



**Agenda**  
December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019 - 5:30pm  
McLaughlin Room, JDUC

Called to order : 5:37 pm (delay for setting up the screen)

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.



**I. Adoption of the Agenda**

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**A. Adoption of the Agenda**

**MOTION 10/12/19:01**

**BIRT SGPS Council adopt the Agenda for the December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Council Meeting.**

**Jeremy:**

**Change Quentin's name in the agenda reports**

**Mike**

**Jeremy**

**Unanimous pass**



**II. Minutes**

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**A. Approval of the Meeting Minutes**

**MOTION 10/12/19:02**

**BIRT the SGPS adopt the minutes from the November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019 General Council Meeting.**

**Caroline**

**Shaun**

**Pass unanimously**



**III. Executive & Speaker Reports**

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**A. Executive Reports**



### **Agenda**

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- a. President – Jeremy Ambraska (oral report)
- b. VP Graduate – Leo Erlikhman (oral report)
- c. VP Professional – Ryan Adlem (oral report)
- d. VP Finance & Services – Abel Hazon (oral report)
- e. VP Community – Uchitta Vashist (oral report)

#### **B. Speaker Report**

- a. Speaker – Laura Culleton (no report)

#### **C. Approval**

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

**MOTION 10/12/19:03**

Jeremy:

Apologies for no written reports (exam season)

Couple of things to touch on:

- First off, if you know anyone who would be interested in running for the executive, or tapping anyone who might be great, I encourage you to do so
- Feel free to get involved with any executives
- I know I will not be returning, not sure of the other executives
  
- In terms of divestments, we are having another discussion tonight, I was not expecting so many people to come in December. January will have the motions come forward (asking the university to divest and also setting ourselves up to divest the SGPS funds)
  
- I want to thank everyone here for being involved and coming out tonight (halfway through the year)
- A reminder that as counsellors you have three important roles:
  - o First: Please disseminate the information to the students that happens here
    - We try to fill email boxes, but no one fills here
    - Please keep in mind that role of being a counsellor
  - o Second: you can bring your own motions (or bring them to the exec)
  - o Third: if you have any concerns or anything you want use to get done for next semester I am here after the meeting to talk



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- SCI (Student Choice Initiative): the appeal has been filed by the Government of Ontario
  - o So, the SCI may come back
  - o We largely survived the member—non-member divide
  - o Funding and membership would be a better world
  - o Meeting with the DSA is upcoming (in charge of seeing which fees come under the government guidelines (which are now non-existent)
    - Next week we are meeting to talk about fee slates
    - Unfortunate that it is next week, but I will update in January
  - o Feel free to reach out
  
- Apologies:
  - o Abel and Ryan have an exam tomorrow, so I apologize on their behalf

Q: Caroline:

Was going to be for finance

We brought up the grants being available, especially health and wellness because our social activities ....  
Can they be applied retroactively

Jeremy:

Not sure, I can ask able

(Caroline: I can also email him <Abel>)

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Uchitta:

Election information booths we are doing in January

Nomination period 7-14<sup>th</sup>

During that time we are doing booths on targeted locations

Encourage more equity-seeking groups to apply for exec positions



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If you know anyone or yourself, please come to the booths if you want to know anything or have any doubts

Also email the execs

If you have any ideas of how to promote equity seeking groups to apply, you can email me

Happy to share we have lots of student involvement!

The beyond boundaries conference has managed to gather lots of volunteer students

The other ongoing committee is the equity committee

If you are interested in any of those committees, please email the commissioners

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Laura,

Thanks again for showing up at this busy time

The main reason for a meeting tonight is to get your perspective on divestment tonight. This is the chance to get your voices heard

And if you have ideas after, please feel free to email the exec

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Motion to approve the reports

Courtney

Tamara

Passes unanimously



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

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- A. Senator Report** – Graduate Student Senator – Courtney Bannerman (oral report)
- B. Trustee Report** – Graduate Student Trustee – Leena Yahia (no report)
- C. Commissioner Reports**
  - a. Athletics Commissioner – Charlie Cleary (no report)
  - b. Equity & Diversity Commissioner – Penny Zhang (oral report)
  - c. International Students Affairs Commissioner – Claudia Hirtenfelder (report attached)
  - d. Social Commissioner – Anthony Lomax (oral report)
- D. Committee Reports**
- E. Department Reports**
- F. Other Reports**
  - a. University Rector – Alex da Silva (no report)
  - b. Chief Returning Officer – position vacant (no report)
  - c. Supervisor – position vacant (no report)
- G. Approval** **MOTION 10/12/19:04**  
**BIRT SGPS Council approve the Senator, Trustee, Commissioner, Committee & Other Reports.**

Courtney

Not too spicy this last senate

The one big thing is a question posed from one of the senators on fall reading week

The student senate caucus would like to have the fall reading week reevaluate for when it is happening (not whether or not it happens at all)

Ideally we would like to move it to Thanksgiving weekend



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We posed the question because originally the fall reading week was supposed to have a 3-year trial period before being assessed

We just want to make sure that assessment happens before it [Reading Week] gets pushed on without being assessed

The deputy provost got back and said that the break would happen for the 20-21 year and at that point will be fully re-assessed

At that point, they want to assess whether or not we have it or whether we should move it

The student senate caucus will push to have it close to thanksgiving (students who live far away can use it better)

Q (Jeremy): do you have an opinion that you want to share with us?

A:

It would be one thing if the week were a whole week off, then they could do the week and thanksgiving, but as it is now for 2-4 days to go home and then come back and then go right back for thanksgiving or vice versa

I think for students further away it allows you to actually go home

Studies have also shown that just taking 2 days off does not allow your brain to have any actual break

Q (Laura): how would that work for law?

They try to schedule the break for when they are doing interviews in Toronto

Point of information (Jeremy): I think we are not affected



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Q: for our fall and winter reading week, it doesn't really affect grad students?

Courtney: I never actually took the reading week

I think there is legislation somewhere that says grad students can actually take the reading week off

I think also for course-based

Nick: could you check that, just because I had a different understanding of it

A: yep

Jeremy:

If this is mostly an undergraduate concern, is there any way we can get the graduate student

A:

We now need to wait for their assessment of different departments

I assume grad students will be one of that

Wait for senate report

Then on our end does the new proposal fit our interests

Then we can advocate

e.g. law

Shaun:

would there be grad-specific language in that. Last year, half our grad courses took a reading week and the others didn't, so it was a bit strange

Just the lack of grad-specific language within reading week was specific

Tamara:



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Can you please just confirm that law is separate for the reading week?

(Chem) :

We were also all over the place

For TA's and labs, some people would have double the labs, some would have less, and this was a bit confusing if you did want to take time off or not this semester

Follow-up from the back above (Courtney):

My understanding is we have three weeks off the year and it would be great to know if this counts as one of our weeks off

Would there be like an official report regarding the discussion that we can look at or pass along to the students rather than just paraphrasing?

Tuition report

Laura: Courtney if you could send me all of those so I can distribute them

Courtney:

The funding working group will be similar to the grad success working group, so there will be a final report

I do have more statistic-heavy things for documents (payments to grads, tuition, international tuition, etc.)

I'll send those documents to Laura to pass them along



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Q: ??

A:

I think they are aiming to finish the working group around May in the summer

There is an employee sitting in and making notes

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Quentin:

On Thursday we have therapy dogs and cookies

There are 3-4 dogs coming

4-6 pm

posted on SGPS Facebook page

there is no snow, therefore the snowman part is scrapped

Anthony will be making cookies to bake

I will bring the comfort dogs

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Anthony:

We had an event last Thursday which was really fun (phytotron on the biosci roof)

Learned a lot about different tropical plants, which was cool

As Quentin said, we have this event up on Thursday

If anyone has dog allergies, the cookies will be in another room with movies and hot chocolate

It will be in Sutherland



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Dog therapy is in the SGPS lounge

So open to everyone

If you would like to judge cookie decorating, please let me know

Don't feed the dogs cookies

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Uchitta (on behalf of Penny):

Equity consultations are still on

If anyone knows if any issues in depts.

Topic is how to make more equity based depts.

Please bring up to Penny

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Matt:

- Not much to report on at the moment

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Motion to approve the reports

Tamara

Mike

Pass unanimous



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#### V. Question Period & Departmental Issues

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#### VI. Business Arising from the Minutes

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#### VII. Main Motions & Discussion

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##### A. Discussion on Divestment

**Motion will be presented to council for the next meeting on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Exec is looking for input from council on the position they want the SGPS to take.**

Laura: how do you think about it, how do other grad students feel about it

Jeremy:

I'm sure some of you were here for the QBACC presentation

The only my understanding the only points for and against is that fossil fuels, especially in mining engineering, they hire grad students and fund grad students and there may be an effect on this

Hopefully on the flip side no one here is a climate change denier, and with the presentation of QBACC they hope queens will do this, also there is probably no impact on the financials

For our own divestment piece, this is more of a symbolic piece especially if the university is doing things  
We have been buying jumbles of slots so negative screening

By 2020 we will be able to reinvest what we currently have and we will be at the threshold were we can have our own financial planners

So after January we will be able to put in those negative screens be put in

Courtney:

I am not in mining or anything, but I think this is something we should go forward with. It is a lot of grad students I talk to seem to want thing



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A lot of other universities also are doing this (e.g. Concordia I think has announced a certain date)

Rick:

For the grad students being funded is it worrying about retributive action or is it saying we won't accept funding for this

Jeremy:

This is a hypothetical, it is not that we have heard from the university or any companies

It is just to me one of the arguments that is a potential reality that comes up

Tamara

I am definitely supportive of us having more control over and divesting personal  
For the university, you can definitely recognize that climate change is a thing and that  
You can also recognize that the Canadian oil companies and fossil fuel industry is still cleaner than a lot of  
their things that come into this country  
We can also

One thing it is a leap for us to jump to divestment for this: we would need to know a plan for when they  
actually plan on divesting, and we just don't

Morgan (chem):

I personally looked at greener filtration on oil and water. I know that all the students were more than happy  
for us to make a stand on it, but we were more concerned of if there is some language that would prevent  
that from happening that would be good for chemistry

A thing that came from faculty is that a lot of the chem dept.

Some of the largest donors are from the oil and gas companies so that is a thing people are concerned

Uchitta: funding is one of the arguments because

Quebec's argument is that out of the whole investment, the green investment was a very small part and the  
major value that the companies have to the start is the economic base and not the investment base  
More of a symbolic move to encourage the company to take more of an environmental stand

Mike:

I was part of the divestment campaign at Dalhousie during undergrad

At least one company made a point of not putting funding from grad students if it went through (it didn't) but  
just to make a point



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Laura:

We keep saying it was a symbolic gesture, but the QBACC was saying that we left some million dollars in the market because fossil fuels were not that

Quentin:

We (not sure who) decided not to endorse QBACC last year

I got to meet with the head of investments at the university, huge privileged, who said:

1. QBACC misinterpreted what social injury means and fossil fuel companies did not, are always looking for
2. Queens only puts about 50/450 million \$ of their portfolio into their fossil fuels industry
  - a. This is not really a lot of money into the fossil fuel companies
  - b. If they pulled that out, queens wouldn't know where to put it in the next year and would just sit there as liquid assets and would not be able to invest back in without penalty
3. If you divest all at once with fossil fuel companies, you lose a seat at the table to talk about how to get the fossil fuel companies to get greener in the future. If we divest, then they have no seat at the table

William;

Was this a point to be brought up as referendum? We know that medicine is not as important

This may be very divided, and certain faculties may be more divided than others

Just kinda it is better than saying so and so it bad

If we were to petition Queens, there is a lot of money tied up with University of Toronto and Guelph, so we would have to have that talk with two other universities as well

A referendum may give us a better idea of how to make

Jeremy:

If we do go through with the call to join onto QBACC, it is still the board of trustees to decide (as they did last time to not invest)

It is a shame we did not get QBACC back

There would be negative screens etc., but the main [point is that it would give them (fossil fuel companies) a hypothetical opportunity to be compliant

Also, this would only be a point to join other groups on campus

QBACC suggestion I think was also 2025, so it would be going to fossil fuel companies and seeing if they will be able to comply over the next 5 years



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It would be us joining with the AMS and other faculties  
In terms of our role as a student government and advocacy on campus...

For the referendum, I would be down to discuss it,. We have had 3 consecutive meeting where we have discussed it, and another in January  
I invite everyone to come in January to speak to it

I don't know if the referendum would allow us to have a debate and it may

Willian:

With something as big as this political statement whether you believe it or not, they could show up to a meeting and voice their support but they cannot actually vote

There are also so many of us here. Maybe because we are all focused on a common cause  
Even if it is slower to achieve it, even if it is a vote on council

If sgps decides to do it would be faster than 2025

Jeremy: our personal divestment is different from the overall one

.. I would strongly oppose going to referendum for our own divestment, because of reasons etc. it is a slippery slope to bring it to referendum  
I agree for the overall thing

William:

The question isn't a certain stock, it is a certain type of stock: it is asking students: yes this is my money that I helped with and I would like to support this.; it is not so much invest in this or that, it is more of a political statement with all the students. I personally would think it makes more sense to bring it to the wider public

Mia:

As a rep of chem eng, a lot of our funding is tied with the oil and gas companies and polymers, so they do invest a lot of money into research especially in our areas  
I did not hear a lot of chatter about divestment per se but more about the image it brings to companies, Oil and exxon etc., people are focusing on the negatives and avoiding the investments that the companies are making  
Our dept. feels that a discussion and such is more about opposition to the oil and gas industry



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Tamara:

Us making a statement about QBACC and climate change is only making a foolhardy statement based on one side of the story and note the whole economics etc.

(Someone from Business):

From the business dept. when we make a business decision it seems like we need rules  
There seems to be a good side investing in the green energy etc. and the bad side

Does this investment move and how do we decide what is good and what is bad, it seems up in the air

Jeremy:

I want to apologies for the terms: the qbacc people did talk about more nuanced and talked to chem dept.'s concerns. I don't know if it is true, you will have to fact check, but I think they said that the advertisement into was more than the actual green energy

We can have more nuance, we can have qbacc back

I think we should have more debate, although I'd like to do something sometime  
We can move slow, discuss the referendum option, have qbacc back,  
I just personally would like to get something

I am also going fine going out to council or referendum and even if it fails and it is not supported  
We could go to qbacc and say there are the concerns, or say we would sign on if there is language

Allison:

Do we have any objective evidence about the potential environmental impact of divesting not just from the last presenters:

Jeremy:

No, and I don't think they really framed this:

I don't think they were coming here and saying if we divest it will solve climate change, it is more going with the movement to create a movement and force them to change

The most we could say is that it is more of a symbolic measure on our side to put pressure on the institution of the university

They did not give us a report on the 50 million that we invested

Uchitta:



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The whole divestment issue that is going on in the world, no one has confirmed ever if you divest that it will have a positive affect on climate change, all of this is anticipation and like Jeremy said it is merely a symbolic moment

Everyone knows that most of the decision making is economic,. I am a mining engineer and I know that most of the thinking of fossil fuels is economic  
Like Quentin said, most of the green tech is not economic  
Canada is one of the most per capital users of fossil fuels in the world  
That is why I think north America

Luke

I was not here for the last meeting, I don't deny climate change but I don't think it is fully a good idea to look at a subjective experience of morals  
I don't understand why there are not objective criteria on the objective sustainability of this

William

Has the proposition ever been made rather than to divest with what we currently have not to invest more money. So then instead of pulling out, same symbolic commitment  
Eventually the portion of our investment would dwindle

Laura:

We don't have to vote yes or no, we can put out our own statements or proposals

Courtney:

I don't know, I'm not in chem, I don't know what companies are donating money or what companies we currently divest in.  
it would be interesting to see what companies are supplying the research funds and with whom we are investing

if those are two separate groups we're are not taking a stand, you could phrase it a different way  
queens investment office could probably help

Uchitta:

Qbacc might have that data  
We could contact that for them



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I think the point raised was good: qbacc was focusing on divestment only, I think that is a good point that can also be stressed

Mia:

I don't agree with Courtney, one of the reasons was that the qbacc speakers were targeting my client  
Their investment at queens was only a small one of what they invest overall

Their position focusing on the negative side of things, I don't agree with that

I think it is important for us to make an impact and show that this is what we want to do, and show others that we want to do

I think it is absolutely necessary for us to make the decision ----

I agree that if we divest and make a scene it will put pressure  
The current investment in research will not go away  
But future investments in research may not come in

Jeremy:

There was about the finances and financial viability  
They did have that and in their opinion  
We can ask them to send their slides out

They said in their opinion it would not  
Maybe it is because oil and gas prices dipped

I think we are in the way to (caveats, qbacc, see if we can reach out)

- See if there is a commitment to still fund grad students at queens if a divestment campaign happened
- It is up to council or referendum to say
- As an exec we can say this, we can give the arguments for an against

The only problem is some people are here: at last meeting, we had more vocal advocates for this  
The more debate here is good  
Addressing caveats and risks is good, even if it is not changing my mind

If we don't think that January is good, we can move it along

I would personally like to say something before the end of the year before another person gets elected and deals with this

But I am good with us arriving to somewhere that we can take a vote on it



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William:

We could also see if we could amend the qbacc motion to better adjust to our needs (e.g. the no new investment idea) which may get us a faster resolution

Shaun:

I support Jeremy that this does not need to go to referendum

If the referendum is more

We are elected and trusted by our members to represent them, we do not need to make every decision in a referendum

Shaun

My council talked about this at our general meeting last spring which was more than 6 of us

We voted unanimously to support it as a department

Again I respect the push to referendum, but as Shaun says I'm not sure it is necessary

Uchitta:

One of the points by qbacc is that if we don't

It is something to consider that everyone is divesting from you, you might want to reconsider

Qbacc has been asking a lot of depts. To see what they have been doing

It would be good for the engineering dept's to ask your grad students and profs about this

As far as I know, eng has not responded to qbacc

Laura:

We also don't have to do anything at all if we don't have to

They can make a statement without us saying anything

Jeremy:

In the interest of time, maybe a straw poll not a vote

- Would go
  - o January do the vote and then either kill it or amend it
  - o Or we could have another round table discussion
  - o But I think that may bog things down



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Laura:

Bu show of hands who would want qbacc to come back

10 or so people vote yes

Jeremy:

We better make a decision before the board of trustees does (in a few years)

Laura:

Can they come back just to answer these questions

Laura:

Sure, I can ask them to put a doc together and answer specific questions

Morgan:

I'm down for whatever, but it would be great to have those questions

Which may not happen over the holidays but it would be good to have

Quentin:

Anecdote or metaphor: I'm in translational medicine, and for anyone in health science etc. we get a lot of investment in pharmaceutical companies, queens invest in those, who then invest in queens studies, and them help society

I see a parallel in this, and I am just afraid that it sets a precedent of there is good and bad (and not everyone will be on the same page)

Lets say pharm companies drop a bomb or something

I just don't think we should be

Shaun:

I am form South Africa

One of the only times queens divested was from South Africa

I would say by setting a precedent, something that is just the right thing to do (as they did in my country)

Quentin:

In the grand scheme of things



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Perhaps this is not the best way forward  
I did not mean to offend you  
*No offense was taken*

Tamara:

I think that is what I was alluding to earlier about economy. There are so many other relations, we don't even know if this will drop the temperature  
What is possible is that everyone divests too quickly and then the oil companies could go bankrupt and cause issues

(from business):

instead of saying divesting, can we just say that we invest more in sustainability  
it will allow us to make the same decisions

Lara:

It is up to you guys, we can do whatever you want to do

Nick: please read the minutes from the qbacc presentation a few weeks ago!



### Other Business

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### Notices of Motion & Announcements

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### Adjournment

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#### A. Adjournment

**MOTION 10/12/19:05**

**BIRT this meeting of SGPS Council be adjourned.**



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Adjourned 6:41 pm