



## Agenda

November 14th, 2017 - 5:30pm  
McLaughlin Hall, JDUC

The Society of Graduate and Professional Students recognizes the traditional and ancestral territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Nations on whose lands we gather on today.

### **Presentation: PSAC 901 (TA/TF)**

Craig Burfold – PSAC Local 901 President – represent 2,000 SGPS students who are also teaching assistants and teaching fellows. We've been in bargaining for a while and we want to deal with Queen's University. Jared and Morgan are also here.

Jared Houston: I'm a coaching steward; plan local events and engagements. We're looking to fill a few vacancies on our student council, and committees we are looking for. Economics and Physics are represented on the Council, but several are missing a steward. We are looking to grow our body.

Craig: The reason why we asked to speak is because as you know, as TA and TF, we have a collective agreement/contract that discusses our working conditions, training, hours...etc. And we get a large contribution for the Health and Dental plan that we contribute to the SGPS. And for PSAC, we started the emergency dental bursary and the international bursary, and we contribute that money from Queen's to the SGPS to administrate. Back in April, the contract expired, and so we've been sitting down with Queen's and Faculty relations – we've been there all through the summer. We can no longer sit in the same room with them with a councillor (Ministry of Labour representative), because there's nothing there for us. We're actually going backwards in the contract right now. As we go forward, our next dates in December (19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>) where a councillor will go back

Survey ~600 people – 5 issues were identified as very important to TAs: tuition support (tuition freeze for TAs) – major issue for international students. No movement so far there; childcare benefit or bursary for TAs with children; all other employee groups receive this benefit – 8% of membership have children – they should have financial assistance. We are the only group that has no childcare benefit (post-docs have them). Avoided a strike for post-docs. We also provide funding for the health and dental plan – plan was improved on eye care; if we look at the \$120,000 we get for health and dental and average over \$2,000 members – that works out to \$60 towards each TA/TF member over the course of a year. Less than 1% of gross pay of teaching assistant goes towards Health and Dental – we're at the lowest end. They've offered peanuts of an increase on that.

Training: Our position is that training should be paid for – in some departments, we get an additional 6 hours on top of every contract that is paid; indiscriminate policy across departments. Ask that it go into the collective agreement.

The reason we have come to you, we're going to start going to the media, embarrassing Queen's University – and mobilizing TAs.



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Leo: What was the fifth one?

Craig: Clawbacks – we feel that external scholarships should not take away from TAs for professional experiences

Morgan: First, and foremost, our website (PSAC901.org) has up-to-date information; you also get emails as members, hopefully you continue to get emails. You can also follow us on social media: Facebook, Twitter. We also have tabling events happening in the next few weeks. There's so many student leaders in this room; mobilization happens on a person-to-person level; have conversations with the students in your department.

Adam: Great presentation. You mentioned that the University seems to be going back on the contract. What are some of the things that are the most disappointing things the University has brought forward.

Craig: What I can tell you is in July, we tabled our monetary issues in the summer. We didn't hear back from them, despite numerous presentations, and they handed us back our proposals with strike-throughs. There was no discussion. Financially, what I can tell you, is if we were to accept what is there today, we will be making a lot less money in three days. Let me put into perspective: there's a new Health and Dental plan with a \$63 increase in student fees – it wouldn't pay for the increase in student fees... if you go to York or U of T, you opt-into one as a student and as an employee. In perspective of this very well-funded community. We see this as unfair, 3-7%, which is what other part-time groups make.

Leo: You mention that post-docs have a different plan? Do Ras do too?

Craig: Post-docs have the gold-plated plan, and you have annual 2-3 year contracts. Part-time workers, sessionals, adjuncts – don't get into that plan unless they meet current criteria. But part-time workers get 3% pay. \$120,000 at 3% would make a greater contributions. RAs – currently in the last year are in the union. In the process of pulling together RA demands, and bargaining will begin. Currently there is no contract, the process has just begun.

David: Will a report summarizing what was discussed – they have all communication.

Morgan: I'll send to Jenny the communicate to send out to the Council

David: Are we being treated unfairly in comparison to other institutions?

Craig: Our wages are still much lower than other GTA locations – having ebenefits is more important

Leo: What is the comparison to other insitutions?

Craig: There are other bursaries available through the union or student Council at schools. With childcare, we have nothing; with wages we are falling behind; and with benefits we are not benefitting



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enough. Remember, the money we contribute benefits professional students too – not just our members. We give the money to the SGPS, which is a health and dental plan for improvement of the whole community.

Adam: In terms of a bargaining timeline, do you have a ball-park as to when things will occur. What does job action look like: we have a conciliation meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> – that will have a determination as to what the mobilization committee will do. Coming back in January the story may change. Just because you have a vote, doesn't mean you go out on strike – that's up to the members to decide at a membership meeting. When we have a strike membership – the employer does take us more seriously when we go forward with strike action.



### I. Adoption of the Agenda

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#### A. Adoption of the Agenda

**MOTION 11/14/17:1**

**BIRT SGPS Council adopt the Agenda for the November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Council Meeting.**

Motion: carries.



### II. Executive & Speaker Reports

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#### A. Executive Reports

##### a. President – Adam Grotzky (report attached)

Adam: I sincerely apologize for receiving multiple emails of my newsletter – we had a few technical issues. Any claims for health and dental must be received by November 10<sup>th</sup>.

I love first peoples – the shoebox drive is now underway. Please work with your departments to organize your local drive and bring to the SGPS.

Two points regarding committees: I've been asked to re-circulate seeking for GSLAG – we had one candidate, so please just send Adam an email as to why it interests you. We also need someone for the Experiential learning committee, through Career Services, especially for graduate students.



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- b. VP Graduate – Stéfy McKnight (report attached)  
Adam and I were at the Canadian Association for Graduate Students conference last week – we talked about some of the issues at Canadian institutions. I didn't get to write the report on it, due to it happening after; we're facing similar issues to other institutions – student and supervisor relationships, career issues (like those not wanting academic careers), non-traditional theses, over-qualification, time to completion...etc. A lot of working groups and reports brought forward. All slides and reports are available online. Added a bunch of events for graduate students; I just figured that would be the best option to circulate, rather than putting on social media.
- c. VP Professional – Russell Durward (no report attached)  
Apologies for not have a report. There's two things I want to talk about:
  - Reaching out to LSAS and ESS to connecting closer with professional societies to address any concerns they may have
  - Developing a Queen's Med and Law event; hoping this will become a regular event
- d. VP Finance & Services – Lauren Peacock (oral report)  
Not a lot of updates. All grants and bursaries are available online, updated. Issues with getting rid of "old grants"; students can still apply for these – we just funnel them into the new grants, otherwise we consider sponsorship or activity bursary.
- e. VP Community – Tyler Morrison (no report attached)  
Rough week for the Executive Reports – Law school reading week last week and recruitment process (interviews during the week)  
Our new Equity Commissioner: Rosie, who will introduce herself; hired after Kelly Watson stepped down  
Orientation Week – connect to Tyler; for some departments it's Faculty, but I'd love to get their ear and talk to them.  
CFS coming to Fall GM

### B. Speaker Report

- a. Speaker – Jennifer Williams (oral report)

### C. Approval

**BIRT SGPS Council approve the Executive and Speaker Reports.**

**MOTION 11/14/17:2**



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Motion carries



## III. Senator, Trustee, Commissioner, Committee & Other Reports

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### A. **Senator Report** – Graduate Student Senator – Alexandru Sonoc (report attached)

Two things to add:

- Distance studies appears on any graduate student transcripts; in contact with Registrar's office and reply that graduate school, distance studies does not appear. She does say that any letter of support towards SCAP would help in correcting the stigma associated with online degrees. My motions further down is in solidarity.

### B. **Trustee Report** – Graduate Student Trustee – Adam Ali (report attached)

Adam: Board of Trustees has not taking a stance for or against; we are expecting to hear from the AMS in the next coming meetings.

### C. **Commissioner Reports**

- a. Athletics Commissioner – Lindsay Ruitter (report attached)
- b. Equity & Diversity Commissioner – Rosie Petrides (report attached)  
Rosie: Hey I'm rOsie – just been meeting with committees/groups to get my feet on the ground. There's three awards that will be released in March – not a ton of interest, so applications that go in are assessed on the spot – one of their big conferences with two influential speakers.
- c. International Students Affairs Commissioner – Atul Jaiswal (report attached)  
Advocated for housing concerns for international studnets – two main issues discussed.
- d. Social Commissioner – Martyna Kamela (report attached)

### D. **Committee Reports**

### E. **Department Reports**

Leo: Sociology Department – reiterating what is happening; department would like to strongly place their views towards 2/3 majority. Our AGM is on Thursday. We do want to do more department events; MacCorry games for all the groups in there.



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Russell: If you want, send me an email and I can start to figure out how to get that thing off the ground.

#### F. Other Reports

- a. University Rector – Cam Yung (no report submitted)  
Apologies for not submitting a report; experiencing a concussion. Nothing to report; full report in December.
  
- b. Chief Returning Officer (oral report)  
With regards to our elections committee, several meetings regarding performance for elections. Had a meeting with the AMS.

#### G. Approval

**MOTION 11/14/17:3**

**BIRT SGPS Council approve the Senator, Trustee, Commissioner, Committee & Other Reports.**

Adam: For Rosie; you can sign-up for the Roundtable in March.

Motion carries.



#### Question Period & Departmental Issues



#### Business Arising from the Minutes

##### A. Ad-Hoc Committee on Electoral Engagement

Requesting 2-3 Council members to sit on ad-hoc committee in the next 3 weeks to discuss electoral engagement, in preparation for December report.



#### Main Motions & Discussion



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**A. Motion for a letter of support to SCAP regarding the removal of the “distance studies” designation from online degrees**

**MOTION 11/14/17:4**

Whereas Queen’s University has a high academic standard for all courses and degrees it offers regardless of whether they are on campus, online, and blended

Whereas there is an unjust stigma associated with terms such as “distance studies”, “online courses”, “online degrees” in the general public

Whereas the Senate Committee on Academic Development (SCAP) is reconsidering removing the designation of “distance studies” from official transcripts

Be it resolved that the SGPS executive write a letter to SCAP stating the SGPS supports combating the stigma associated with distance studies, online courses, and online degrees and that it supports the removal of the special designation “distance studies” from official transcripts.

Be it further resolved that the letter be sent to SCAP no later than November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017 so that it can be read in time for its next meeting.

Be it further resolved that the executive contact the AMS so that they too may send such a letter of support to SCAP.

Adam: I’m happy to see non-Executive members bringing this forward. This does not necessarily impact us. There’s no consensus with undergraduate students right now – speaking to the AMS Academic Affairs Commissioner. My view is not important, though we should respect the undergraduate level where it matters. I’d be concerned about the language of the motion to be the person supporting this motion.

Leo: I’m going to propose an amendment, but it be conferred to graduate student associations, where individual departments can voice their concerns, may be better.

Alexandru: Not friendly.

Leo: Some of the undergraduates I know, I don’t view a science degree online the same as in person, and that is similar across engineering streams. Perhaps a less stigmatizing words could be used.

David: Also, my question would be is this online/distance studies label report elsewhere, other than the transcript. Is there anywhere else this could be reported?



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Alexandru: So the distance studies shows up on the official transcript, was added as an administrative measure so that people doing an online degree can't start taking courses on campus – that was the only reason it was introduced. Absolutely, an online degree shows up in the course calendar; so anyone can

Tyler: I tend to agree with Adam and Leo, could you speak about other academic institutions – is this a typical thing?

Alexandru: I'm uncertain. It'd be interesting to find that out.

Matt: My understanding is that the course code online is distinct; course codes are different. Not sure if that is the same for every course.

Adam Ali: Echo most of the conversations; there are differences between courses taught online and in person, across different institutions. The one piece that would be a good idea – to table this to another meeting. I want more information. My question would be – who is the demographic that tends to use these courses. Immediately equity and diversity comes to mind.

Alexandru: That is exactly who is using the degree; people in communities who can't get here. Timing – this will be decided at the next SCAP meeting next week.

Lindsay: One of the primary concerns seems to be is that it won't be representative of the sciences with a practical component. Removal of designation, where appropriate, theoretical nature. Doesn't include parts.

David: Follow-up from before, if someone has done a Chemistry degree – how could you differentiate? Only to go through their transcript, or a different way on their diploma.

Alexandru: Certificate of Law Studies instead of JD; or Certificate in Inquiry Methods – the degrees themselves.

Lindsay: We could support removal of online, but require another qualification to indicate that a labwork was being done/some practical component. We think that the primary concern is communication.

Adam: That simply can't be done through the Registrar's office – wholesale; you do it for everybody or for nobody.

David: My question was more where the root/who brought this forward, and are we dealing with students who have been victims of this stigma.

Alexandru: It was brought forward by the Chair of SCAP from the Registrar's Office; they view the designation is archaic and has stigma. They'll keep it on the unofficial transcript, but not the official transcript.



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Parish: Obviously there is the case that they could change the designation that changes the name to remove... so in general, people who do the degree on campus, their degrees would be undervalued.

Alexandru: If I were to enroll in one of these courses, I would get the same certificate, but in mine it wouldn't say distance studies. Whereas those off-campus would.

Leo: Continuing Distance Studies – standards are different, often lower. When you are considering the differentiation, 80 for on campus, 75 for distance studies. How they can come to campus is an option – an avenue for students to enroll on campus eventually – not fully isolated out. Echoing Adam, this is an undergraduate issue, and if the AMS is not set on it, then I don't think it's out place to say we are in favour of this. If undergrads is not in support, and we don't know what is happening at other universities, I don't think we can say we are in support of this.

---Labeling and bringing Registrar's Office to next Meeting ---

Alexandru: Will make our letter useless, as the meeting is next week.

Adam: I would like more information; there is no way the Registrar to change this – I'm very confused as to the context behind this. IF the motion changes to a discussion item, with the Registrar coming in to have a discussion.

Norman: I agree in principal with having the wording removed; so there's a big stigma against it, but it seems wrong to put the two degrees of equal. A simple solution would be renaming that entire arm, rather than calling course codes differently. The Registrar problem goes away.

Adam: I just want to clarify. I would encourage that we vote to not vote in favour of tabelling; we are not well equipped to make this decision. The debate came to Senate, and was sent back to SCAP. They are in the review process – these are all discussions they wish to have. It would be ill informed for us to take a stance, and given timelines.

Motion is defeated.

#### **B. JDUC Committee**

#### **MOTION 11/14/17:5**

BIRT the SGPS Council strike a committee to determine what are the most important features of a shared space in the new JDUC project. The purpose of this committee is to determine what are the priorities of graduate students for this new space. The committee should feature 3-7 members graduate committee consisting of members of



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the executive and members of council, including the Commissioner or Deputy of the Equity SGPS Commission. The SGPS will invite the AMS to strike a committee for non-graduate specific parts of the meeting to have input on them.

Adam Ali: Quick question – how are you seeing equity, diversity, and inclusion welcoming members in the SGPS.

Leo: We would welcome that – friendly amendment.

Adam: Some other information, there's a website launched last week is to get more feedback from students at large from all students, with the idea that we would look at that and incorporate that. We're also doing several town halls, with as many students as possible to bring this forward.

Alexandru: A question – about the make-up of the committee.

Leo: That's what I was hoping from the discussion – didn't want to outline a composition. If we want a graduate one, have a graduate student at large, members from Council – a diverse portfolio.

Adam: I think it needs a bit more structure. What the overarching goal is – when some document or report would be submitted, what the purpose is. Could we table this to the next meeting to bring forward a comprehensive plan.

### **C. Review of the Principal (See “Submission from Principal Woolf to Joint Committee”)**

Adam reads over preamble for the Principal submission. Cam also makes aware of his participation in the committee.

Adam: I hope you guys read the letter – it's a bit lengthy, but it's very important we get feedback. I hope we have some conversation here.

Leo: One of the problems I came back is the lack of clear proactiveness; I'm working with KGH and Queen's to do more on reducing the number of students who are going to the hospital drunk. I find over the years, the University tends to be reactive, rather than proactive. I will be filling out the survey and I think that's really interesting; we're talking about student experience, we need to go back to get to research-focused.



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Adam Ali: I'll be filling out the survey as well. A student group – protesters – women of colour – asked for a more direct implementation of PICRDI; I read through Dr. Woolf's comments and plan and throughout my time here, I continue to not see issues of race and racism centered in how we conduct things at this University. Particularly persons of colour, and women of colour, with those thoughts in my head. I encourage you to bring forward comments of what needs to be improved.

Stefy: I echo both Leo and Adam. Queen's University Council – SGPS and AMS students invited; from what I've seen, a lot of emphasis was on graduate student experience. The Principal is focusing on Graduate students, but I haven't felt it in the last few months. I had to reframe the question to be a graduate student in that moment. As Graduate students, we need to push the conversation to go to graduate students.

Alexandru: I was at the last senate meeting where the Principal mentioned the desire to focus more on research, rather than undergraduate focused. He coated, while not making any less of improvements we've made, let's improve research. We spend too much energy and time on undergraduate experience and wellness, but wellness should be taken care of the Ministry of Health – the University doesn't receive a cent for the running of the Wellness Centre on Campus. Wellness does need to be provided by the University and community at large.

Lindsay: If we are well, we perform better.

Christine: Health and wellbeing of a student can only contribute to the students. U of T just finished renewal of the Presidency. One thing that came up was the President/Principal ability to gain funding for research. Donors, but I think it would be important for him to focus on getting funding specifically for research and graduate students, protected money within the institution. Having the Principal be part of the greater public sphere.

Leo: Daniel does teach a course still. When we're thinking about the University and reputation, Queen's pulls itself out of ranking systems – we were a top 50 global institutions, as the Harvard of the North with McGill and U of T. We're not as proactive. We have to get back to the reputation of Queen's with both of those issues.



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Rochelle: Is Queen's accountable – if we don't hold the Council accountable, I think it's going to become another taskforce. I would urge you to keep in mind.

Adam Ali: I think that's a really good point. Times have changed, but they haven't. Nothing has happened – there has not been proper accountability. Part of your job is deciding whether or not this Principal can get us there. That's a big question, and I will bet that this Council – the rest of the Council needs to take this seriously. We've had five reports, yet these things continue to happen.

David: I definitely agree with this discussion with racism. One thing I want to speak to from Physics is Queen's not being a world-renowned research institution. Queen's won a Nobel Prize recently. We also just got a huge amount of funding from the Federal government to make a whole new institute.

#### **D. Referendum Policy (See "Briefing on the SGPS Student Fee Policy")**

Adam: Two fees failed, which would have passed had we seen the ½ majority. With low voter turn-out. The other side of that, I just want to hear other perspectives, is whether the JDUC fee is so complex/convoluted that the 2/3 threshold almost sets it up for failure is that. Let's say our fee is long-term. I'll have more details for you at our next meeting. We may have to raise our society fee by \$40 - \$45 to cover rent cost. All that being said, they are both options and potentially alternative options later down the road. As someone who has explored this issue extensively, I see an expensive \$35 fee, rather than raising our society fee. Upfront fee may deter students from voting for the fee, despite it saving money in the long-run.

Lindsay: Are you suggesting that only for this, the 2/3rds would be available. Especially, from equity seeking groups that have not passed, because those groups don't have the ability to change. Unless we change for all fees.

Leo: Going to send a question to our AMS President friend about the Walkhome and Clubs Office fee. Walkhome is a safety service funded by the University. They won't reject students from accessing that system. 0 graduate students are employed by Walkhome. Just like how graduate students aren't paying patrons of QP. About the 2/3 majority threshold and speaking to Stuart Clark, the concept to major capital projects –



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we can't have speaking notes. Maybe Council needs to look at policy surrounding thresholds about elections/referendums in the next electoral cycle to "try again". That would be a policy discussion at a general meeting. It'll receive a lot of traction to do the vote at the same time as the AMS.

----Vote for an additional ½ hour of time for meeting ----

Alexandru: I wanted to talk about quorum – current policy states that any group can gather 10% of electoral. That's current your policy. I think it's a little flawed in that if you're not going to get 10% for the vote, you're not going to get 10% the term. Any special interest group can sway the vote. Say a mechanical engineer wants to sway that mechanical engineers – if nobody shows up. What I suggest is that it's a threshold. I think it's perhaps wiser that the Council accepts the referendum votes.

Norman: I agree with Lindsey that having a special vote would not be a good idea to decide objectively. The two issues – I think they should have been separated.

Kayla: We had a similar building project, all three representative student bodies to approve the fee. I believe there was a policy.

Lindsay: The point I was trying to make was that making this decision was that, changing the rules of voting, so the ediscussion about the JDUC should be separate. THings

Maria:

Laura:

Tyler:

Adam:

Leo:



**Other Business**

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### Notices of Motion & Announcements

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The Fall GM is on Tuesday, November 28<sup>th</sup> in Dunning 14 – please invite your department members!

The next Council meeting will be Tuesday, December 12<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM (McLaughlin Hall, JDUC). Motions for the December Council meeting are due by 4:00 PM on Tuesday, December 5<sup>th</sup>.



### Adjournment

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A. **Adjournment**

**Motion 11/14/17:6**

BIRT this meeting of SGPS Council be adjourned.