



Hello everyone,

I hope you have had a fantastic start to the Fall Semester!

My report this month is much the same as last month, with some minor changes. I have left these much the same as I wasn't with you on the 27th of August and this way I can speak directly to these points in our September meeting.

Below is an update on some of the activities in my portfolio:

International Student Representatives

One of core objectives this year is to try and put in place some soft infrastructure for international graduate students so that there is a means and way of communicating with and understanding them at the departmental level. Due to the decentralized nature of Queen's University, this is vital. I am hoping to develop a communication channel between myself, International Graduate Representatives, and other international bodies on campus

As such, please could you email me (international@sgps.ca) the name and email address of your international student representative so that I can begin this process. If your Graduate Student council does not have an international student representative, I would encourage you to ask them to create such a position. To give you an idea as to what such a position might entail:

The International Student Representatives act as representatives of the department's international graduate students providing the department with information about international students' latest concerns and matters. These representatives also act as a connection to the university for incoming international students helping them to understand the university's lingo, structures, and layout as well as the more specific details of the department. The position is not restricted to international students, but it would be ideal that it is held by at least one international student. The International Student Representatives should also try to be engaged with or at least knowledgeable of the workings of SGPS' International Commissioner, Queen's University's International Centre, the International Student Working Group, and other international related bodies

Of course, the above text can be edited according to your own departmental needs. I hope that you will help me to develop this university wide infrastructure and I look forward to hearing from your reps soon.

Past Events: Game Night and Family Fun Day

In June, I hosted a Games Night at Nexus downtown. Nexus is a fun environment with a deeply engaged community and they host games nights every Tuesday. In July, together with the Social Commissioner and Ban Righ, we hosted a Family Fun Day at the Splash Pad in the Park. Ban Righ was an excellent support, providing an array of food, services, and supplies. Despite having a wonderful collaboration and gorgeous weather our event was poorly attended. We think that this was a combination of potentially poor timing and it being a new event. Ban Righ is open to creating another of such family event and expressed enthusiasm for continued collaboration with the SGPS. You can see some photos of these events are at the bottom of the report.

Upcoming Events: Know your Services

The intention of these workshops is to provide a comprehensive overview of the services and information that international graduate students need to be made aware of. In order to achieve this, I reached out to a variety of stakeholders to give 10-15-minute presentations and Q&A about particular topics. While these workshops are directed at international graduate students, they (especially the latter two) might be helpful for any graduate.

Know your Services: Funding and Work (16 September, 9-12 in Gordon Hall 302)

- Arthur Chen (QUIC): visas, work restrictions on and off campus and QUIC's tax assistance.
- Jenny Lee Northey (Career Services): Accessing employment and career support through Career Services.
- Chris Lambert (KEYS): How you or your family members/partners can access employment in Kingston
- Rohit Revi (PSAC 901): Speaks about worker's rights, the PSAC 901 union, and student advocacy
- Gillian B Berry/ and Beth Lake (Registrar Office): Managing your fees, when to pay, and payment plans
- Abel Hazon (SGPS): Emergency funding and jobs available through the SGPS
- A representative from Student Awards delves into the General Bursary and the Work Study Program
- A representative from the School of Graduate Studies talks about accessing funding through competitive scholarships such as the Vanier and the Trudeau.
- Kristen Spong (Mitacs): Unpacking Mitacs funding opportunities

Know your Services: Looking after yourself and your loved ones (19 September, 9-12 in Gordon Hall 302)

- Wendy Vuyk (ISKA): Integrating into Kingston and Community Health Centers
- Amanda Gray (QUIC): University Health Insurance Plan (UHIP) and QUIC activities
- Andria Burke (SGPS): Supplementary health care through the SGPS
- Arunima Khanna (Student Wellness): Health care facilities and services available on campus
- Kelly Smith and James Lighthart (ARC): Facilities and services available at the Athletics and Recreation Centre
- Kimberly Gascoigne & Jessica Bertrand (Hospitality Services): Food options and services on campus
- Heidi Penning (the Equity Office): About the Equity Office, its workshops and services
- Penny Zhang (SGPS): Equity spaces and groups on campus and in Kingston
- Susan Belyea (Ban Righ): Services for mature women and those with families.
- Anthony Lomax (SGPS): Keeping social, upcoming social events on campus and in Kingston
- Colette Steer (School of Graduate Studies): SGS Habitat, building community for you and your family, and accessing information about your services

Know your Services: Thriving as a Student (9 October, 9-12 in Gordon Hall 302)

- Colette Steer (SGS): Supervisor relations, Expanding Horizons, and Opportunities to Present your Research
- Leo Erlikhman (SGPS): Peer and Academic Advisors at the SGPS
- Hanna Stanbury (SGPS): Opportunities to speak and practice English
- Agnieszka Herra (SASS/QUIC): Expert writing and academic skills support for graduate students
- Douglas Ottney (Library): Library facilities, services and workshops available on campus
- Davin Carlson (ITS): Access to different software, technology through Queen's and SOLUS
- Andrea Reid (CTL): The services and resources available to you when teaching or working as a teaching assistant
- Dinah Jansen (CFRC): Opportunities to volunteer, be on radio, podcast and post PSAs
- Canan Sahin (ISWG): International Graduate Community Building and Advocacy

Upcoming Events: International Research Seminars

On the 25th of November, 9th of December, and 27 of January I intend to host a series of international research seminars. For each of these, I would ideally like 2-3 speakers about a specific region or country who are speaking about their research in that locale. If you have any ideas or suggestions about who might be good candidates for these sessions, please reach out to me (international@sgps.ca)

Upcoming Events: Beyond Boundaries Conference

The commissioners are collaborating to create a conference from the 29th of February to the 1st of March. We have decided that before we send out our call for participants we will be starting out in September with a call for sponsorship from different faculties, departments and bodies on campus. Then we will send out the call for participants in October. The aim of the conference will be to host a series of multi-disciplinary or multi-spatial panels discussing specific topics which will enable both graduate networking and academia.

Beyond Canada Podcast

In a continued effort to showcase both the work of international students as well as the value and challenges of international research I have launched a podcast called *Beyond Canada: International Thought & Scholarship*. The first interviewee was Prince Michael Amegbor who discussed the blending health initiatives of sub-Saharan Africans living in Toronto. You can hear it on [CFRC's website](#) and we are waiting for it to be released on other podcast channels soon. There will be one episode a month between now and April.

Other workings

Over and above the organization of events and the podcast I have been hard at work over the course of the summer to meet as many people as possible who work with international students. This has included meeting people in QUIC, SASS, Hospitality Services, Ban Righ, Career Services, PSAC901, SGS, ISWG, An Clachan and others. For the most part, these meetings have been about trying to understand the services they currently have for international students and the ways in which I can aid their efforts. I am slowly trying to create a catalogue of all of these.

To close

In a nutshell, it has been a productive summer and I have learnt a great deal about the services, opportunities, and potential challenges for international students at Queen's University. I am looking forward to serving this community as best I can and hope that the above are a step in that direction. Once again, having departmental graduate student representatives would be an incredible resource in this regard and I encourage you to speak to your own Graduate Student Councils and reach out to me about who in your councils I can speak to about international student affairs.

I hope to see you at some of the events and look forward to any feedback, suggestions or ideas about anything I have already put forward.

Have an excellent start to your semester and I will see you in September.

Kindest regards,



Claudia Hirtenfelder
International Student Affairs Commissioner for the SGPS



Some crazy difficult games at Nexus! But so fun!



A beautiful day out in city park! Thanks Ban Righ for all the yummy food and awesome games!



Hello all,

The past couple of months (from May'19 till August'19) proved to be very productive for myself, as the Supervisor, in terms of learning while implementing to the maximum of my capabilities. Monthly events were finalized by all four commissioners in their respective year plans in the beginning of the session 2019-20. For the most part, all four commissioners were able to achieve their monthly event targets (successfully) except a few exceptions where the Equity and Athletic commissioners were not present in Kingston (with proper information to SGPS President as well as myself). This issue has been discussed and would be eliminated in future as the school year begins. All the commissioners would be in Kingston with Equity as well as Athletic commissions doubling up the events in the coming months.

My role: I, as Supervisor, have become more comfortable and familiar with SGPS and its operations in the past months. My prime target has been to make sure that the four commissions are meeting their targets in terms of engaging and benefitting SGPS members with the support of Andria (SGPS Director) as well as the executive. In order to do that, I organize biweekly meetings with all the commissioners for general event updates as well as potential events and collaborations. Other than that, in person meeting with each commissioner every month, has been very productive where we discuss in detail about how a particular event will be executed, bookings, time, dates and budgets. Once all the basic information for the events is finalized, I compile all the event information from the four commissioners and pass it along to Andria for graphics and marketing. Finally, I keep in continuous touch with Jeremy (President) and Andria (Director) to give periodic updates and discuss any potential issues.

Past Events: Starting from the very first month of the new SGPS team (2019-20), we have been able to successfully conduct a number of events for SGPS member staying in Kingston for the summer. The idea for summer events was keeping in mind SGPS member with spouses and kids as well. The other important aspect kept in mind while organizing these events was this year's budget constraint due to 'Student choice initiative'. Conscious efforts were made to be inclusive (family friendly) as well as keeping the events budget neutral and push more towards collaborative events within and outside the SGPS. The summer started off with some easy social events such as the 'SGPS Board Game night at Nexus' by the International commissioner and 'SGPS Observatory tour' by the Social Commissioner. The Athletic and wellness commissioner also organized a 'Running group' event which continued every Sunday for the month of July. However, another Athletic event (Beginner's Kayaking) had to be cancelled due to low ticket sale which could be an effect of less number of people during summer. Finally, the biggest event in terms of budget for Summer'19 was the 'SGPS Midsummer picnic' at the City park in which Social, International and Equity commissions collaborated with the Ban-Righ center for an outside social designed for students and families alike. Out of these events, the observatory tour as well as the Midsummer picnic have a high potential to be conducted again in future and showed highest engagement.

Other work: Other than the regular activities planned by myself and the commissioner, some side activities have also been carried out during the summer and some other have been planned for upcoming terms. These include Summer Intramurals by the Athletics commissioners, Charlie, with the involvement of Leo, VP Graduate at SGPS. The Equity commissioner, Penny has also been involved in external committee work with the Equity Office at Queen's, BEAG and SEEC. Penny is also planning to develop an SGPS equity committee which will discuss equity issues faced by graduate students and encourage diversity and inclusivity on campus. The international commissioner, Claudia on the other hand, has been invited (along with myself) by QUIC for QUIC's Graduate orientation to inform new graduate international students about SGPS and its services. She also runs the SGPS International student affairs page on Facebook to give important information to International students and understand diverse student voices on campus. Moreover, Claudia has been conducting a series of podcasts interviews on the theme 'Beyond Canada' (to be released in Fall term) to highlight international scholarships and research done by Queen's graduate students internationally. Anthony, the social commissioner, has come up with an innovative new plan in collaboration with the Isabel Bader Center of Performing Arts in which some of the events will be selected from Isabel's year plan for which the SGPS will buy group tickets which will be then available for SGPS member

for lower prices. Charlie, the Athletics and wellness commissioner, has also started to work on the very popular 'Sports hours' to continue the SGPS sports hour legacy and encourage more and more students to participate in fitness and healthy activities.

Orientation week: Myself, Andria and the social commissioner, Anthony has been heavily involved to organize the orientation week events over the summer as well. This year a major attention has been diverted to orientation week as the student choice initiative opt-out scheme will be in effect from this year. Orientation week is the very first SGPS impression on 'potential' SGPS members. In order to inform graduate and professional students of SGPS services, activities and benefits, Myself, along with social commissioner and Andria have come up with an Orientation week full of informative as well as networking events for incoming students to make immediate connection. The event list includes: Queen's Campus amazing race, Night at the museums, 1000 Island Boat cruise, Speed meeting and Trivia at Alibi, Hike to Rock Dunder, Wolfe Island Corn maze and an International Mixer at Queens University International Centre (QUIC). This will help incoming students in getting familiar with campus, Kingston as well as their peer in the most exciting and amusing way. Special efforts have been made to advertise the orientation week activities by reaching out to maximum number of SGPS members, not just by SGPS social media, but also through other services' social media on campus such as CFRC, where Public announcements on radio have been set up for the month of August as well as an interview podcast on airwave will go live one week before orientation, conducted by Myself and the commissioners.

Future plan: Although a temporary plan for future events have already been set in the year plan but the key focus at the moment is for a number of September events. These events are separate from the orientation events. Equity commissioner, Penny Zhang, will be organizing 2 equity workshops: Equity, diversity and inclusivity training and bystander intervention training on Sept 12 and 17 respectively. Moreover, equity commissioner has been interested in the sustainability week and is planning to conduct an environmental justice event on Sept 30th. The social commissioner has planned another tour to 'The Lennox & Addington Dark Sky Viewing Area' in the month of September as social tours have been successful in the past and students seem to show increasing interest in exploring new places in Kingston. The international commissioner has organized an amazing free 'Know your services' workshops for September and October (3 workshops on different themes). These are designed for international graduate students, however all SGPS member can take benefit from these as it brings different valuable services available for students on campus under one roof. Finally, free yoga sessions have been planned by the Athletic and Wellness commissioner to start off the new term with fresh energy and enthusiasm.

The fall term has been intensively and carefully planned, especially the month of September and October, in order to make students aware of SGPS services and its benefits. This is the underlining aim for all the activities planned with the hope to get least number of opt outs and maximum benefit to Graduate and professional students as well as SGPS as an organization.

Uchitta Vashist
Supervisor
Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Queen's University
supervisor@sgps.ca