

The Executive Committee of The Graduate and Professional Student Senate

Meeting of 10 January 2024 at 5:30pm

In-person and remotely via Zoom

The following GPSS members and staff attended the meeting:

A.J. Balatico, GPSS President
Amanda Chin, GPSS Vice President of Internal Affairs
Nicholas Juno, GPSS Vice President of External Affairs
Matthew Moran, GPSS Vice President of Equity & Inclusion
Jack Flesher, GPSS Vice President of Administration
Jon Choi, GPSS Vice President of Finance
Noah Nguyen, Executive Senator
Sahra Ibrahim, Executive Senator
Maleen Kidiwela, Executive Senator
Ella Spurlock, Executive Senator
Charles Bugre, Executive Senator
~~Clare Koesters, Executive Senator~~
~~Raj Dewangan, Executive Senator~~
Francisco Dojenia, ASUW Director of Internal Policy
Rene Singleton, SAO Advisor
Carrie Moore, HUB Executive Director
Christina Coop, SAO Interim Associate Director
Bill Mahoney, Graduate School Advisor
Daniel Cook, GPSS Senate Director
Madeline Valdez, University Affairs Director

The following persons also attended the meeting:

1. [Action] Call to Order 5:31pm

A.J. Balatico called the meeting to order at 5:31pm.

2. [Action] Approval of the Agenda 5:33pm

Amanda Chin moved to approve the agenda.

Jon Choi raised a point of information asking for clarification on the officer budget item.

A.J. Balatico said that there was a need to discuss the officer budget with Executive Senators before discussing it privately amongst the officers.

Jon Choi asked if the budget drafting would occur among the officers.

A.J. Balatico said yes. He said the officer budget item was just informational.

Jon Choi seconded. No objections. Motion passed. 5:33pm

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

Jack Flesher moved to approve the minutes. **Francisco Dojenia** seconded. No objections. Motion passed. 5:34pm

4. [Information] ASUW Fall Update 5:34pm

Francisco Dojenia said the ASUW Senate website and the Records page are still down. He said the board is preparing to do tabling next week. He said the Constitutional Reform Task Force will begin rewording the ASUW constitution this Friday. He said the ASUW Senate Resolution about standing against terrorism and antisemitism passed 30-4.

A.J. Balatico raised a point of information and asked how many Senate meetings ASUW has had this year.

Francisco Dojenia said there were ASUW Senate meetings last Tuesday and this Tuesday.

A.J. Balatico asked if ASUW had one board meeting.

Francisco Dojenia said the first board meeting will be tomorrow.

A.J. Balatico asked if the resolution on academic materials went through board.

Francisco Dojenia said the resolution passed the Senate last year but has not yet gone through the board.

Madeline Valdez said ASUW's OGR is requesting that everyone pass on news that Huskies on the Hill is happening on Monday, January 29. She said registration for Huskies on the Hill closes on January 20. She said Huskies on the Hill presents an opportunity for students to lobby for legislation that would increase the Washington State College Grant by 10%. She said the expansion would make the 5% incremental increase to the Washington State College Grant permanent while adding an additional 5% increase to offset pandemic-induced inflation constraints. She urged the Executive Committee to vote in favor of the expansion on the Washington State Legislature website by January 12 at 10:30am.

Jack Flesher raised a point of information and clarified that OGR stands for the Office of Government Relations.

Nick Juno raised a point of information and said that testimony must be given an hour before committee and that committee is at 10:30am on Friday. He said people would

need to vote in favor of the expansion on the Washington State Legislature website by 9:30am at the latest.

A.J. Balatico asked Nick if expanding the Washington College Grant is consistent with the Washington Student Association's legislative interests.

Nick Juno said yes. He said there is a bill to expand the Washington College Grant and raise the income threshold for recipients to 70% of median family income in the state. He said recipients would be able to receive full funding for a 2–4-year degree program. He mentioned that the Washington College Grant is one of the most generous college grants in the country. He said expanding the Washington College Grant would result in expanded undergraduate enrollment for low-income and POC communities. He said expanding the Washington College Grant is a major priority for ASUW and WSA.

6. [Information] Executive Senator Updates 5:38pm

Maleen Kidiwela said the first Elections Committee meeting will take place tomorrow. He said the committee needs to elect a committee chair, schedule meetings for the quarter, and go through its bylaws. He said the goal is to propose amendments to the bylaws of the Executive Committee and work on the actions guide.

Ella Spurlock said the Science and Policy Committee has first drafts of 2 resolutions completed this evening. She invited the Executive Committee to provide feedback on the resolutions. She mentioned that the committee has not yet incorporated citations into the resolutions. She asked that feedback focus specifically on content and grammar. She said the committee will have final drafts of the resolutions ready by Monday to send out to the Senate. She said the first and second reading for both resolutions are planned for the Senate meeting on January 17. She said this will allow the Senate to pass along the resolutions to legislators in Olympia while they're in the legislative session. She mentioned that the Science and Policy Committee meetings are on Tuesdays. She said the next steps for the committee are the Senior outreach program and preparing for the Graduate Research Symposium.

7. [Information/Action] Officer Updates

Nick Juno said he is currently working with the Washington Student Association and student governments on the Washington College Grant expansion. He said the hearing on expanding the Washington College Grant will take place this Friday at 10:30am. He said the bill to expand the Washington College Grant is SB5999 and would raise the family income threshold of recipients to 70% of median family income. He said the expansion will help lead to a more representative campus and graduate school. He mentioned that

college enrollment throughout the state has decreased in recent years, but that low-income enrollment has increased by 10% from 2019-2022 because of the Washington College Grant, which passed in 2019. He mentioned that there has been a similar decline in Pel Grant recipient enrollment. He said he is also lobbying for another bill around childcare that presents an opportunity to get graduate students in the Working Connections Childcare Program and goes to committee on Friday. He said he is in contact with the Department of Child Youth and Families and the Department of Social and Public Services which is involved in healthcare and childcare programs. He said he is working with legislators to expand Washington's student loan program, which currently offers loans at 2% interest to Washington state residents, by expanding the definition of "high demand degrees" that these loans cover. He mentioned that there might not be much interest among legislators in expanding it. He mentioned there is also a bill this Friday for public loan forgiveness. He said this bill is important for part-time professors who must meet a certain number of credit hours for their loans to be forgiven. He mentioned that he has not been able to get much traction on raising the Student Activities Fee threshold. He said he spoke with the Student Activity Fee Board Chair, Mitchell Klein, who said that an 8-9% increase over 2 years could resolve many financial issues. He said this is not something legislators have been focused on before and might be a multi-year process given the pushback GPSS has received from other students in WSA. He reminded the Executive Committee that Huskies on the Hill will take place on January 29.

Jack Flesher asked if there was anything Nick needed from the committee or officers for support in achieving GPSS's legislative objectives.

Nick Juno said he has been hoping to find ways to extract graduate student issues from undergraduate student issues. He recommended that the Executive Committee write an open letter to legislators specifying issues facing graduate students. He said he will send out for graduate student testimonies, which can be done remotely. He encouraged the Executive Committee to indicate their support for expanding the Washington College Grant, which constitutes a \$93 million item. He said he will send out information about how to vote in favor of the bill.

A.J. Balatico asked Nick if he had any sense of how legislators perceive the return on investment with the Washington College Grant.

Nick Juno said not yet. He said Joel Anderson is now the Assistant Lead for the Washington Student Achievement Council and that he is compiling that type of information. He mentioned that lower college enrollment across the state might negatively influence legislative interest in expanding the Washington College Grant.

A.J. Balatico said the legislature uses similar metrics for evaluating programs like the Husky Promise UW's low-income scholarship.

Nick Juno mentioned that he and Joel Anderson received questions about that from Faculty Council today.

Matthew Moran said he finished completing a list of 50 off- and on-campus resources to invite to the Resource Fair and will soon be sending out official invites. He mentioned that there is a lot of enthusiasm for the Cultural Showcase and expects that it will take off soon with a good cohort of student performances. He said the Diversity Committee has received 5 applications, approved 3, and is regularly receiving more. He said the next steps for the committee are to have more targeted outreach with organizations that have already applied for funds. He said he will be working with Rene and Felice to expand outreach to diversify diversity funds. He said Jess has been on UW Diversity Council. He said he will be looking through the previous pool of liaison applicants for a graduate student representative to serve on the Diversity Council. He said the Diversity Committee may be shifting its meeting schedule this quarter. He mentioned the need to be very deliberate with communication and outreach, so people understand what GPSS is planning.

Amanda Chin said she will work with Ella to advertise for the Graduate Research Symposium and with the Events Director to develop a list of people and RSO's for outreach. She mentioned that there are specific RSO's that are academic in nature and work with graduate students. She said the CV workshop was yesterday. She said karaoke will be next Friday from 6:00pm to 7:30pm in HUB 238. She said the Drag Brunch will take place on Saturday, February 3 and that Ms. Texas 1988 and Dion Dior Black will be the performers. She said the event will provide a vegetarian and vegan brunch. She said the Drag Brunch will cost \$20 for UW students and \$25 for non-UW students but that prices will increase by \$5 the week of the event. She said there will be Puppy Love and bowling events along with other tentative events during the Winter quarter.

Jack Flesher said most of his work has been focused on Senate recruitment and administrative tasks. He said 7 Senators did not meet their attendance requirements for last quarter. He said he contacted these Senators and expressed disinterest in kicking anyone out. He said he reminded these Senators that they can assign proxies for the meetings they cannot attend. He also said he could provide these Senators their optional quarter of leave retroactively. He said the Senate has lost 2 Senators. He explained that 1 switched out with another person in their program while the other graduated. He said the Senate added 3 new Senators, 2 from Speech and Hearing and 1 from LLM Law School. He said he has received emails from people saying they are interested in getting involved in GPSS. He thanked Noah for working on the website to make a Senate roster and the Senator of the Month proclamations. He mentioned that the Arts Council had its first

meeting on Tuesday, but that some of the original members were not able to meet. He said the Arts Council will need to establish a new meeting time. He said he has sent out a When2Meet sent to Senators who expressed interest in being involved with CSMR.

Jon Choi said the Student Activities Fee had its first meeting on Friday. He said the Student Technology Fee did not send in its special notice meeting request to the public office and therefore could not meet. He mentioned that the budget request packet will be due on January 29. He said the Finance and Budget Committee did not reach quorum last Friday and therefore could not meet. He said it has been difficult to get people back on campus during the first week of the quarter. He said the committee has 4 special allocations requests to review by this Friday. He said 1 request is from the school of Oceanography and that there is another potential request from History.

A.J. Balatico Said tomorrow is the Board of Regents meeting. He said Regents will be discussing the undergraduate enrollment report and another report by Joy Williamson-Lott related to graduate and professional programs across campuses. He said that UW Seattle is the only campus in Washington whose enrollment numbers were not negatively impacted by COVID. He said all other Washington colleges have seen their enrollment drop, including UW Bothell and UW Tacoma. He said the Regents will be focused on distributing resources and will evaluate campus needs with the capital report. He said graduate students in general would be supportive of capital improvements of Bagley Hall which would cost about \$5 million and represents the only explicit request for building maintenance in this year's Legislative Session. He said David Woodson will come to the Senate on January 17 to discuss the UW power plant along with the decarbonization resolution authors. He said UAW will go into their collective bargaining agreement negotiations. He explained that GPSS is separate from UAW but that the Senate's constituency contains a high number of UAW members. He said the introduction of other fees to offset wage growth on campus will directly impact GPSS's decision related to the Services and Activities Fee. He said the Executive Committee will need to consider whether it considers staff members' wage increases a standard annual budget expenditure. He mentioned that GPSS officer growth is also related to tuition rates in different programs. He mentioned that there was 1 person who was unable to continue with SAF this quarter and that GPSS needs at least 1 graduate student willing to be appointed to SAF. He said GPSS will likely need to review about 150 resumes for the position again. He explained that filling the position is not something that requires a full appointment from the Executive Committee. He said he still needs to email Christina Coop about acquiring Pantheon and Slack for the GPSS website and communication. He said PACs met on January 3 and spoke with President Cauce and Provost Serio about plans involving communication around the Middle East conflict. He said they are relying on the Jackson School to give lectures. He said they do not want to go into facilitated

discussions without first providing professional training for facilitating these discussions. He said funding for training is on the table if there is an interest for it. He said Joy Williamson-Lott will be at the next PACS meeting on January 17. He said she requested that, if invited, the Senate hold a Q&A session like the one that was held with Provost Richards and President Cauce last year. He said there will be a TABS meeting at Bothell soon. He said he is working with the Faculty Senate and Counseling Center on an Okanagan Charter for student health across facilities which will be introduced to the Senate in February. He said the Graduate Council approved the continuation of the Astrobiology programs as well as a 5-year review timeline for the Anthropology master's and PhD programs. He said the Graduate Council also approved an Engineering Leadership Certificate, which will be presented to the Board of Regents tomorrow. He encouraged the Executive Committee to begin thinking about GPSS's transition into next year and the succession of officers. He mentioned that this year marks his third term as an officer of GPSS and that he will not be qualified to run again. He said the next President will need to be aware of the position's responsibilities.

Christina Coop said ASUW was in the process of moving off Slack and to Microsoft Teams.

A.J. Balatico said the decision to move to Slack resulted from a previous discussion with Rene about Union membership. He said it was strange to have Microsoft Teams which required university login. He said Slack was the option because it is what the UAW also uses.

Christina Coop said GPSS is not the union.

A.J. Balatico confirmed that GPSS is not the union.

Christina Coop asked why the union using Slack would be a factor in GPSS's decision to switch platforms.

A.J. Balatico said Senators use non-Microsoft emails and that 25% of the Senate's constituency are union members. He said Microsoft Teams is used for internal use among GPSS officers and staff but not for the Senate.

8. [Information] GPSS Composition Survey 6:11pm

A.J. Balatico said the GPSS Composition Survey is conducted every year to see who is on the Senate. He said the Senate has a higher representation among professional and master's students than before. He explained that the survey is not conducted in the Fall because graduate students are onboarding and getting acquainted. He said the survey will

be ready to go on January 17. He asked the Executive Committee if there is anything aside from the demographic and research information it currently asks for that the Executive Committee would like to include.

Ella Spurlock asked if there is a question for what students want to do after graduating. She said this question could inform more of the professional programs GPSS puts on.

A.J. Balatico said there is not a policy that defines what a PhD or master's degree in the Graduate School Council. He said the question could give GPSS an idea about what programs are training their students for.

Jon Choi suggested asking if Senators intend to stay in Seattle after graduating to help gauge potential alumni engagement.

A.J. Balatico said about 70% of students stay in the state after graduation. He said this is one potential selling point to the legislature about expanding the Washington College Grant.

Jack Flesher asked if 70% of all students or 70% of graduate students stayed in the state.

A.J. Balatico said 70% of all students stayed in the state.

Jack Flesher recommended including open-ended questions.

A.J. Balatico said it is important to give people time and for the survey not to take too long to complete. He recommended that Senators be able to complete the survey in 5 to 7 minutes. He suggested prompting respondents to keep their answers to the open-ended questions short. He mentioned that some Senators might not engage with their constituency as much because of how they meet and interact with other students. He mentioned that PhD students have been strongly represented historically.

9. [Information/Action] All Grad Messaging Blueprint 6:17pm

A.J. Balatico said elections and student regent applications had a high level of interest last year. He said there were 40 applications as opposed to only 6 from the year prior. He said there were 10 candidates for 6 officer positions last year. He said there may be an entirely new officer board because most officers would be transitioning away from GPSS next year. He said the Office of Government Relations set the date for the Legislative Session for January 20. He said he is thinking about sending out an all-grad email on January 18 after the Senate meeting with resolutions and details about the Cultural Showcase and Graduate Research Symposium. He said the email will be sectioned by

topic. He reiterated that GPSS is not the union and that the email will not include union activity.

Jack Flesher said he agrees. He expressed that it would be better to send a well-formed and bundled email. He mentioned that people generally have not responded to his emails from last week.

A.J. Balatico said there were 150 graduate students and program advisors at the Surgeon General event. He said 150 people turned in resumes for liaison positions. He said GPSS may expect a similar number of applications for the Cultural Showcase and Research Symposium.

Matthew Moran asked if information about officer elections would be included in the email.

A.J. Balatico said officer emails would be included so Senators interested in being officers next year could connect with them and ask for further information about their jobs. He said elections will take place during the first or second meeting in May. He said he will mention that officer positions are ASE jobs with tuition waivers.

Jack Flesher reminded current officers to remain impartial with the information they provide to interested Senators to avoid swaying election results. He also reminded them that they are not allowed to show support or preference for any one candidate over another.

9. [Information/Action] Officer Budget (Early Legislative Session) 6:23pm

A.J. Balatico said the operational budget for GPSS is around \$630,000. He mentioned that the officer line items constitute about \$40,000 and that the rest constitutes allocations and personnel.

Jon Choi said he believes that 80% of the budget is personnel.

A.J. Balatico said the biggest chunk of money goes to officer compensation. He said that tuition cost is based on program. He explained the different tuition rates and how they increase across programs and tiers. He mentioned that staff members are paid \$24 per hour for 19 hours per week. He indicated that the increase in staff wages does not constitute a standard budgetary increase. He said staff wages increased by \$1 per hour from last year. He said GPSS requested \$30,000 from SAF last year and received \$22,700. He said GPSS spent a lot last year to catch up on spending from previous years. He encouraged the Executive Committee to have frank discussions about the budget and

whether GPSS needs to maintain expenditures associated with positions, features, and activities. He said the budget normally increases incrementally over the years. He encouraged the Executive Committee to examine each line item in the budget this year. He indicated that GPSS saved money by combining the Creative and Communications positions from last year.

Nick Juno said Adrien and Mykael's performances have been outstanding. He said the Organizing Director position is relatively new. He said the role was created because UW and GPSS had an outsized role in now-defunct national organizations. He said he would be open to the argument that those roles be consolidated into 1 Policy Director role.

A.J. Balatico mentioned that people critiqued specific line items in the GPSS budget after it was adopted last year.

Jack Flesher suggested creating a staff position for a dedicated website developer if the Policy Director role were consolidated. He said there are constant issues with maintaining the website and expressed interest in hiring someone to deal with front- and back-end updates, maintenance, and follow-up on sessions. He said currently various staff members all update different parts of the website. He indicated this may be possible without increasing the budget.

A.J. Balatico said SAF-requested budget is for operations, events, and people that GPSS hires. He said there are items that, if eliminated, would come out of the programming budget which is separate.

Matthew Moran said he agrees with Jack and Nick. He said GPSS might be able to hire a website developer at less than 19 hours per week. He expressed urgency in fixing the website.

Jack Flesher said fixing the website is an expertise issue. He said someone who specializes in website development could do a better job and concentrate their efforts.

A.J. Balatico said managing the website does require a high level of coding background. He said the website is a WordPress but it also needs to be cyber security compatible with the university. He mentioned that GPSS was hacked last year in travel grants. He said single sign on integration on different pages is technical. He said officers could include professional development requirements in the job description. He said he wants our Senate to be aware of how GPSS is funded, and that Senators should not be surprised that GPSS staff is funded by SAF or that different officers cost different amounts. He

indicated that SAF might not fund a budget increase and that GPSS added an officer position that it is currently deficit spending to cover.

Matthew Moran said the summer officer wage is \$30 per hour but that we can fix it to \$24 to be consistent with staff pay.

A.J. Balatico said changing the summer officer wage to \$24 per hour would save \$8,640. He said \$24 per hour would be less than what officers get during the school year. He mentioned that STF currently has \$8 million left and that GPSS is looking to fund some initiatives through STF in future years.

Matthew Moran said that is something GPSS cannot really plan for due to the likelihood of a strike and not knowing the results of negotiations. He said GPSS has based officer pay off TA/RA parity.

Jon Choi mentioned that GPSS has an endowment that generates a few thousand dollars per year that has not been accessed in recent years. He indicated that last year's officers' budgets were underutilized.

A.J. Balatico said 2017-2018 was the last normal fiscal year since the pandemic. He indicated that officers have underspent since then because of COVID. He said wages have remained standard and that the biggest carryover will be from allocations. He said the cost of maintaining the VP of Administration position will cost \$18,000. He said GPSS's request to SAF will be about \$500,000 next year.

Nick Juno said he is working in Olympia to change SAF, but that it will be a multi-year process. He recommended being conservative about what GPSS receives and that planning for less would be smart.

A.J. Balatico said that GPSS should not ask for less than in previous years. He indicated that it is important to figure out the actuals.

Nick Juno said the pool of money may not expand.

Jack Flesher asked if Jon could apprise the Executive Committee about what the budget timeline looks like.

Jon Choi said there are 2 budget processes. He said 1 is for the SAF budget request and the other is the internal operational budget that the Executive Committee passes to the Senate for approval in Spring. He said that to submit the budget request to SAF, GPSS

needs to figure out how much it is going to spend. He said he shared last year's actuals with the officers and offered to share them with the Executive Senators. He said he will be meeting with HUB finance to get Autumn quarter actuals and will share with Committee as soon as possible. He said he is hoping to complete a preliminary officer budget draft before next Friday. He said he will present the officer budget on Wednesday, January 24. He said Monday January 29 is the deadline for submitting the SAF budget request.

A.J. Balatico said there will not be time for the Senate to approve the SAF budget request if it is not submitted by January 17.

Jon Choi asked if the Senate would need to approve before he submitted the SAF budget request.

A.J. Balatico said the standard would be for the Senate to approve the SAF budget request before it is submitted on January 29.

Carrie Moore said there is an option to extend the SAF budget request deadline to give the Senate more time to approve.

A.J. Balatico said the budget request would need to be introduced at next week's Senate meeting. He said the latest that the Senate could approve the SAF budget request would be February 7. He said GPSS approved the budget request early last year.

Jon Choi asked if the committee advises requesting an extension from SAF.

A.J. Balatico said if the SAF budget request is submitted on the 7th or the 8th, they can entertain it on the 9th or the 16th.

Jon Choi said he will try to get an extension from the SAF chair. He said he will keep to the current schedule and get it approved by the Senate by February 7. He said he will try to set up meetings with other officers for drafting the budget.

10. [Information] Senate Agenda Setting 6:47pm

A.J. Balatico projected and explained the Senate Agenda.

Jack Flesher asked about the timing for the Science and Policy Committee resolutions and whether 20 minutes is enough to discuss the budget. He asked if we wanted to build in time to fill out the GPSS Composition Survey.

A.J. Balatico Said 30 out of 50 Senators filled out the TABS survey at the last Senate meeting.

Matthew Moran supported adding time for the GPSS Composition Survey.

Jon Choi said he plans on giving a 10-minute presentation with time for questions.

Maleen Kidiwela asked if it would be possible to send out the survey earlier.

A.J. Balatico said yes.

Jack Flesher volunteered to read the land acknowledgement.

Ella Spurlock said 15 minutes should be sufficient to discuss the Science and Policy Committee resolutions. She said the resolutions will be polished by the meeting. She said she hopes that people read them before coming to the Senate meeting.

A.J. Balatico said he will send out the resolutions on Monday at 5:30pm.

Matthew Moran said there was a nomination for Maeve Riley for Senator of the Month. He mentioned that Maeve was a member of both the Arts Council and Elections Committee and led Crochet Circle.

Jack Flesher supported Maeve Riley's nomination. He asked about including a 5-minute block for the GPSS Composition Survey.

A.J. Balatico said yes. He suggested that the budget overview should be focused on changes between this fiscal year and the next.

Jack Flesher moved to approve the agenda. **Maleen Kidiwela** seconded. No objections. Motion passed. 6:53pm.

11. [Action] Adjournment 6:54pm

Francisco Dojenia motioned to adjourn the meeting. **Matthew Moran** seconded. No objections 6:54pm

Meeting minutes prepared by Daniel Cook, GPSS Senate Clerk.

