



Agenda
March 9th, 2021 - 5:30pm
Zoom

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. This land acknowledgement reminds us that rich Indigenous governances still exist, and will go into the future. This should also serve as a reminder that we are benefitting by living on this land that is a traditional territory of indigenous people.



I. Announcements



II. Adoption of the Agenda

A. Adoption of the Agenda MOTION 03/09/21:01

BIRT SGPS Council adopt the Agenda for the March 9th, 2020 Council Meeting.
Elise visentin moves, Sean Marrs seconds.
No dissent, passes unanimously.



III. Minutes

A. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

MOTION 03/09/21:02

BIRT the SGPS adopt the minutes from the February 9th, 2020 Council Meeting.
Philip Simpson moves, Sean Marrs seconds.
No dissent, passes unanimously.



IV. Executive & Speaker Reports

A. Executive Reports

- a. President – Justine Aman (oral report)

Justine
Not present.



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No questions.

b. VP Graduate – Courtney Bannerman (report attached)

Courtney

Hello, can everyone hear? Okay. I don't have much to add, would like to draw attention: Reduction in international tuition for PhD students went through. Next, all entering SGS next Fall will be assessed the new tuition. Current students will need to make the switch, though. All international PhD students should have gotten an email asking them to log in to Solus, so they need to identify that they want reduced tuition. This is because the University cannot just change tuition since they were offered with a certain funding and tuition amount. Deadline to do that is May 1st; if they do not do that by this date, they will have the higher tuition and will not be able to make this change with any exceptions.

Also doctoral defense procedure will be very similar. A lot of what the committee did was answer questions and make things easier to schedule; only thing impacting summer graduation is four different levels: Pass, pass with major revisions, referred, fail. Pass with revisions is that the student would need to rewrite some of the thesis but don't need to change it or defend again.

Last thing: Extension of stipend for those affected; SGS has committed to extension if they were supposed to graduate in 2020-21 year, but question is if earlier career students had their work impacted and should need to have an extension. There should be more light shed on this on how they want stipends to be handled, but we are advocating for all to take a 5th year if they need it. That's all, but I'm happy to take any questions.

Q (Chloe Robinson): Question about bio grad council, they have discussed request to continue funding for all grad students and were writing a letter to Dr. Kadir and were wondering if SGPS was also releasing some statement that we could jump behind or if other departments were also writing letters.

A: You can either find others that are writing letters in other departments, but for this to pass we need a certain amount of pressure, so if you can add a bit of pressure to that then it would be good.

Anthony Lomax: Point of joint statement is to allow folks to get signatures from faculty members as well as other students, in order to make a stronger case to the administration, hoping unit heads and faculty will sign on. I signed a joint statement, a few other folks have contributed, and sent to PSAC. Justine and I are meeting tomorrow to send this out to council reps and PSAC will be doing work in departments as well.



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Q (Norris Roozmon): Also bio grad student with Chloe. Similar question because in meeting yesterday, stipend for students doing 7th semester wouldn't apply if graduating in spring of 2021, only fall of 2021. But what I just heard from Courtney is that it would extend across the board, hearing different statements.

A: Stipend amount won't be increased, but campaign is for increasing stipend for PhD students to a 5th year. Of course, waiting for official word. Of course, Master's students are affected too because they may have spent the majority of their time in grad school without ever going on campus. It's challenging to plan the campaign because we're waiting on word from SGS to target what we're asking for. If that protocol isn't out this week, we're going to continue anyways.

Norris: I wasn't asking about stipend increase. Rather, if Master's student needs a 7th semester, graduating in spring or fall of 2021 won't be given that stipend. Not expecting increase, but if someone taking that semester would be given a stipend still.

Courtney: Agreed that they want to drop that stipend extension, but we will be pushing for stipend extensions for Master's and PhD students.

No questions.

Speaker: Anthony not in agenda but wants to speak so over to him.

c. VP Community – Anthony Lomax (oral report)

Anthony

Pivot the clock campaign, but also just a note that we aren't specifying PhD or Master's, just grad students. [Anthony quickly reads a paragraph from letter]. So I am working on that with Courtney and Justine, any of us would be happy to hear from folks. Often asked what students are telling us, so the more information we have about the impact is important. I would be happy to get anyone's statement and due to decentralized nature that the University often weaponizes against students. If anyone has questions about this, I would be happy to talk about that as well. In my department, hoping to bring this to them.

Conference coming up March 20-21st, shaping up to be great weekend, 5 deans from across the school talking about COVID, University response during COVID. There will be time for questions, hoping to get discussion with upper levels of University with that discussion. Conference is called Scholarship Beyond Boundaries, lots of great panels so look on the website for more about that. Something else I have been working on and can't quite remember, but those are good starts for right now.



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Oh! I remembered. The other thing I have been working on a little bit with Fifi is student engagement survey that probably hit your inboxes on Thursday. I sent an email just prior to the email being released. We have a pattern of releasing reports, making committees, etc. and not seeing any impact from that. Survey asking about sexual assault, etc. can be triggering but won't let the University gather that information without doing anything about it. One thing is training on sexual violence, as well as racial equity training, not only for undergrads but also at the graduate level. If you have input into that, I would be happy to hear from you on that as well. Planning to pressure the University to use this data in ways that have some impact, and they are claiming that data will be out in May.

No questions.

B. Speaker Report

- a. Speaker – Mary Rita Holland (oral report)

Mary Rita Holland

We are currently in the midst of another election, I will leave the election report to our CRO but did want to emphasize that the debate for those seeking position of VP Graduate is this Friday at 6:30pm. Also...in the process of organizing the spring AGM coming up on March 23rd, if you have items for the AGM make sure that those are to me by March 13th. A lot of internal and external want to present so I hope that we have good turnout for those speakers. Also ongoing bylaw and policy work, will be reaching out to the committee members about what we've been working on over the past few months. Just a reminder that detailed elections information is coming.

No questions.

Anthony: Justine asked me to congratulate the two new exec members, as well as Courtney who was elected for VP Finance but big congratulations to those two new executive members.

C. Approval

MOTION 03/09/21:03

BIRT SGPS Council approve the Executive and Speaker Reports.

Delaney Ryan moves, Sandra Smeltzer seconds.

No dissent, passes unanimously.



If anyone wants to speak in the next section, let me know, but since all reports are attached we can skim through.

Senator, Trustee, Commissioner, Committee & Other Reports



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A. Senator Report – Graduate Student Senator – Courtney Bannerman (report attached)

Courtney

Board and Senate met for retreat, theme was lessons learned during COVID. So...what did they implement that should be kept, what areas of lack should be fixed. During the retreat, I mentioned graduate student funding extensions so hoping that means that we have some from the Senate/Board on our side.

No questions.

B. Trustee Report – Graduate Student Trustee – (no report)

C. Commissioner Reports

a. Athletics & Wellness Commissioner – Madison Danford (report attached)

Madison

Nothing else to add outside of my report.

No questions.

b. Equity & Diversity Commissioner – Fikir Haile (report attached)

Fikir

I don't have anything to add to my report, but if any questions happy to answer them.

No questions.

c. Indigenous Graduate Liason – Paige Van Tassel (report attached)

Paige

Add note for climate survey: For any indigenous students taking survey, there is a deep read circle tomorrow and March 8th 5-6:30pm. If interested, reach out to 4 directions. Personally I will be attending because I took the survey and it was pretty shocking.

No questions.



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d. International Students Affairs Commissioner – Rohit Shukla (report attached)

Rohit

Not much to add onto report, but happy to answer any questions.

No questions.

e. Social Commissioner – Kel Martin (report attached)

Kel

Not present.

No questions.

D. Committee Reports

E. Department Reports

F. Other Reports

a. University Rector – Sam Hiemstra (no report)

b. Chief Returning Officer – Benjamin Mercado-Cruz (oral report)

Ben

Hi everybody. So, couple of points from prior election first.

There was successful rollout of virtual nominations, some feedback that it was easier than typical clipboard, so that might continue beyond this election, and I will provide a written report next council about how that can continue and talking to Mary Rita if we can implement that.

Second, nomination period was chaotic so we had to make some extensions which were not as clearly communicated as we could, but that extension yielded 2 new candidates so it was well worth it.

Third, we had a very low debate attendance so clearly a lack of marketing and, not the word I'm looking for, maybe resonance within the membership. There could be a lot of reasons, and I will be looking to explore that.



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Lastly, 19% voter turnout which is very low. I can say there was little advertising on the elections teams side. Along with posters and other manual ways, it would be enough, but we didn't account properly.

By-election: Debate this Friday at 6:30pm with two candidates present if they are ratified this evening. Marketing for the by-election will follow the previous route of the election, which could be troubling if we have similar turnout. If I could ask Council to reach out to their Departments to notify their constituents about the dates of the election so that we can get quorum and our last position filled.

Q (Anthony Lomax): Wondering if Friday evenings are the best time to host a debate, given it's the same time as last election.

A (Ben Mercado-Cruz): Been going off of the paperwork and not being creative, but I know that changing the dates can be troublesome. Certainly obvious point to make, but I could probably work something out with the candidates if we discuss.

Mary Rita: It was slotted in on Friday, so we would have to have a conversation with the elections team if we changed any dates. With upcoming AGM, we may be out of luck as well, but something to think about for the future. Any other questions?

No questions.

c. Supervisor – position vacant (no report)

G. Approval

MOTION 01/12/21:04

BIRT SGPS Council approve the Senator, Trustee, Commissioner, Committee & Other Reports.

Chloe Robinson moves, Sean Marrs seconds.
No dissent, passes unanimously.



VI. Question Period and Departmental Issues



VII. Business Arising from the Minutes



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VIII. Main Motions & Discussion

A. Ratification of Nominated By-Election Candidates MOTION 03/09/21:05

BIRT SGPS Council approve the addition of Darren Zanussi onto the election ballot for the position of Vice President Graduate.

BIRT SGPS Council approve the addition of Rohit Shukla onto the election ballot for the position of Vice President Graduate.

BIFRT that the candidates for the position of Vice President Graduate be presented on the ballot in the following form: "Please select one of the following candidates to assume the role of Vice President Graduate of the Society of Graduate and Professional Students at Queen's University for the 2021 – 2022 term."

Delaney Ryan moves, Sandra Smeltzer seconds.
No dissent, passes unanimously.

B. Ratification of By-Election Referendum Question MOTION 03/09/21:06

BIRT the SGPS approves the placement of the following question on the 2021 By-Election ballot to continue the optional student fee for the Ontario Public Interest Research Group – Kingston. "Do you agree to the continuation of an optional student fee of \$4.66 for Ontario Public Interest Research Group - Kingston? This fee is subject to triennial review."

Sandra Smeltzer moves, Sean Marrs seconds.
No dissent, passes unanimously.



VI. Other Business



X. Notices of Motion & Announcements



XI. Adjournment



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A. Adjournment

MOTION 03/09/21:07

BIRT this meeting of SGPS Council be adjourned.

Elise Visentin, Natasha Lomonossoff.
No dissent, passes unanimously.