

# GPSS Senate Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 9th 2022, 5:30pm 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 Malikai Bass~~  
~~Executive Senator Pratima KG~~  
Executive Senator Davon Thomas  
ASUW Director of Internal Policy Nicole Hishmeh  
Associate Director of Student Activities Rene Singleton  
~~Associate Dean of Student and Postdoctoral Affairs Bill Mahoney~~  
~~Husky Union Building Executive Director Justin Camputare~~

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

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

## 2. [Action] Approval of the Agenda 5:41pm

**Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** moved to add a 10-minute public comment period after the land acknowledgement. **Davon Thomas (Public Administration)** seconded. No objections.

**A.J. Balatico** moved to add a suspension of Bylaws for the Judicial Committee and a suspension of Bylaws for the Elections Committee after the approval of the agenda for 3 minutes each.

**Andrew Shumway (Earth & Space Sciences)** said that the Senate could vote to suspend the Bylaws but that he would weigh in at the appropriate time whether it was a good idea.

**A.J. Balatico** said that the first suspension of Bylaws was related to the timeline of sending out the notice of bylaw amendments to the Senate. He said that the Judicial Committee would make the decision today. He said that it was recommended that the changes to any Bylaws be sent

seven days prior to the Senate meeting by the president, which would have been last week before the Executive Committee meeting.

**A.J. Balatico** said that the other suspension of the Bylaws acknowledged that the Elections Guide had not been submitted and that the Elections Guide would change depending on the Judicial Committee's recommendations and how the Senate voted on the budget.

**Britahny Baskin (Neuroscience)** seconded. No objections.

**Chianaraekpere Ike (Law)** asked someone to explain the amendments regarding the Judicial Committee.

**Aaron Yared** said that there were two amendments: one was to suspend the bylaws regarding giving notice to the Senate and the other one was an amendment to the timeline for distributing elections materials.. He said that if there was a proposed amendment to the Bylaws, he was supposed to send notice to the Senate seven days in advance. He said that the plan was to have the Judicial Committee make the decision today, so it did not work out timing wise. He said that the GPSS was also behind on the timeline for distributing the Elections Guide.

**Davon Thomas (Public Administration)** moved to approve the agenda. **Waleed Khan (Education)** seconded. No objections.

### 3. [Action] Suspension of Bylaws 5:48pm

**A.J. Balatico** said that the vote to suspend the bylaws would require a two-thirds majority approval from the Senate. He explained that the vote was to suspend the timeline for when the Judicial Committee gave its recommendation.

**Andrew Shumway (Earth & Space Sciences)** asked A.J. Balatico if the Senate was voting to suspend Bylaws Article 12 Section A Clause 4, which read "the President shall distribute copies of the proposed amendment to GPSS at least seven days before the GPSS meeting at which it is to be considered."

**A.J. Balatico** said yes. He said that there might be other contingent bylaws related to the Judicial Committee's recommendation. He said that the clause contained the word "may" which was subject to interpretation. He said that he would have to look into the Bylaw. He said that the Senate was specifically voting to suspend Aaron Yared's presidential requirement to send out the Judicial Committee's recommendation 7 days prior to this meeting because the Judicial Committee's decision had not yet been made.

**Andrew Shumway (Earth & Space Sciences)** said he did not know how he felt about voting to suspend this bylaw. He said that the Bylaws existed for a reason and this bylaw existed to give the Senate time to consider changes to the Bylaws before voting to amend them. He said that

voting to suspend this part of the Bylaws and then pushing through the Bylaw change that most senators have not read would not be the best thing to do for a sustainable GPSS.

**Chianaraekpere Ike (Law)** said she agreed with Andrew Shumway (Earth & Space Sciences) and expressed her concern. She said that she did not think the proposed suspension of Bylaws was good and noted that this disapproval came from two members of the Judicial Committee.

**A.J. Balatico** said that the implication for not suspending this bylaw was that it eliminated one of the Senate's options to adding an officer to the budget since the SAF request was on Friday. He said that the choices would then collapse to either adding staff raises to the budget or adding three staff members. He said that the GPSS would not be able to consider adding an officer.

**Marty Varela (Residential Community Student Association)** asked A.J. Balatico to clarify that the GPSS would not be able to consider the addition of an officer because it was constrained by the time frame imposed by SAF and because A.J. Balatico did not think that the GPSS had enough time to push the notification period and the election.

**A.J. Balatico** said that the election was part of his reasoning. He said that the creation of the Elections Guide was contingent on the GPSS deciding whether to have five or six officers next year. He said that it was up to the Senate to vote on this matter. He said that the Judicial Committee had planned to meet during the breakout session and come to a decision. He said that he had interpreted the Senate as ready to vote on the matter, though they might need clarification on certain points.

**Marty Varela (Residential Community Student Association)** said that her question was specifically asking what was creating the rushed timeline. She asked if it was because the GPSS would run out of runway to make the officer change happen if it limited itself to the timeline that the Bylaws demanded. She said that ultimately, the GPSS would need three additional weeks which meant that elections would happen at the end of May instead of at the beginning of May. She asked if she was misinterpreting A.J. Balatico's explanation or whether there was additional information that she did not have access to. She said that she needed to know to make an appropriate decision in this situation.

**A.J. Balatico** said that the next Senate meeting would be on April 6, which was a month away, so the GPSS would have the time to consider it. He said that the GPSS's SAF request was on Friday and that this date could not be postponed because the SAF wanted to present to the Board of Regents at the May Board of Regents meeting.

**Aaron Yared** said that while the GPSS election was a factor, the real issue was approving the budget. He said that the GPSS needed to approve the budget today so that A.J. Balatico could present the budget to the SAF on Friday. He said that it was still possible to add staff members because adding staff members did not require bylaw amendments since staff members were just extensions for the officers to accomplish their responsibilities. He said that the line items could be edited as opposed to added if the GPSS only added staff members. He said that

adding officers required constitutional amendments, bylaw amendments and a reshuffling of responsibilities. He said that the GPSS needed to make that decision today or that it needed to be pushed to next year if people still wanted the position to be created. He said that this was why A.J. Balatico was pushing to suspend the Bylaws. He said that the vote was open.

**A.J. Balatico** said that once this vote closed, Janis Shin (Molecular Engineering) could open up the next vote. He said that the next vote concerned the Election Committee's February 28 deadline marked in the Bylaws. He said that the vote would give an extension to the Elections Committee to make changes to the Elections Guide. He said that in order to do so, the Elections Committee would need to know whether or not to add another officer as the change would affect how the Committee published and advertised officer positions.

**A.J. Balatico** motioned to vote on the suspension of the Judicial Committee's timeline. **Davon Thomas (Public Administration)** seconded.

*Senators were directed to vote through Poll Everywhere. Senators voted 12:9:7, yea:nay:abstain for the suspension of the Judicial Committee's recommendation timeline. The vote failed.*

#### 4. [Action] Suspension of Elections timeline 5:56pm

**Alexander Novokhodko (Mechanical Engineering)** motioned to table this and all items until after the public comment period and to have the public comment now. He said he wanted to be respectful of the time of the people publicly commenting, as Kip Diaz pointed out in the chat.

**Aaron Yared** asked Alexander Novokhodko (Mechanical Engineering) if he wanted to table the approval of the minutes and the land acknowledgement.

**Alexander Novokhodko (Mechanical Engineering)** said yes.

**Meshell Sturgis** objected. She said that there was already a motion on the table that the GPSS should go forward with. She said that depending on how that result looked, the GPSS could then decide to vote on the second amendment or not and then subsequently move into the public comment. She said that the public comment was not originally on the agenda either, so while the GPSS wanted to respect people's time, it was working out the agenda.

**Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** seconded Alexander Novokhodko's (Mechanical Engineering) motion. He said that the GPSS had approved the public comment for the agenda and that there were people in attendance for the public comment period. He said that he wanted to respect their time.

**A.J. Balatico** said that the GPSS needed to have a majority vote on whether to proceed with Alexander Novokhodko's (Mechanical Engineering) motion or whether to sustain the objection from Meshell Sturgis. He said that it would require a vote within a vote.

**Britahny Baskin (Neuroscience)** said that she agreed with A.J. Balatico's and Meshell Sturgis's points. She said that the agenda was made and that the public comment period was placed where it was placed. She said that she understood the sentiment of respecting people's time, but that in every meeting, everyone had to wait through the beginning process of the meeting. She said that this was not an abnormal situation and said she also felt uncomfortable about pushing off the land acknowledgement.

**Alexander Novokhodko (Mechanical Engineering)** withdrew his motion.

**Aaron Yared** asked everyone to vote on the elections timeline.

**A.J. Balatico** moved to vote on the election timeline through Poll Everywhere. **Ted Cohen (Molecular Engineering & Sciences)** seconded.

**Andrew Shumway (Earth & Space Sciences)** raised a point of order and asked A.J. Balatico to specifically state which part of the Bylaws the GPSS was voting to waive.

**Gabby Rivera** said that the GPSS would vote to suspend Section H Clause 4 Part C:  
*that the Elections Committee shall develop an elections guideline and the Senate will approve that guideline no later than February 28 each year.*

**Gabby Rivera** said that the GPSS would not meet that deadline and that it would approve of the delay.

**Aaron Yared** thanked Gabby Rivera and asked people to vote while he moved ahead with the next item.

*Senators were directed to vote through Poll Everywhere. Senators voted 18:2:1, yea:nay:abstain for the suspension of Section H Clause 4 Part C of the Bylaws. The vote passed.*

## 5. [Action] Approval of the Minutes 6:03pm

**Britahny Baskin (Neuroscience)** motioned to approve the minutes. **Davon Thomas (Public Administration)** seconded. No objections.

## 6. [Information] Land Acknowledgment 6:03pm

**Gabby Rivera** gave the land acknowledgement.

*The Graduate Professional Student Senate acknowledges the stewards of the Coast Salish lands, the lands on which we currently sit on, and the UW occupies. We*

*acknowledge the original and current caretakers, the Duwamish, Squamish, Tulalip and Muckleshoot people.*

*In Renton, the Duwamish people used to live along the black and cedar Rivers which were unfortunately dried up when the city of Renton created a channel into Lake Washington, killing a vital food source for the Duwamish people.*

*Throughout quarantine, the running and hiking paths in those areas specifically were a place of solace for me, but now I bring that a new perspective, so I want to recognize the past, present and future caretakers of the lands that I'm incredibly grateful for, and I'm reminded that I'm merely just a visitor on stolen land.*

*So while the city of Renton has made a deep effort to educate the native history of my city, I know recognition alone is not enough. So to learn more, I encourage you to go to your local cities' history museum. Mine has a permanent exhibit. Pay rent to real rent Duwamish if you're able, and if you can't support monetarily, support by showing up for our student groups on campus and our ASUW American Indian Student Commission (AISC).*

**Gabby Rivera** said that the ASUW would host a winter celebration this Saturday at the HUB and thanked everyone for their time.

## 7. [Information] Public Comment period 6:05pm

**Aaron Yared** directed people to raise their hand and give their comment when he called on them. He said that he reserved the right to limit each speaker's time to ensure that other people were also able to speak their piece.

**Julia Bouanna** said that in her three years at the UW, UWPD never made her feel safe. She said that seeing UW Alerts go out after robberies and theft just to be followed up with "suspect not found" made it clear that UWPD was not keeping the community safe. She said that the overwhelming majority of calls that UWPD fielded were for nonviolent offenses. She said that the UW community did not need cops with deadly weapons showing up to a scene when someone was having a mental health crisis. She said that funding alternative emergency services was a no-brainer.

**Mario Falit-Baiamonte** said that he had been part of creating this resolution as well as other things. He said that the resolution had come a long way and that he and his team had put in a lot of work into it. He said that his team had recently met with Dean Jodi Sandfort of the Evans School who had been very supportive of the initiative. He said that the team would work with her and partner with her through the EPIC program. He said that this resolution would make people safer on campus.

**Kip Diaz** said that they had been part of the team working on the resolution. They said they were proud of what the team was able to accomplish in such a small amount of time. They said that they were also an ASUW senator. They said that the resolution passed the ASUW Senate body and was pushed onto the ASUW Board of Directors. They said that their team had collaborated with a Seattle community group to create a similar model outlined in the resolution. They said that the Seattle community group was excited to see how the resolution ended up. They said that there might also be members of the Seattle community group in the crowd today. They said they were passionate about this resolution because they had had negative experiences with police officers. They said that it was time for the campus to change and were excited for the GPSS's vote.

**Julianna Bennett** said that she currently served as the District 8 Alder on the Madison City Council in Madison, Wisconsin. She said that she attended UW Madison. She said that the city of Madison implemented the crisis response team using the CAHOOTS model. She expressed her support for this model because of the many benefits that it had, including helping alleviate the pressure on the police department, assisting with the sending of appropriate personnel to each call, and providing follow-up services for these students. She said that in Madison, the crisis response team had received bipartisan support from the police department, police supporters, and those that wanted to reimagine public safety. She said that implementing this team eased the load on the police department so that the police officers could spend more of their time responding to calls that were actually of a violent nature.

**Julianna Bennett** said that nine of the ten calls to the University of Wisconsin's police department involved a mental health crisis which fell into one of three categories: substance abuse, trauma, and suicide. She said that her city recognized that the police were not subject-matter experts in mental health matters, and that the community benefited from having mental health experts respond to these calls. She said that she was a survivor of domestic abuse, and that the police were not able to help her in her situation. She said that having an expert in the situation would have been helpful to her.

**Julianna Bennett** said that there had been a student in Madison who wanted to take their own life and had called for help. She said that a police officer responded by asking "Why are you even trying to commit suicide?" She said that the student said that it had made them want to kill themselves even more. She said that having someone respond to these calls could help them with what they were experiencing and facilitate follow-up services so that they could receive the additional care that they needed.

**Julianna Bennett** said that she was shocked at the lack of full support for a program like this. She asked why anyone would not want someone that was experiencing a mental health crisis to not have a trained individual at the ready. She asked why police supporters would not want the police officers to focus on matters that were violent in nature. She urged everyone to support the resolution.

**Julie Emory** said that as a victim of stalking, harassment, and assault while working and living in the University District, she had not received any assistance when the police were called by her superiors at work. She said that at most, the police officers had asked her to make a statement but that they did not guarantee her safety from that point onward. She said that during her stalking, she was supported by her superior at work. She said that the only help she had received was by enlisting the help of a bus driver. She said that she felt guilty for asking the bus driver for help in the situation where she had felt very vulnerable. She emphasized that though graduate students might believe that it was not their responsibility to furnish an emergency response for students, it was their responsibility as teaching assistants and mentors in the community to make sure that they were putting their best foot forward and showing the UW community at large that graduate students cared about the safety of all student in the University District.

**Adam Scott** agreed with everyone. He said that the shared experiences with police and with alternative response teams showed that the police were not trained for these situations and that they should be spending their time in other locations where they were more useful. He said that he had seen the way that police have handled people in the University District. He said that having police officers walk through the dormitories was unsettling because the officers had free access to dormitory buildings. He said that having a safe alternative response and the knowledge that someone could support him whenever he needed it was exactly what he needed. He said that this legislation was very beneficial for the entire community and that people should support it as students and community members.

**Nicole Palczewski** said that she had contributed some byline edits and had ensured proper logic flow in the resolution. She said that she was an Evans School student and that she wanted to echo what everyone had already said. She said that she was a professional fundraiser and had been a previous homeless caseworker. She said that from her personal experience, when clients had had mental illness episodes or breakdowns for any reason, police officers who were called to the scene had limited resources to ameliorate the situation. She said that having social workers was not only a great way to support BIPOC students and students who were dealing with mental health crises in the current pandemic, but also as a way to show them that the community was here for them, believed in them, and cared for them in a way that was not currently reflected in the current city structure.

**Alex Novokhodko (Mechanical Engineering)** moved to extend time by 5 minutes. **Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** seconded.

**Ted Cohen (Molecular Engineering & Sciences)** objected

**Davon Thomas (Public Administration)** motioned to amend motion and close stack after Britahny Baskin (Neuroscience) gave her comment.

**Ted Cohen (Molecular Engineering & Sciences)** withdrew his objection.



**Alexander Novokhodko (Mechanical Engineering)** asked if there was anyone else who had not yet spoken who wanted to make a public comment other than Crystal Song and Guneeta Chadha. He noted that Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration) had indicated that everyone should be heard through the chat. He reiterated his question.

**Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** said everyone had gone, but that there could be a final call after the last speaker.

**Davon Thomas (Public Administration)** disagreed and said that this was the final call.

**Alexander Novokhodko (Mechanical Engineering)** said that if there was a need for another call, he would not accept the amendment as friendly and would extend time for five minutes.

**Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** said there were no other speakers.

**Alex Novokhodko (Mechanical Engineering)** accepted the amendment. No objections.

**Crystal Song** said that she had spent five years as an undergraduate student at UW and was currently attending UW as a graduate student. She said that she was familiar with the campus and fully supported the bill. She said that if the GPSS believed in protecting and supporting its students, the GPSS should help provide the crisis support that students needed and not rely on armed officers who were ill-equipped to provide for the UW community. She said that she was also a survivor of domestic violence and had never once believed that the police would address her issues adequately. She said that even as a seven year-old, she did not want to call the police. She said that her family owned restaurants on the Ave and were shocked at how lackluster the UWPD's responses had been to crimes and disturbances in the area. She agreed with Nicole Palczewski that the GPSS needed to send a message that it cared about its students. She was shocked that only a tiny percentage of UWPD calls were not for nonviolent incidents. She said that it was revealing that it took a long time to get that information. She said that instead of sweeping this trend under the rug, the GPSS should acknowledge that police were not always the answer. She said that she had observed policing and incarceration and had worked in a prison, so she had been able to see the impacts of violence and symbols of violence and saw that the police did very little to support the UW community. She urged the GPSS to support this bill.

**Britahny Baskin (Neuroscience)** called on Guneeta Chadha.

**Guneeta Chadha** said that she was a first-year student at the Evans School of Public Policy and Governance. She said that as a child of formerly incarcerated parents who had dealt with a lot of these specific issues, she thought it was important that the GPSS support legislation that focused on community resolutions. She said that this resolution would invite people to think about alternative solutions to help community members in crisis such as social workers, community engagement, and nonprofits. She said she supported this resolution as a student who had been impacted by incarcerated parents, who was a formerly incarcerated student with

juvenile records. She said that it was important to support the resolution because of its focus on the mental health of community members and its ability to provide support. She thanked Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration) and Davon Thomas (Public Administration) for taking the lead in this effort and thinking about how alternative responses would impact community members.

## 8. [Information] Senate Check-In 6:22pm

*The Senate check-in question was "How are you destressing for finals? If you are using comfort TV shows as your way to destress, what TV shows are you watching?"*

**Lauren Gonsalves (Microbiology)** asked if the Judicial Committee was meeting at this time.

**Aaron Yared** said yes. He said that he would send people into breakout rooms and let people choose their own rooms. He directed the Judicial Committee to join room 8 and everyone else to join rooms 1-7.

*Senators went into the breakout rooms for 10 minutes.*

**Davon Thomas (Public Administration)** asked everyone to watch Abbott Elementary on Hulu and said that he wanted the show to be renewed for season two. He said he did not watch *The Office* or *Parks and Rec*.

## 9. [Action] Resolution: Ad Hoc Committee 6:30pm

**Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** said he had prepared a presentation which outlined the revision of the resolution over the past few months. He said that this was the second reading of the Alternative Emergency Services Pilot Program in the University District.

**Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** said that the GPSS had indicated that his team needed to go back to the drawing board to scrutinize what they were proposing and who they were talking to back on December 8th. He said that this was the best thing possible to happen for the resolution and that he appreciated the recommendation that had been made. He said that the GPSS had formed an ad hoc committee which had met five times for a total of about five hours. He said that there was a substantial amount of work that had happened outside the ad hoc committee which he would speak about later. He said that the ad hoc committee had involved revising the resolution line by line and line by line. He said that this effort was driven by people who participated, many of whom were not senators and were not involved in student government, which was exciting for him to see.

**Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** said Gabby Rivera was the officer who convened the committee at its first meeting on January 21 where she transferred chairship over to him. He said that he ran the day-to-day responsibilities of the committee such as facilitating the

meetings and allowing conversations to lead progress. He said that Sephora Zoro was the secretary and acting vice chair. He said that Sephora Zoro was an ASUW senator and had been at a number of the GPSS meetings.

**Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** said that one major update since the last time he presented the resolution was that the Evans School had agreed to be a direct partner with his team in the effort outlined in the legislation. He said that his team had engaged with them in a new program called the Evans Policy Innovation Collaborative (EPIC) which would start next fall. He said that Janis Shin had recently sent out supporting materials about EPIC. He said that EPIC provided students the support to figure out solutions to social problems and helped them engage the community in a solution with a human-centered design. He said that EPIC approached problems through a five-step process. The first step was to define the challenge. He said that the problem was apparent in the resolution. He said that EPIC's inaugural program would seek to develop an iterative design process where the end user, the person who was directly impacted by these policies and the person who would be serviced by this alternative emergency services team.

**Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** said that the objective of EPIC's human-centered design was to define the problem and create various prototypes. He said that the prototypes were all based on models that have worked across the country. He noted that the GPSS had heard public comments from Juliana Bennett, a student at University of Wisconsin-Madison as well as a city council member of Madison. He said that Madison had implemented what his team was trying to implement here. He said that his team was trying to take the plan a few steps further than Madison. He noted that community members had said that this plan had worked well in Madison and in Denver. He said that his team would be able to test one prototype for a few weeks and collect and analyze the data with faculty members to improve the prototype. He said that EPIC wanted to engage in an 18-month process that was led by the community and stakeholders. He said that he and his team had talked to many of the stakeholders and had come up with a policy recommendation that Seattle could scale. He referred to the slides and said that it outlined what EPIC was trying to accomplish.

**Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** asked Kip Diaz to read written comments from people who were not able to make it to the public comment period.

*Kip Diaz read the slides.*

**Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** said that senators had received a recent version of the resolution prior to the meeting. He said that his team had condensed many of the whereas clauses and said that he would be happy to go over the changes. He said that prior to the vote, he would substitute an amended piece of legislation to reflect the final changes that were made last night. He said that he would post the changes in the chat so that senators had the latest version. He said he would walk through the changed clauses to explain the reason why his team focused on the clause, the implication of the clause, and what it said that the GPSS supported.

**Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** said that the biggest difference introduced in the resolution was that the program was not an on-campus program. He said that the program was strictly an off-campus program in the University District. He said that this detail was determined through his team's conversations with Representative Frank Chopp who they were planning to meet with again in two weeks. He said that his team had met with three City Council officers and had a number of supporters at City Council. He said that come budget season, his team would submit budget requests. He said that the program would be a pilot program in the University District which would comprise five roving teams, each with two full-time community paramedic positions or part-time employees working equivalent hours, as well as two full-time mental health provider positions and a full-time program director.

**Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** emphasized that the EPIC program would help his team prototype the design. He said that these changes could be based on conversations with mutual aid networks in the University District, and with people who were already responding before the police got involved. He said that Dean Jodi Sandfort of the Evans School had indicated that she wanted to prioritize EPIC's involvement in this project. He said that his team's involvement would be more as advisors; his team would not lead the effort once the GPSS passed the resolution because they wanted to ensure that the program was grounded in community.

**Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** said that the pilot program would be launched next fall. He said that the EPIC program would develop a full proposal by this coming Friday. He said that the program would offer mobile, peer-supported de-escalation assistance, nonpunitive and life-affirming interventions, and emergency services. He said that his team had looked at the Anti Police Project for many of the recommendations. He said that this program differed from the CAHOOTS model and other crisis response teams because it would respond to all nonviolent calls. He said that the goal was to prevent criminalizing behavior or interpreting calls as criminal incidents. He said that if someone called 911 or the separate emergency number created through this program, that call could be diverted to this team to give residents access to services they needed without perpetuating the often disproportionately racist and harmful cycles of trauma which was supported by data.

**Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** said that the pilot program would provide a separate number and start training dispatch staff to recognize and triage calls. He said this specific clause originated from the many meetings his team held with people who were already doing this work and had experience in emergency response. He said that the funding would come from a combination of state, city, and university allocations. He said that his team had secured some funding from Sally Clarke, the director of regional and community relations for the UW. He said that she had committed to submitting funding requests to the Provost to fund the EPIC team for this summer. He said that the EPIC team would comprise students and people who had lived experience and direct involvement in the University District. He said that the dean had expressed that compensating people for their effort was nonnegotiable.

**Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** referred to the clauses listed on the slide and said that the statements reaffirmed the team's commitment to the belief that no one should be punished for being a person of color, low-income, unhoused, disabled and otherwise marginalized. He said that the clause unequivocally stated that a nonviolent call should not involve the police. He stated that 98.8% of on-campus calls that the UWPD responded to were nonviolent, and that about 70% of calls the Seattle Police Department responded to in the University District were nonviolent. He said that this was an opportunity to completely reimagine the University District's emergency response. He said that based on the public comments, students wanted this change and said that his team felt that this program could give the students the appropriate response that they needed.

**Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** said that the last two clauses reaffirmed the GPSS's support for suspected crimes related to the need for care, income support, or drug use. He reiterated that police should not respond to these calls because they did not require a punitive response. He said that these callers needed access to necessary services which were not the police. He said that the reason that the GPSS was discussing this program which was operating off-campus was because the Evans School and the university was committing its resources to make the program happen. He said that the campus was currently discussing what this program would look like. He emphasized that on-campus organizations had stated that they wanted on-campus emergency services. He said that he believed it was in the campus's interest to collect data on what non-police responses looked like to decide if it wanted to expand the pilot program to the campus.

**Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** reiterated that the program would not operate on campus. He said that his team had focused on off-campus from a funding perspective. He said that many people that his team spoke with felt that there was a greater opportunity to garner funds working off-campus and to get the city to change its municipal code in a way that would allow the alternative emergency response team to respond in lieu of the police.

**Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** said that the last clause discussed who came to the scene after the alternative emergency response team arrived. He said that the ad hoc had held many conversations about this topic. He said that his team decided that they wanted to have a community center in the University District with wraparound services to provide the support people needed. He said that he had worked at the King County Housing Authority for a number of months. He said that his team had many conversations with the many community partners in the University District and that the program had the opportunity to house itself in the University Heights Community Center. He said that this negotiation would have to continue moving forward.

**Davon Thomas (Public Administration)** said that Jodi Sandfort, the dean of the Evans School, had been a big supporter. Sally Clark, the UW director of regional and community relations and former City Council member; Andrew Lewis; and Frank Chopp, a representative of Seattle residents supported the program. He said that the team had also garnered feedback and had reached out to all the requested student groups and organizations in addition to other

community mutual aid networks and student groups, 16 different organizations, 12 student groups, and 3 City Council offices. He noted that one of the organizations that the team worked with reached out to them and requested that they not be listed publicly moving forward on this work. He said that this was because the organization did not want to be treated as a check box, but also feared for their safety. He said that many organizations did not want to be doxxed by campus administration or members of the campus.

**Davon Thomas (Public Administration)** said that the organizations that the GPSS had asked the team to reach out to were listed in the minutes from December. He said that people felt unsafe in this work regarding reforming the police. He said that he wanted to ensure that people felt safe by not listing them publicly. He said that the committee had gone through five separate revisions of the resolution with 16 different students at the five ad hoc committee meetings. He said that the team expected the EPIC proposal to be released this Friday and start an 18 month program partnership together.

**Davon Thomas (Public Administration)** gave a trigger warning about suicide. He said that this past fall, he and Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration) had been in an unfortunate situation where one of their first friends and classmates at the Evans School had died by suicide. He said that he had found the classmate's body the night of on October 20th. He said that he had had a very difficult fall quarter. He said that he had dropped his economics class and had been very close to leaving the program, though he eventually decided to stay. He said that during the night of the incident, police officers, firefighters and paramedics responded to the scene. He said that it was the team's belief that people with guns were not needed to respond to this situation. He said that as a gay, Black man, he had heightened senses to deal with the police response that night.

**Davon Thomas (Public Administration)** said that when he and Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration) had asked the police officers what took them so long to respond to the scene. He said that the police officers had responded with "because of Defund the Police." He said that if one looked at the data, the real reason why police responses were very slow for the past two years was because police officers were not getting vaccinated, not because of the efforts to defund the police. He said that toward the end of the night, the police officers had asked him and Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration) if they wanted to wait an extra hour for a chaplain to come down to the University District. He said that they had waited in the cold and said that they were done waiting after being at the scene for five hours. He said that he had been on the phone with his mom and his brother that night. He said that he had let the Evans School leadership and his cohort know. He said that it had been a difficult quarter and that he and Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration) had chosen not to mention that the resolution was conceived from their classmate's passing when they brought the resolution to the GPSS last quarter. He said that he and Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration) had wanted to quickly take action and make the situation right. He said that having the GPSS push the team to go back to the drawing board and improve the resolution was the best possible outcome.

**Davon Thomas (Public Administration)** said the resolution featured more resources, institutional commitments, and more stakeholder and student buy-in. He said that he did not have the privilege, as a Black man in America, to have a mental health episode in public because police officers would shoot first and ask questions second. He said that there were questions last quarter on whether this program would affect graduate students or whether it was solely an undergraduate issue. He said that it was not. He said that the resolution was conceived from the passing of a graduate student, one of his first friends here at the Evans School, someone who had created his cohort's Slack and GroupMe and had united the whole entire program. He said that this was why he was adamant on the passing of the resolution. He said that after his experience this past fall, he had observed that police officers were cold. He speculated that their coldness was not by choice but the way they survived their work.

**Davon Thomas (Public Administration)** said that this tragedy that happened in his first month of graduate school was very difficult for him to get through. He said that he had truly contemplated leaving his program because of how difficult last quarter was, but that he was still here. He apologized for not being upfront to the GPSS about the conception of the resolution, but asked the Senate to understand that it was too soon at the time and that he and Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration) did not know if they could speak about the event publicly. He said that he and Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration) had attended grieving services last quarter and that they were both in a better place now to talk about these issues publicly. He said that it was still difficult, but that he wanted the Senate to have the full context of their motivations behind the resolution. He asked the Senate to understand.

**Alexander Novokhodko (Mechanical Engineering)** motioned to extend time by 5 minutes. **Britahny Baskin (Neuroscience)** seconded.

**Meshell Sturgis** moved to extend time by 10 minutes. **Alexander Novokhodko (Mechanical Engineering)** seconded. No objections.

**Gabby Rivera** thanked Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration) and Davon Thomas (Public Administration) and the ad hoc committee for their incredible work and due diligence over the past few months. She said that she and Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration) held a lot of check-in meetings. She said that Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration) went above and beyond as the chair of the committee; he reminded her to give him contacts and connect him to different organizations that were listed in the request for the creation of the ad hoc committee back in December. She said that the ad hoc committee went beyond their obligations. She said that the implementation of the program outlined in the resolution was an integral and critical need to the student community and to the greater UW area. She said that she was proud to have watched the growth that had happened over the past few months.

**Aaron Yared** asked where the service would be housed. He noted that the program would receive funding from the state, city, and the Evans School. He asked who would be in charge of this service.

**Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** said the EPIC program would house the design process and the prototyping process under the guidance of the dean and that it would be administered by a wide variety of partners. He said that it was not yet decided exactly who would facilitate the response which was why the team would have to do a request for proposals for the community organizations who wanted to participate in the response. He said that Jodi Sandfort said that the program needed to be community-led. He said that she also suggested that the team work with medical students or the Department of Social Work and pair student trainees with responders. He said that the team had been in conversation with University District community responders. He said that his team was hopeful that there could be partnerships made there.

**Aaron Yared** asked how the GPSS played a role in the program. He said that he supported the idea of GPSS supporting and endorsing the creation of the program. He said that the first couple “that” clauses seemed like they should be “whereas” clauses instead, especially because the GPSS was not the one creating the program. He said that since those clauses described what the program would be. He said that since EPIC was going to be the one that was responsible for the program, though there were graduate students and graduate senators who were involved in creating the program, changing the “that” clauses to “whereas” clauses seemed more appropriate.

**Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** said that considering that the university would be initially financing a large portion of the program and that EPIC would house it, having the GPSS’s support would greatly benefit this effort. He reiterated that the resolution passed in the ASUW Senate last night. He said that the city of Seattle was about to enter into an intense budget cycle. He said that the program would ask the city for about a million dollars. He said that the team felt that it had lined up enough council votes at this stage to make it possible. He said that having endorsements from both student governments whose students interacted with the University District would make a large difference. He said that some of the council members had expressed to his team that they would be supportive of the program, but that they wanted to see that the official student governments backed the program as well.

**Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** said that he and the other sponsors were open to entertaining amendments. He said that the initial decision to include the “that” clauses in the section they were placed was to make it clear that the GPSS supported the creation of the program. He said that the “whereas” clauses stated past events. He said that his team interpreted the “therefore be it resolved” clauses as future events. He said that his team wanted to express that the GPSS supported the alternative emergency services program. He said that his team wanted to make the “whereas” clauses very clear which was why they were written in past tense.

**Aaron Yared** said that “whereas” clauses were contextual. He said that explaining what the alternative emergency services program was would provide context for why the GPSS supported it.



**Meshell Sturgis** stated that the resolution had originally been tabled based on certain conditions. She asked Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration) to speak to how those conditions had been addressed.

**Sephora Zoro** said that the team had used the ad hoc committee as an opportunity to engage with the groups that A.J. Balatico had listed in the chat as well as groups in the larger University District community. She said that some groups were not responsive to the ad hoc committee's attempts at correspondence, but a majority were. She said that it cheapened the team's interaction with these groups to say that the team talked to each group on the list. She said that the team had documented the work that many of the groups had done working on the legislation, giving feedback, and setting up meetings. She said that if Meshell Sturgis wanted her to go into detail on each group or the groups that were unresponsive, then she was willing to do so.

**Meshell Sturgis** said yes. She said that in order to finish out the discussion and consider voting for the resolution, the sponsors would have to clarify who they talked to and what each group on the list said.

**Sephora Zoro** said that for the Black Student Union (BSU), she either spoke with Erin or Emmanuel. She said that Erin was the liaison to ASUW for the BSU. She said that she had also spoken to Emmanuel who was working for the ASUW through BSU. She said that both Erin and Emmanuel were in support of the resolution and had expressed that the BSU was outwardly in support of the resolution. She said that Erin and Emmanuel had worked on the legislation with them and had helped the team amend it outside of the ad hoc committee. She said that there were some groups listed that preferred not be named and have their interactions made public because it would cheapen the interaction. She emphasized that the ad hoc committee did not interact with the groups just to check a box. She said that the resolution sponsors had met with student groups before the legislation was introduced back in December. She said that for some groups, she could not repeat what they said. She said that all the groups that the ad hoc committee talked to were in support of the resolution.

**Gabby Rivera** said she and Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration) met in the beginning of January to get the contact information of all the groups. She said that she was the person who contacted Crip Riot. She said that she made Crip Riot aware of the resolution, but that she was not able to give much context due to the timeline and because all the communication was done via LinkedIn messaging. She echoed Sephora Zoro's statement that some of the groups listed had specifically asked not to be mentioned on record.

**Alexander Novokhodko (Mechanical Engineering)** motioned to extend time by 10 minutes. **Britahny Baskin (Neuroscience)** seconded.

**Ted Cohen (Molecular Engineering & Sciences)** motioned to vote on the resolution.

**Ted Cohen (Molecular Engineering & Sciences)** withdrew his motion to hear what Meshell Sturgis had to say.

**Meshell Sturgis** responded to Ted Cohen's (Molecular Engineering & Sciences) motion to vote by saying that she did not feel comfortable with that motion. She said that she would object to moving to vote because it did not sound to her that the groups were consulted and on board with moving forward with the resolution. She said that she interpreted a group's unwillingness to have their affiliation with the resolution shared on record as indicative of nonsupport. She said that she had only heard the names of a couple groups, and none of the key ones. She said that the resolution should remain tabled until these unnamed groups came forward to publicly comment and until these groups were identified as having their entire body in support of the resolution.

**Kip Diaz** said that since Gabby Rivera reached out to Crip Riot, it seemed that the ad hoc committee had reached out to every group on the list,

**Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** reiterated that the ad hoc committee had reached out to everyone on the list. He said that he wanted to go more in depth about what those communications were, but that the committee was specifically asked by a few of the organizations to not disclose their involvement. He said that the ad hoc committee was open to everyone and had received much involvement. He noted that many members of the ad hoc committee were members of those groups that Meshell Sturgis had told the resolution sponsors to reach out to. He emphasized that those conversations did not end with the passage of the resolution. He said that passing the resolution gave EPIC more of a foundation to start its work. He said that students from the aforementioned groups as well as others who were participating would be compensated for their efforts and be a part of the design process.

**Ted Cohen (Molecular Engineering & Sciences)** motioned to vote on the resolution through Poll Everywhere based on the fact that the Senate needed to decide whether to support the resolution. **Janis Shin (Molecular Engineering & Sciences)** seconded.

**Meshell Sturgis** proposed an amendment to the motion by asking to set aside time for discussion.

**Davon Thomas (Public Administration)** reiterated Juliana Bennett's message in the chat: "There is a difference between being in support and not wanting to publicly support for their own protection." He said that the organizations that the team had mentioned had come out in full support of this policy. He said that he wanted to be cognizant of the fact that these Black and brown students who participated in this work felt targeted, stalked, and put in danger. He said that not wanting to publicize one's support for something did not necessarily mean opposition. He said that it could be an attempt to stay alive and protect oneself. He said that he wanted to make the distinction because he felt like it was a false narrative. He recognized that some people could support this work and be a part of the work but not want their support to be made

public due to safety reasons. He said that it was a lived experience, though not everybody's experience.

**Meshell Sturgis** moved to suspend Ted Cohen's (Molecular Engineering & Sciences) motion for 3 minutes and 30 seconds.

**Ted Cohen (Molecular Engineering & Sciences)** withdrew his motion to vote and motioned to extend time by 4 minutes. **Britahny Baskin (Neuroscience)** seconded.

**Meshell Sturgis** said she took some notes during the presentation and public comment period. She said that she wanted to do her due diligence in representing her constituents. She said that there were several points that she wanted to address. First, just because a program that was cited in the resolution had been implemented elsewhere, such as Wisconsin and Oakland, did not mean that it was a sound, equitable, nor successful implementation. She said that the citations just indicated that they were happening and that more information was needed to ascertain whether those programs were actually successful.

**Meshell Sturgis** said that she was thankful for the opportunity to hear many voices during the public comment period. She noticed that most of the commenters were people from the Evans School. She said that she had only heard one person identify as a graduate student. She noted that none of the public commenters had identified as a part of any of the groups listed in the chat. She noted that the reason the resolution had been tabled last time was for this reason.

**Meshell Sturgis** said that while it was great that Dean Jodi Sandfort was on board, there were many other deans at UW. She said that if the GPSS were to get behind this resolution, it would need the support of many more deans. She said that this resolution should have unbridled support, and that the fact that the Senate was not seeing it meant that it was not yet time to move forward with the resolution. She clarified that it did not mean that the resolution should be completely killed off, but that the resolution was not yet at a point for the GPSS to pass.

**Meshell Sturgis** said that the people she had been working with, such as representatives of the union, the Black Student Union and the \_\_\_\_\_ had all signed on to say that they would be open to further conversation but were currently not in support of the resolution being moved forward to be voted on within the GPSS. She said that this sentiment had been shared through a letter and at the spaces of the Black Graduate Student Association, DecrimUW and the student union.

**Meshell Sturgis** also noted that the ad hoc committee never visited the diversity committee to have such conversations. She said that she had offered up the opportunity. She also pointed out that Sally Clark was mentioned as a collaborator. She said that she had had conversations with members of the BSU board and Safe Campus who had directly said that they had problems with Sally Clark and the reimagining safety campaign that was happening out of the President's office. She noted that there was conflicting information.

**Meshell Sturgis** pointed out that the team should be centering communities and marginalized communities, not adding them on and tokenizing them. She said that as the GPSS DEI officer who also studied this, it concerned her because she felt that she was witnessing tokenization happen. She also pointed out that the constituents she had conversed with were graduate students, graduate students of color, disabled graduate students, queer graduate students, people who were representing a diverse swath of graduate students at UW. She said that the students she represented were from the Gender, Women, & Sexuality Studies department, Geography, the College of Education, English, Communications, the Information School, and the School of Social Work. She said that she had spoken to many different people who were not comfortable with the resolution. She said that she wanted to make sure that she was representing her constituents. She said that that was the responsibility of senators. She said that she did not see support for this resolution across campus and within marginalized communities of graduate students.

**Sephora Zoro** said that everyone could check the minutes from the December 8th meeting. She said that Meshell Sturgis offered to meet with her and other sponsors of the resolution to discuss further getting in contact with people who were affected by the resolution. She said that her team had emailed Meshell Sturgis three times and that Meshell Sturgis had not responded to any of them. She said that in the last email that she had sent, Meshell Sturgis had responded to today with a complete non sequitur. She reiterated that the team had tried to get in contact with Meshell Sturgis and had taken her up on her offer but had been met with silence. She said that her team cared about Meshell Sturgis' input, but that she had been very difficult to reach.

**Sephora Zoro** said that she had also spoken with other members of the community. She acknowledged the possibility of a disconnect since she was an undergraduate student. She said that she had spoken with the BSU board about the current project and the Evans School's as well as Sally Clark's involvement. She said that she agreed that Sally Clark's reimagining of the campus safety responders was not in line with their goals. She pointed out that this program was not affiliated with the reimagining campus safety project since it would happen off-campus. She said that it was also not a police-corresponder model. She said that though there were parallels between this project and the reimagining campus safety project, they were not the same program and said that this was a false conflation of Sally Clark's involvement in providing this project funding.

**Sephora Zoro** said that she had also spoken with her own constituents and other members of her community as an ASUW senator. She said that she had heard the community members' concerns and had seen the desire for more community involvement and engagement on this issue. She said that she had not seen any dislike for this sort of program. She said that her experience had been different from Meshell Sturgis' and that it was unfair for Meshell Sturgis to say that there was not wide community support, especially from members of this university. She invited Meshell Sturgis to email her if she had any questions. She also offered to share her phone number.

**Gabby Rivera** moved to extend by 7 minutes. **Davon Thomas (Public Administration)** seconded.

**Britahny Baskin (Neuroscience)** objected. She suggested that someone either entertain a motion to vote on the resolution as is or a vote to table this for our next meeting with the understanding that all involved parties would sort out any concerns. She said that the objection should not be taken as a vote for either option

*Senators voted on whether or not to extend time by 7 minutes via Poll Everywhere.*

**Aaron Yared** said there were only 20 votes cast which meant that the Senate was no longer at quorum.

**Ted Cohen (Molecular Engineering & Sciences)** suggested that the Senate was still at quorum but that some had just refrained from voting. He said that the Senate could continue to make motions, vote on them, and pass them if the right number of senators voted.

**Aaron Yared** said that it was totally possible.

**Ted Cohen (Molecular Engineering & Sciences)** motioned to vote on the resolution as amended.

**Rene Singleton** said that Aaron Yared should count how many current members were present before entertaining the motion.

*Senators and officers raised their hands on Zoom and Aaron Yared counted the raised hands.*

**A.J. Balatico** said that some senators were not raising their hands, but the Senate was at a quorum of 25.

**Aaron Yared** affirmed that the Senate was at quorum and revealed that the vote was against extending time. He asked for guidance on what to do next.

**A.J. Balatico** suggested voting on the resolution.

**Marty Varela (Residential Community Student Association)** agreed.

**Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** moved to approve the resolution as written through voting by affirmation. **Alex Novokhodko (Mechanical Engineering)** seconded. No objections

**Andrew Shumway (Earth & Space Sciences)** raised a point of information and asked what the exact motion on the table was.

**Aaron Yared** said the motion was to approve the resolution as written through voting by affirmation.

**Britahny Baskin (Neuroscience)** said that by not objecting, senators were implying that they were not against the motion.

**Aaron Yared** said yes. He said that if the motion was voted on via Poll Everywhere, then people could vote either way. He said that if someone objected, the resolution would have to be voted on via Poll Everywhere.

**Matthew Mitnick (Public Administration)** amended his motion to be that the resolution was voted on via Poll Everywhere.

**A.J. Balatico** clarified that voting by general consent would be having the support of 50% of the senators in a room. He said that voting was equivalent to calling by division and said that it was necessary to utilize Poll Everywhere.

*Senators voted on the resolution via Poll Everywhere. The resolution passed, 18:3:2, yea:nay:abstain.*

## 10. [Action] GPSS Budget Approval 7:29pm

**A.J. Balatico** said that he had received word from the SAF committee chair that it would technically be fine for the GPSS to entertain all budget options because SAF requests were based on the previous year, not what the GPSS would spend in the coming year. He said that the SAF had determined that the GPSS could still present on Friday. He said that the GPSS could still entertain the option of adding an officer if the GPSS desired to do so. He said he would entertain a straw poll to figure out which option the GPSS should lean towards. He said that the option with the most votes would probably be the one that the GPSS eventually adopted.

**A.J. Balatico** said that the Executive and Finance & Budget committees' Senate budget adoption worksheets matched. He posted the worksheet in the chat. He said option A was to continue the staff wage increase that the Senate voted on in February to next year. He said that this expenditure would cost \$36,000. He said that option B was to continue with the staff wage increase extension as well as add three staff members and adjust the officer tuition line. He said that option C was to do the staff wage increase and add one officer and one Executive Senator to the Executive Committee. He said that regardless of the GPSS's budget request, it would ask for an increase of \$17,755, or 4%, of its previous SAF request. He said that the GPSS would also deficit spend until at least FY25 (2024-'25 school year). He said that the GPSS would have somewhere between \$250,000 and \$400,000 in reserve and in the endowment.

**A.J. Balatico** referred to the slides which laid out the timeline. He said that if the Senate were to choose option A, it would exit deficit spending mode by FY25, and the overall expenditure would

be only \$30,000 to the GPSS's general fund, which currently sat at \$420,000. He said that if the Senate were to choose option B, it would be locked into deficit spending until FY26. He said that the \$589 amount was within the margin of error. He said that the GPSS would not necessarily spend all of its budget. He said that the officer tuition line item was the most variable item on the budget because each program had a different cost. He said that option C cost about the same as option B, \$208,000 versus \$202,000. He said that option C did not change the timeline of the GPSS's budget request and addressed the issue of GPSS's large reserve.

**A.J. Balatico** referred to the slides which listed each option. He reiterated that option A maintained the GPSS's current structure of five officers, six executive senators and nine staff members. He said that the GpsS would have \$245,000 available at the end of FY25. He reiterated that option B was the continuation of the GPSS' staff wage increases with the addition of three additional staff members to address the "falling-through-the-cracks" kind of thing. He said that the additional three staff members would be hired and onboarded prior to fall quarter, but that he had not accounted for giving the staff additional hours during the summer. He said that it was possible to do so, and that the expense could be written off as a nonbudgeted expenditure. He said that the ratio of staff members to officers would increase to 2.4 staff members per officer. He reiterated that option C would entail adding one additional officer and one additional executive senator. He said that officer would work over the summer and that the GPSS would know who those people were around May, after the election. He said that having nine staff members to six officers resulted in a ratio of 1.5 staff members per officer. He acknowledged that staff members could be shared between officers in terms of what duties they addressed. He noted again that officer tuition was a variable cost. He said that even though it had the largest stick price of all the line items, ultimately, the GPSS was projected to have \$212,000 left at the end of FY27. He said that it was a difference between \$60,000 and \$54,000. He said that adding another officer would increase variability and would depend on which programs the officers were from.

**A.J. Balatico** said that the GPSS expected tuition increases of 3 to 4% at most. He said that the GPSS could not project these costs into the future because some programs had implemented tuition freezes or had tried to address their tuition cost in different ways such as reducing cohort size. He suggested opening the floor for discussion and subsequently moving to a vote. He addressed Ted Cohen's (Molecular Engineering & Sciences) question in the chat and said that the decision did not impact the GPSS's SAF request because the GPSS's SAF request would only be \$17,755 no matter what. He said that the SAF Committee chair had advised him to present the version that the Senate voted on. He said that he would update the SAF Committee on what the GPSS decided, so even if the GPSS did not implement the bylaw changes today, it could conduct a straw poll to see which option was most popular. He said that the GPSS would stick with the most popular option and work with the Judicial Committee to figure out what needed to be done in order for the option to be approved by the Senate. He said that this would also help the GPSS develop an Elections Guide.

**A.J. Balatico** said the straw poll would be held on Poll Everywhere. He also addressed the question whether the GPSS needed all three staff members and could add just one or two. He

said that the issue had not come up in the Executive nor F&B committees. He said that the committees had decided that since the price of three staff members were roughly equivalent to one officer, adding three staff members was the most comparative option. He said that senators could motion to amend the budget request.

**Ted Cohen (Molecular Engineering & Sciences)** advocated for considering one or two staff members, unless the GPSS had a clear plan for why the GPSS needed three staff members to fill administrative tasks. He said that the decision was between having an officer dedicated to the Senate and keeping track of the graduate program advisors and whatnot, or whether it should be a staff member. He said that once this was decided, the number of staff could be worked out in the future, especially since the GPSS was using its general fund to fund this expense.

**Alexander Novokhodko (Mechanical Engineering)** strongly disagreed. He said that three was the appropriate number of people for these duties based on his experience in ASUW. He said that many of the duties the GPSS had discussed for the new officer were things that many individual people did in the ASUW. For example, the ASUW had a membership coordinator whose job was to track attendance, track who is and is not a senator, which were questions that had been instrumental in this meeting. He said that their responsibilities also included contacting absent people and removing them from the roster if they failed to attend. He said that the ASUW's vice speaker's duty was to be the parliamentarian, meaning that it was their job to understand bizarre bylaw situations, which had come up multiple times in this meeting. He said that the ASUW had an internal affairs board member whose job was legal compliance with the OPMA and as a chair for their version of the Judicial Committee.

**Aaron Yared** pointed out Rene Singleton's question in the chat: "Who would be the designated supervisors and how will that impact the work?" He said that this could be something that the GPSS could figure out later.

**Davon Thomas (Public Administration)** said that there was a large ongoing conversation about who would oversee all the different staff members. He said that instead of having three different officers oversee three different staff members, it would be better to have one central figure to take care of all administrative things. He said that Gabby Rivera's position officially had five different staff members under her. He said that this was egregious. He admitted that some of the staff members were shared across the officers, but that it was important to recognize that they were officially under her.

**Davon Thomas (Public Administration)** said that if the GPSS was going to have all the different staff members function as one unit, it would have to consider whether to put the staff members under which officer. He said that he had heard the phrase "falling through the cracks" at least a dozen times this quarter, and said that if it was mentioned that often, then it was not the opinion of just one person. He advocated for option C as the best option.



**Britahny Baskin (Neuroscience)** said that she understood from the conversations she had heard over the year that there was concern that Meshell Sturgis did not have enough help in her position. She said that there was evidence that adding three staff members would be appropriate for providing Meshell Sturgis' position with more assistance. She said that today was a good example of why the GPSS needed more help. She said that she understood that there was a difference between officers and staff, but thought that having a staff member focused on one thing instead of being split across many things would be better.

**Marty Varela (Residential Community Student Association)** asked Britahny Baskin (Neuroscience) which option she thought was most ideal.

**Britahny Baskin (Neuroscience)** said that she was advocating for option B. She said that she was responding to the question of whether to add one or three people to the GPSS's structure.

**Marty Varela (Residential Community Student Association)** said it was important for everyone to remember that the duty of an officer was expansive, not specific. She said that officer duties followed the needs of the Senate, and the described deficiencies and shortfalls that the GPSS was experiencing had previously been officer duties that had been reassigned when the officer structure was reconfigured last year. She said that if the GPSS were to correct this shortfall, it would have to involve at least one officer. She said that the GPSS did not have an option here for an officer and a staff person. She said that adding an officer and executive senator would help balance the redistribution of staff members and advocated for option C.

**Janis Shin (Molecular Engineering & Sciences)** agreed with Marty Varela (Residential Community Student Association). She said that the roles that she had been given this year were officer duties last year. She said that in a conversation with Gabby Rivera, Gabby Rivera had mentioned that Janis Shin (Molecular Engineering & Sciences) was doing a lot of Gabby Rivera's duties. She said that she was basically doing officer duties which came easily to her because she had worked closely with former secretary Logan Jarrell last year. She said that if these duties were given to a new staff member, then things would fall through the cracks because of a lack of adequate training. She noted that Gabby Rivera supervised five staff members. She said that it might be easier on Gabby Rivera's position for the GPSS to redistribute the current staff and add an overseer to help make sure that things got done.

**Aaron Yared** clarified that all staff members executed officer responsibilities. He said that there was no requirement for a bylaw amendment if the GPSS added more staff because adding more staff would allow officers to more effectively carry out their duties as stated in the bylaws. He said that Janis Shin's (Molecular Engineering & Sciences) added responsibilities actually fell under the Vice President of Internal Affairs (VPIA) role by design.

**Gabby Rivera** said that she thought she had too many staff members to do an amazing job at all of the components of her officer description as stated in the Bylaws. She said that it was also related to her own personal strengths, weaknesses, and interests. She said that she relied heavily on Janis Shin's (Molecular Engineering & Sciences) expertise and Rahmat Raji's (the

GPSS office manager) willingness to go above and beyond in their job descriptions. She said that in the case that a VPIn did not have prior GPSS and ASUW experience and the GPSS hired an all new staff, it would be quite the learning curve on top of the three other staff members that she managed.

**Marty Varela (Residential Community Student Association)** recognized Gabby Rivera's excellence and hard work. She said that she had worked with the previous VPIn and had felt the stress that she experienced in the role for some of the things that Gabby Rivera had described as shortfalls for herself. She pointed out that officers worked year round, so the summer was covered and budgeted for. She said that staff members did not work year round, so there was a significant amount of transition work that had to happen over the summer to be ready for the Senate. She pointed out that a lot of the fluidity that the Senate experienced in its meetings were due to Janis Shin's (Molecular Engineering & Sciences) context and history in connection with the Senate. She said that the Senate could not assume that it would always have that. She said that the Senate should assure the opposite, since anyone who was matriculating to the campus could run for an officer role despite having zero familiarity with how the GPSS operated. She said that it was not just a steep learning curve. She asked the Senate to imagine having a cohort of officers, all of which were brand new. She said that it would be chaotic and problematic for them, and that having such a steep learning curve would diminish the experience that they had and diminish the efficacy of the Senate. She stressed that this decision was not just a monetary decision, because the GPSS could afford all of the options. She said that the decision was about how to position the Senate to be at least as successful as it had been this year and in subsequent years so that future Senate bodies did not look back at this year's Senate and think "What were they thinking?"

**Britahny Baskin (Neuroscience)** said that after hearing further comments, she found option C to be very strong and amended her advocacy more towards option C. She said that if the Senate went with option B, it would need to hire three staff members.

**Alexander Novokhodko (Mechanical Engineering)** said that he wanted to make one more argument in favor of option B, which he had also written into the chat. He noted that the Vice President of Equity and Inclusion (VPEI) did not supervise any staff members. He said that the ASUW, besides their director of diversity efforts, had ten commissions that served specific constituencies in the context of diversity and inclusion efforts. He said that the difference between the number of people asked to bear that load in ASUW versus GPSS was striking to him. He said that adding multiple staff members who could bear the load of the required work was the correct choice.

**Meshell Sturgis** seconded Gabby Rivera's point in the chat that voting for option C did not mean that the VPEI would not get a staff member next year, because all officers were in favor of giving each officer a staff member. She said that it was possible for the VPEI position to receive a staff member next year outside of the decision being made right now.

**Aaron Yared** said that after adding another officer and another executive senator the Senate would still have to decide which staff members would be assigned to which officers. He said that the GPSS wrestled with this issue this year. He said that adding three staff members might allow the GPSS to more evenly distribute responsibilities across staff and create new responsibilities given the experiences that Meshell Sturgis had had this year.

**A.J. Balatico** clarified that the GPSS did not have the money to add a staff member and an officer in the next year. He said that it was possible a few years out, around FY26, to add another staff member if an officer was added now. He said that one of the options to hire staff could morph into changing staff members into an officer position later on as long as the bylaws were properly amended. He said that for the most part, the GPSS could scale the budget change by considering three staff members as equivalent to one officer.

**Aaron Yared** said that the initial suggestion when the GPSS had discussed creating the VPEI role was to initially create a staff member and morph the staff member into an officer in three to five years.

**Gabby Rivera** said that when she mentioned discussing staff job descriptions once the officer structure was decided, she meant beyond rearranging which staff members go where. She said based on what she observed this year, there was a need for the GPSS to change job titles and job responsibilities. She noted that Meshell Sturgis did not have any staff members and that the GPSS needed to create a job description that combined responsibilities across the current variety of staff. She said that the GPSS did not have to continue with its current staff structure if the creation of a new officer was approved. She said that since staff job descriptions did not need to be voted on by the Senate, there was a potential for the GPSS to be creative when addressing its needs. She said that the GPSS could create open committees in the spring quarter about restructuring the staff.

**Aaron Yared** said that everything that Gabby Rivera had said would still hold true if the GPSS only added three staff members as opposed to adding an officer and an executive senator. He said that it would be more difficult to do the latter. He said that the problem of deciding what responsibilities would go where and equitably distributing staff across officers would still remain.

**A.J. Balatico** said that the Senate had dropped below quorum. He said that the issue was that the GPSS's SAF request was scheduled for Friday. He said that regardless of which option the senators chose, it did not seem like option A was being considered. He said that it seemed that the decision was between options B and C, unless someone also agreed with Ted Cohen (Molecular Engineering & Sciences) suggestion of adding one or two staff members. He said that holding a straw poll would be appropriate at this time and would be helpful for him to draft the SAF request. He said that the GPSS would not vote on the budget today as it would be contingent on the Judicial Committee's eventual Bylaws recommendation.

**Aaron Yared** agreed and said that straw polls did not require a quorum.

*Senators voted on a straw poll held via Poll Everywhere.*

## 11. [Information] U-PASS Discussion 7:57pm

**Gabby Rivera** said that she was looking for feedback regarding the information she would share about the U-PASS Committee. She explained that U-PASS was the transit fee on everyone's UWID. She said that the U-PASS Advisory Board had recently presented the recommendations from the Transportation Services. She explained that the U-PASS Advisory Board voted on one of those recommendations. She said that this recommendation was then presented to the Senate bodies who gave a vote of approval before it was then sent to the Board of Regents.

**Gabby Rivera** said that the U-PASS program earned revenue through its U-PASS quarterly fees, parking, and the Central Funds Subsidy, which was when the administration paid for 10% of operations. She said that U-PASS expenses reflected the transit costs. She said that administration costs included overhead personnel, NightRide, etc.

**Gabby Rivera** said that the current U-PASS fee was \$92 per quarter. She said that the Transportation Services had listed the following recommendations on the slide. The first recommendation was to not increase the fee at all and maintain the fee at \$92 per quarter. She said that this opened the possibility of a \$14 increase or a deficit in FY24. She said that the \$14 increase was an estimated projection based on light rail expansion and the resulting increase in transit cost. She said that the other option of a \$3 increase for FY23 would avoid the deficit. She said that this would also lead to a potential for a \$9 increase in FY24. She noted that the U-PASS Advisory Board came to the Senate every single year so it was currently focused on FY23 only. She said that it was hard not to consider the implications that her vote in FY23 would affect students who would have to pay the fee in FY24.

**Gabby Rivera** said that U-PASS would vote on March 15. She said that the meeting would be held on Zoom and would be open to the public. She said that she was notifying the Senate now of the potential outcomes so that senators were not surprised when the U-PASS Memorandum of Understanding came to the Senate in May, around election time. She said that she was happy to provide context and answer any questions.

**Waleed Khan (Education)** asked if the general public could vote or whether voting was restricted to certain people.

**Gabby Rivera** said that only voting members of the U-PASS Advisory Board could vote. She said that there was a space for public comment at the beginning of the meeting. She reiterated that the Advisory Board would only be voting on FY23. She said that the Advisory Board had discussed partnering and advocating with its transit partners and also instilling a cap on student fare transit costs, since the recommendations to raise U-PASS fees were a result of rising transit costs.

**Aaron Yared** asked everyone to email Gabby Rivera to let her know their thoughts so that she could represent the Senate when she voted.

## 12. [Information] Spring Quarter Senate Plans 8:03pm

**Aaron Yared** said that President Cauce had recently announced that masks would be optional starting spring quarter. He said that food policies and the school were reverting to normal. He asked the Senate if it wanted to go back to hybrid or in-person meetings or if it wanted to continue having meetings 100% virtually. He said that the reason why the GPSS had held meetings virtually during winter quarter was because Omicron variant COVID rates were skyrocketing and people did not feel safe. He said that he did not know if the sentiment still existed or if people felt safer and more comfortable on campus now. He said that if people wanted to meet in person, the GPSS had the room reserved. He said that the HUB had not officially made a decision yet, but there was a potential for food to be served at meetings.

**Janis Shin (Molecular Engineering & Sciences)** asked Aaron to clarify whether the GPSS was required to have an in-person component once the mask mandate was lifted.

**Aaron Yared** said that he was currently trying to figure out that detail. He said that he knew that the governor was lifting the mask mandate, but was not sure if the exceptions to the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) had been lifted as well. He said that if the exception was lifted, then the GPSS would not have a decision—it would just have to hold its meeting in person. He said that hybrid options would be held in tandem for the convenience of senators.

**Alexander Novokhodko (Mechanical Engineering)** strongly advocated that the Senate make this decision at the next meeting and give Aaron Yared more time to answer the question about the OPMA. He said that since it was currently past 8pm, many people who may be most affected by meeting in-person or adversely affected by continuing virtually might not be present.

**Aaron Yared** acknowledged Alexander Novokhodko's (Mechanical Engineering) point. He said that if the first meeting was held virtually or if the OPMA exceptions were lifted, then the decision would not matter either way. He said that he was open to tabling the item.

**A.J. Balatico** said that the GPSS had lost quorum and said that holding a straw poll might give skewed results. He noted that President Cauce had strongly recommended that students wear masks for the first two weeks of the spring quarter and said that this timeframe encompassed the first Senate meeting. He doubted that the GPSS would offer food at the first Senate meeting of the spring quarter. He reminded everyone that the GPSS had a budget for food and that it had been saving up its money for an end-of-the-year party with substantive food.

**Davon Thomas (Public Administration)** said he agreed with A.J. Balatico and Alexander Novokhodko (Mechanical Engineering).

**Aaron Yared** resolved to hold the first Senate meeting of spring quarter virtually and asked someone to table this item until the next Senate meeting.

**Gabby Rivera** moved to table this item until the next Senate meeting. **A.J. Balatico** seconded. No objections.

### 13. [Action] Senator of the Month 8:08 pm

**Gabby Rivera** thanked everyone for participating in the first ever Senator of the Month.

***Gabby Rivera** read A Proclamation Celebrating the Work of Alexander Novokhodko as Senator of the Month.*

**Gabby Rivera** said that she and Alexander Novokhodko (Mechanical Engineering) had attended UW as undergraduate together and had seen each other a lot at student government functions. She said that it had been fun to continue to cross paths with Alexander Novokhodko (Mechanical Engineering) and see his amazing work.

**Alexander Novokhodko (Mechanical Engineering)** thanked Gabby Rivera and said that he remembered her from his time as an undergraduate.

**Gabby Rivera** congratulated Alexander Novokhodko (Mechanical Engineering) once more and said the honor was well-deserved.

### 14. [Action] Recognition of Service 8:10pm

**A.J. Balatico** said that the link on the slide was celebratory music. He posted the link to the music and the proclamation recognizing Dr. Theodore “Ted” Cohen in the chat.

***A.J. Balatico** read the A Proclamation Recognizing the Service of Dr. Theodore “Ted” Cohen.*

**A.J. Balatico** said that he was ready to forward Ted Cohen (Molecular Engineering & Sciences) the proclamation via email and thanked him once more.

**Aaron Yared** congratulated Ted Cohen (Molecular Engineering & Sciences) for successfully defending his dissertation and thanked him for all the work he had done for the GPSS. He said that Ted Cohen’s (Molecular Engineering & Sciences) was just beginning.

**Ted Cohen (Molecular Engineering & Sciences)** said that receiving this recognition was bittersweet, since defending meant that he needed to leave the GPSS. He said that he would still be with the GPSS in spirit and was excited for the work that everyone would do. He thanked the GPSS for the honor and said it meant a lot.

## 15. [Information] Officer and Committee Reports 8:16 pm

**Aaron Yared** said that the search process for the new police chief has begun. He said that he would do his best to help the search committee find somebody who was best for the university, but that his first priority was to find someone who would protect the UW's most vulnerable populations. He said that a new ad hoc workgroup on teaching and learning led by the Provost was working to come up with questions about what the UW could do to change its policies on teaching and learning. He said that in order to change these policies, the workgroup needed to identify the biggest problems with the current policies. He said that the ASUW president and himself were the two student representatives on the committee while the rest of the members were high-ranking people like a company CEO. He said that he would update the Senate on how both groups went. He said that he would make sure to mention attendance policies.

**Aaron Yared** said that Peyton Swinford would give a longer update when the legislative session officially ended. He said that it was the second to last day of session, and that it seemed that all of the bills that the GPSS had tracked would succeed, including the low interest student loan program that graduate students would qualify for, a study on student health insurance coverage, massive expansions to financial aid for low income students, and other things. He said that every priority that gained traction had succeeded. He said that it marked another successful year for the GPSS's external team. He thanked the people on the Legislative Advisory Board and said that they had been instrumental in paving success in Olympia. He address Britahny Baskin's (Neuroscience) comment in the chat and said that the healthcare bill had passed the Washington State legislature but had been vetoed by Governor Inslee. He said that with respect to the direction of policies that had been passed in the presence of the mask mandate, the governor would not have an excuse to veto the bill this time. He said that the GPSS should not assume the best outcome without seeing the process through, but said that it was a good sign that the GPSS had made so much progress and that there was a desire for the bill to be passed within the Washington State legislature.

**Gabby Rivera** said that she would be hosting a free food event tomorrow on campus at 5pm in the HUB. She said that the GPSS would host a graduate research panel in collaboration with the UW Libraries. She said that if someone wanted to talk about something related to the theme of connection, they should let her know. She said that she was still working with UW Libraries and had not finalized the details. She announced that the GPSS had received discounted tickets to the May 6th Mariners game and that the link to purchase the tickets were available now. She said that some of the tickets were about \$8. She said that the plan was to meet up at a bar on the Ave and take the light rail to the game together. She said that the GPSS had many events in store for spring quarter.

**A.J. Balatico** said that the GPSS needed to amend its international travel grant process due to Putin's war. He said that people could still apply, but that they would have to apply to the UW Global Travel Security (UW GTS) and receive approval from their department chair in order to travel abroad. He said that the GPSS could not accept summer travel past June 10th, because of transitions. He said that the number of applicants for the travel grants had reached normal

levels which meant that the application process would become more competitive. He said that the travel grant acceptance rate typically sat around 60%, but that the GPSS had not reached it yet.

**A.J. Balatico** said that the Services and Activities Fee Committee (SAF) would vote to fund its 18 different units, and said that the GPSS was entering its budget season. He said that the GPSS would present to the SAF on Friday. He said that the SAF would vote on the Intellectual House, independent of the Intellectual House's ongoing projects, in mid April, prior to the May Board of Regents meeting.

**A.J. Balatico** said that the Student Technology Fee (STF) Committee voted on many projects but added that the fund still had \$6 million available. He said that the committee would eventually decide what to do about the level of the fee. He said that any fee change proposal would come before the ASUW and the GPSS. He said that the GPSS had openings on the SAF and STF, and F&B committees due to recent graduations.

**A.J. Balatico** referred to the slides and said that the GPSS had funded the CSA and FIUTS which held their events in February. He said that the Taiwanese Student Association would be hosting their night market at half capacity due to COVID. He said that the GPSS had also funded a speaker series that would be held through Zoom for Qmunity, an RSO separate from the Q Center.

**A.J. Balatico** said that the GPSS had also granted departmental allocations to the School of Environmental and Forest Sciences, and the Department of Art History. He said that if everyone who was interested in departmental allocations suddenly applied, the fund would run out. He asked senators to submit their applications as soon as possible to receive funding. \

**A.J. Balatico** referred to the slides which listed some of the representative projects that the STF Committee voted to fund on Monday. The STF Committee funded a supercomputer node set for the digital arts program. He said that former GPSS Physics Senator Jared Canright presented his dissertation material on how to improve physics classes using virtual reality at UW and said that the STF supported him with \$80,000 to pilot a program that would allow students to use virtual reality in their physics labs. He said that the STF Committee funded an expansion of the Go Baby Go project, a project related to Husky Adapt that made cars for children with mobility needs. He said that the STF Committee also approved the mobile health van's proposal which would expand its ability to do outreach in the district.

**Meshell Sturgis** said that the committee tasked with implementing Senate Bill 5227, which mandates DEI staff training, will be developing a training module that is similar to the current Title IX training modules. She said that this training module will be shared with all students on campus in 2 years and said that the committee was asking for internal and external entities to help facilitate these training sessions. She asked everyone to send faculty, center, or organization suggestions to Jeanette James or her via email.



**Andrew Shumway (Earth & Space Sciences)** said that the Judicial Committee was still working on bylaw changes. He said that the Judicial Committee was taking its due time to make recommendations on whether a new officer should be added to the GPSS structure. He said that the recommendations should be ready to present by the next Senate meeting.

## 16. [Information] Announcements 8:28pm

**A.J. Balatico** said that GPSS officer elections were coming up. He noted that the Elections Guide was not yet out, but said that there were requirements for candidates to attend certain meetings, especially those that were related to the positions they were running for. He said that last year's Election Guide was available and that the Elections Committee would update the guide as necessary next quarter.

**A.J. Balatico** said that there was an executive senator opening. He said that the election was tentatively scheduled for April 6th but that the election could be moved depending on interest.

**A.J. Balatico** said that the Husky Seed fund was accepting applications until March 29th and that the grants were worth up to \$5,000. He said that the GPSS would apply for CART captioning and Zoom Webinar funding from STF this quarter. He said that the GPSS would also consider applying for funding for projects related to increasing access to science and technology. He said that ASUW candidacy filing closed last Friday but that ballot measures were due this Friday. He announced that the AISC Winter Celebration would happen this Saturday from 12 to 7:30pm. He said that food would be available at 3pm.

## 17. [Action] Adjournment 8:31pm

**Waleed Khan (Education)** motioned to adjourn the meeting. **Janis Shin (Molecular Engineering & Sciences)** seconded. No objections

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