



## GPSS Vice President of External Affairs Quarterly Report Winter 2023 (Written 4/2/2023 by Joel Anderson)

### Personnel

- Nick Juno (Policy Director) and Geoffrey Odoch (Legislative Organizing Director) helped maintain our on-campus presence during winter quarter while I was in Olympia. I'll continue to work in Olympia 2–3 days/week through the end of the state legislative session (Sunday, April 23).
  - Nick and Geoffrey have both helped facilitate weekly LAB meetings in person and assisted ASUW staff in the planning of our annual Huskies on the Hill Lobby Day (Tuesday, February 7).
  - Nick has also helped with legislative research to support GPSS' lobbying efforts in Olympia.
  - Our team will be planning and working on a handful of projects (i.e., plans/frameworks for graduate student mobilization) during spring quarter to support GPSS' future external affairs work.

### Committees

- Executive Committee: I provided committee members with updates from the state legislative session and progress being made on GPSS' legislative agenda throughout winter quarter.
- Legislative Advisory Board (LAB): I wrote meeting agendas and remotely facilitated LAB meetings during winter quarter. LAB spent most meetings reviewing updates from the state legislative session and providing feedback on how GPSS could best collaborate with the WA Student Association (WSA) and other student governments (i.e., ASUW). Though LAB still offers [public access to all meeting materials](#), this has been temporarily impacted by storage issues with GPSS' Google Drive. I'm currently working on transferring all 2022–23 external affairs materials to OneDrive.

### Activities and Events

- Link for reference: [2022–23 Legislative Agenda](#)
- The 2023 state legislative session started on Monday, January 9. With the support of WSA and other student governments, GPSS has made progress on numerous parts of its legislative agenda, including the following:
  - **Native American Scholarship Program.** [SHB 1140](#), the House's proposed operating budget, includes a pilot program to support Native American students at Washington State University during the 2023–25 biennium.
  - **Expanding WA College Grant eligibility.** The House's proposed operating budget (linked above) also includes an expansion of the WA College Grant's maximum award to students from families with 0–65% median family income (MFI) during the 2023–24 academic year compared to the current standard of 0–60% MFI.



## GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL STUDENT SENATE

- **Preserving the WA Student Loan Program (WSLP).** [EHB 1823](#) would resolve existing administrative issues with the WSLP and restrict eligibility to graduate students in high-demand fields. The House's proposed operating budget preserves \$130 million (of \$150 million, initially) to implement the WSLP.
- **Supporting student basic needs.** [2SHB 1559](#) would require all public institutions of higher education to convene basic needs task forces and hire at least one benefits navigator to help students access campus and community resources. It would also allow four community and technical colleges (CTCs) and two baccalaureate ("four-year") institutions to establish free/reduced-price meal plans for low-income students.
- **Improving student access to reproductive and gender-affirming care.** [HB 1564](#) would ban the sale of over-the-counter sexual assault kits. The House's proposed operating budget (linked above) also includes funding for emergency contraception vending machines at public CTCs and baccalaureate institutions across the state (available on a first-come, first-serve basis).
- **Expanding and making permanent the Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness (SSEH) Pilot Program.** [ESSB 5702](#) would make SSEH permanent and ensure that all public institutions of higher education can participate (on an opt-in basis). *GPSS has been a leader on this bill throughout the state legislative session.*
- 2023 Huskies on the Hill Lobby Day: We hosted our annual lobby day on Tuesday, February 7, with 40+ students from all three UW campuses (Seattle, Tacoma, Bothell) and President Ana Mari Cauce in attendance. This was the first in-person lobby day since 2020 and, despite some logistical challenges, many students reported enjoying the event. Tri-campus collaboration will continue to be encouraged in future years.
- Other organizational tasks: We've continued to update our [Linktree](#) and now have a GPSS External Affairs [YouTube channel](#) where students can watch our live testimony. We've also shared updates about our ongoing legislative efforts on [Twitter](#).

### Summary of Spring 2023 Plans

- I'll continue to be present in Olympia 2-3 days/week to address any ongoing concerns about GPSS' legislative priorities. WSA's presence has been somewhat reduced as students return to classes during spring quarter.
- Our external affairs team will continue to discuss legislative updates and develop projects (i.e., how to better mobilize graduate students) that will support GPSS' legislative work in future years.
  - This may include examining the issue of student healthcare access. While legislators didn't have capacity to address USHIP considerations this year, Rep. Nicole Macri (43<sup>rd</sup> LD) has expressed an interest in discussing the program during the interim (i.e., when the state legislature isn't in session).



- A group of GPSS representatives will be traveling to Washington, D.C., in mid-April to engage in federal advocacy meetings on behalf of [Student Advocates for Graduate Education](#) (SAGE). They will be discussing topics like research and higher education funding for public universities.
- WSA will be hosting its Spring General Assembly at UW-Tacoma on May 12–13. Many of the associated events are open to all students who want to learn more about WSA. Additional information about participating will be disseminated to GPSS later in the quarter.