

The Graduate and Professional Student Senate

Meeting of 7 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
Mykhail Lembke, GPSS Policy Director
Mitchel Klein, Student Activity Fee Committee Chair

The following persons also attended the meeting:

1. [Action] Call to Order 5:35pm

A.J. Balatico called the meeting to order at 5:35pm.

2. [Action] Approval of the Agenda 5:36pm

Daniel Cook (History) moved to approve the agenda. **Hannah Shipman (Aeronautics and Astronautics)** seconded. No objections. 5:36pm

3. [Action] Approval of the Minutes 5:37pm

Beth Fawcett (Chemistry) moved to approve the minutes. **George Fennell (Material Science and Engineering)** seconded. No objections. 5:37pm

4. [Information] Land Acknowledgment 5:37pm

Matthew Moran, on behalf of GPSS, gave the land acknowledgment and mentioned the Legislative Advisory Board, the Washington Student Association, wəłəbʔaltx^w –

Intellectual House, the ASUW American Indian Student Commission, the Native and Strong Lifeline, Stand with Duwamish, and Real Rent Duwamish as additional resources for getting involved.

“Every community owes its existence and vitality to generations from around the world who contributed to making the history that led to this moment. Indigenous people have lived here continuously since time immemorial, and Seattle is now a highly cosmopolitan territory with overlapping sovereignties and fidelities. Acknowledging the land we are on is only the first step. Therefore, the Graduate and Professional Student Senate at the University of Washington in Seattle acknowledges the coast Salish people of this land, the land which touches the shared waters of all tribes and bands within the Squamish, Tulalip, and Muckleshoot nations and all traditional lands on which we learn and work.”

5. [Information] Announcements 5:39pm

Amanda Chin reminded the Executive Committee about the Graduate Research Symposium and provided a link to FAQs. She said the deadline to apply for the Graduate Research Symposium is February 15. She said the Puppy Love event will take place next week from 12:00pm to 1:00pm on February 14 in HUB 334. She said Movie Night will take place on Friday, February 16 in HUB 340.

Matthew Moran reminded the Executive Committee that there is still a call for submissions for the Cultural Showcase taking place in April. He said the Diversity Committee funded the Lunar New Year Gala on February 17 as well as the 14th annual Nowruz, Persian New Year, which will occur on March 16 from 5:30pm to 10:30pm at the UW Tower. He welcomed the new Senator from Circle, Chithira Unnikrishnan.

Chithira Unnikrishnan said she is a first-year master student in Civil Engineering and Management representing the CIRCLE community. She explained that her role as GPSS liaison is to serve as a bridge between student government and the community of international graduate and professional students on campus, representing a quarter of all graduate students. She said being involved in CIRCLE provides her an opportunity to be part of groups that help and enhance the experiences of international students. She mentioned that international graduate students face many pressing issues such as navigating employment, insurance, and cultural inclusivity. She said CIRCLE raises international graduate student voices. She said she is looking forward to collaborating with GPSS.

Jack Flesher said there will be another Craft and Complain event tomorrow from 4:00pm to 6:00pm in HUB 314. He announced a new sketch series for sketching dogs from Puppy Love. He provided a link to the Arts Council spreadsheet of events. He mentioned that museum visits throughout Seattle are free on the first Thursday of each month and that Frye offers free 30-minute drop-in mindfulness sessions. He said Century Ballroom hosts dance classes and social dance times.

Maeve Riley (Drama) announced that there is a production of *Much Ado About Nothing* through the Simpson Center at Hutchinson Hall starting tomorrow through the weekend. She said she is a dramaturg for the production.

Jack Flesher said Campus Sustainability Fund has mini grants available for student-led projects. He said students must RSVP for the climate justice teach-in and collective action mixer taking place tomorrow from 4:00pm to 6:00pm in HUB 145. He said UW Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is holding Naloxone, CPR, and AED training sessions in March.

Jon Choi said EMS will host more training sessions in the Spring quarter as well.

Jack Flesher mentioned that GPSS worked on a resolution for Naloxone last year. He announced that there were free public lectures coming up. He said Senators can take their name tags, but to please bring them back.

6. [Information] SAF Chair 5:50pm

Mitchel Klein introduced himself. He provided a definition of the Student Activities Fee (SAF). He explained the SAF Committee structure. He presented the 18 different units that SAF funds on campus. He provided the operating costs for Fiscal Year 2024, totaling over \$21.5 million in total allocations. He provided the quarterly tuition and fee costs. He said total income for SAF is around \$35 million to \$40 million per year, most of which goes into paying SAF bonds. He explained the annual SAF allocation process. He said each unit has significant authority over how they spend their allocations. He said this year SAF is working on a new website, increased transparency, records accessibility, and unit field trips. He said SAF is currently facing difficulties posed by the limit on raising annual increases no more than 4%, minimum wage increases, inflation, increased unit requests, new services requested by students, and funding prospective new units.

Nikoloz Nadirashvili (Art History) asked if Mitchel oversaw SAF. He asked who made decisions regarding SAF funding and allocations.

Mitchel Klein said the SAF Committee collectively makes those decisions and that he is the Chair of the Committee.

A.J. Balatico said ASUW and GPSS appoint members to the SAF Committee. He said Denzil Suite and the Board of Regents approve those decisions.

Nikoloz Nadirashvili (Art History) asked how long it takes for a new initiative to get approved by SAF.

Mitchel Klein said it depends on the cost and legality of the initiative. She said there is currently no money to allocate to new initiatives.

Nikoloz Nadirashvili (Art History) asked for clarification on GPSS's role in SAF funding.

A.J. Balatico said costs have been increasing for over a decade. He said healthcare providers at UW get paid in the 20th percentile of the medical field. He said the 4% annual limit for SAF increases adds about \$800,000 to the SAF budget each year, which is not enough to fund the \$3.2 million to \$4 million in new requests each year. He said SAF funds are distributed among necessary units on campus. He said Alec, Raj, Maleen, Jon, and Olivia are the new SAF Committee appointees and will assist in making decisions about distributing funds.

Mitchel Klein said increasing the 4% annual limit on raising the SAF fee requires legislating at Olympia. He said the SAF fee is currently increasing by the maximum amount each year and it still is not enough. He mentioned programs that were funded through SAF like Student Legal Services, the Golf Range, RSO grants, Physical Therapy, and general campus infrastructure.

Mykhail Lembke asked what percentage increase would be sufficient for SAF to meet expenditures.

Mitchel Klein said it depends. He said SAF could always spend extra funds to service students more. He said there are always additional services to provide to students, but that right now SAF is not meeting basic minimums.

Beth Fawcett (Chemistry) asked what Mitchel Klein would tell each department on campus if he could.

Mitchel Klein said he would tell each department that every single student on campus has used SAF services.

7. [Information] GPSS Composition Survey 6:13pm

A.J. Balatico said there were 60 responses to the GPSS Composition Survey. He presented and explained the GPSS Composition Survey results. He explained the principal recommendations and actionable feedback received through the GPSS Composition Survey concerning meeting times, providing guidance to Senators, opportunities for interaction, and servicing international students. He explained various opportunities to service and represent international student interests. He said there will be other opportunities to provide input and feedback.

8. [Action] GPPS Elections Committee 6:19pm

Alec Solemslie (Environmental and Forest Sciences) said the Elections Committee is busy changing bylaws about voting modality. He said the Elections Guide cannot be sent out until March. He said the bylaw changes and Elections Guide will be completed and sent to the Senate in March for approval. He said the Elections Committee is currently working on changing the bylaws to address voter disenfranchisement and contingencies should the digital voting platform fail. He said the current bylaws indicate that Elections Guide need to be sent out by February.

A.J. Balatico said the Elections Guide has been sent to the Judicial Committee for review next week and that the Judicial Committee will give its recommendation to the Senate by March 6. He said the Elections Guide will either go out right before finals or at the beginning of Spring quarter. He said the Senate must formally vote on whether to suspend the bylaw requiring that the Elections Guide be sent out in February.

Tobin Wainer (Astronomy) asked if there is a clause that will undo the suspension or amend the bylaw for March rather than February.

A.J. Balatico said the Senate could suspend the bylaw and make a recommendation for this academic year.

Jack Flesher said the Elections Committee is looking to change the bylaw so that the Elections Guide must be sent out by March rather than February. He said the Elections Committee will change and vote on the bylaw change at the next committee meeting anyway.

A.J. Balatico said the alternative is to call a special meeting to pass the Elections Guide in late February.

Beth Fawcett (Chemistry) moved to suspend Article 5, Section H, Clause 4C pending the bylaws update. **Hannah Shipman (Aeronautics and Astronautics)** seconded. No objections. 6:25pm

Motion passed.

9. [Information] GPSS Budget Check-In 6:27pm

Jon Choi apprised the Senate of the budget process for the next Fiscal Year. He said the Senate will receive and vote on budget recommendations from the Executive Committee and the Finance and Budget Committee at the beginning of Spring quarter. He provided a summary of the budget headings and breakdown. He explained that the plan currently is to decrease overall funding by 6% next year by consolidating staff roles and reducing summer wages for the Officers. He summarized the reallocation of funds to different budget headings. He emphasized that the Executive and Finance and Budget Committees are still discussing the budget.

Beth Fawcett (Chemistry) asked if there has been consideration in adjusting for inflation.

Jon Choi said inflation and cost of living expenses would be accounted for in a typical budget season, but that historically GPSS has not spent all its budget. He said GPSS is choosing to consolidate staff positions to cut costs, so inflation will not be accounted for.

A.J. Balatico said Officer tuition rates also have an impact on the budget. He said this is the biggest variable cost because different programs have different tuition costs. He said the budget currently allocates \$144,000, or \$24,000 per Officer, for Officer tuition costs.

He said this figure is based on the average cost of graduate tuition but that the actual cost can vary.

Maleen Kidiwela asked why GPSS is reducing Special Allocations by \$2,000.

Jon Choi said it resulted from the decision to balance the budget. He mentioned that GPSS has not spent all the Special Allocations budget in the past.

Tobin Wainer (Astronomy) asked if the decrease in budget accounts for the decrease in available funds. He asked what happens to unspent funds.

Jon Choi said SAF gave GPSS \$485,000 and offered the possibility of an 8% increase, but that GPSS should realistically expect a 4% increase for next year's funding. He said GPSS received a little more than \$7,000 from STF. He said the \$510,000 that GPSS is expected to receive will not cover the proposed budget and that the difference will be covered by the GPSS reserve funds. He said the goal is to lower the amount of the budget to be covered by the reserve funds and survive long enough for SAF and STF funding to catch up. He said the university would place GPSS on probation if it cannot cover costs.

A.J. Balatico said GPSS would suspend certain activities long before it failed to cover costs.

Matthew Moran said GPSS is not in jeopardy of failing to cover its costs. He said the goal is to reduce costs to catch up and that the current budget proposal is not a final decision, but a starting point for discussion. He said it is imperative to move forward with a budget that is consistent with GPSS's values.

10. [Information] Senator of the Month 6:44pm

A.J. Balatico said the Senator of the Month announcement will be deferred to the next meeting. He said GPSS will have Senators of the Month in March.

11. [Information] Officer Updates 6:44pm

Nick Juno explained that all bills in the Washington state legislature must pass out of their original chambers by Tuesday. He said students from all 3 campuses participated in Huskies on the Hill last week and that he received positive feedback from the event. He said legislators are being conservative about spending this year. He said legislators are supporting bills for childcare and childcare providers, easing housing costs for renters, building more housing, expanding access to loan forgiveness programs, and expanding access to the Washington College Grant. He said raising SAF fees was part of the Legislative Agenda but was not passed by the Washington Student Association. He said legislators are not interested in acting on SAF fees either. He said he is working on building relationships with students on the WSA board. He said there will be a Legislative Advisory Board meeting tomorrow at 3:00pm in the GPSS office.

Matthew Moran said he has been outreaching to groups for the Cultural Showcase and the Diversity Resources Fair but has been having difficulties with communications. He

said the Seattle Office of Civil Rights and the Washington Office of Equity have expressed interest in participating in the Diversity Resources Fair. He said the Drag Brunch was successful and that there will be another Drag Event on May 17. He said he is working with the Mariners Organization on a graduate student night with happy hour on May 10. He said the Mariners Organization is planning on building a partnership with GPSS. He said the Diversity Fund is close to allocating \$7,000 in funds and that all the applications for funding are in the agenda he sends out each week so people can see all the organizations Diversity Fund has been working with.

Amanda Chin said there will be a Puppy Love event on February 14 from 12:00pm to 1:00pm in HUB 334 and a Movie Night on February 16 in HUB 340 at 6:00pm. She reminded the Senate about the Cultural Showcase, the Graduate Interdisciplinary Research Symposium, and a GPSS Film Festival featuring the short films of 4 local film makers and a post-screening dialogue in Kane 130.

Jack Fleisher said there will be a Craft and Complain event tomorrow from 4:00pm to 6:00pm and sketching at the Puppy Love event. He said the Arts Council is considering a second Craft and Complain event for March 1 and encouraged Senators to check the Arts Council spreadsheet. He said he has been doing targeted outreach to departments that currently do not have Senators in GPSS. He said these departments are Dentistry, the Allen School, and Social Work. He said CSMR has not been able to meet yet due to scheduling conflicts. He reminded Senators to leave their name tags at the end of the meeting.

Jon Choi said GPSS received an extension to submit the budget request packet. He said other units on campus will present their budgets. He said STF will review proposals on Monday. He said Travel Grants has had a record number of applications this month. He said Special Allocations is receiving applications. He said there has been a lot of interest in Departmental Allocations this month.

A.J. Balatico said the Provost Townhall will occur next Thursday at Alder Hall from 10:00am to 11:00am on research, innovation, and the future at UW. He said President Cauce is set to retire in 2025. He said the adoption of the Okanagan Charter, a framework imbuing health and wellness into community spaces, is an initiative that PACS is pursuing. He said STF is looking to spend its \$8 million reserve but will not be able to. He said STF will propose a rate based on their projected expenditures next year when it comes to the Senate. He said UPASS will come to the Senate on March 6 to discuss changes to the transit system and the UPASS fee. He said the Senate will have to approve bylaws changes, the Election Guide, and review the budget at the March 6 meeting.

12. [Action] Adjournment 7:01pm

Maleen Kidiwela (Oceanography) motioned to adjourn the meeting. **Maeve Riley (Drama)** seconded. No objections. 7:01pm

Meeting minutes prepared by Daniel Cook, GPSS Senate Director.