another student expense because students already had so many. They said that many of the students used the resource and that the shuttles provided a way for students to reduce their carbon footprint.

Caryn Walline said that the transportation services office was currently in discussions with the shuttle partners that also helped fund that program. She said that the transportation deferred maintenance portion of the shuttles program made up 10 to 15% for the two shuttle services that operate. She said that the office was not looking to reduce shuttle service, but instead was aiming to have the shuttle partners take on the additional expenses.

Question: Do deferred maintenance costs over time on parking structures cost more long term than the revenues made from parking?

Caryn Walline said yes. She said that due to the large backlog of deferred maintenance for the UW's transportation services infrastructure, the transportation services office needed more parking revenue than it was currently collecting to address aging infrastructure issues. She reiterated that many of the campus garages were 40 to 50 years old and were nearing their end-of-life. She said that garages needed electrical system maintenance or waterproof coatings.

Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration) asked how much revenue parking generated. He asked if eliminating parking garages and repurposing them into other public use facilities like housing or other community spaces would save money long term. He asked if reallocating the land by selling it to the city or another entity would help the transportation services office be self-sustaining. He said that by reallocating the land, parking would become obsolete, especially as transit options increased and less people drove to campus.

Caryn Walline said that she would have to get back to him after doing an analysis of the. She said that she would take the feedback.

Question: How might future development of the U District parking lots affect demand for campus parking?

Caryn Walline said that there was a lot of development planned for the U District. She said that some of UW's U District surface lots would be redeveloped. She said that there may potentially be additional demand on UW's campus parking for visitor parking on campus due to the decrease in parking spaces around U District. She said that the transportation services office was currently in the process of looking at its parking lot capacity and how parking spots were distributed between visitors and UW's students, staff and faculty. She said that parking for students, staff, and faculty would always take priority.

Janis Shin (Molecular Engineering & Sciences) asked Caryn Walline to put the feedback email in the chat.

Caryn Walline said that she would put the email and the link to the public hearing in the chat. She said that the website had more information about the proposal and also contained a version of the presentation she just gave. She said that senators were welcome to share the link with their constituents.

Aaron Yared said that there were situations where public transportation was not a viable option for current commuting students either due to child responsibilities or the need to go to work. He asked if the transportation services office had considered those situations when reducing parking spaces and increasing parking rates. He asked if the costs had been too great that these measures had to be taken despite those concerns?

Caryn Walline said that the reduction in parking on campus was part of a mandate by the city of Seattle. She said that it was also part of the UW's campus master plan as a way to reduce the number of commute trips that came to campus. She said that the city mandated that the UW reduce its drive-alone commuting to campus to 12% by 2028. She said that the UW was trying to focus on encouraging people to use public transportation or other sustainable transportation modes. She said that parking rates were a separate issue. She said that though parking helped the transportation services office reach a 12% drive-alone rate, the office had considered the fact that not everyone would be able to take public transportation, especially given their schedule. She said that this was why value parking was available for students, staff and faculty. She said that the office was looking to maintain its parking rates at lower than the market rate within the U District so that it was affordable for students, staff, and faculty that needed to drive to campus.

Andrea Paz (Social Work) commented that professional students tended to commute for longer and usually after work.

Chianaraekpere Ike (Law) said that she lived on-campus in family housing, and that one of the biggest issues was that many cars were vandalized every day. She asked whether the transportation services office or HFS was in charge of the parking lot. She said that many students were frustrated and had been complaining about this issue and that the incidence of car vandalization had significantly increased during the pandemic. She asked if Caryn Walline was aware of these complaints.

Caryn Walline said that it depended on which residence hall Chianaraekpere Ike (Law) lived in. She said that parking lots located on campus were managed and operated by the UW transportation services while residential locations off-campus were operated by HFS. She said that the transportation services office coordinated with HFS in regards to parking facility security issues both on and off campus. She said that the office had seen an increase in vandalism since the start of the pandemic, both of its fleet vehicles as well as the cars within its parking lots. She said that the office had partnered closely with the UW Police Department and other campus partners to try and address some of the vandalism issues.

Caryn Walline said that the transportation services office was currently considering increased camera installation within parking facilities. She said that the office was looking to improve lighting in its facilities and install limited access security gates in some of its garages. She said that the office was also looking into hiring additional security staff to help monitor the lots. She

noted that Laurel Village and Blakely parking lots were managed through HFS, but that she would take note of Chianaraekpere Ike's (Law) comment anyway.

Aaron Yared said that Andrea Paz (Social Work) brought up an interesting point. He said that she expressed concern about student and resident privacy, due to the planned increase of cameras. He said that this issue had also been brought up during his time at due to the hate crimes happening there.

Caryn Walline said that it was a difficult issue to work around. She said that cameras had the potential to identify crimes that happened, but acknowledged the privacy concerns. She said that the transportation services office was looking to install camera systems to look at only when an incident happened. She said that the office did not plan on live monitoring the cameras. She said that her office had discussed potentially adding a camera system to the UWPD's monitoring center with the UWPD, but that the current plan was to only use them in the event of an incident.

Meshell Sturgis asked if she was the only one who felt disappointed and frustrated that students had to pay to attend the university, and that those who worked at the university did not get paid enough, or that some students who had to pay to attend the university had to pay more fees. She expressed her unhappiness at the situation.

Alexander Novokhodko (Mechanical Engineering) asked if the transportation services office managed the ADA shuttles on campus. He said he had heard of students being turned away from using those, even if they used cane or other mobility assistance devices due to lack of medical documentation. He asked if there was a way to broaden access to the shuttle service.

Caryn Walline said that the transportation services office did manage the Dial-A-Ride shuttle. She said that the office did not manage the eligibility for who could use the service and explained that that was done through the Disability Services Office. She recommended that Alexander Novokhodko (Mechanical Engineering) reach out to them or ADA Coordinator Bree Callahan about eligibility issues.

Chianaraekpere Ike (Law) said that when students made complaints to HFS, the HFS denied responsibility and referred them to the transportation services office. She asked Caryn Walline to install street lights in parking lots to help with safety concerns. She said that security guards or cameras were not urgently necessary, and that good lighting was a good first step to addressing the issue.

Caryn Walline thanked Chianaraekpere Ike (Law) for her comment.

Aaron Yared asked Caryn Walline if it was a question of funding. He said that he had heard the administration mention that break-ins could be prevented with proper lighting. He said that he had suggested that the administration pay for the lighting and asked if lighting the parking lots was under the transportation services office's purview.

Caryn Walline said that the transportation services office did manage lighting. She said that the office had a strategic initiative to improve parking lot lighting. She said that lighting was an issue that was shared with other groups on campus like UW Facilities, such as when lighting pathways that connected parking lots. She said that the transportation services office did not manage lighting for the pathways. She said that UW Facilities had been discussing a lighting initiative and working on how to coordinate on issues around lighting improvements. She said that the students might hear more about the lighting initiative soon and that the transportation services office was starting a task force around the issue.

Chianaraekpere Ike (Law) asked why the transportation services office thought that reducing parking spaces first before making sure that there were adequate commuting alternatives was the best way forward.

Caryn Walline said that the decision was not made by the transportation services, but was rather dictated by the campus master plan. She said that the reduction of 3000 parking spaces was mandated by the city of Seattle. She said that the transportation services office was currently working with transit and agency partners to advocate for additional public transportation options and routes.

Aaron Yared asked if the transportation services office had decided on which stalls to close down or if they were still in the midst of analyzing usage data. He noted that whichever parking lot was chosen, the transportation services office would end up hurting a certain population of people.

Caryn Walline said that the transportation services office was in the initial stages of analyzing the usage data. She said that the office's strategy for reducing parking stalls would be determined after talking with other campus stakeholders to determine where development was going to happen on campus and where demand was. She said that many people's commute methods had changed due to COVID and that this gave the office an opportunity to examine how parking was capacitated in different areas of campus.

Aaron Yared said that it seemed like a lose-lose situation. He pointed out that the reason why the transportation services office was getting rid of those 3,000 parking stalls was to encourage people to use public transit, which meant that the office would have to get rid of stalls in highly trafficked areas to increase the impact of their encouragement. Aaron Yared said that the senators could email him if they wanted to pass questions to Caryn Walline through him or that the senators could email her directly.

8. [Action] Resolution: Waiving S/NS Grade Change Fee 6:42pm

Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration) put the link to the resolution in the chat. He said that he had written the resolution in consultation with people in his program. He said that it was a very popular issue in his program's group chat. He explained that on Friday, January 14, the provost had sent out an all-campus message which communicated that this quarter was an extraordinary circumstances quarter. He said that this meant classes could be taken with S/NS grading. He expressed support for this decision. He pointed out that students were required to pay a \$20 fee each time they requested a grading option change and that this was a barrier for students who might not be able to afford the fee. He said that the GPSS had spoken about many of the labor-related issues and financial pressures that people were experiencing. He said that he did not think that students had to pay the institution to use an option that had been granted to them in an uncompromising situation, especially because students were already paying so much money to utilize what they should legally be entitled to.

Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration) said that the sponsors of the bill had identified that UW had received \$53 million from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Act to be used specifically for institutional purposes. He said that the sponsors believed that the administration could use this fee to cover the administrative cost for changing grading for students, specifically in light of the COVID situation.

Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration) said that the resolution recognized the financial difficulties people faced in addition to academic concerns. He said that as a result, students should not be charged a \$20 fee and that institutional dollars from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Act should be used to cover this fee and any other costs with opting into a grading change. He said that the past fees should be retroactively waived as well. He said that there may be many students who did not utilize this option because of the fee associated with it, so there was an equity-related barrier.

Davon Thomas (Public Administration) said he was in favor of the decision to mark this quarter as an extraordinary circumstance quarter due to how crazy COVID was and because he did not like his statistics class. He said that \$20 may not seem like a lot to some people. He said that it took him two months to find a job last quarter and that he did not have healthcare during that time. He said that this quarter, he had been appointed to the office of undergraduate admissions which gave him healthcare for this quarter. He said that if he lost the appointment next quarter, then he would lose healthcare. He said that this was the reality that many students had to go through on this campus. He said that last quarter, all of his spare money went towards food, rent, and other essentials. He said that this resolution raised a big issue to the administration.

Davon Thomas (Public Administration) said he had emailed the registrar's office on Monday morning asking them to waive the \$20 fee in light of the "extraordinary circumstances" quarter.

He said that the office had responded and said that the fee has two purposes: 1) to dissuade students from making schedule changes after the first week, and 2) to cover the cost of manual changes that must be done for students when the registration changes are done. He said that a real person in the office of the university registrar had to manually adjust the grading option.

Davon Thomas (Public Administration) said he was not dismissive of the fact that the job required manual labor. He said that this information did not detract from his stance that \$20 was a significant barrier. He said that funding that the UW had received from the federal government was sufficient to waive the fee. He reminded everyone that the resolution would not be voted on for another two weeks. He said that he was not trying to rush the resolution through. He said that the registrar's office had recommended that he reach out to the Office of Student Financial Aid to see if they could use emergency funds to waive this. He said he would reach out to the financial aid office tomorrow. He welcomed people's feedback, comments, or questions. He said that he could not guarantee an outcome for his efforts.

Aaron Yared said he had brought this issue up to Provost Richards because it was ultimately the provost's call whether to declare a quarter an extraordinary circumstances quarter or not. He said that the provost's office had internal guidelines that it followed and said that he could ask the provost to share that with him if it would be useful. He said that he was not sure if the provost would share them with him, but that that was a separate discussion.

Aaron Yared said that the provost had told him that the administration had considered waiving the fee when they decided to declare this quarter an extraordinary circumstances quarter but had decided against it. He said that the amount of manual work necessary to perform the grade change cost more than the \$20 fee. He said that the provost told him that the office would revisit the issue and give him an answer sometime this week. He said that the resolution was already having an impact and said that he would keep everybody updated if he heard back from the provost.

Malikai Bass (Museology) asked if the provost's office provided any details on the amount of labor involved.

Aaron Yared said that they did not.

Davon Thomas (Public Administration) said that the registrar's office did not provide any details either. He said that Malikai Bass' (Museology) question was a very valid question and that he could follow up with them tomorrow about the answer to that question. He said that he would also reach out to the financial aid office tomorrow about emergency funds and how much money they had.

Chianaraekpere Ike (Law) expressed support for waiving the fee. She expressed concern that taking money from financial aid was an indirect way of charging students. She asked if her logic was sound.

Aaron Yared said that her logic was sound, but that the argument was redundant because the money for financial aid came from the federal government anyway.

Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration) said that he had identified the money that the UW had received from the federal government. He said that half went to financial aid for students and the other half went to the institution. He said that the resolution sponsors did not want to touch the financial aid for students because that money went directly to students. He said that his team was looking at the institutional portion, which could be applied towards issues like this. He said that he had wondered how the UW planned to spend the institutional funds. He said it would be interesting to have a space to collectively address that.

Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration) addressed Alexander Novokhodko's (Mechanical Engineering) point in the chat and said that exploring this issue meant doing things like asking questions of different offices and having people commit to this work.

Aaron Yared said that in his emails with the provost, the provost had mentioned a potential alternative for the Higher Education Emergency Relief Act funds regarding something like adding hybrid technology. He said it had felt like a misdirect and another way of saying that the funds that they would be using to waive the fee could be used more productively in a different sector. He said that the provost's office was trying to consider the best use of the money.

Davon Thomas (Public Administration) asked which entity administered funding to different departments. He suggested that the Senate receive a presentation on what the entity was actually using the federal funding for. He said that this transparency would go a long way. He asked people to connect him and Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration) to any resources or potential stakeholders that they should reach out to.

Aaron Yared said that it was most likely the Office of Planning and Budgeting (OPB) who distributed the money. He said that the GPSS could try reaching out to them and that the OPB loved to give presentations about activity-based budgeting and different budgeting models.

9. [Action] Resolution: On Evacuation Plans for University Buildings 6:55pm

Malikai Bass (Museology) said *The Daily* had written an article at the start of the quarter about a student who had never been given other information on how to evacuate the building because they primarily used wheelchairs. He said that this student had been stranded during a fire drill and had to use a walker to exit the building, which took them nearly an hour. He said that this was unsafe as walkers were not designed for stairs. He said that when the student reached out to the administration, the student found out that they were technically at fault because of UW's esoteric process for obtaining accommodations during emergency evacuation.

Malikai Bass (Museology) read the resolution.

Malikai Bass (Museology) said that he was aware that some of the “that” clauses needed to be reworded. He said that he worked with Toby Gallant of the Student Disability Commission to get information from Bree Callahan, the Director of Disability Resources for Students. He said that the original student of the article, he, and Toby Gallant were stonewalled.

Andrea Paz (Social Work) said it was frustrating to have Bree Callahan not answer. She asked if Bree Callahan had answered at all or if she had stated that certain buildings had exemptions due to their historic building status.

Malikai Bass (Museology) said that the only response that he received was “oh, that's interesting that students don't have that information” without any commitment to action.

Andrea Paz (Social Work) said that the situation was quite worrisome and offered to reach out to Bree Callahan. She said that the situation was unacceptable and thanked Malikai Bass (Museology) for reading the resolution. She asked Malikai Bass (Museology) to let her know how she could help and said that she also wanted to know why the ADA coordinators were not answering

Malikai Bass (Museology) said that there was room for others to help. He said that he wanted to focus on this issue this year because the UW's emergency plans for other emergencies had similar levels of care and consideration given to disabled students.

Aaron Yared said that he remembered trying to roll a cart into Denny Hall to host trivia night and having to circle the building three times to find a ramp to push the cart up. He said that he and his colleagues had found a ramp which led to a door that led to stairs. He said that the building was very inaccessible and that he was lucky that he and his colleague were strong enough to lift the cart up the stairs. He said that as a new student in Seattle, he was shocked about the accessibility issue and that his colleagues had responded that it was an issue in many of the buildings on campus. Aaron Yared said that when it came to life and death situations such as when a building was on fire, there should be some way for everybody to get out. He pointed out how the student referenced in the news article took an hour to get out of the building and noted that in the event of an emergency situation, people did not have an hour to navigate their way out of the building. He said that it should not matter if a building was historically significant or not and argued that the UW needed to take the proper precautions. He said that from a purely selfish, financial aspect, the UW would be held legally liable if somebody got hurt or died because the administration did not take necessary steps.

Malikai Bass (Museology) clarified that the resolution was not asking the administration to make changes to any buildings. He said that students with disabilities were supposed to print, fill out, and submit a safety form to the evacuation warden for their building in order to receive assistance during a fire. He said that the students were only able to receive assistance that was listed in the form's limited recommendation box.

Meshell Sturgis suggested that Malikai Bass (Museology) add language in the resolution about how each unit must have a web page devoted to providing this information and list who the warden was for various buildings. She said that it would be good for professors and teaching assistants to provide this information in their syllabi.

Malikai Bass (Museology) said that the forms were technically supposed to be publicly accessible. He said that Alexander Novokhodko (Mechanical Engineering) had found a link for all the safety forms, but that the link was dead.

Andrea Paz (Social Work) asked if DRS was involved and if they could do anything.

Malikai Bass (Museology) said that Toby Gallant had sent the same email to Adiam Tesfay as he did to Bree Callahan. He said that he had not followed up with Toby Gallant about Adiam Tesfay's responses. He said that DRS was hard to get in touch with because it had very long response times this quarter. The DRS was hit with increased demand because it shouldered a lot of the burden for setting up hybrid classrooms and did not receive more staff members to help.

Andrea Paz (Social Work) said that the DRS was trying their best, even without proper staffing. She asked if the resolution could include language about hiring more staff or demanding more staff dedicated to this issue.

Meshell Sturgis said she liked the clause about electing a minimum number of disabled-identifying individuals in the committee population. She suggested that Malikai Bass (Museology) change the language to say "commensurate with the student body population or campus population." She said that numbers could change and that identity terms often evolved and suggested that Malikai Bass (Museology) keep the language more open.

10. [Information] Officer and Committee Reports 7:13pm

Aaron Yared said that he had been part of a conversation with administration about whether students should return to campus and what that would look like. He said that the biggest takeaway from the conversation that he tried to impart on the administrators was that they should not keep flip flopping. He said that the constant change in plans was a major driver of anxiety for many students, and that the administration did not give students enough time to prepare for changes, which was unfair.

Aaron Yared said that the administration was not prepared for the possibility of students transmitting Omicron to each other. He said that the reason why the administration had decided to go virtual at the beginning of the quarter was not only because of the fear of infection but also because there would be a high rate of absenteeism. He said that in order for the UW to meet certain national level standards, UW's classes needed to hit an attendance threshold. He said that once students were back on campus, he was not sure what the administration would do if a COVID outbreak happened on campus.

Aaron Yared said that WashPIRG was trying to do something through chapter 205, which was a policy involving voluntary fees. For example, U-PASS, SAF, and STF are voluntary fees. He said he was working with the ASUW president to check the legality of WashPIRG's actions. He explained that student governments were not allowed to lobby outside of the actual interests of students to maintain an apolitical. He said that student governments were still allowed to lobby for educational initiatives. He said that if WashPIRG succeeded in getting a voluntary fee, it was worth seeing what that looked like in practice as their lobbying continued from the state to the national level.

Gabby Rivera said that the U-PASS Committee had its first meeting which established the committee. She said that the U-PASS Committee would have another meeting next week where members would receive a budget forecast. She said that she would relay any information about projected changes in U-PASS fees. She said that [SAGE](#) had a summit on February 11 and 12. She said that she would post details about it on the Discord and that senators could talk to senators from other schools during the summit. She said she had transferred the chairship of the ad hoc committee to Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration), and that he and she were doing regular checkups. She added that she was attending meetings as she could. She said that she was finishing up job description reviews with all of the GPSS staff members and that she had two more left. She said that she would give updates at the February 9th meeting.

Gabby Rivera referred to the slides and which listed GPSS events for the quarter. She said that there was a link to purchase discounted tickets to the men's basketball game. She said that there was an opportunity to practice public speaking about a project or research that you may be working on with UW Libraries in core programs. She said that the GPSS would host a trivia night at the HUB and would do it in one of the few designated areas to eat pizza, which would be where all the food courts were located. She said that she would also try to gauge how comfortable people were with the idea of playing trivia. She said that the GPSS was hosting a mixer on the 10th in the South Ballroom and that the mixer would feature a buffet dinner, lawn games, and other fun activities. She said that the GPSS was prepared to shift the event to a pick-up dinner situation like it did last quarter. She welcomed everyone to give her ideas about events to host in the spring.

Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration) said that the ad hoc committee had its first meeting last Friday. He said that the members had discussed the committee structure and had extended the timeline indefinitely to ensure that all relevant stakeholder groups had been consulted. He asked interested people to fill out the when2meet poll and put the link to the poll in the chat. He said that Sephora-Clotilde Zoro was the secretary of the ad hoc committee and was the one who had co-presented the original legislation with him to the Senate in December. He said that State Representative Frank Chopp was willing to contribute \$100,000 in capital-related costs in an off-campus pilot. He said that there was much to discuss in terms of the ad hoc committee's engagement with the city of Seattle. He said that the committee had also met with Sally Clark who would be looped into the effort because she oversaw intergovernmental relations for UW.

Joel Anderson introduced himself as the GPSS Policy Director and said that the GPSS was continuing to make progress on a couple key pieces of legislation focused on financial aid. He said that the most difficult step was making sure that the bills passed through budget and fiscally related committees. He said that to engage students in that work, the GPSS had been working with the Washington Student Association which had text-banked more than 24,000 public school students, including himself. He hoped that others who had received the text had filled out the form to lobby their legislators. He said that the state had initiated the process of appointing a graduate student to the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC). He explained that the WSAC was a state board that focused on higher education policy implementation and other related issues. He said that he was not sure who would be appointed yet, but that it was currently being decided. He said that this appointment represented one of GPSS's larger legislative achievements of last year. He said that this appointment helped the GPSS live up to one of the pillars of its policy agenda, which was graduate student representation in higher education conversations.

Joel Anderson said that the Legislative Advisory Board would continue to meet on Thursdays from 11 to 12 on Zoom. He said that the Zoom information was available on the GPSS website. He said that the LAB's one-pager lobbying documents were currently being designed by the GPSS Creative Director Devika Kool and would be done soon.

Lauren Newton asked senators to join the GPSS on February 11 and 17 for the Huskies on the Hill event. She said that students would have the chance to talk with legislators about bills impacting students and gain experience in advocacy and lobbying. She asked everyone to sign up if they had the time and to publicize the information. She said that the link to register was on the screen and that people were welcome to email her with any questions.

A.J. Balatico said that the Finance & Budget committee (F&B) would meet from 10:30 to 11:30 on Fridays. He said that F&B would discuss how the GPSS should proceed with either hiring a new officer or a staff position. He said that senators who were not part of F&B were welcome to sit in, though they would not be able to vote.

A.J. Balatico said that travel grants were open for winter and early spring. He said that the travel grant committee needed more reviewers. He said that he was anticipating a wave of applications from education students, and that he could not score those applicants because he belonged to the College of Education. He said that reading each application only took 10 minutes, and that it would be helpful if someone could commit that service. He said that the GPSS had officially doubled the amount of travel grantees awarded this academic year compared to last year.

A.J. Balatico said that the UW Food Pantry, Student Publications, and Student Veteran Life were presenting to SAF this week. He said that GPSS's presentation to SAF last week went well. He said that the Student Tech Loan Program (STLP) was asking for any feedback on what it should buy. He said that the STLP had committed a lot of money for new laptops and WiFi hotspots and was open to buying more if there was demand. He said that the STF Committee

had not yet met, and that it did not have a request for proposals for winter quarter yet, but that it was forthcoming.

Meshell Sturgis said that she had been in two different meetings to hear Sally Clark present. She reminded everyone that Sally Clark was the person who had been appointed to lead the safety revamp that President Cauce sent an email about a couple of weeks ago. She said that these meetings had not gone very well overall. She said that during the Faculty Council meeting, SafeCampus had brought up many concerns regarding Sally Clark's position. She said that the meeting with Ricky Hall and several leaders of undergraduate RSOs, one of which represented the Black Student Union, also did not go well. She said that there was almost no engagement from the undergraduates with Sally Clark. She said that there was a future meeting coming up again with the Faculty Council that people were preparing for. She said that she would update the GPSS with how the meeting went.

Meshell Sturgis said that the chapter proposal that she submitted had been accepted. She said that she was excited about some of the research coming out of the diversity committee and her position. She said that the committee would submit a round table proposal that was due in two days. She said that there was an upcoming graduate student conference at Harvard called "Seeding relations beyond settler and ecology." She asked people who were interested in participating to reach out to her.

Meshell Sturgis said that the diversity committee had received several diversity funding applications. She said that the applications would be reviewed at the meeting after the next.

11. [Information] Announcements 7:29pm

A.J. Balatico said that there were two different events coming up in February that were sponsored by the Finance & Budget Committee: the hybrid Lunar New Year Gala from the CSA on February 12th and the FIUTS Cultural Fest in the HUB.

12. [Action] Adjournment 7:30pm

Davon Thomas (Public Administration) motioned to adjourn the meeting. **Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** seconded. No objections

Meeting minutes prepared by **Janis Shin**, GPSS Senate Clerk.