Statement of Objectives

**Introduction:** My name is Miles Parker and as a candidate for Vice President of External Affairs for (GPSS) at the University of Washington, I am committed to amplifying the voices of graduate and professional students in legislative and policy arenas. I decided to run for this role due to my passion for public service and amplifying the civic voice of our graduate population. My approach will center on strategic advocacy for student-parents, coalition-building amongst student organizations, and proactive engagement with policymakers to advance our collective interests to enhance the graduate student experience.

**Strategic initiatives:**

* **Legislative Engagement:** Establish regular communication channels with state legislators and their staff to stay informed about relevant bills and to advocate for graduate and professional student interests. This will be through lobbying efforts as well as community building efforts.
* **Coalition Building:** Forge partnerships with other student organizations, both within the University of Washington and across the state at other institutions, in order to strengthen advocacy efforts and present a unified voice on key issues, such as the Graduate Student Loan program.
* **Student Education and Mobilization:** Develop workshops and informational materials to educate students about legislative processes and encourage active participation in advocacy initiatives. This means continuing the Legislative Advisory Board, Graduate Student Virtual Lobby Day, and more. I would love to encourage students to engage in student testimonials, which is something I would like to pilot on the Hill during session.

**Bills: Supporting HB 1492 – Early Registration for Students with Dependents:** HB 1492 proposes providing early course registration for students with dependents, recognizing the unique challenges faced by these students in balancing academic responsibilities with caregiving duties.

**Objective:** Advocate with the new student lobbyist team and advocate with the legislators who were in our corner in the prior session, then work with the opposition in correlation to the new budget. This will encourage support and facilitate discussions on its potential impact on our community.

**Advocating for HB 1873 – Expanding Access to Working Connections Child Care Program**: HB 1873 seeks to increase access to the Working Connections Child Care program for graduate and professional students. This initiative aims to alleviate financial burdens associated with childcare, thereby enabling students to focus more effectively on their academic pursuits.

*Objective:* Continue to work with legislators to make this a possibility and stress that by providing childcare for parents, this will alleviate financial burdens on students so that they can pursue careers in high demand fields, such as mental health services or education so that this bill can get passed.

**Advocating for Tribal Tuition Waivers**: The Tribal Tuition Waiver program allows eligible American Indian students to pay resident tuition rates at Washington State institutions. This initiative supports the educational aspirations of Native American students and fosters inclusivity within the academic community.

*Objective:* Stress the importance of working with our Native American students and the significance of encouraging Native American students to attend higher education institutions. This would include modeling the tuition waiver off of WSU’s and expanding it to the University of Washington.
**Conclusion:** If elected as Vice President of External Affairs, I will dedicate my role to advocating for policies that enhance the academic and personal experiences of graduate and professional students at the University of Washington. As mentioned, my focus on legislative initiatives such as HB 1492, HB 1873, HB 1485, and the Tribal Tuition Waiver program, I aim to create a supportive and equitable environment that empowers all students to succeed in their passions, especially in high demand fields.