

The Graduate & Professional Student Association Annual Report

It has been another great year for the Graduate & Professional Student Association (GPSA) in serving the WSU community. We have continued to strive to provide the best programs and services for WSU graduate and professional students. After wrapping up the academic year 2019-2020, the GPSA executives would like to take a moment to reflect on the past year and set our priorities for the upcoming year. The annual report below outlines just a few of the exciting accomplishments that our hardworking team made in the past year, working collaboratively with all of you, the community and family that is WSU.

This report outlines various initiatives, advocacy efforts, programs and services, as well as our new Strategic Plan that GPSA leaders spearheaded this past year. Our priorities included a wide range of issues concerning the student experience reflecting the stories and struggles of our fellow students. We have worked on academic affordability, food insecurity, and community building, and while there is more work to do, we are confident that the progress this year will be a stepping stone in making the student experience more equitable for students of all backgrounds.

Our Mission

The mission of the WSU Graduate & Professional Student Association is to:

- Advocate on behalf of graduate and professional students at the university, local, state, and federal levels to increase affordability and accessibility.
- Provide academic, professional, and financial support services for graduate and professional students.
- Facilitate interdisciplinary communication within the graduate and professional student community.

Year in Review

Current programs

GPSA offers a wide variety of programs that provide academic, professional, personal, and financial support services for graduate and professional students.

The Evening Childcare Program: In partnership with the WSU Children's Center staff, the GPSA was able to support an Evening Childcare program for graduate and professional student parents. This program provides a safe and welcoming environment with a flexible schedule for infants, toddlers, preschool, and school age (to age 12) children. Dinner and a snack are provided each night. Children's activities include art, music, science along with choice centers for play and homework. Outdoor play areas are also provided. This year, we were able to help support 44 children and 28 families and will continue to provide this service next year.

The Excellence Awards: The Graduate and Professional Student Association conducts the GPSA Excellence Awards each year. The GPSA Excellence awards are broken up into seven different categories: Graduate Assistant, Teaching Assistant, Research Assistant, Graduate Student

Instructor, Academic Advisor, Registered Student Organization, and Community Engagement. Nominations are accepted from students, peers, and advisors. This year, even with the current COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to provide these awards to our amazing students!

The Professional Development Initiative: The Professional Development Initiative (PDI) is organized by the Graduate School and the GPSA. This initiative aims to provide a range of programs, training opportunities, and resources to graduate and professional students that will help prepare them for academic and career success. The goal of PDI is to ensure that all graduate and professional students have the skills, knowledge, and mindsets necessary to succeed both professionally and academically. Through this initiative, we have developed a series of core competencies that are intended to guide students through their programs and help them transition into their future role in academia or industry. The following core competencies are inclusive of masters and doctoral students across disciplines and applicable to a wide range of professional settings: Academic and Career Development; Communication and Collaboration; Leadership and Professionalism; Personal Well-being. For the academic year 2019-2020, we were able to hold 46 events, serving over 1500 students and faculty students and faculty.

The GPSA Research Expo: The GPSA Research Exposition offers WSU graduate and professional students a forum for presenting their original research, scholarship, and/or creative work. Students of all disciplines are welcome to participate. As a participant, you display your poster or creative work alongside your fellow graduate and professional students. You have the opportunity to present your work to faculty, students, other members of the University community, and the general public. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we transitioned to a virtual format in order to provide this valued service to our students. We received 150 abstract submissions, and we awarded over \$9,000 in scholarships to top presenters.

The GPSA Study Center: The GPSA study center is located in the Terrell Library and available via cougar card access to all graduate and professional students. Here you will find several computers, printing services, board room style table and chairs for meetings, white boards and a wall mounted TV for practicing presentations. This past year, the Study Center was utilized by 500 graduate and professional students who visited the space over 6500 times.

The Graduate Writing Center: This year, the GPSA increased our support of the GWC by relocating the center, adding consultants, and improving the workspace. The GWC works with students to help them learn to revise and edit their own writing. The center averaged 350 appointments the past two years, serving approximately 200 graduate and professional students, not including walk-ins. We are hoping that by tripling the availability of consultants for students to meet with, we will be able to serve more students. We are already seeing a 20% increase in students served since opening the new center in January.

Programming: GPSA also offers a variety of social events for our students. This year we held over 10 social events including a Welcome Back BBQ, Ice Cream Socials, and Bowling events. Once COVID-19 began we switched to virtual events such as Restaurant Week in Pullman and a virtual Scavenger Hunt.

Funding Opportunities

GPSA offers a wide variety of programs that provide financial support for graduate and professional students.

Dissertation Grants: Our Dissertations grants have continued to grow over the past few months. Although this is a new source of funding from GPSA, since it's initiation in January, we funded 40 students with nearly \$15,000 to help graduate students in their final year finish up their research. Already, we have received very positive feedback on this resource as many students struggle with last minute costs which may hinder their ability to graduate.

RSO Funding: The GPSA will allocate funds on an annual and semester basis to other Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) of Washington State University that will participate in the mission and goals of the GPSA by serving the interests of Members of the GPSA.

Sponsorship: GPSA has funding available to sponsor events that promote the interests of GPSA graduate and professional student members. This funding was awarded to student, faculty, and university groups in order to support various events, resources, and activities available to WSU students.

Travel & Registration Grants: GPSA provides financial assistance in the form of travel and registration grants for WSU Pullman fee paying graduate and professional students. Even with many cancelled conferences due to COVID-19, GPSA still supported over 200 students with more than \$100,000 in order to attend professional conferences around the world.

Grocery Reimbursement Program: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in partnership with ASWSU, the GPSA initiated a grocery subsidy program for WSU Pullman students. This program provides reimbursements for students on grocery purchases. The goal of this initiative was to help offset costs and aid many students and families that have been negatively impacted by this pandemic. In just a few weeks we have received over 800 applications from students, providing more than \$15,000 in funds. The GPSA continued this program, with financial support from the Graduate School, into the summer providing funding for an additional 300 students.

Engagement Opportunities

The Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA) has several opportunities and ways for you to get involved. If you would like to get involved, consider becoming a GPSA senator or Executive. These positions are a great opportunity to make a difference on campus. All GPSA members are free to participate in senate meetings, at GPSA events or volunteer for a University or GPSA committee (you do not have to be a senator or executive to participate).

- Become a GPSA Executive or Senator
- Join a GPSA or University committee
- Become involved in the WSU Pullman Community
- Take part in our Advocacy efforts

Resolutions

Adding to previous resolutions published by the GPSA, this year we looked to address two issues facing our students:

- 2019-2020
 - Adding “Citizenship and Immigration Statues” to EP15
 - Urging local prosecutor Denis Tracy to retry Hargraves

SWOT Analysis

The following is the result of strength, weakness, opportunity, threat (SWOT) analysis from the 2019-2020 GPSA Executive Board

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPSA has a strong presence with students and administration and can quickly organize responses to new issues • GPSA has developed working relationships with administrators, including Dean of the Graduate School who has an advisory role in the organization • Because of our wide reach we are able to offer opportunities for the students involved to make interdisciplinary connections • Students involved gain leadership and other experiences to set them apart in their careers • We are able to provide benefits to students such as PDI events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPSA operates with 1-year terms for all of its positions this allows new ideas and perspectives to constantly be entering the organization • The single year terms also mean that projects naturally tend to come to an end at the end of each term, which lends a sense of urgency to getting goals accomplished • The same urgency means that there can be a lack of continuity in vision and projects are forgotten
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The state of Washington has a network of student organizations that we can harness for state level advocacy. • The WSU system has been integrating all campuses under one degree which could make it easier to have GPSA organizations on every campus. • GPSA can be used as a recruitment tool for high quality graduate and professional students • GPSA provides unique skills to our members we should use that to recruit new senators. And to communicate the value of students being involved in GPSA to faculty mentors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are funded primarily by student service and activity fees (S&A) which are tied to the number of enrolled students • Our model requires that people want to participate, which means public relations are very important

Moving Forward & The Strategic Plan

A second iteration of the WSU GPSA strategic plan was completed this past year in order to identify some key areas that have the potential for high impact on the efficacy of the organization. The strategic plan has been divided into two main themes which are broadly defined and impact every student:

1. Improve graduate and professional student experience and engagement
2. Improve efficiency of day-to-day operations

This logic model is a graphic depiction that presents the shared relationships among the resources, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact for GPSA and depicts the relationship between GPSA's activities and its intended effects. The main section of logic model can be divided into three parts, inputs, outputs, and outcomes. Inputs include GPSA and related organizations and personnel. Outputs include activities and participation from GPSA and related organizations and personnel. With the inputs and outputs, short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes/impacts will be generated. Short-term impact is defined as change in knowledge, medium-term impact is defined as change in actions, and long-term impact is defined as change in conditions. Beyond those three main sections, the logic model also includes some assumption of GPSA strategic plan and potential external factors, which are variables that may have an effect on GPSA.

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Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes -- Impact		
	Activities	Participation	Short (Knowledge)	Medium (Actions)	Long (Conditions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graduate students Professional Students Relationships with other regional and national organizations Research stations across Washington State University WSU Graduate School Cougar Health Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual census survey and reports Professional development events Represent student voice on university wide committees Coug day at the capitol Lobbying in DC Mental Health First Aid Training Events/activities that encourage community engagement Biweekly GPSA Senator meeting Committees Travel grants Dissertation grants Sponsored registered student organizations Monday minute Social media Research expo Social events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graduate and professional students GPSA representatives Graduate School National Association of Graduate and Professional Students (NAGPS) Western Regional NAGPS Washington Student Association (all Universities in Washington) Student Government Council (all WSU) Cougar Health staff Student involvement Professional Development Initiative (WSU graduate school and President's Office) 	<p><u>Gain an understanding of:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs of graduate students with a focus on mental health Various health insurance options across students and campuses Graduate students' current engagement with communities Financial resources and future budget Reasons of low senator participation & engagement Annual accomplishments of GPSA Current information distribution practices with senators and stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide comprehensive trainings to support students' mental health Lobby for access to assistantship insurance for students who are not on assistantships or are not located in Pullman Provide opportunities for students to engage with communities Recruit, train, and retain talented and diverse group of senators Align financial resources with goals and integrate annual planning Share with the student body a complete picture of GPSA's accomplishments annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer students report mental health issues All graduate and professional students have access to affordable healthcare Increase in the number of students who do community outreach or involve the community in their research Responsible, responsive, and active GPSA representative for every department Effective and efficient GPSA committees Effective use of our financial resources A robust communication network with all stakeholders Engaged students in GPSA activities and events
<p>ASSUMPTIONS –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Student experience and service provided or organized by GPSA are adequate. (2) The operation effectiveness of GPSA can be improved. (3) GPSA will create a supportive educational community that facilitates our personal and professional growth so we can continue making WSU, our community, and the world a better place. 			<p>EXTERNAL FACTORS –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Changes in political and regulatory environment. (2) Lack of participation by senators and students during meetings and administration of surveys. (3) Illness or other unforeseen circumstances that affect team members participation. 		

THEME 1: student experience and community engagement; THEME 2: effective operation and transparency and communication; Belongs to multiple categories

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The GPSA will continue to re-evaluate, refine, and adjust our strategic plan each year to ensure we are meeting the current needs of graduate and professional students.

COVID-19 Statement

In light of the various circumstances facing graduate and professional students over the course of the past semester and continuing into the 2020-2021 academic year, the GPSA Executive Board offers our sincere hope you are staying safe and healthy in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. We know that the continuing news cycle and updates at the federal, state, and university levels, as well as globally, can be confusing, at times contradictory, and stress-inducing. The pandemic touches every aspect of the graduate and professional student experience, from funding, to research in the lab and at archives and libraries, to shifts in pedagogy, and ever-changing travel restrictions. The GPSA Executive Board affirms our organization's commitment to ensuring the safety and security of Washington State University's graduate and professional students.

We will continue to keep you informed about what the latest developments mean for graduate and professional students as well as advocate for policies that prioritize your health and safety, as well as funding.

Concluding Remarks

These are just a few of the accomplishments that we were able to achieve with the support and collaboration of the WSU community. We strived to listen with empathy to graduate student concerns, collaborate with you to deliver excellent programs and services, and create a welcoming and diverse environment for our students.

As the new year approaches, know that your GPSA leaders remain steadfast in our belief that the student voice is and will always be the strongest agent for change.

As always, we encourage your feedback and please do so by contacting Jennifer Johnson, President of GPSA, at presgpsa@wsu.edu.

Go Cougs!

Testimonials



Ayumi Manawadu

Degree: PhD Candidate, Structural Engineering

GPSA Involvement: Senator and Community Affairs committee

"Being a part of the GPSA Senate is a unique experience, which helps me to be informed and to learn to approach problems from a broader perspective. It is diverse, inclusive, energetic, and fun. It gives you a voice to influence the next big decision for graduate and professional students. It is inspiring to see how so many passionate individuals come together to mold decisions that matter."

January 30, 2020



Margaret McCoy

Degree: PhD Candidate, Horticulture, Research and Extension Centers

GPSA Involvement: Senator and University and Student Affairs committee

"Being a Senator with GPSA has helped broaden my understanding of the graduate and professional student issues around the state, and has given me opportunities to work with and learn from many people that I would have never interacted with, without being a part of this organization."

January 22, 2020



Arunabha Mitra

Degree: PhD Candidate, Plant Pathology

GPSA Involvement: Senator and Communications committee

"I like being a GPSA Senator because it is an excellent opportunity to be engaged with the broader student community across WSU in terms of addressing student needs, being informed about university policy and affairs, and helping bring the Pullman campus and RECs together."

January 30, 2020



Debomitra Dey

Degree: PhD Candidate, School of Food Science

GPSA Involvement: Senator and PDI committee

"The reason I joined GPSA was to interact with graduate students and faculty on-campus. GPSA gave me an amazing opportunity to closely work for and understand the issues of graduate students. And the best part is that it taught me collaborate and develop interpersonal skills."

January 26, 2020



Tabitha Espina

Degree: PhD Candidate, English Rhetoric and Composition

GPSA Involvement: Senator and University & Student Affairs committee

"Being in GPSA has given me the profound opportunity to contribute to a community I benefit from and believe in. As a graduate student, I have appreciated the many ways GPSA has supported my growth, both professionally and personally, through its extensive services and initiatives. I am continually inspired by our vibrant graduate student community and appreciate the opportunities to connect and collaborate. Overall, I am grateful to be a part of an organization that actively believes in our capacity to inspire change through our research, teaching, and service and recognizes the value of our efforts."

January 27, 2020



Islam Khan

Degree: PhD Candidate, Physics & Astronomy

GPSA Involvement: Senator and Budget committee

"The GPSA Senate has taught me about the power of advocacy and the importance of ensuring that the voices of graduate students are effectively communicated throughout the community."

January 31, 2020



Andrew Gillreath-Brown

Degree: PhD Candidate, Anthropology (Archaeology)

GPSA Involvement: Chair of Communications, College Representative for Veterinary Medicine, Research and Arts Committee, and Historic Preservation Committee

"GPSA offers lots of programs and opportunities to students. I have personally benefitted from many of these programs (like Travel Grants and the Research Expo) during my 4 years at WSU. I have loved the opportunity to promote these programs so that other graduate and professional students can also benefit from them. I am thankful for my time and the connections that I have made in GPSA."

January 27, 2020



Rachel Wong

Degree: PhD Candidate, Educational Psychology

GPSA Involvement: College of Education representative, Chair of Programming, UREC Board, and Student Media Board

"Being involved in GPSA has allowed me to learn more about the resources available to graduate and professional students and has taught me to advocate more effectively on behalf of graduate and professional students. As an international graduate student, I am grateful for the opportunities that I, together with other students, have had to talk about international graduate student concerns at WSU and even in D.C. The GPSA community is one that offers physical, emotional, and mental support and I am thankful that I am a part of it."

February 24, 2020



Arian Karimitar

Degree: PhD Student, Cultural Anthropology

GPSA Involvement: Senator, Grants committee, and Office of Student Involvement

"As a GPSA Senator during the 2019-2020 academic year, I improved my anthropological training by learning alongside fellow GPSA senators of how to navigate the WSU's political landscape and to create better conditions by advocating for graduate and professional students."

April 1, 2020