



Hello council,

In this report, I would like to touch on some of the initiatives that we have been working on this fall as well as ask councils participation in a couple of areas.

Indigenous Position at the SGPS

The creation of an Indigenous position has been a priority of the SGPS for a couple of years and I personal priority of mine as SGPS President. I have put forward a motion for the creation of a commissioner level indigenous position. The person who is hired will be a self-identified Indigenous SGPS member and their mandate will be to explore and define the position and its role in the SGPS.

We are hoping that the position and its rate of remuneration reflect the Society's desire to improve equity, diversity, and inclusion. I also believe that hiring a person to investigate the mandate will produce a position that is robust and sustainable within the SGPS for many years to come.

Opt-out numbers/SCI

By council we should have the final numbers on opt-out. As you are aware this year, we have been dealing with the student choice initiative. I would love to discuss next steps with council and reflect on the SCI strategy.

Alcohol Policy

We spoke about the Alcohol Policy at the last meeting. The public consultation is underway. It is imperative that we encourage graduate and professional students to engage in the process and highlight the issues with the policy.

We have raised concerns about the consultation process and are hoping that the public consultation process will be evaluated properly.

Presidential Caucus

I held the first Presidential Caucus last week. I would like to thank Aimee, Collette, Emma and Danny from attending. The purpose of this meeting was to have an informal discussion relating to SGPS and faculty specific issues. I am hoping that moving forward attendance will increase. I would love if council could inform their President/Presidents about these meetings and provide me with contact info so that I could email them moving forward.

Jeremy



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the VP Finance & Services

Dear Council,

The Finance Committee is up and running with no outstanding issues. Of interest to this council is that since our last meeting, we have already received applications for our grants program which is a great outcome compared to last where we had no applications until the Winter semester.

Health and Wellness Grant

The SGPS is excited to announce the inception of the Health and Wellness Grant (“Grant”). The Grant is meant to provide support support for projects and initiatives that seek to promote positive health and wellness at Queen’s for the greater community of graduate and professional students. The SGPS executives have allocated \$4,000 to this Grant for the 2019-2020 academic year and this funding can be accessed by either individual students, clubs, or departmental student councils.

Any questions about the accessing this Grant can be addressed to me at vp.finance@sgps.ca or personally at this meeting.

Best regards,
Abel Hazon
VPFS



Hi All,

A few updates:

Committee Updates

The SGPS VP Professional holds a seat on the Board of Directors of the Grad Club and I have therefore been attending the Board's meetings. The Grad Club will be undergoing a renovation and as a member of the Board, I have played an advisory role in this process.

I am attending and participating in the meetings of the Academic Integrity Subcommittee. In its most recent meeting, the committee discussed potential changes to OnQ, wherein students would no longer be able to view the names and email addresses of their peers registered in the same class. Indeed, this change would alleviate privacy concerns raised by some.

Human Resource Matters

Among other human resource matters, I am taking part in the recruitment of volunteers for the Graduate Peer Support Centre.

Additional Projects

I am conducting research and undertaking comprehensive planning for potential structural changes to next year's executive. This may involve altering the executive incentive structure.

Ryan Adlem
Vice President Professional



Dear Council,

Another September has come and gone, and with it another series of largely successful orientation events. Here is a run down of our eight orientation events scheduled between September 3-20:

- **SGPS Amazing Race**
 - Three teams participated in this fun event which was planned by Uchitta (former Supervisor, now VP Community) and Penny (Equity Commissioner). Teams had to take selfies at various places around campus. The extensive and informative list of places was created by Penny, our Equity Commissioner. This was a great event to kick off orientation week as it physically oriented people to their new campus and introduced a lot of services many didn't know existed.
- **SGPS Night at the Museums**
 - This event was well attended, and offered participants tours of two museums located on or near Queen's campus: Murney Tower and the Museum of Health Care. After the tours, we had appetizers at the Grad Club, where representatives from other museums set up displays and answered questions. I heard only positive feedback about this event. I'm very grateful that Leo (VP Graduate) passed my information along to Danielle and Darragh at the Kingston Association of Museums, Art Galleries, and Historic Sites. Not only did they partner with us to create a really fun and unique orientation event, but they also passed on a list of local museums willing to provide tours for SGPS members throughout the year. This partnership is bound to lead to some really great educational events that are affordable, family friendly and unique to Kingston.
- **SGPS 19+ 1000 Island Boat Cruise**
 - As in past years, this event proved very successful. We sold 239/240 tickets, and people had a lot of fun dancing and chatting aboard the Island Queen. There was a great diversity of programs represented: I met new people from my program (Cultural Studies), education, law, engineering, chemistry, biology, and others. The one change I would consider for next year is having the event last the usual three hours instead of four.
- **SGPS Speed Meeting and Trivia at the Alibi**
 - This event, organized by Uchitta and I, brought together a really fun group of people for "speed meeting" and Trivia at the Alibi. Our platonic take on speed dating was really well received, and we ended up giving people about 4 minutes to talk to each new person (instead of our original plan of 1 minute). Bruce, the owner of the Alibi, hosted trivia for us and was friendly and flexible when we asked for minor changes in the menu, timeline, etc. People genuinely seemed to have a great time meeting each other at this event, I would highly recommend repeating it in the future.
- **SGPS Hike to Rock Dunder**
 - We were watching the weather carefully before this event and sent out an email notifying people that it may be cancelled. As it was sold out, we were very happy when the threat of thunderstorms dissipated on the morning of the event. We told people to prepare for showers and had the bus driver waiting for us in case of rain, but in the end the weather was actually great. The overcast skies on our hike up to the lookout helped keep us cool, and the sun came out while we were resting at the top, giving us great photo opportunities. Nothing but positive feedback about this one.
- **SGPS Trip to Wolfe Island Corn Maze**
 - While this has been a staple of our orientation week schedule over the years, it actually sold less tickets this year than our other events. Based on my observations and conversations, I would say that people's reactions to the event were mixed. While the food was well received and some people had a lot of fun with the organized games, others found the man running the event a bit abrasive and inflexible. There

also seemed to be some tension between him and other workers at points. While I still think Wolfe Island is a great location for an orientation event, I wonder if beach/dunes day might be a more appealing activity for future years. This might allow people a more relaxing option at the end of a busy orientation week. Another option for a Wolfe Island event is apple picking, which could be a really fun alternative.

- SGPS 19+ 1000 Island Boat Cruise (Again)
 - This second boat cruise was much less successful than the first in terms of ticket sales. With hindsight, I believe there are some important reasons for this. First, many departments host their own cruises with the same company, and our second boat cruise likely oversaturated the market. Second, this plethora of boat cruises offered during orientation week causes confusion. Incoming students are given a lot of information, and they do not necessarily understand the distinction between SGPS and their home departments. I received many emails asking whether people who had already paid for a boat cruise through their department now had to pay again. Adding a second SGPS cruise only compounded this confusion. Given these reasons, I think it best to stick with one cruise in future years.
- SGPS International Mixer at QUIC
 - This was a really fun event that had a great turn out of over 60 students. After Claudia (International Commissioner) and I introduced ourselves and our upcoming events, we ran an ice breaker game before chatting over pizza. The partnership between QUIC and SGPS at this event is one that will hopefully continue throughout this year and in the years to come.

I would really like to thank all the volunteers, fellow commissioners, SGPS permanent staff, and members of the executive who helped to plan and run these orientation events. It was really great to work as part of this team. September was also busy with other work:

- “Keeping Social” Workshop
 - As part of Claudia’s fantastic set of *Know Your Services* workshops for international students, I created a handout for participants and spoke for about 15 minutes about different ways to stay social in Kingston. I had a lot of fun researching for this event and found options for everyone from gamers to crafters to athletes to musicians and beyond. I also decided to include a lot of recurring events, venues, and community event boards on the list to show people how to stay social in Kingston.
- Beyond Boundaries Conference
 - I sent out emails to departments seeking sponsors and was able to help secure funds from the new Screen Cultures and Curatorial Studies Graduate Program in the Film Studies Department. I am also continuing to look into catering options and social events for what is shaping up to be a pretty big conference (now with seven sponsors across the university!). I’d especially like to thank Claudia for all her incredible work heading up this initiative so far.
- “Autumn’s Arrival” – SGPS Laser Guided Stargazing Tour
 - This event was unfortunately cancelled by the Lennox and Addington organizers due to cloud cover. However, it turned out to be a very popular offering and was already sold out a week before the event. I am planning to reschedule this for early May when the site starts up their laser guided tours again.

In addition, there are a few upcoming events in October that I am excited about:

- Fort Fright
 - This is a popular event that has been on our schedule for years. We have bought tickets and will return to Fort Henry’s haunted house again this year on October 24.
- Orpheus Chamber Orchestra with Jan Lisiecki
 - As an experimental partnership with the Isabel Bader Centre, we are offering SGPS members 15% off the already discounted student price for this concert with a world-renowned chamber orchestra and Polish Canadian piano phenomenon. This is a great way to see some of the fantastic content at Kingston’s beautiful waterfront concert venue at a more accessible price.

As always, I welcome suggestions, comments, and questions. My email address is social@sgps.ca, I look forward to hearing from you!

Thank you,

Anthony Lomax



Hello everyone,

It's October and things have been busy. Below is an update on some of the activities in my portfolio:

International Student Representatives

Only two SGPS Representatives have got back to me about the status of International Student Representation in their departments. I am happy to report that Chemical Engineering and the Faculty of Education have students representing international graduates. I also know that the Department of Geography and Planning is in the process of ratifying such positions too. If your GSC has an international student representative please put me in contact with them ASAP (international@sgps.ca)

If you do not have any international student representation within your GSC please let me know. If you could also email me details about how many international graduates are within your departments that would be greatly appreciated too.

There are numerous challenges facing international students and considering they make up 27% of the graduate student body it is imperative that we represent their needs, creating this kind of soft infrastructure which will help to foster better communication between myself and departments is critical in achieving this. However, I need your help to make that a reality

Know your Services Workshops

The first two of the Know your services workshops ran smoothly. On the 16th of September 10 speakers discussed various aspects of funding and work and on the 19th of September 8 speakers discussed the ways in which international students can look after themselves and their loved ones. Unfortunately, the attendance to these workshops was not as high as I would have liked (10 and 4 people respectively) but I learnt a great deal as to how this could be improved in future. I also took extensive notes and on completion of the 3rd workshop (to be held on the 9th of October on Thriving as a Student) I will be compiling a Know your Services document for international students.

Upcoming Events: International Research Seminars

I am happy to say that I have partnered with QUIC to host these Seminars and am currently in conversation with some student groups on campus about how we could geographically focus them. QUIC is offering up use of their space and will assist in marketing the event. Due to the availability of the space the workshops will now be hosted from 5-7pm on the 11th of November and the 2nd of December, with the January date to be confirmed. Expect more details in next month's report.

Upcoming Events: Beyond Boundaries Conference

Together with the other commissioners, I spent September trying to secure sponsors for the conference and I am happy to say that we now have six sponsors: SGS, FAS Fireplace, School of Policy Studies, QUIC, APPLE, SAPLab together with the SonicArts Studio. They have put forward panel themes which will be used in the conference.

The Call for Presenters will officially be released on the 3rd of October with the 31st of October serving as the deadline for applications. I encourage you to apply and to share it with your colleagues.

Further, if you know of anyone else (a faculty, department or particular project) who might want to come on as a sponsor please ask them to contact me (international@sgps.ca or beyondboundariesconference@outlook.com)

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 second episode with Nathalia Santos Ocasio is now and is titled "[Beyond Canada: The Art of Social Infrastructure: Santiago's Poblaciones and the Afterlives of Arpilleras](#)". We discuss her research in Costa Rica as well as some of the opportunities and challenges she has experienced around language, culture and representation.

International Student Advocacy

There is an increasing number of bodies that are support international student advocacy on campus. The International Student Caucus under PSAC901 under the leadership of its Equity Commissioner Rohit Revi, the International Student Working Group (ISWG) with Canan Sahin as the main point of contact, and myself as the International Student Affairs Commissioner.

Importantly, the International Student working Group is an advocacy group that was formed last year and started the campaign "Here to Fly" in Fall 2019. They are continuing their campaign this year and have met with myself and Jeremy to discuss the ways in which the SGPS can better support them. They will be running a tabling campaign and an online petition to raise awareness about fee discrepancies at the university. They have asked for an opportunity to speak to the Council. I will keep you updated regarding these initiatives.

To close

There are a lot of moving parts in my Commission but they all serve two main goals: to highlight the value of international scholarship and to ensure that international graduate students are supported through workshops, soft infrastructure, and advocacy. If you have any ideas as to how I can improve my service feel free to reach out at any time (international@sgps.ca)

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 month

Kindest regards,

Claudia Hirtenfelder
International Student Affairs Commissioner for the SGPS



Hi Council,

Here is some information on the recent by-election for VP Community.

Timeline:

Two candidates got their packages in on time. A third candidate was hoping to submit the morning after the deadline, but this could not be accommodated on the grounds of fairness, adherence to the rules, and delay in the elections process. The ballot question was put to council via e-vote on the Tuesday night. There was a slight error on the question, indicating the incorrect position. The question did not receive sufficient quorum to be passed. As such, the SGPS did not post candidate profiles to the website, however I did allow candidates to start campaigning because the council votes seemed generally favourable, because council had previously mandated the timeline, and because the ballot question would not need to be approved until the voting itself. Note that any appeals for candidate applications would have been done through the elections committee and not through this ballot question. The ballot question was successfully re-put to council the following day and passed with quorum. The SGPS profiles were then put up on the website the following day (Thursday morning).

Campaigning was generally straightforward with no major issues until the day before the vote. On that day, a complaint was received that one candidate had too many words in their profile blurb. It came to light that an error was made in posting the profiles that essentially repeated some information for one of the candidates (due to a misreading in the elections package). As the extra words did not give any additional value to the candidate, the extra words were removed from the website. The extra words were not removed from the ballot, however, as voting had already begun by the time this was resolved, and more than 100 votes had been cast. The complaint for the error arose because another candidate noticed that their link to their social media page on their SGPS profile page had been removed. According to Andria, this was standard practice for campaigns, but unfortunately the candidates were not explicitly informed of this ahead of time.

There was also a small issue with SimplyVoting where we were locked out of our account the first voting night. This was resolved by 9 am the next day, and the election continued as normal. There were also some complaints from people who did not notice that only their last names were being used. This was done for technical reasons regarding student number privacy with the University and Laura needing access to SimplyVoting. No further voting issues occurred.

In my estimation from before the results were revealed, despite the above irregularities, the election was committed in a fair manner, and the results could be trusted. My recommendations for future elections are below.

The candidates were informed by phone and email of the results before posting them publically. The results of the election are below:

Results - SGPS By-Election September 2019

Start: 2019-09-25 00:01:00 Canada/Eastern

End: 2019-09-26 23:59:00 Canada/Eastern

Turnout: 758 (15.2%) of 4995 electors voted in this ballot.

SGPS VP Community By-Election 2019 - 2020

Option	Votes
Uchitta Vashist	346 (51.0%)
Lara Aluko	333 (49.0%)

VOTER SUMMARY

Total	758
Abstain	79 (10.4%)



Recommendations:

- Clear communication to the candidates on election issues should come only from the CRO and not other sources
 - o This was not known to be an issue, but there was potential for multiple sources of information
 - o Candidates should also be clearly informed that the Executive has no control over the election and should not be included in emails to the Elections team (i.e. CRO, Speaker)
- Candidates need to know explicitly that we cannot link their social media pages during voting days
 - o Clearer distinction between the differences in campaigning and voting days would be useful
- We need a full-time CRO to be elected
 - o By-elections without a fulltime CRO are difficult because of the complexity of the rules
 - o A more thorough understanding of the rules and potential scenarios that arise would be useful (which may include making notes for future CROs)
 - o Bylaws and Policies need updating for consistencies, and the CRO would be best to do this
- We need to appoint a standing elections committee for the whole year
 - o We are lucky that it was not called this year
 - o It is rarely called, but essential for when it is called
 - o They can also help make recommendations for policy updates to the policy committee
- I recommend no more September elections if possible, without a full-time CRO

- It is a chaotic time for the SGPS and too difficult without a full-time CRO
- Election By-Laws and Policies need to be updated:
 - More consistency between bylaws and policies
 - More consistency between by-elections and regular elections
 - E.g. it needs to be explicitly clear that the Deputy Speaker takes the CRO responsibilities as the Speaker is also already on the elections committee (it is currently contradictory)