Relations Improvement Program

Brandon Ellington

# Student Government Relationships (current)

## Students (Internal)

This relationship is in a forming phase. Communication difficulties are similar to faculty’s in that it is difficult to demonstrate the potential and developing story of committees on campus. The best way is word of mouth, but that relies on a strong network that can reliably reach many students in a few hops. This is unfortunately not the case given an overrepresentation of students interested in law/government and an underrepresentation of students interested in the sciences, social justice. Additionally, while students in certain arts and athletics may not be underrepresented, their ability to voice their concerns to student government, students as a group, and the community are limited.

## Students (External)

This relationship has gone through cycles. It is currently in a storming phase given the tensions that exist between schools in Eastern Washington and Western Washington that has not quite resolved itself. We have not made efforts to strengthen connections outside of the context of the Washington Student Association, so erosion or weakening of the organization would be detrimental to maintaining coordination with legislatures. This is especially important given the opportunity to advocate for revolutionary ideas, such as replacing Aramark, allowing for experimental building, and improving social services.

## Faculty

This relationship is in a storming phase- faculty do not appear very efficient at synthesizing committee progress into a narrative demonstrating their value added to students/the community. This makes it difficult to coordinate strategies for broadcasting and improving governance as a whole.

## Staff

This relationship does not exist. There is a Campus Leadership Group, but it is still figuring out itself and how to relate to the community. Thus conversation about liaisons is pending their desire to reach out.

## Senior Leadership Group

This relationship is in a forming phase- setbacks for lack of structure in meeting reciprocation are issues of confidentiality (explicitly stated) and productivity (implied). People within the group have expressed willingness to meet with GSU regularly, but have reservations about us attending their meetings.

## Board of Trustees

This relationship is in a forming phase- while GSU has attended their meetings, they attend ours sparingly. Interest has been expressed for including GSU in Board committees, so follow up here will be critical for moving into the next phase. While this is more of a meet-in-the-middle solution, the more contact GSU can establish with the group outside of just meetings is very positive. There is also no formal relationship with the Student Trustee, or a mechanism/metric used for distinguishing candidates. While this is an issue slightly beyond our control (given who Trustees are accountable to) we can altruistically take steps to give the position continuity and structure in case the autonomy is overwhelming.

## Legislature

Our ability to advocate for students freely is adversely affected by the Washington Student Association, by the official College legislatures, and the balance of power within the House and Senate.

# Vision and Mission

GSU strives to make civic engagement approachable, educational, and rewarding for students expected to learn across significant differences. We wish to empower students to create positive change at Evergreen through the solidification of governance policies, strengthening of internal and external communications, and improving social infrastructure.

# Student Government Relationships (Problem Statements - User Stories)

## Students (Internal)

As a student, I need to be able to efficiently communicate with other students, so I can better fulfill the Evergreen student mission of “learning across significant differences”

As a student, I need to be able to smoothly navigate Evergreen structures, to enhance collaboration with others in academic growth.

## Students (External)

As a student, I need to be able to have a means to systematically reach out to students on other campuses, so that I have a diversified network to lean on in the future.

## Faculty

As a student representative, I need to be able to strengthen relationships with the faculty governance, to ensure their wants align with student needs.

## Staff

As a student, I need to be able to understand the hierarchy of administration at a high level, to better articulate where systemic failures may occur.

## Senior Leadership Group

As a student representative, I need to be able to reliably influence members of senior administration, to effectively advocate for those who may not have the capacity or will to do so.

## Board of Trustees

As a student representative, I need to be able to have regular contact with Trustee members, to better engage with the high level decision making that happens in the college.

## Legislature

As a Director of Legislative Affairs, I need to be able to reliably go to and from the Capitol Building during session, to hold meetings and develop relationships with legislators.

# Risks

## Students (Internal)

Students may not know how to maintain this structure given high turnover

Students who know about GSU’s past may hang on to those stereotypes (not actually connected to students, only concerned with themselves, etc.)

## Students (External)

It may be difficult for a cohesive network to survive past a couple years, given its reliance on strong connectors and influencers

## Faculty

Faculty may not be able or willing to make their governance efficient, which makes effectively managing a relationship with them challenging

## Staff

Staff have a new internal structure that, like GSU, may take years to find a “rhythm” that systematizes relationships with the community

## Senior Leadership Group

The group may decide to keep meetings closed, and give infrequent check-ins

## Board of Trustees

It will be hard to coordinate schedules or motivate students to keep these relationships alive

## Legislature

Students may have a hard time navigating the legislative process, discouraging them from participating in it strategically