



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Representatives
April General Meeting 2017

[No reports submitted]



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the President
April General Meeting 2017

Dear Councilors,

The year has almost come to an end, and I wish to offer an update of two important issues that have been pending until now.

For the first time in history of the SGPS, I started a conversation with the University on the topic of secondary use of university's data for our advocacy work at the SGPS. While the conversation initially seemed to take a productive path, I started to face hesitations from the administration and its affiliated bodies, on granting the SGPS such access to data. A conversation that started by a promise of our access to confidential data, paused at a decision that eventually limited our access to even the so-called "publicly available" data. While the nature of causes for this hesitation is not entirely clear to me, I suspect the sensitivity of certain offices of the University to the topic based on that I chose to base this conversation on, might have had a role in this.

While having this conversation, I looked for other possible routes to follow the goal of the project. One of the findings of this query was that there seems to be no formal process in place to offer training to supervisors of the graduate students in research-based programs, in order to improve their mentorship skills. I recently submitted a motion to the Senate to task one of its committees or another working group to investigate the need for such formal process, the resources that need to be developed for it, and ways to encourage the supervisors to take advantage of such resources, upon their development. This motion will be discussed in April's Senate meeting, and I encourage you to show your support for it, if you deem it appropriate.

One of the areas at which we had a noticeable success, was collecting data from our membership's opinion regarding our biggest service, the SGPS Health and Dental Plan. Based on the results from our survey, we have been able to identify key areas for improvement of the plan, and we have already started a conversation with our partners on campus on how to implement these changes with the highest efficiency in rates.

I am currently transitioning my successor into his role, and we have attended a few meetings with different committees and offices of the university together, and we are going to continue this throughout April. The Executive-elect have already been familiarized with many aspects of internal governance of the organization, and have had the opportunity to be active participants in all the decisions that we are currently making. I am confident that with the transition that they are receiving, they will have a strong start at their roles.

Regards,

Saba Farbodkia
President, The Society of Graduate and Professional Students



SGPS Mental Health Survey:

Our mental health feedback survey closed last week. In total, we met our target response number with 232 submissions which represents ~6% of our constituency. The data is in the process of being assembled into a report that will be released by the end of April. Below are some key takeaways:

- Nearly 40% of respondents had used counselling services at Queen's either in the form of going into LaSalle or accessing their faculty embedded counsellor. 72% were aware counsellors in LaSalle were available to them and 46% were aware faculty embedded counsellors were available.
- 3% of respondents had utilized the SGPS Student Advisor program and 47% were aware of it as a resource.
- 42% of students believed having access to the AMS Peer Support Centre would help the well-being of SGPS members. 13% percent did not believe it would be helpful and the remaining respondents were unsure.
- 58% of students believed having access to telephone based counselling would help the well-being of SGPS members. 16% percent did not believe it would be helpful and the remaining respondents were unsure.
- 85% of students believed having access to a graduate/professional student specific counsellor would help the well-being of SGPS members. 7% percent did not believe it would be helpful and the remaining respondents were unsure. 51% of students would support the implementation of a new \$20 student fee to cover the costs of hiring one. 23% would not support the implentation of this fee and the remainder were unsure.
- There were over 440 comments submitted in the survey and we are in the process of analyzing them.

Thank you to everyone for helping us reach our goal with this survey. This will serve as a valuable tool for the incoming executive in understanding where they need to place their time and resources in the upcoming year.

Regards,

Sebastian Gorlewski (vp.graduate@sgps.ca)



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Vice President Professional
April General Meeting 2017

[No report submitted]



SGPS Members,

Below is a summary of the cumulative progress made on my portfolio’s annual plan—which also serves as my last report to SGPS Council as your VP Finance and Services. You can find the original annual plan on the SGPS website for greater information on each of these projects (Council Documents > September).

Structural/Governance Reform

The project is largely complete. Transition materials and modules have been implemented which will give future executives a better understanding of how to do their jobs. Governance reforms, like the executive proposal system for spending money are now permanent fixtures of the SGPS.

Specific Objectives

1. Update the SGPS Strategic Plan with Committee support and submit the plan to Council for ratification
 - a. **Abandoned. Not a useful document in actually improving SGPS services or function. A preface to a transition manual at best.**
2. Evaluate the success of internal financial controls in the SGPS including: the budget process, spending, and executive decision-making involving money, propose changes as needed
 - a. **Complete. Will be incorporated into transition materials**
3. Evaluate the staffing requirements of the SGPS and make recommendations as to the shifting of responsibilities or creation/consolidation of roles
 - a. **Complete. Executive Director and Logistics have been given slightly altered responsibilities**
4. Evaluate the structure of the Executive and its relationship with Council and propose changes
 - a. **In Progress. Executive oversight will be studied at length by the incoming executive, to report back in the fall**
5. Develop a complete executive transition and governance manual/program for use by future executives, designed for training executives without any prior SGPS or governance experience
 - a. **Complete. Transition modules prepared and delivered to incoming executive, will form the basis for future executive training. Written transition manuals provided as needed—but should be standard for next year.**

Timeline

Month	Stage of Project	Status
September	Strike strategic review committees, apportion committee tasks, solicit membership involvement	Abandoned
October	Draft committee briefing materials and distribute terms of reference for report writing	Abandoned
November	Fact-finding and problem-solving investigation	Complete
December	Further Interviews/discussions, mid-project updates	Complete
January	Compile and Complete Executive Transition and Training Procedures	Complete
February	Return to Council with draft report to solicit feedback—make changes accordingly	*not required
March	Council Reviews Systemic Changes requiring Policy/Bylaw changes, changes voted on at GM	*not required
April	Implement Transition Procedures	Complete

Bursary Program

Project complete. We administered bursaries and brought changes based on member feedback under the new policy regime. Changes take effect May 1st, 2017.

Specific Objectives

1. Create a detailed report on the impact of changes to the bursary system measured against previous years
 - a. **Complete. Committee reviewed and endorsed minor eligibility expansions.**
2. Adjust the scope of existing bursaries/administration of the system as needed to fulfil member needs
 - a. **Complete. Though we're voting on the expanded bursary amounts tonight.**

Timeline

Month	Stage of Project	Status
September	Continue granting bursaries and collecting feedback from applicants—continue throughout the year	Complete
October	Begin compilation of bursary data on the use of specific bursaries and rejection rates	Complete
November	Present 6-month report on the system and recommend changes to the GM if required	Complete
December	Continue granting bursaries and collecting feedback from applicants	Complete
January	Continue granting bursaries and collecting feedback from applicants	Complete
February	Return to Council with report to solicit feedback—make changes accordingly	Complete
March	Council reviews tweaks requiring Policy/Bylaw changes, changes voted on at GM	In Progress
April	Implement changes as needed, Transition new VPFS	Complete

Grants/Strategic Funds

Project Complete. We made minor adjustments to the application process.

Specific Objectives

1. Measure and report on changes made to the grants program measured against previous years
 - a. **Complete.**
2. Come up with new means to use the Accessibility/Sustainability Funds through the creation of a new, simplified grants process so organizations can apply online for several types of grant at once
 - a. **Complete. Online system implemented.**
3. Adjust the applications process of the system to balance the administrative burden with accessibility to funding
 - a. **Complete. We've made minor changes to administering grants so applicants can apply whenever rather than by a certain date.**

Timeline

Month	Stage of Project	Status
September	Continue processing grant applications and collecting feedback from applicants	Complete
October	Continue processing grant applications and collecting feedback from applicants	Complete
November	Present 6-month report on the system and recommend changes to the GM if required	Complete
December	Review Sponsorship system with the Finance Committee	Complete
January	Cont.	Complete
February	Submit report and solicit feedback	Complete
March	Council reviews tweaks requiring Policy/Bylaw changes, changes voted on at GM	*not required
April	Transition the new VPFS	Complete

Student Activity Fees

Project Complete. Incoming VPFS shall administer continued reporting requirements for fees going forward.

Specific Objectives

1. Present a new set of student fee policy changes for review by Council
 - a. **Complete.**

2. Implement changes to the reporting and nomination process to increase the scope of information provided to students
 - a. **Complete.**
3. Assess the effectiveness of implemented reforms and make minor changes as needed
 - a. **Complete**
4. **Implement Continuous Reporting Obligations as per policy and assess fee-receiving groups in time for Q1 2018.**

Timeline

Month	Stage of Project	Status
September	Continue compiling feedback from committee on possible student fee changes, submit report to Council for feedback	Complete
October	Bring forward complete bylaw and policy changes as directed by Council	Complete
November	Pass final Student Fee Policy Update at GM	Abandoned (unnecessary)
December	Draft and deploy updated nomination and reporting materials, outreach to groups to explain reporting obligations, help assemble Fee Proposal Packages from groups	Complete
January	Finance Committee undergoes first eligibility/continuing reporting obligations hearing with groups	*not required
February	Winter referendum on new fees	Complete
March	Report to Council on the impact of the changes, minor tweaks as needed at the GM	Complete
April	Transition new VPFS with operation of system	Complete

JDUC Revitalization

The project is still moving slowly. It will be up to the incoming executive to continue to manage this file as the AMS, SGPS, and other university stakeholders decide the shape of a future student centre.

Specific Objectives

1. Assist the AMS with a programmatic assessment of all JDUC space, identify graduate/professional student space needs and how they can be leveraged in the refit
 - a. **Complete.**
2. Draft a final proposal document outlining the new layout of the building and SGPS space
 - a. **In Progress. All the balls are in the AMS court now to put pen to paper and come back with something**
3. If the project moves forward, to pass a student fee to pay for the capital costs required for improvements to SGPS space

Timeline

Month	Stage of Project	Status
September	Begin initial assessment	Complete
October	Participate in Programmatic Assessment along with the AMS, assess SGPS future space needs	Complete
November	Cont.	Complete
December	Report back to Council on Status of the Project	In Progress
January	Introduce final plan for the project, outline projected scope of SGPS participation to Council	
February	Put SGPS Fee for JDUC Renovation to Referendum as needed (this might not even happen if the project is abandoned or scrapped)	
March	Update on status of project to Council (tentative)	
April	Transition the incoming VPFS on the state of the project	

As always, I am free to take your questions.

Respectively Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stuart Clark". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left and a large loop at the end.

Stuart Clark

Vice President (Finance & Services)

Society of Graduate and Professional Students (SGPS)

vp.finance@sgps.ca



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the VP Campaigns & Community Affairs
April General Meeting 2017

Dear SGPS members,

I can't believe I am nearing the end of my term on the SGPS Executive. It has been an incredibly rewarding learning experience and I want to thank Council for their engagement this year, as well as all our members for engaging with our programming and services, and coming out to events. I hope that you continue to use the broad range of services that the SGPS offers next year, and consider participating in the committees and other volunteering opportunities that come up under the new Executive.

I apologize for my inability to be at this final meeting but, in the spirit of ending my term the way I started it, I am away for research and out of the country. If you need to reach me, I am happy to correspond by email, but please consider talking to my successor Tyler if your question pertains to items past May 1. He is very eager to start his role and if you have projects you would like to start for next year, there is no time like the present to get him on board. Below I have tried to list everything that I have worked on over the past year. The reports of my work studies are attached separately, considering their length, but please look to the full reports package and you should be able to locate them there.

Commissioner Program

In the Fall semester, I participated actively in the hiring and transitioning of the Commissioners into their roles. The engagement I have had with the Commissioners over the Winter term has mainly been at Commissioner meetings, or providing feedback on the wonderful programming that they ran through the Workshop Series, as well as partnering with other groups, or on their own. With the help of our VP Finance, we have also created Transition documents for the incoming Commissioners, and the new Executive are looking forward to working with the new team come their collective start date of May 1st.

Orientation Week

There have been two ORT meetings in the Winter Semester- one in late January, and the other in late March. The main goals of the meeting were to solidify what kind of programming we will be offering during the upcoming Orientation Week. Some of the notes from the meetings are below. If you would like access to all the notes from the meeting, or would like to participate in ORT in the future, please contact me directly. Please keep in mind that the below notes are suggestions from the Orientation Round Table participants, and don't necessarily reflect what the final product will be in terms of the Orientation Week schedule, which is subject to change by the new team.

Events:

In keeping with previous years, and following the results of the exit survey from SGPS Orientation 2016, the events that ORT has suggested on keeping include Speed Meeting, Boat Cruise, Trolley Tour, Billiards Night, and the Corn Maze. In order to build on programming previously offered, the SGPS is working in collaboration with SGS and other services on campus to create a more graduate and professional student specific Campus Tour. There has also been discussion on adding a second speed meeting, to accommodate for demand, and to vary the athletic event to feature attending the Football Game at Orientation as a group, as well as to have an event at the Boiler Room for those interested in climbing.

Summer/Winter Orientation:

Another proposal which has been made through Orientation Round Table is the creation of permanent, small programming for those entering their degrees in the winter or summer terms. The School of Graduate Studies already

does a small event to welcome students during these start times, however the SGS would also like to offer a social for the incoming students to acquaint them with their new community and with the services that this organization offers.

Written Materials:

The Welcome package from last year has been circulated within the members of the Orientation Round Table Committee and feedback is being incorporated in the new edition of the Welcome Package, as well as in the agenda. Similarly, suggestions have been made to include more materials throughout Orientation Week, and during the year, similar to the postcards that the SGPS already has on Health & Dental, on other elements of the organization including its structure, how to get involved, and who to contact with which questions.

Volunteers:

There has been an interest in fostering a larger volunteer base this time around for Orientation Week in order to encourage returning students to also participate in Orientation activities and meet incoming graduate and professional students. In order to do so, the ORT Committee suggests creating team building events for potential volunteers throughout the summer, and the circulation of sign-up emails as early as May. If you, or anyone you know, is interested in volunteering for SGPS Orientation, please contact our main office, or any of the Commissioners!

Feedback:

As of last year, there has been an initiative to gather student feedback on the events that the SGPS hosts throughout Orientation Week. We would like to encourage the continuation of that this year, and welcome ideas on other modes of feedback gathering other than surveys. Another suggestion that came from one of the meetings is to host a 'coffee hour' a few weeks after Orientation Week in order to give students an opportunity to come and discuss their thoughts on Orientation, and to sign up for ORT if they are interested in participating for the following year.

Workshop Series

This was an initiative that we were able to launch in January 2017, and we have run programming every week since then between 6-8 pm on Wednesday evenings. Some events have been better attended than others, however overall this has been a successful initiative in that it provided students with the opportunity to engage with different groups, and learn new skills. Similarly, it has opened up new doors on collaborating with groups such as Student Wellness Services and the Centre for Teaching and Learning, which has led to more exciting initiatives for the upcoming year. Thank you to everyone who participated in the Workshop series this year, and to those who attended. Keep an eye out for the programming that will be introduced under the new Executive, whether it is in the same or a different format.

Research Assistants

My two research assistants have completed and submitted their reports on International and Indigenous student resources. I am including the introductions from both reports below, however to view the full report, please see the package for this meeting.

International Student Resources Report:

The purpose of this research was to determine issues that international graduate and professional students face at Queen's University. The research focused on four (4) main areas of concern namely: language barriers knowledge gaps, academic expectations and accommodation of cultural backgrounds. There was also a focus on student's experience with transitioning into Queen's and Canada in general.

The research was carried out by conducting interviews with departments and offices on campus that offer services useful to international graduate students. The purpose of the interviews was to gain an in depth knowledge of the specific services provided to international graduate students by the relevant departments, the normal issues and complaints heard by these departments from international graduate students, and the extent to which international graduate students utilize these services.

Interviews were conducted with the following departments and individuals:

- Queen's University International Centre (QUIC).
- The School of Graduate Studies (SGS) Cross-Cultural Advisor at the Student Wellness Centre.
- The Human Rights Office
- The Equity Office
- The Student Academic Success Services (SASS): The Writing Centre and Learning Strategies Unit
- The Ban Righ Centre
- SGPS International Student Affairs Commissioner
- SGPS Student Advising Services

The plan upon the commencement of this research was to conduct a survey of international graduate students in order to collect first hand qualitative and quantitative information on their personal experiences at Queen's University regarding the four main focus points of the research. In an effort towards this end, a list of possible survey questions was drafted. The same is attached to **Appendix A** of this report. However, this endeavor was impeded due to an inability to receive the requisite clearance from the Ethics Committee. It is recommended that a similar survey be conducted in future research in this area in order to gain a more precise understanding of the issues and experiences of international graduate students at Queen's.

Indigenous Student Resources Report:

In order to continue to evolve and develop as an institution on the forefront of academic excellence, Queen's University, specifically its graduate and professional faculties, must place increased emphasis on recruiting, admitting and supporting Indigenous students. By reviewing the statistics and theories of educational attainment and its relationship with socio-economic development, as well as researching achievements from other institutions, and interviewing leaders on our campus this report highlights some of the key ways that Queen's could invest in its Indigenous students, thereby increasing its ability to support and retain these individuals. Without this innovation, Queen's University risks falling behind other institutions who are developing programs which give their students - both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal - a competitive advantage in a country quickly moving towards reconciliation.

Thank you to both of my work studies, Charldera Murphy and Natasha Beitman Brener, for their hard work over the past 5-6 months. If you have any questions about the reports, please feel free to contact me and I can forward you on to either of these wonderful individuals.

Clubs Office

As a result of the student fees not passing during the last Referendum, discussions with the Clubs Office about the structure of the agreement moving forward has been ongoing. As soon as there is an update on the situation, the new Executive will inform Council of the changes.

Copy Editing Program

While this was the project I was most keen to work on, it has also been the toughest to get off the ground. I am happy to report that I was able to gain funding from the SGS Student Initiative Fund, and that, coupled with SGPS funding, will be able to produce a training module for copy editing. That said, the service itself remains a work in progress that I hope my successor will take on as one of his projects for the upcoming year.

Thank you again for the opportunity of serving as your VP Campaigns & Community Affairs. I look forward to seeing all the amazing things that the new Executive brings to the table this coming year.

Sincerely, Anastasiya Boika, Vice President Campaigns & Community Affairs



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Council Speaker
April General Meeting 2017

Oral report to be presented at Council.



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Graduate Student Senator
April General Meeting 2017

[No report submitted]



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Trustee
April General Meeting 2017

[No report submitted]



Dear Council,

I would like to review March events and highlight upcoming April events.

Wheelchair Basketball

On March 11th from 5-6pm in the ARC Upper East Gym about 14 students participated in wheelchair basketball. We had 12 chairs and played a full court 6-on-6 basketball game after learning about basic rules. Participants all had a great time trying a new sport and learnt lots! I would be very interested in hosting this event again next year – but this time having a community members who plays wheelchair basketball to come and teach students more skills.

Meditation Workshop

On March 15th from 5:30-6:30pm SGPS hosted a meditation workshop in the ARC. The instructor led us through various types of mindfulness and meditation, including walking meditation. We were given tips on how to add meditation and mindfulness into our daily lives. This event was free to attend. While all 20 available spots were accounted for via the online registration, only about half of these registrants attended. In the future I will email students to remind them about the event about 24 hours in advance.

Rock Climbing

On March 22nd and 23rd about 20 students in total participated in rock climbing at the Boiler Room. Students were taught how to safely don gear, how to belay, and given some climbing tips. Students then climbed with partners for a few hours. There were lots of laughs, triumphs, and some tired hands and arms. This event was very popular, selling out completely. This event would be good to host again in the future. The \$10 fee seemed reasonable and did not deter most students from attending.

Basketball Sports Hour

On March 25th from 6-7pm we hosted a basketball sports hour at the ARC. Four SGPS members attended and many undergrads asked if they could join. A 5-on-5 full court game was established.

Learn to Run

Two students attended the learn-to-run group last week. We went for a 3k walk-run and students were taught about running form, training plans, hydration and nutrition, clothing, and recovery. We finished the session with a group stretch. While this event well only 2/6 students attended – more advertisement may be required if this event is to run again in the future.

Bootcamp

There will be a free bootcamp on April 5th from 5:30-6:30pm in the ARC for all SGPS members. I will provide a verbal report of this event at council.

Upcoming Event

April 20th → Nature Walk at Lemoine Point; 5pm

Committees:

Orientation Round Table

Healthy and Wellness Steering Committee

University Council on Athletics and Recreation

I am happy to take any suggestions or comments about future and past SGPS athletics events as well as general questions or comments about athletics and physical activity for graduate students. I can be reached at athletics@sgps.ca.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Ruiter

Athletics Commissioner, SGPS



Dear Members of the SGPS,

It is with a heavy heart that I submit my final report as your Equity and Diversity Commissioner before the new commissioner transitions in the month of May. I have learned so much throughout my time in this role and have had the pleasure of getting to know many of you personally, which I will miss dearly.

Event reporting

On Friday March 27th, I hosted the ‘Invisible but Visible: A Night of Artistic Expression and Anti-Oppression’ in Robert Sutherland Hall. It was a fantastic night of dialogue and story-telling, with over 75 attendees exploring the various student portraits and stories that were hung on the walls of the room and listening to 5 artists perform their spoken word or musical pieces. The photos were a huge hit and were asked to remain in the room for the ‘Visible Faces’ inaugural conference (hosted by QCARED) that took place on March 28th, 2017, and remain in the room by popular demand. Thank you those of you who attended, and please email me any questions, comments or concerns you have in regards to the event. I will be working on an online release of these photos that I am excited to share with those of you who were unable to attend.

SGPS Equity Issues Standing Committee

The Equity Issues Standing Committee is excited to present the first ever SGPS Equity Strategic Draft Plan, which we have been working on diligently since October 2016. It was done through a consultation with other SGPS members to determine gaps in SGPS policy re: equity seeking groups and in recognition of the fact that no such plan currently exists within the SGPS operational framework. In endorsing this plan, we believe that the plan aligns with the recommendations of the Principal’s Implementation Committee on Racism, Diversity and Inclusion expected to be released to the broader Queen’s community at the upcoming Senate meeting on Tuesday, April 18. As this is our first Draft, we open suggestions and feedback so that we may modify and improve the plan where necessary. We look forward to your support. Please find the draft plan attached below.

Thank you all for an amazing year.

In solidarity,
Tahseen Chowdhury



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the International Student's Affairs Commissioner
April General Meeting 2017

Dear SGPS Members and Council,

There have been no major developments since the March Council Meeting.

ISAC Mission Document

The International Student Affairs Committee is awaiting feedback from the Speaker in order to know how best to proceed with the Mission Document.

Office Hours

My office hours are Wednesdays from 1pm- 2pm in JDUC 205. If any international students in your department face any issues they need to talk about or need advocacy for, please direct them my way. As always, I welcome any suggestions or comments, my email address is international@sgps.ca

Best wishes,

Chiedza Pasipanodya

International Student Affairs Commissioner



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Social Commissioner
April General Meeting 2017

We had to unfortunately cancel semi-formal this year because of the lack of tickets sold. There was not enough interest that would ensure the event was a success so we had to cancel it, however we are holding an event to replace this semi-formal. We are holding an event on Friday April 7th at the Grizz as a "come celebrate the last day of classes". I am looking forward to transitioning the new social commissioner in the first coming weeks of April and passing on the ropes to ensure a successful changeover.



OFFICE OF THE RECTOR
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY AT KINGSTON

Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the University Rector
April General Meeting 2017

Oral report presented at the General Meeting.



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Chief Returning Officer
April General Meeting 2017

[No report submitted]