Hello Council,
Below are some of my updates:

**Senate**
At the January Senate meeting, the student caucus was successful in amending the dates for fall reading break. While this was an initiative led by undergraduate students, it is something that the SGPS voiced support for and voted in favour of. This will attach the fall term break to the Thursday and Friday before Thanksgiving weekend.

When we spoke about the fall term break as a council, there seemed to be confusion about whether graduate students are entitled to the break. The short answer is no. The decision on whether to extend a break for graduate students is made at the department level. However, the hope is that with the four-day break format more graduate students will have access to the break.

**Grad Games**
We have begun to plan for our first ever Grad Games. The format will be like med-law games where students compete in faculty teams in an intramural sporting tournament. This is taking place on the weekend of March 14 and 15.

Teams will compete in Volleyball, Basketball, Dodgeball and Soccer. Food will be provided, and the cost is free for students. For this weekend to be a success, I ask that you kindly share the social media posts and consider forming and signing up teams.

**New Executive**
I would like to congratulate the new executive; I have complete confidence in their ability to lead the SGPS moving forward.

**Student Choice Initiative**
I just wanted to update the council that we have received confirmation from the school that we will be returning to our previous pre-SCI system. This means fees that were previously mandatory can return to their mandatory status. This means the SGPS fee will return to mandatory, but the dollar amount will remain broken out.

**Divestment**
Lastly, I just wanted to thank everyone who was involved in the divestment debate. An elected government of any kind only works when representatives debate and share opinions. I was extremely proud of everyone involved in the debate on divestment.

Jeremy
Hello everyone,

January 2020
The 2020-21 Executive election period ended and we have the next team of executives with “Anthony Lomax” - current social commissioner, organized “Electio Information booths” on various targeted locations on campus such as QUIC (International center), McCory hall, JDUC and ARC. All election material and packages was available on the booths from Thursday January 9th till Monday January 13th.

The social commission conducted the tour of “The Agnes” and the international commission continued with the “International Research Seminars”, the one in January was on the 20th from 5-7 at QUIC. We had three speakers: Canan Sahin (Political Studies), Hilal Hara (Geography), and Gaye Onuerer (Sociology) who talked about their research on Turkey including research on Syrian Refugees, Youth and Precarity, and Academics working on Peace Advocacy. Other than that, five episodes of the international podcasts have been successfully released and Episode 6 will be released later this month.

Beside the regular monthly social event, the social commission organized the SGPS’s yearly “Winterlude trip” to Ottawa in early February. The SGPS got great feedback from people and the event seemed to be very popular among graduate students, yet again.

Major activities coming up
A team of 17 people is working on the successful implementation of the “Beyond Canada conference”. Currently the team is in the final stages of the conference organization and things are going well. So far 75 people have registered for the conference – This includes speakers, sponsors, and volunteers. Registration is now open for those of you who would just like to attend the conference. The cost of attending is $30 for SGPS members and $45 for non-SGPS members. The price includes food for two days and access to all of the panels. It is a brilliant networking opportunity.

There are only 25 tickets left and registration will close on the 14th of February. The final program will be made available online this week and in the interim you can read more about the conference on the SGPS website. The international commission is also in process to structure its “International graduate students network”. The idea behind this is that it will include department representatives, who will report to their departments’ Graduate Student Councils (or equivalent body), therefore the International Student Representative does not have to be an SGPS member (although that would be ideal) but they would need to stay abreast of international events and objectives within the SGPS as well as that of other bodies on campus (such as QUIC, SGS, etc).

The SGPS is also proud to organise its first ever “SGPS Grad Games” event. This event would be purely athletic and include various games like volleyball, soccer, dodgeball and basketball. The spaces for the event have been booked and registration has started for teams and individuals.

The Equity commission is conducting its “Intercultural film series”, a collaboration with QUIC World Link program to showcase various films based on specific equity group with the hope of boosting Diversity on campus by having meaningful discussions and sharing knowledge/experiences. The very first one was organised around the “Chinese lunar new year” theme and the movie was shown at QUIC. The next one is planned for February 12th based on the “Black history month”. The equity committee is also hoping to organise free coffee chat events to increase outreach. The aim is for the equity committee to have conversations with students on equity related issues and how the SGPs can better address them.

The grad community, despite having amazing talents, often lack platforms. So, the social commission is on its way to plan a talent showcase event for graduate and professional students in the month of March. The event is currently in its
rudimentary planning stage and more information is expected to come out soon. Please feel free to email myself (vp.community@sgps.ca) or the social commissioner (social@sgps.ca) for any feedback or question regarding this.

Others

One of our ongoing goal is for a more collaborative and structured **Fall 2020 orientation**, an important project for current (myself) and incoming VP Community. In the initial meeting with the SGS, it was discussed that SGPS will get a time slot within the main SGS orientation held in the first week of September. SGS will also work on creating a memo that proposes alternative dates to the departments to conduct departmental orientations which could potentially help students with overlapping orientation sessions. Regular updates will be provided to departments, other stakeholders on campus and SGPS to have better communication this year around orientation plans.

The draft **Campus Wellbeing Framework** is the result of six months of consultations with students, staff and faculty. It represents the shared, wellbeing vision of more than 1800 Queen’s community members (33% undergraduate students, 17% graduate students, 35% staff and 15% faculty members) who told the project team that campus wellbeing is rooted in a culture of care, inclusion and respect, social connectedness, the places we learn and work, and in the multiple dimensions of personal health. Informed by community feedback, the project team developed a set of guiding principles and four priority areas of focus.

The project team is now seeking feedback on a draft Campus Wellbeing Framework. You can download the draft framework for review and comment on the draft framework on the links provided.


https://www.queensu.ca/campuswellnessproject/community-review-draft-campus-wellbeing-framework

Uchitta Vashist  
Vice President Community  
Society of Graduate & Professional Students (SGPS)  
Queen’s University  
Kingston, Ontario  
vp.community@sgps.ca
Hi everyone,

Here are my latest updates.

**Professional Headshots**
Six hours of professional headshots successfully took place on January 30th. There was a huge turnout. Thank you for attending and helping advertise this event.

**Microsoft Excel Workshops**
There will be an introductory and intermediate-level workshop for Excel. These skills-based training courses are a recent addition to our career-based programming. The introductory interactive workshop is well suited for those who have not used Excel before. We will learn how to navigate the program and how to use some of the main functions of Excel. We will spend an hour and a half getting comfortable with the program and learning the basics. These workshops are being planned for early March and more details will be announced soon.

**Transition Planning**
I have been planning the annual executive transition that will be taking place all day January 8 and 9.

Happy to answer any questions.

Ryan Adlem
Vice President Professional
Members,

The following is the general summary of the bursaries and grants utilization as at Tuesday, February 4th 2020

**Bursaries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row Labels</th>
<th>Total applicants to date (Total last year)</th>
<th>Total $ Disbursed</th>
<th>Budgeted</th>
<th>Average Bursary (Maximum allowed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dental</td>
<td>7 (19)</td>
<td>1920.95</td>
<td>5,000.00</td>
<td>640.32 (800)</td>
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<td>Emergency</td>
<td>21 (31)</td>
<td>3,790.50</td>
<td>10,000.00</td>
<td>344.59 (450)</td>
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<tr>
<td>International*</td>
<td>29 (50)</td>
<td>4,600.00</td>
<td>5,000.00</td>
<td>200.00 (200)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports/Activity</td>
<td>15 (49)</td>
<td>1,369.98</td>
<td>5,000.00</td>
<td>137.00 (150)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>72 (149)</strong></td>
<td><strong>11,681.43</strong></td>
<td><strong>25,000.00</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row Labels</th>
<th>Total applicants to date (Total last year)</th>
<th>Rejected</th>
<th>Total $ Disbursed</th>
<th>Budgeted</th>
<th>Average Grant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>2 (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>847</td>
<td>5,000.00</td>
<td>847.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Departmental Student Council</td>
<td>4 (19)</td>
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<td>1,820</td>
<td>10,000.00</td>
<td>455.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity &amp; Inclusion</td>
<td>4 (6)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3,600</td>
<td>5,000.00</td>
<td>900.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability*</td>
<td>0 (0) **</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5,000.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and wellbeing</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4,000.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10 (26)</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,267</strong></td>
<td><strong>29,000.00</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = I am considering reallocating $4,000 of this amount to distribute to the International Student Bursary to support 20 additional applicants.

** = the last time this grant was utilized was one application in the 2017-2018 year (two academic years ago). If this year sees no uptake, I will recommend that this grant be reviewed with the next year’s executive.

**Organizational Tax Liability**

I am currently working with our auditors, president, and support staff to review an organizational tax liability review (“Review”). The Review was initiated after some internal discussions about the possibility that some of the monies that we collect constitutes a service charge and, as such, are subject to HST. For you reference, two examples of those monies: the Health and Dental Plan administration fee and every ordinary ticket sale.

The professional opinion contained in the Review recommends several options, each of which will have a financial implication on the SGPS as an unexpected expense. This is because the recommendations will require us to pay or withhold taxes retrospectively or moving forward, respectively.

The Finance Committee is in good standing.
Always happy to take your questions.

Abel Hazon
VPFS
Hi everyone,

Here are my latest updates.

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**Transition Planning**
I have been planning the annual executive transition that will be taking place all day January 8 and 9.

Happy to answer any questions.

Ryan Adlem
Vice President Professional
Dear Council,

I am pleased to be your new Indigenous Graduate Liaison for the SGPS. I am primarily involved with making connections and furthering engagement between the SGPS, Four Directions Indigenous Student Center, Aboriginal Council, Queen’s Native Student Association, Office of Indigenous Initiatives, Indigenous student representatives of various departments and the indigenous graduate students at Queen’s University.

Having recently accepted the position in January, I am working on establishing relationships with all the above-mentioned offices, organizations and people for the month of January and February. I am familiar with Four Directions Indigenous Student Center having volunteered with Laura Maracle for cultural safety training and Vanessa McCourt who is the Indigenous Advisor and leading the SAGE (Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement) nest. Next steps will be to discuss with these various networks to come up with some ideas for further engagement of Indigenous graduate students.

I am also working on establishing community links so that graduate students feel more comfortable connecting with the wider Kingston Indigenous community if they need the support in place for reaching out to the community for personal and professional support that Queen’s University may not be able to offer. These organizations include the Kingston Indigenous Language Nest, Ollin, Katarokwi Grandmother’s council and others on the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe territory.

I hope to be more knowledgeable about pre-existing programs in place so that I may move forward with creating a social/program/workshop that gears specifically to indigenous graduate students that is in line with the SGPS mandate. I also hope to be more understanding of the needs of indigenous graduate students through the ongoing meetings with these various networks as mentioned above so that I can fulfill my duties in this position.

Chi-n’Miigwechwendam kina wiya

(I am very grateful to all of you)

Paige Van Tassel
SGPS Indigenous Graduate Liaison
indigenous@sgps.ca
Dear Council,

I would like to open this report with a statement on a recent incident at Queen’s related to the novel coronavirus. It is extremely insensitive to make light of a virus that is affecting the global community. I urge us all to recognize and take a stance against the racism and xenophobia that has resulted in the wake of this virus. I would like to remind us to be compassionate to those who have been affected by this virus and cognizant of the impacts of this illness on other parts of the world. Please continue to support your fellow Chinese and Asian students and take a position against any acts of racism, xenophobia, and discrimination.

Other updates:

The SGPS & QUIC film festival is happily underway. We’ve had our first movie in celebration of Lunar New Year on January 24 and our next one will be on February 12 in celebration of Black History month. I hope you will join us on February 12 at 5:30pm at QUIC. We will be screening “Barry” – a film about the life of a young Barack Obama. Please also tell your constituents about this event.

There was an open UCARE (University Council on Anti-Racism and Equity) on January 20. At this meeting we discussed the ongoing progress towards the PICARDI report recommendations. There was also a discussion on the Chown Hall incident investigation closure. At the time of the meeting, we are unsure what the reasons for the closing of the investigation were from the police side and there may be a university investigation to start, following more information from the police investigation. There was also a discussion on the process for reporting human rights and EDI (equity, diversity, inclusion) violations. The comments were that this process is not always clear or easy to navigate, especially in comparison to some other processes – i.e. academic misconduct. Currently, you are able to report any human rights or EDI violations/concerns to the Equity and Human Rights Office. There was also a report on the LIT training for orientation leaders. Of interest to the SGPS membership, there will be 1 open position for the UCARE committee, starting in September 1, 2020. These positions are 2 year terms (but it may be possible to hold them for only 1 year). The application will be posted on the UCARE website. There will also be open positions on the UCARE sub-committees. The next open UCARE meeting will be on March 30, 2020.

At the latest Built Environment Action Group we discussed the upcoming plans for the committee and the development of a Year Plan. There will be research on disability and accessibility policies of different Canadian universities. A potential app for accessible navigation that was presented on in October was discussed and will be followed-up on – the app is currently under development. There was a discussion on the development of an accessible route website for Queen’s.

At the latest Senate Education Equity Group we had a discussion on the history of the Kingston and Queen’s Muslim community as well as a discussion on Islamophobia on campus. As you may know, last week was the anniversary of the Quebec Mosque shooting. Please take a moment to look up the Green Square campaign and support the survivors of the shooting.

I’ve also been working towards building up an equity network for this Commission. If you’ve attended this council meeting/read this report, please send me an email or forward me your faculty council’s email as I would like to reach out to them to discuss equity spaces within the departments!

As always, I am open to any comments, concerns, questions, or suggestions. Please feel free to contact me at equity@sgps.ca.

Best regards,
Penny Zhang  
Equity and Diversity Commissioner 2019-2020
Hello everyone,

Happy February! Well done to all of you who run and participated in the SGPS election! A big congratulations to the new executive members. I look forward to working with you all in future. As stated in my last newsletter, my goals for this semester are:

1. Release 4 more podcast episodes (episodes 6-10) on Beyond Canada
2. Host 4 more international research seminars at QUIC
3. Lead the organization and successful execution of the Scholarship Beyond Boundaries Conference
4. Continue to develop the International Student Graduate Network
5. Continue to support International Student Advocacy
6. Continue to be part of conversations pertaining to international student affairs

I will now briefly give an overview of developments pertaining to each of these.

1. **Beyond Canada Podcast**

In episode 6, I chat with Sean Marrs about his work - Flies on the Wall: Surveillance and the French Foreign Ministry (1774-1791). This month I will be releasing the audio from the International Research Seminar on Ghana. If you or anyone you know is doing international research and/or collaborations and would like to be interviewed for the podcast, please feel free to get in touch (international@sgps.ca).

2. **International Research Seminars at QUIC**

The third seminar on Turkey was well attended (17 people) and very interesting. I had hoped to keep the International research Seminars going through the winter semester but with the amount of upcoming work required for the Scholarship Beyond Boundaries Conference I have decided to continue these in the summer and then come up with a set date and time for the rest of the year so that these become regular features on QUIC’s calendar. If you know of anyone who might want to do an international research seminar on a particular country or theme please ask them to contact me (international@sgps.ca).

3. **Beyond Boundaries Conference**

We are in the final stages of the conference organization and things are going well. So far 75 people have registered for the conference – This includes speakers, sponsors, and volunteers. Registration is now open for those of you who would just like to attend the conference. The cost of attending is $30 for SGPS members and $45 for non-SGPS members. The price includes food for two days and access to all of the panels. It is a brilliant networking opportunity. **There are only 25 tickets left and registration will close on the 14th of February.** The final program will be made available online this week and in the interim you can read more about the conference on the [SGPS website](#).
4. **International Student Graduate Network**

Importantly, I have received some emails asking who these reps are responsible to – The idea is that these reps are responsible to their departments’ Graduate Student Councils (or equivalent body), therefore the International Student Representative does not have to be an SGPS member (although that would be ideal) but they would need to stay abreast of international events and objectives within the SGPS as well as that of other bodies on campus (such as QUIC, SGS, etc).

I am happy to report that the Biology department now has two international student representatives. I am currently looking into what training and/or workshops I could run for this network. This will be my main goal for March and April but I remain open to helping departments envision this role and anyone who needs more information can gladly drop me an email ([international@sgps.ca](mailto:international@sgps.ca)).

5. **Support Advocacy**

I remain committed to supporting the needs to groups who are advocating on behalf of international students. So far, this has primarily been the International Student Working Group. I have been attending their monthly meetings and will be at their meeting on February 12th. A group of students did reach out to me to ask if the SGPS could promote their event but the executive thought that the event itself might be too political and were weary of showing any implicit or explicit support. I might need to explore how my commission could facilitate and/or support student led initiatives/events without necessarily evoking SGPS support. This will be something I will look at more in the second half of the semester and might make it a priority for my commission if I am hired for the position again in May.

6. **Continue Conversations**

I remain committed to speaking to people on campus about international graduate students. This includes my monthly meetings at QUIC – I have an upcoming meeting with the director as well as the Advisory Council on the 13th of February. I will also be attending the ISWG meeting on the 12th of February. If you have any information that you think is important for international graduate students please let me know. Also, if there are any events or workshops that you think will serve the community I would be happy to share them via the [SGPS – International Student Affairs Facebook Group](https://www.facebook.com/groups/SGPSInternationalStudents/). Alternatively you can share them directly via the page and I will simply approve the post. If you haven’t already, please feel free to join the group. – whether you are an international student and/or simply interested in the work the commission is doing.

I am excited for this semester and I look forward to working with and learning from all of you.

Kindest regards,
Claudia Hirtenfelder
[international@sgps.ca](mailto:international@sgps.ca)
Dear Council,

I’d like to start by thanking the current executive for hosting a great strategy and team building weekend for the incoming 2020-2021 executive February 8-9. This was a great way for the incoming executive to get to know each other. I certainly learned a lot and am excited about taking on responsibilities as VP Community in May.

Our Winterlude Trip on February 1 was a big success, thanks to all those who came out, and especially fellow commissioners Penny and Claudia for helping me out! People were able to go skating, visit parliament, and see an ice sculpture competition on Sparks Street.

We have a few really exciting events coming up! First, at the end of February I’m excited to be able to sponsor Leapday Night 2020 on Febraury 29 at 9:30pm at the Grad Club! This live DJ experience is organized by Tone Deaf Collective and sponsored by SGPS. It will serve as a great end to our first day of Scholarship Beyond Boundaires! Shamik has performed in 15 countries, and toured with Tegan & Sara, Method Man & Redman, Bassnectar, Tanya Tagaq, DJ Q-Bert, DJ Kentaro, and George Benson. He has showcased at numerous festivals including Shambhala, Bass Coast, Vancouver Island Musicfest, Edmonton Folkfest, Hillside, New Forms (Canada), Colours of Ostrava (Czech Republic), Southbound, Sub Sonic (Australia), Sunburn, Mood Indigo (India), Electric Forest (USA), and Dubplate (Philippines). Shamik has also performed at TEDx, the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games. His beatbox tutorial video on Youtube has garnered over 125 000 views.

I am also currently organizing an SGPS Got Talent event that will occur in collaboration with the SGPS Grad Games 2020. This is currently scheduled for the evening of March 14. We want you to display your talents! We will provide a stage and space, you provide your talent for performance, art, or other creations! We will be sending out a call for grad and professional student contributions soon, please pass this on to folks in your faculties/departments/programs!

On March 28 at 11:00am, I’m organizing an afternoon trip to Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area for Maple Madness, where we will eat pancakes, feed chickadees out of our hands, and learn how maple syrup is made. This is going to be a really fun event for your friends and families that everyone is invited to with minimal cost.

Thanks everyone for your continued support and promotion of our events!

Anthony