# The Executive Committee of the Graduate and Professional Student Senate

Meeting of 21 February 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

## The following persons also attended the meeting:

1. [Action] Call to Order 5:30pm

**A.J. Balatico** called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

## 2. [Action] Approval of the Agenda 5:31pm

**A.J. Balatico** explained that there was an agenda item to add to the agenda regarding Departmental Allocation.

**Matthew Moran** moved to approve the agenda. **Francisco Dojenia** seconded. No objections. Motion passed. 5:32pm

## 3. [Action] Approval of the Minutes 5:32pm

**Jack Flesher** moved to approve the minutes. **Clare Koesters** seconded. No objections. Motion passed. 5:33pm

4. [Information] ASUW Winter Updates 5:3pm

**Francisco Dojenia** said ASUW is hosting a town hall on February 26 from 5:00pm to 6:00pm to go over student health and wellness. He said there is legislation pending for collegiate-based EMS service and student health insurance. He said ASUW is discussing adopting the Chicago principles. He discussed ASUW's Asian Student Commission Task Force.

A.J. Balatico asked about the Ice Cream Resolution.

Francisco Dojenia said the Ice Cream Resolution is still going on.

A.J. Balatico asked if President Cauce held a forum.

Francisco Dojenia said she held a forum yesterday.

**A.J. Balatico** said he received an email from the ICA about the powerplant. He said the email indicated an interest in decommissioning the powerplant by 2030 instead of 2035. He asked if Francisco received the same information.

**Francisco Dojenia** said he was not sure. He said most of his work has been leading the Constitutional Reform Task Force. He presented the membership of the task force and said its final meeting is on Friday to approve its proposals.

A.J. Balatico asked for context on the election involving the ballot initiative.

**Francisco Dojenia** said the filing opens on Friday and closes on March 1. He said campaigning begins March 5 which is when the student body will vote on the ballot measure. He said the Constitutional Reform Task Force researched other university constitutions and has focused on increasing democratic engagement in ASUW and increasing checks and balances. He presented the ballot question that students will be voting on in April as well as the proposed constitutional reforms from the Constitutional Reform Task Force.

**A.J. Balatico** asked which of the new positions outlined in the Constitutional Reform Task Force's proposal are paid staff and which are elected. He asked how the proposal would impact ASUW's ability to attract participants.

Francisco Dojenia said the reforms involve more paid positions to increase engagement.

A.J. Balatico said having paid positions is a budgetary concern.

**Francisco Dojenia** said that the constitution's approval will not take effect until Summer 2025. He said ASUW will use the time between the constitution's approval and Summer 2025 to work with the Finance and Budget Committee and SAF on amending ASUW bylaws to align with the new constitution. He continued explaining proposed

constitutional reforms. He presented the timeline that the Constitutional Reform Task Force is following.

A.J. Balatico asked what kind of feedback ASUW has elicited from voters and students.

**Francisco Dojenia** said 3 at-large student representatives have been part of the task force. He said there has not been much student input beyond these members.

**A.J. Balatico** asked what other messaging ASUW will use to supplement communication about the proposed constitutional changes with voters since voters are unlikely to read the new constitution in its entirety.

**Francisco Dojenia** said he is not sure but suggested that ASUW could reach out through social media. He said the candidate packet will be released to voters. He acknowledged that voters will not read the new constitution in its entirety.

**A.J. Balatico** asked if there will be an executive summary or 1-page brief outlining the changes between the old and new constitutions.

**Francisco Dojenia** said that type of documentation could be included in the report to the student body.

**A.J. Balatico** recommended providing a summary of the substantive changes to the constitution.

5. [Information] Executive Senator Updates 5:51pm

**Ella Spurlock** said the Science and Policy Committee has wrapped up its legislative work for the Winter quarter. She said the resolutions that the Senate passed are still in the process of being sent out. She said the committee missed the opportunity to send the resolutions to state legislators during the legislative session. She said the committee is currently focused on organizing the Graduate Research Symposium on April 4 which has received 33 applicants. She said the application deadline for the Graduate Research Symposium has been extended to March 1. She said GPSS is thinking about only reserving the North Ballroom if there are less than 50 participants.

**A.J. Balatico** said there are a good amount of people who signed up for a 3-minute thesis portion and that there is a lot of capacity remaining for poster sessions. He mentioned that GPSS could facilitate printing posters for participants.

**Raj Dewangan** said SAF met various units and is currently discussing individual budgets with each unit. He said the programming cost has increased dramatically for Student Technology Loan Program. He said SAF is trying to determine how to incorporate new units.

**A.J. Balatico** asked if Raj could elaborate on the differences between CAPS funding and other unit funding. He asked Raj what his preferences are.

**Raj Dewangan** said a lot of funding goes to programming and travel. He said the parameters for determining funding include unit need, whether units have the organizational capacity to expand, and unit motivations. He mentioned that SAF could not issue merit increases last year. He said SAF is now committed to advertising that units are funded by SAF.

**A.J. Balatico** reiterated that the 4% increase every year constitutes about \$800,000 while there are over \$4 million in additional requests each year. He thanked Raj, Jon, Maleen, Alec, and Olivia for their work.

**Maleen Kidiwela** said the Elections Committee has not met quorum to hold meetings over the last 2 weeks and cannot approve any edits in the bylaws from the Judicial Committee. He said the Elections Committee submitted changes to the bylaws and received feedback on those changes from people who attended the last meeting. He said the consensus in the committee was to not accept some of the changes from the Judicial Committee. He reiterated that the Executive Committee cannot do anything without quorum. He indicated that the committee needs 1 more person to attend to meet quorum. He encouraged Executive Senators to join and help.

**A.J. Balatico** said 4 at-large Senators were needed to form the Executive Committee and that there have been discussions about membership at prior Senate meetings.

Jack Flesher said another Executive Senator could join the Elections Committee.

**Charles Bugre** said the university is considering updating the majors and minors it offers as well as communications about how things work at UW.

**A.J. Balatico** said these updates do not affect graduate students directly but may affect their teaching load and the allocation of resources.

**Clare Koesters** said she is trying to get Sustained Dialogue started with Jay Cunningham and is working with the Sustained Dialogue Institute in DC. She said the project is meant for students to discuss different sides of an issue. She said they discussed the possibility of using Sustained Dialogue as a means of facilitating student conversations rather than a forum for student activism. She said they also discussed where Sustained Dialogue would be maintained. She expressed her desire to simplify the process. She said there the project will involve an antisemitism task force and an islamophobia task force. She said President Cauce has felt pressure about this issue on campus and the university will collect data on student views.

**A.J. Balatico** mentioned that Jay Cunningham is the Student Regent. He said there is institutional support for Sustained Dialogue, but that the question over who will sustain the project after Jay leaves remains. He said the project prioritizes dialogue over debate, is not issue-specific, and would be a framework for any dialogue.

**Jack Flesher** suggested that the Simpson Center could be a good place for getting the program started and sustained over the short run with institutional support.

**Noah Nguyen** said she represented Material Science and Engineering which performed a science demonstration at a local Elementary School. She said she has updated the GPSS website with the Senator of the Month and is determining what information can be archived or updated. She said there will be a Faculty Tri Campus Committee meeting tomorrow with a section for GPSS updates. She said she will create a list of updates to present at the meeting.

**A.J. Balatico** said the International Student Health Insurance Program (ISHIP) was brought up. He said ISHIP was not competitive with ACA options and that providing healthcare to students remains an issue.

6. [Action] Officer Updates 6:11pm

A.J. Balatico recognized Jordan as the new University Affairs Director.

Raj Dewangan welcomed Jordan.

**Jack Flesher** said Arts Council tasks are ongoing. He said there will be a sketch session on February 28 from 1:00pm to 2:00pm in the GPSS office and that he will send out information on the event tonight. He said he is waiting to hear back on an approval for an alcohol permit for the Craft and Complain event at the end of the quarter. He said he is serving again this quarter on the Landolt Committee for the Distinguished Graduate Mentor Award. He said the results will be announced later in the year. He said he met with Alec, Beth, and Matthew to discuss bylaws revisions. He said he met with 1 new Senator for onboarding and is following up with departments currently lacking GPSS representation.

**Amanda Chin** said all the Winter events are finalized. She said there will be a Cultural Showcase on April 2, a Graduate Research Symposium in the North Ballroom on April 4 from 12:00pm to 4:00pm, a Film Festival on April 20 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm in Kane Hall, a Diversity Summit Resource Fair on April 27, and a Drag Show on May 17 from 5:30pm to 7:00pm. She said there is ongoing discussion on collaboration between CIRCLE and the UW Alumni Association.

**Clare Koesters** asked what sorts of films Amanda is looking to screen at the Film Festival.

Amanda Chin said the thematic focus is community and culture.

Clare Koesters asked if Amanda is looking to screen short or long films.

Amanda Chin said she is looking to screen short films.

Clare Koesters said she could connect Amanda with some local filmmakers.

**Matthew Moran** said the Diversity Leadership Conference is in its 10<sup>th</sup> year and will be hosting a free event this Friday from 1:00pm to 5:00pm called Bridging Perspectives: Leading With Community. He said there will be a keynote speaker at the event as well as workshop sessions held by professionals, students, and professors. He said Jess will be tabling at the event. He said the Diversity Resource Fair has received close to 10 on-campus resources tabling the event and is currently trying to get more. He said he is sending emails out to on-campus contacts. He mentioned that he is trying to get local and state officials to table the event. He said he will try reaching out to the Office of the Governor as well. He said the Diversity Resource Fair will take place on April 27 from 12:00pm to 2:00pm. He said the Diversity Committee approved 2 more applications and will exhaust its funds by the end of the quarter. He said the Diversity Committee will focus more on writing resolutions in the Spring quarter. He said he will work on the Equity Toolkit once his administrative work is finished.

**Jon Choi** said Travel Grants has received 61 applications, a record number, and has funded 3. He said STF has approved 1 proposal and will hear 26 more.

A.J. Balatico asked if there were a way to view the proposals.

Jon Choi said STF has uploaded some records of previous proposals that were approved.

A.J. Balatico asked if any of the proposals are from this year.

Jon Choi said no. He said the proposals were from 2023 and prior.

A.J. Balatico asked if current proposals are public information.

Jon Choi said he does not think they are.

A.J. Balatico said information on current proposals could indicate what STF funds.

**Jon Choi** said he will bring that up to the STF Chair. He said 1 Special Allocation was approved and that 2 more Departmental Allocations will be reviewed this week. He said the Dance Department needed a new rug and a refrigerator, and that total funding for a more energy efficient refrigerator would be over \$1,000. He said the Finance and Budget Committee approved \$1,400 of funding which needed approval from the Executive Committee.

**A.J. Balatico** said there would need to be a 2/3 majority vote to reverse the Finance and Budget Committee's approval.

**Ella Spurlock** asked what other Departmental Allocations requests look like. She asked if there have there been other requests and whether these have been funded. She asked how much money would be left to allocate if the Finance and Budget Committee approved \$1,400 in funding for the Dance Department.

**Jon Choi** said \$5,000 have been allocated for Departmental Allocations for this fiscal year. He said \$1,000 was given to the Earth and Space Sciences, and \$1,000 to

Oceanography. He said that with \$3,000 remaining, there are applications from Earth and Space Sciences, Dance, and History for a total of \$2,900.

**Ella Spurlock** asked if approving the Dance Department's request and the other 2 requests in the pipeline would exhaust the Departmental Allocations fund for the end of the financial year.

Jon Choi said yes. He said there would only be \$100 remaining.

Nick Juno said there are 15 days left in the legislative session. He said state legislators will be on the floor full time until March 7, which is the last day of the session. He explained that the Senate and House bills will go into Conference Committee to reconcile any differences. He said budget negotiations are taking place from now until the last day of the session. He said the House and Senate budgets came out earlier this week and that the budgets will pass next week. He said the House budget is favorable and allocates more money while the Senate budget is more austere. He said the budget provides additional money for the Native America scholarship pilot program at Washington State University (WSU). He said there is a desire to expand the program to make it more universally implemented in the state. He said WSU asked for \$5 million to cover union contracts. He explained that state budgets do not normally fund union contracts but that the House allocated \$2 million while Senate allocated nothing. He said UW is approaching budget negotiations soon and that this decision over allocating funds to cover union contracts could have an effect. He said funding for Bagley Hall and Campus Decarbonization is on track and that funding for UW Medical and expanding the Washington College Grant is proceeding smoothly. He said there was \$90 million allocated in the Senate budget for a Graduate Student Loan Program that would issue loans to Graduate students pursuing high demand degrees at 1% to 2% interest. He said there was an implicit understanding that the loan could be forgiven down the line. He said the program passed last year and will be administered under the Washington Student Achievement Council in Academic Year 2024-2025. He said the Senate cut \$40 million from the fund with plans for redistributing it to a more general education fund. He emphasized that this is the only graduate student focused program. He said he is working on motivating campuses to write to budget Chairs in the Senate to voice their dissatisfaction over cutting funds from the program. He said the Student Achievement Council has indicated that \$50 million will still cover expected operations. He said the program would remain but that legislators would see it as a fund to use for other projects. He said higher education Senators were very upset about this information and that House budget representatives were blindsided. He said he hopes that the decision will be reversed and that it is important not to defund graduate student priorities.

Clare Koesters asked if it was too late to email state Senators.

**Nick Juno** said we can still email Senators. He indicated that the floor fight will be brutal. He said final budgets will not be hashed out until the end of the legislative session on March 7. He mentioned that he sent out a draft email that GPSS Senators could modify and send.

**A.J. Balatico** said graduate school is seen as a luxury rather than a necessity for the workforce. He said the interests of graduate Students are often pitted again K-12 education.

**Nick Juno** said the state is moving into an economy in which having an undergraduate degree is no longer sufficient. He said there have been no substantive changes on policy.

**A.J. Balatico** said the STF Committee incubator would be a way of spending money allocated through STF. He mentioned that the STF is currently \$22 per student per quarter and maintains a large reserve. He said STF will come to GPSS in April to look at which projects are being funded. He asked Senators to think about the necessity of collecting STF from students. He indicated that the Incubator plan is intended to spend the funds. He said one possible alternative is to eliminate the STF that students pay each quarter to STF. He said the Provost's Town Hall was last Thursday and that the discussion focused on AI and how UW will interact with AI. He said there will be an AI task force to determine how it interacts with the university mission. He said Provost Serio mentioned the resolution on tire chemicals from GPSS and GPSS's work in cultivating community relating to the Okanagan Charter. He said GPSS must work on aligning itself with the Diversity Blueprint. He said the Faculty Senate has been updating its own bylaws. He said there has been pushback in the Faculty Senate over professors providing disability accommodations. He said the faculty finally have a channel for addressing grievances across the 3 campuses that do not rise to the level of litigation. He said the Chair of the Student Regent Selection Committee will be Puneet Birk at UW Bothell. He mentioned that Puneet served as the ASUW Bothell President and the Washington Student Association President.

**A.J. Balatico** moved to have a 3-minute recess. **Jack Flesher** seconded. No objections. Motion passed. 6:50pm

7. [Action] Officer/Executive Budget 6:56pm

**Jon Choi** apprised the Executive Committee of the budget updates. He said there was an error in calculating the Fringe Benefit Loan Rate, meaning that there is an additional \$7,000 for the budget.

**Jack Flesher** clarified that the substantive change from the last Executive Committee meeting was the \$7,000 difference.

Jon Choi confirmed.

**A.J. Balatico** recognized that Charles, Maleen, Raj, Jon, and himself are on the Finance and Budget Committee.

Nick Juno asked for a reminder on the deadline for passing the budget.

**Jon Choi** said the Executive Committee will approve the budget recommendation by at next week's meeting.

**Matthew Moran** said further budget cuts is an area of conversation. He said cutting the budget in ways that reflect GPSS values is important. He said the officers have agreed on much of what is proposed in the budget. He said the Finance and Budget Committee is looking to cut from the budget further. He said there is nothing in the GPSS bylaws mandating staff positions which is why it would be simple to cut staff positions. He said the Executive Committee can consider cutting Officer summer wages. He said the current structure for approving the budget takes the burden off the Senate. He explained that this labor is either done by those hired or elected, or by unpaid Senators. He said the Executive Committee must be mindful about what GPSS work looks like in the future.

**Clare Koesters** asked if Executive Senators could sit in on Finance and Budget Committee meetings.

A.J. Balatico said yes.

Clare Koesters said she would like to be able to ask more educated questions.

**Jon Choi** offered to send out information on the Finance and Budget Committee meetings.

**Matthew Moran** said he has some other ideas about cutting from the budget. He mentioned that GPSS never spends every dollar allocated even though the budget proposal assumes GPSS will.

**A.J. Balatico** reiterated that Officer compensation is variable and dependent on the cost of the program of the Officer that the Senate elects. He indicated that this is something that should be considered during elections. He said expenditures often do not fit neatly into specific funding categories.

**Jon Choi** explained that transactions from FY2020 and FY2021 could not be separated out which is why transactions for both showed up in FY 2021.

A.J. Balatico said it would be nice to have that information shared.

**Matthew Moran** discussed the possibility of standardizing Officer pay to a salaried position to eliminate tuition cost variability. He said there were logistical and practical issues to consider with this idea.

**Jack Flesher** said GPSS decided to have parity for Officer compensation with ASEs so that Officer positions are not unique or separated from ASEs. He said the idea was to have commensurate compensation and to attract candidates who want to engage in the work of GPSS.

**A.J. Balatico** asked the Executive Committee what other types of information it would need before deciding on the budget by next week.

**Jack Flesher** asked if there are any major differences between this proposal and the Finance and Budget Committee's proposal.

**Jon Choi** said the Finance and Budget Committee is looking to reduce FY2025 funding according to the maximum available SAF funds.

Jack Flesher asked if that is ongoing work in the committee.

**Jon Choi** said yes. He said the Finance and Budget Committee will discuss the budget this week and share its proposal with the Executive Committee next week.

**A.J. Balatico** reiterated the mission of GPSS. He said Special Allocations helps build community and that Travel Grants has been growing. He raised the issue of where Special Allocations funding is going. He said he wants more transparency about the activities being funded. He said discretionary funding is up in the air.

Matthew Moran asked A.J. what the Executive Committee should agree on today.

**A.J. Balatico** reiterated that the Executive Committee should ask itself what kind of information it needs before deciding on the budget. He said the Executive Committee does not have access to budget actuals. He asked if the Executive Committee was comfortable making a budget decision with the information it currently has.

Clare Koesters asked how many staff members the GPSS personnel costs cover.

**A.J. Balatico** said GPSS personnel costs cover 9 staff members, 6 Officers, and some committee compensation.

**Matthew Moran** said the current proposal removes 3 staff positions and lowers Officer summer wages by about 20%.

Clare Koesters asked if there is a web page with information on staff member positions.

**Matthew Moran** said that information was never officially posted to the website and is not defined in the bylaws though that could be changed.

**Clare Koesters** said she was not uncomfortable with deciding on the budget now for the sake of moving forward. She said it would help to have more information on staff positions.

**Jack Flesher** said staff positions and job descriptions are linked to Handshake and are available, but not collected onto the website.

Noah Nguyen said there is a job description form attached to the GPSS website.

**A.J. Balatico** said the President's Assistant was the first staff position in 1966. He explained the logistics of making decisions concerning staff and Officer emails and titles.

Clare Koesters said the webpage is descriptive.

**A.J. Balatico** said 400 people applied to GPSS staff positions. He said cutting staff would mean cutting student opportunities for employment.

**Matthew Moran** said Amanda went through over 300 applications over the Summer. He said staff wages increased from \$18 to \$24 per hour over the last 2 years. He said some jobs on campus get away with paying under minimum wage. He said it is important to support staff with adequate pay.

**A.J. Balatico** said GPSS may soon experience compression where specialized positions earn close to minimum wage. He said this level of discussion has not happened within the Senate because it is difficult for Senators to acquire the necessary information for making budget decisions.

Jack Flesher said this is why the budget is an agenda item.

**A.J. Balatico** said next year's SAF allocation may not be what GPSS requested. He said GPSS only received about \$22,000 out of the additional \$30,000 it requested last year.

**Jon Choi** asked Executive Senators if they feel comfortable with the proposed budget. He asked what information they would need to feel more comfortable about deciding on the budget.

Maleen Kidiwela asked how much was left over for the reserve fund.

Jon Choi said there would be \$6,000 left.

Maleen Kidiwela asked how much there was at the beginning of the year.

Jon Choi said \$226,000.

Maleen Kidiwela asked for clarification on the budget and spending process.

**Jon Choi** said if GPSS somehow goes over budget it would be at risk of spending more than it has in the reserve fund. He said the budget can be adjusted over the Summer if the Officers budget is insufficient based on elections results.

**Jack Flesher** lamented the financial situation. He said he was concerned about making drastic changes that would impact GPSS's functions. He mentioned that GPSS has access to a \$140,000 endowment that was created in the event of unexpected financial loss. He said there are contingencies in place to prevent GPSS from not being able to cover its costs. He said he is comfortable with the budget as presented. He reiterated that he is concerned about cutting too much too quickly.

**Jon Choi** said the Executive Committee's recommendation does not have to align with the Finance and Budget Committee's recommendation. He said both will be presented to the Senate.

**A.J. Balatico** the bylaws would need to be amended if certain cuts are made to Officers. He said GPSS has not accessed its endowment for 10 years. He said he would like to figure out where GPSS is spending its money. He said GPSS is underspending in all

categories except Travel Grants and personnel. He mentioned that we underspent by \$18,000 in personnel this year and that he wants to know what causes this discrepancy.

**Jon Choi** said GPSS overspent on personnel in FY2022 and FY2023. He said these discrepancies could come from tuition differences or differences in how GPSS calculates Fringe Benefit Loan Rates. He said reserves have decreased because GPSS has increased spending beyond what it receives from SAF. He said many people seem to approve of the budget as presented.

Clare Koesters said that she was ready to approve the budget.

Matthew Moran said there are some more conversations GPSS needs to have first.

**Jack Flesher** said he would like to see the Finance and Budget Committee's ideas at next week's meeting before voting on the budget.

**A.J. Balatico** said he would like to see My Financial Desktop reports to see where GPSS is spending money. He said this information will help him make an informed decision. He said he would reject the budget as presented because it is not data informed.

Jon Choi said the carryover is the GPSS reserve fund.

A.J. Balatico said there should be a report showing that.

Jon Choi said he would provide that report.

8. [Action] Communication to Elections/Judicial Committees 7:43pm

**A.J. Balatico** said the proposals to the bylaws related to elections have not been shared because the Judicial Committee and the Elections Committee must meet independently. He said Jack, Beth, Alec, and Matthew have met, but not in a forum for making decisions on behalf of student government. He said he has received requests about folks applying for student regent and GPSS officer positions.

**Matthew Moran** said the Judicial Committee did not meet quorum last week. He said the Executive Committee would be able to approve the bylaws changes next week if quorum continues to be an issue.

9. [Action] Senate Agenda Outline 7:45pm

**A.J. Balatico** said the UPASS Committee will be at the next Senate meeting where it will ask to approve an \$86 quarterly fee and discuss future projections. He said the Judicial Committee, the Elections Committee, and the Finance and Budget Committee have items to discuss at the next Senate meeting.

**Jack Flesher** said the bylaws changes, the Elections Guide approval, and the budget are big items. He said he thinks the budget will take time.

**A.J. Balatico** said the Elections Committee and the Judicial Committee bylaws changes may be passed easily. He said the March meeting is always the longest due to the budget discussion. He said he would like a summary of items funded by the Finance and Budget Committee and the Diversity Committee.

**Matthew Moran** said there is a link for current year's Diversity Committee. He said he will be indicating which initiatives have been funded by the Diversity Committee.

10. [Action] Adjournment 7:49pm

Matthew Moran motioned to adjourn the meeting. Amanda Chin seconded. No objections. 7:49pm

Meeting minutes prepared by Daniel Cook, GPSS Senate Clerk.