**Statement of Objectives**

As the GPPS Senate Director, I am a Master of Public Administration Student who is deeply committed to shaping public policy to better support students, people, and families in Washington, and this year, I have had the privilege of advocating for student needs in Olympia and Washington, D.C.. In my position, I have learned to listen and understand each student’s unique contributions at every meeting and reflect them appropriately in the minutes, skills that are an integral part of forming the GPSS’s legislative agenda and bringing students’ individual stories to Olympia during legislative session. I intend to apply these skills to reach the following goals as the 2025-26 GPSS Vice President of External Affairs:

**Position Objectives**

Continue building and maintaining GPSS’s relationship with the United States Student Association: I recently attended the United States Student Association (USSA) Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., where I developed connections and identified opportunities for collaboration among student governments. I plan to continue engaging with the USSA to ensure that the University of Washington’s graduate student voices are represented in national discussions around higher education.

Increase LAB participation year-round, emphasizing UW Tacoma and Bothel students’ perspectives: Legislative Advisory Board participation is vital year-round by implementing committee leadership opportunities. I plan to increase engagement during the winter and spring quarters to maintain momentum in our advocacy efforts. I will emphasize perspectives from UW Tacoma and Bothel graduate students to ensure their 1,300 graduate student voices are represented in Olympia.

Develop student advocacy and civic engagement toolkits: Although 2025 is not a major election year, voter engagement and advocacy remain crucial. I intend to create toolkits on voter literacy, lobbying, and supporting legislation to help graduate students take informed and effective action at the state level.

**Legislative Objectives**

As the University of Washington’s graduate student lobbyist, my highest legislative priorities will include:

State Loan and Grant Accessibility for Graduate Students: Funding for Washington’s graduate student loan program has been cut, leaving many graduate students without financial support. To address this, I intend to support upcoming propositions that include refunding the Graduate Student Loan Program, expanding the Washington College Grant’s eligibility to graduate students, or launching a new pilot program to provide need-based grants to graduate students.

Expand Childcare Services for Low-Income Students: The University of Washington’s graduate students each have unique backgrounds, and students with children deserve access to affordable and reliable healthcare while pursuing higher education. While the Working Childcare Connections program did not pass this legislative session, I intend to continue lobbying for it to ensure childcare support for graduate students and their families.

Increase Funding Allocation for Graduate Student Employment Opportunities: I will advocate for the reallocation of funding toward research projects that provide assistantship opportunities for graduate students and secure additional funding allocation toward internships and on-campus jobs. These opportunities are important for supporting graduate students’ academic growth while ensuring their ability to afford their basic needs.

I appreciate your time and consideration for my candidacy, and I am excited by the opportunity to be your legislative representative next year.

With gratitude,

Annika Peterson