

THE GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT SENATE

Meeting of 01 June 2022 at 5:30pm

In-Person and Remotely via Zoom

The following GPSS members and staff attended the meeting:

Aaron Yared, GPSS President

Gabrielle Rivera, GPSS Vice President of Internal Affairs

Payton Swinford, GPSS Vice President of External Affairs

~~Meshell Sturgis, GPSS Vice President of Equity & Inclusion~~

A.J. Balatico, GPSS Vice President of Finance

Matthew Mitnick, Executive Senator

Marty Varela, Executive Senator

Britahny Baskin, Executive Senator

Malikai Bass, Executive Senator

Pratima K.C., Executive Senator

Davon Thomas, Executive Senator

Nicole Hishmeh, ASUW Director of Internal Policy

Rene Singleton, SAO Advisor

Justin Camputaro, HUB Executive Director

Bill Mahoney, Graduate School Advisor

Janis Shin, GPSS Senate Clerk

The following persons also attended the meeting:

1. [Action] Call to Order 5:37pm

Aaron Yared called the meeting to order at 5:37pm.

2. [Action] Approval of Agenda 5:37pm

Aaron Yared said he would like to entertain a motion to amend the agenda to add “Hazard Pay Resolution Second Reading” after item 10 for the same allotted time of seven (7) minutes.

Matthew Mitnick motioned to amend the agenda as requested by Aaron Yared. Davon Thomas seconded. No objections. The motion to amend the agenda passed.

Matthew Mitnick motioned to amend the agenda to include a 20-minute public comments item to be added between current agenda items five (5) and six (6). Davon

Thomas seconded. Alexander Novokhodko, Marty Varela, and Andrea Paz objected. The motion moved to discussion.

Matthew Mitnick stated that the acceptance of public comments in previous meetings set a precedent and believed that students should be allowed to speak on agenda items.

Aaron Yared said that there was a written public comment form in existence.

Alexander Novokhodko said that he objected due to the sudden nature of adding the public comment section, allowing for a possible advantage to those present at the meeting who knew of such an amendment. He said that Senators could yield their time to members of the public during specific agenda item discussions. He said that such an amendment would be unfair.

Aaron Yared stated that it was his hope that Senators circulated the GPSS public comment form amongst their constituents. He also apprised the Senate that this was a de facto discussion period in regards to the proposed amendment.

Marty Varela reminded everyone of the declaration made at the last GPSS meeting regarding public comment procedure. She said that she was supportive of public comments and Alexander Novokhodko's sentiment vis-a-vis the proposed amendment.

Andrea Paz said that she objected to the proposed amendment due to its perceived belated nature.

Matthew Mitnick responded that no GPSS Officer or Senator has communicated any formal decision regarding public comments to the Senate. He said that GPSS has the responsibility to listen to students in attendance of a public meeting.

Mario LAST NAME said that it was standard practice to listen to student grievances within an open meeting.

Pratima K.C. said that GPSS meetings are public meetings and that public comments should be included, as done in previous meetings.

Aaron Yared reminded the Senate that there was an avenue for submitting public comments. He said that it was the Senate's responsibility to inform constituents of the public comment form.

Britahny Baskin said that the matter of public comments has been discussed in several Executive Committee and full Senate meetings. She said that adding a public comment item in the midst of a Senate meeting was not conducive of meeting progression. She said that clarification is needed on who the “public” was.

Aaron Yared clarified that GPSS meetings were open to the entire public and not just UW students.

Adam LAST NAME said that verbal public comments were the norm in GPSS meetings and believed the public comments should be included in the agenda, as prescribed by precedent.

Alexander Novokhodko motioned to close the discussion. Britahny Baskin seconded. Multiple objections were fielded.

Aaron Yared addressed the objections. The motion moved to a vote.

The vote to close discussion passed; 16 in the affirmative, four (4) in the negative, zero (0) abstentions.

Mario LAST NAME requested that Aaron Yared, in his capacity as GPSS President, read out all written statements and comments in the Zoom chat function for those not present via Zoom.

Aaron Yared responded that he would read out all written statements and comments in the Zoom chat function.

Matthew Mitnick said that it would be in the public’s best interest if all submitted written public comments were read out during agenda item discussions.

Aaron Yared responded that he would be happy to read the public comments related to each action item.

Matthew Mitnick stated that GPSS has an obligation to hear public comments per The Washington Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA).

Aaron Yared disagreed, stating that the public is allowed to attend all GPSS meetings, however, they do not have the permission or obligation to speak. He also stated that discussion on the matter was closed.

Matthew Mitnick motioned for a 15 minute recess.

Aaron Yared responded that there is currently an outstanding motion that must be acted upon. He said that new motions could be made afterward.

Pratima K.C. asked if there was a faculty advisor present.

Aaron Yared responded in the affirmative. He moved the motion to amend the agenda to include a 20-minute public comments item to a vote.

Matthew Mitnick asked if Senators recognized by the chair had a speaking time limitation.

Aaron Yared responded that it was the chair's discretion.

The vote to amend the agenda did not pass; seven (7) in the affirmative, 13 in the negative, zero (0) abstentions.

Matthew Mitnick motioned to amend the agenda to include a written public comments item to be added between current agenda items five (5) and six (6), in which all written public comments are read out by the chair.

Aaron Yared declined to accept the motion, stating that it was identical to the previous proposed agenda amendment motion made by Matthew Mitnick.

Matthew Mitnick responded that it was not an identical motion and specifically one that includes written public comments.

Aaron Yared accepted the motion and asked for a second. Pratima K.C. seconded. Marty Varela objected.

Marty Varela said she objected because the motion was identical to the previous agenda amendment motion made by Matthew Mitnick, and appears to circumvent the process that is in place that permits the public's voice to be heard.

Aaron Yared stated that the Senate will not repeat discussion made during the previous motion. The motion moved to discussion.

Jack Flesher said that reading out written comments would unfairly advantage certain voices who entered their comments before the end of the meeting, as written comments are allowed through the duration of a Senate meeting.

Pratima K.C. said that it seems that GPSS is silencing the public by not addressing all public comments submitted to the Senate.

Matthew Mitnick stated that the Senate has spent the last 50 minutes debating whether or not fellow students were allowed to speak on agenda items. He said that public comments were allowed during previous GPSS meetings. He also said that GPSS has an obligation to hear from students. He asked Senators why they were opposed to hearing from students and the greater public.

Mario LAST NAME asked why written public comments could not be read by the chair to the Senate. He said that utilizing the written public comments format was the solution provided by the chair.

Britahny Baskin said that it seemed that Matthew Mithnick was orchestrating extended discourse surrounding the public comment amendment, as it was not brought up until the beginning of the meeting.

Natalia Madrinan said that hearing public comments was extremely important to the institution.

Davon Thomas said that the agenda item for public comment is general in nature and not meant for orchestrated actions. He expressed his frustration in the length of discussion surrounding the proposed agenda amendment.

Britahny Baskin motioned to close discussion. Alexander Novokhodko seconded. No objections. The motion moved to a vote.

Aaron Yared asked Matthew Mitnick for clarification on the length of the proposed agenda amendment.

Matthew Mitnick requested 30 minutes for the item.

The vote to amend the agenda did not pass; six (6) in the affirmative, 13 in the negative, zero (0) abstentions.

Matthew Mitnick motioned to amend the agenda to include a 15-minute town hall for open discussion item to be added between current agenda items five (5) and six (6). **Pratima K.C.** seconded. No objections. The motion to amend the agenda passed.

Andrew Shumway motioned to approve the agenda as amended. **Davon Thomas** seconded. No objections. The motion to approve the agenda passed.

3. [Action] Approval of Minutes pm

Britahny Baskin motioned to approve the minutes. **Pratima K.C.** seconded. No objections. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

4. [Information] Land Acknowledgment pm

A.J. Balatico, on behalf of the GPSS, gave the land acknowledgement. He included resources for action involving tribal lands and indigenous awareness.

5. [Information] Announcements pm

Gabby Rivera said that the UPASS Advisory Board is looking to recruit new members for the upcoming academic year. She said that the board needs two (2) GPSS appointed members. She said to contact her with any questions.

6. [Information] Open Town Hall (Amended Agenda Item) pm

Aaron Yared and **A.J. Balatico** facilitated the town hall, as Senate chair and parliamentarian respectively.

Camille Gix stated that she was horrified by the manner in which the Senate carried itself during the agenda approval item. She said that it was undemocratic to silence or limit public comments.

Maryam Noor stated that she was troubled by the manner in which the Senate carried itself during the agenda approval item.

Adrian LAST NAME stated that there were ethical lapses in the execution of the latest GPSS elections and urged GPSS to evaluate such execution to make future elections more legitimate. He said that he was disappointed in the manner in which the Senate carried itself during the agenda approval item.

Maxwell LAST NAME said that GPSS was actively silencing public voices, including those of students and student advocates.

Julie Bouanna said that she was disappointed in GPSS leadership and is silencing public voices. She said that GPSS was to cultivate an equitable space.

Natalia Madrinan said that students are supposed to operate as a coalition for the betterment of campus life. She said that she was disappointed in the silencing of public voices.

Mario LAST NAME said that he was disgusted in the execution of the latest GPSS election and GPSS leadership's opposition to Matthew Mitnick's proposals.

Matthew Mitnick motioned to extend time by 10 minutes. Pratima K.C. seconded. Marty Varela objected. The motion moved to discussion.

Gabby Rivera proposed a friendly amendment, asking that those already queued to submit verbal comments could be the conclusion of the town hall period.

Matthew Mitnick said that he would accept the amendment as friendly in the event that his motion passed.

Marty Varela rescinded her objection. No further objections. The motion to extend time passed.

Britahny Baskin said that the concerns presented were serious and pertinent. She recognized and appreciated Matthew Mitnick's actions within the Senate.

Spencer Voest emphasized that GPSS was tomorrow's leaders and must set an example for future governance and leadership.

Matthew Mitnick provided context and background into his experience within the latest GPSS election.

7. [Information] Shoutouts pm

Aaron Yared facilitated the shoutouts item.

GPSS Officers and Senators gave their respective shoutouts, recognizing actions including legislation and volunteerism.

8. [Information] Executive Senator Election pm

Aaron Yared apprised the Senate that there were five (5) Executive Senator positions vacant. He entertained nominations for the vacancies.

Jack Flesher asked for clarification into the duties and responsibilities of an Executive Senator.

Britahny Baskin provided her lived experience as an Executive Senator.

Malikai Bass provided his lived experience as an Executive Senator.

Aaron Yared added that Executive Senators serve a check-and-balance function on the Executive Committee.

Pratima K.C. nominated Maleen Kidiwela for an Executive Senator position. He accepted the nomination.

Aaron Yared entertained any further nominations and stated that nominations could also be made in the upcoming academic year. He said that unless more than five (5) nominations were fielded, nominees would be running unopposed.

Britahny Baskin nominated Matthew Mitnick for an Executive Senator position. He accepted the nomination.

Maleen Kidiwela gave brief remarks regarding his Executive Senator nomination.

Matthew Mitnick gave brief remarks regarding his Executive Senator nomination.

Aaron Yared entertained a motion in favor of confirming Maleen Kidwela and Matthew Mitnick as Executive Senators.

Davon Thomas motioned to confirm Maleen Kidiwela and Matthew Mitnick as Executive Senators. Malikai Bass seconded. No objections. The motion passed.

9. [Action] Senator of the Month pm

Aaron Yared recognized Senator Malikai Bass as the Senator of the Month. He read the accompanied proclamation. He entertained a motion to pass the proclamation recognizing Senator Malikai Bass as Senator of the Month.

Jack Flesher motioned to pass the proclamation recognizing Senator Malikai Bass as Senator of the Month. Marty Varela seconded. No objections. The motion passed.

10. [Information] Land Acknowledgement Work pm

A.J. Balatico presented a slide discussing the GPSS land acknowledgement. He stressed ideas of collaboration, inclusion, and intentionality. He communicated the continuing work conducted by GPSS, University officials, and stakeholders.

Davon Thomas reminded the Senate that an individual resigned from GPSS due to anti-indigenous sentiments. He said that land acknowledgement work was extremely important.

Malikai Bass stated that it was extremely important to continue land acknowledgement work.

Aaron Yared desired the record to reflect the successful dissertation defense of Dr. CHECK TRANSCRIPT.

A.J. Balatico recognized the Diversity Committee for its land acknowledgement work.

11. [Information] Attendance Resolution Second Reading pm

Malikai Bass and Aaron Yared presented the second reading of the Resolution Regarding The Inequitable Impact of Attendance Policies in Graduate Education.

Jack Flesher thanked Malikai Bass and Pratima K.C. for their efforts in drafting the aforementioned resolution.

Britahny Baskin provided her lived experience as an instructor for undergraduate students.

Matthew Mitnick thanked Malikai Bass and Pratima K.C. for their efforts in drafting the aforementioned resolution.

Marty Varela motioned to approve the Resolution Regarding The Inequitable Impact of Attendance Policies in Graduate Education. Pratima K.C. seconded. No objections. The motion passed.

12. [Information] Hazard Pay Resolution Second Reading (Amended Agenda Item) pm

Matthew Mitnick presented the second reading of the Hazard Pay Resolution. He provided additional information and clarification into the resolution.

Alexander Novokhodko presented his comments regarding the resolution and stated that he could not support the Hazard Pay Resolution.

Aaron Yared asked what source of funding would be used for the proposed Hazard Pay Resolution.

Matthew Mitnick responded that the resolution could source funding from any area of potential revenue. He presented several amendments to the resolution.

Britahny Baskin added that COVID-19 hospitalization cases were rising.

Alexander Novokhodko directed the Senate to the King County COVID-19 dashboard for accurate case reporting.

Davon Thomas motioned to approve the Hazard Pay Resolution. Matthew Mitnick seconded. Marty Varela objected. The motion moved to a vote.

The vote to approve the Hazard Pay resolution passed; 10 in the affirmative, three (3) in the negative, four (4) abstentions.

13. [Information] America's Choice White Paper pm

A.J. Balatico presented the GPSS White Paper, titled "America's Choice", which covers the topic of mass shootings in the United States of America. He stated that the positions within the document are non-partisan and wholly research-based. He added that this was continuing work.

Jack Flesher raised an issue regarding the White Paper's title, as the document specifically relates to the United States.

Aaron Yared stated that any questions, comments, or concerns could be addressed to A.J. Balatico.

14.[Action] Judicial Report Regarding The Election pm

Aaron Yared handed the Senate chair to Andrew Shumway of the GPSS Judicial Committee.

Andrew Shumway presented the judicial report regarding the election. He said that the Judicial Committee voted unanimously to address election complaints filed only by GPSS voting members and/or graduate students, and those present at the May 18th elections meeting. He provided a brief summary of the submitted election complaints.

Matthew Mitnick asked A.J. Balatico if he made any contact with the Elections Committee about running a candidate late.

A.J. Balatico responded in the negative.

Matthew Mitnick asked A.J. Balatico if he spoke with any Elections Committee members about running other candidates.

A.J. Balatico responded in the affirmative.

Pratima K.C., as a member of the Elections Committee, disclosed her position on Jack Flesher's standing within the latest election.

Andrew Shumway stated that it was the Judicial Committee's recommendation that GPSS codify the process for absentee ballots and candidate listing.

Rene Singleton reminded the Senate that decisions by the Judicial Committee have already been made and that this was an opportunity to improve for the upcoming academic year.

Matthew Mitnick motioned for the election to be re-conducted at the beginning of the upcoming academic year, taking the Judicial Committee's findings into consideration for improvement.

Aaron Yared responded that this was an information item, and therefore, a motion cannot be proffered.

Marty Varela asked if there was an error identified by the Judicial Committee.

Andrew Shumway responded that the elections complied with the GPSS Constitution and Bylaws.

Matthew Mitnick clarified that his motion called for a new election for the position of GPSS Vice President of Administration.

Andrew Shumway stated that a motion was not possible without the suspension of parliamentary procedure.

Matthew Mitnick motioned to suspend the rules of the Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure (Sturgis) and the OPMA to motion for a new election.

Jack Flesher said that he doesn't believe that OPMA can be suspended as it is state law.

Alexander Novokhodko stated that the GPSS Bylaws does include a procedure for the execution of new elections.

Malikai Bass asked if the motion for a new election could be made during the adjournment action item.

Andrew Shumway responded that judgment would be up to the chair. He entertained a second for the suspension of the rules of the Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure (Sturgis). Pratima K.C. seconded. Marty Varela objected. The motion moved to discussion.

Marty Varela stated that running from the floor puts an individual at a disadvantage.

Aaron Yared stated that if the motion carried, the law may be violated.

Matthew Mitnick rescinded the motion.

15.[Information] Officer & Committee Reports pm

Aaron Yared said that it was an honor to serve as GPSS President.

Gabby Rivera said thank you to the Senate.

Payton Swinford said thank you to the Senate.

A.J. Balatico thanked the Senate and staff.

16.[Action] Adjournment pm

Pratima K.C. motioned to adjourn the meeting. Jack Flesher seconded. No objections, motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 10:06pm.

*Meeting notes prepared by **Clement “CJ” Bermudes Jr**, GPSS Senate Director.*

