



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Graduate Student Senator
April 2019

Council,

Today was my last Senate meeting and it was a historic one. In 1918 Senate passed a motion barring black students from being enrolled in the Faculty of Medicine. Prospective students were refused and current students were told to finish their degrees elsewhere. Although black students were admitted again in 1965, the history and real reasoning for this motion were covered up on at least four separate occasions by Queen's. The 1918 motion was finally officially repealed by Senate in October, 2018.

Today an official written apology was signed and also orally given. In attendance was the son of one of the black students whose studies were cut short.

Today the university explained the real reason for the 1918 decision: a report of medical schools was written that recommended there be no black students in medical schools in North America; the American Medical association, following the report, gave Queen's Medicine a low ranking for having black students enrolled; in order to increase its ranking so that it could get more money from two foundations, Queen's passed the motion terminating the studies of black students in the Faculty of Medicine.

Today the University and Faculty of Medicine committed to the honoring and remembering this shameful chapter from their past with an exhibit in the Faculty of Medicine. They also committed to teaching medical students this history so that not only will lives that could have been be remembered but also our medical students may be better prepared to challenge the many biases and racial injustices that still exist within the health care system.

It has been an honour and a privilege to be your graduate student senator these past two years. I have had the pleasure of working with many talented individuals: SGPS executive, SGPS Councilors, Deans and assistant Deans, Professors, fellow Senators, staff from the University Secretariat, the office of the Ombudsman, and the School of Graduate Studies; on many project, initiative, and new academic programs to make Queen's a better place to learn, teach, research, and enjoy. It has been fun. I am very pleased to have met my successor, Courtney Bannerman, and from what I can tell she will be an excellent graduate student senator. Please join me in wishing her the best.

Alexandru Sonoc
Graduate Student Senator