

Part A – Contact Information

Provide the following information:

1. Name of Group as it should appear on the Ballot:
Ontario Public Interest Research Group Kingston (OPIRG)
2. Campaign Manager Information
 - a. Name: Sofie Vlaad
 - b. Student Number: [REDACTED]
 - c. Address: [REDACTED]
 - d. Telephone: [REDACTED]
 - e. Email: 16sv8@queensu.ca
 - f. Department: Philosophy
 - g. Degree Program: PhD

Part B – Group Description

The Ontario Public Interest Research Group – Kingston at Queen’s University (OPIRG) is a centre for community-based research, education, and action supporting social and environmental justice. We believe we cannot address societal problems in isolation, but that issues must be examined and challenged through an intersectional approach. OPIRG is unique in that we unite research, education, and action into one organization. Not only do we inspire and support critical research, but we also use this research to develop educational materials and campaigns that create lasting change. OPIRG is student-driven and directed: our Board of Directors, research projects, and educational campaigns are all student-led. The optional student fee that we are requesting will fund guest lecturers, events, campaign materials, and volunteer committees, and will help eliminate financial barriers for students who would like to participate. We are seeking a 4.66 optional student fee. This will allow us to enhance the support and resources we make available to Queen’s University students who participate in our educational campaigns and our research projects. During our 29 years at Queen’s University, our research and educational campaigns have made an undeniable mark on our campus, and all our work has been made possible with the dedication of Queen’s University students.

Part C – Budgetary Breakdown

Student fees are OPIRG’s main funding source. Our current funding structure (student fee, fundraising, and federal/provincial/municipal grants) limits the extent to which we can support students and grow our work. Fundraising and external grants make up 10-30% of our funding each year, and alone are not enough to sustain OPIRG’s core operations. To be able to continue our work on campus, a student fee from SGPS membership is critical. Please see the budget at the end of document.

Part D – Student Fee Questionnaire

1. Why is your group seeking a Fee?

Our fee allows us to do the work we do. This includes planning and hosting regular events focusing on the issues that matter to students such as Alt Frosh, as well as various other campaigns and projects. A critical component of our work is funding research opportunities for students that become educational campaigns. For example, The People’s History Project is driven by student research into the experiences of diverse groups at Queen’s and Kingston that

are routinely excluded from dominant narratives. Most recently, the project included stories about the expulsion of Black medical students from Queen's. This project also relies on artists in the community to create posters for these stories so we can share this information in an accessible way. In the future we are hoping to turn these stories into podcasts.

As OPIRG recruits more volunteers and stirs up more community interest in our projects, the possibilities for our social justice work expands. Unfortunately, financial constraints prevent much of this potential from being realized. A 4.66 optional student fee would allow OPIRG to grow to meet student demand for our services.

2. What direct benefit will SGPS members derive from granting your group a Fee?

OPIRG Kingston helped to create, with SGPS member and OPIRG board member Yasmine Djerbal, the working group *Roots & Wings* which provides educational workshops for BIPOC girls from ages 8-14, to explore their diverse identities and introduce social justice issues in a fun, engaging, and age-appropriate way. The troupe leaders are racialized/BIPOC AMS and SGPS members; group leaders are enthusiastic and passionate about their role in *Roots & Wings*, and many of them are concurrent education students who gain valuable experience that can be used towards their professional career.

SGPS member Maha Faruqi created the podcast *Queer Muslim Resistance*, which started Sept 2020, and focuses on topics relevant to queer people who are Muslim or come from a Muslim background. Maha and various guests—many of which are other graduate students who are queer and/or Muslim—explore what it means to be queer and Muslim, what issues affects their communities, and how they grapple with the challenges of valuing sexuality and selfhood while also being committed to belief and belonging as Muslims. These are two examples of the many ways in which OPIRG Kingston engages with the SGPS membership and projects that will not only continue but flourish with the SGPS's support.

3. How is the dollar value of the Fee related to the benefit you are proposing to provide?

In the past 29 years, we have funded nearly 50 student-driven research projects that we have turned into meaningful and lasting change. Organizations such as Loving Spoonful, Reelout Arts Project, Queen's Positive Space, Queen's Coalition for the Elimination of Racial and Ethnic Discrimination, Yellow Bike Action, the Earth Centre, and about half of all the community gardens in Kingston all originated from OPIRG as either a research or educational campaign. One of the priorities of OPIRG is providing quality programming to Queen's students. In order to secure the services of skilled facilitators, and to bring them to Kingston, OPIRG needs to be able to cover costs associated with their visit. OPIRG provides a wide range of services, including research opportunities, direct programming, training and support, and facilitation. This breadth of activity requires considerable resources if it is to be done well.

4. When was your group established?

OPIRG Kingston at Queen's University was first established as an AMS club in the fall semester of 1992. While our intersectional approach to social and environmental issues has remained constant, how we accomplish this work is constantly changing to meet the needs of a dynamic campus. In 1992-93 one of our first environmental campaigns was greening student housing. OPIRG volunteers helped to winterize student homes and reduce energy consumption in the University District. We provided volunteers the opportunity to make a difference and made homes more energy efficient. We have since grown and taken up on numerous other issues including, but not limited to, conducting the first campus women's safety audit, educating and advocating for more fair-trade products on campus, developing the Queen's Positive Space Program, fostering Queen's Black History Month, The Levana Gender Advocacy Center and more.

5. If you have collected a Fee in the past, what initiatives and/or opportunities have you provided the Queen's Community with the collected funds?

The fee we collected from SGPS over the years supported approximately 25 student research projects, and more than 30 educational and action-based campaigns here at Queen's. Our research and fundraising work lead to the creation of the organizations mentioned in Questions 2, 3 and 4, as well as the Sexual Health Resource Centre, the Queen's Alternative Resource Library, the People's History Archive, and other projects and initiatives. A great example of our work is our latest undertaking: The Queer Muslim Resistance Podcast.

ONTARIO PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP KINGSTON

PROFIT AND LOSS

September 1, 2019 - September 1, 2020

	TOTAL
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INCOME	
4010 Alma Mater Society-Fee Levy	43,820.60
4020 Society of Grad. & Prof. Students	15,302.57
4030 HRDC Grants	5,127.00
4090 Donations	1,805.47
4100 Fundraising	1,256.25
4110 Interest Earned	25.64
4153 Project Working Groups	
Kingston Ind. Solidary (KISN)	361.55
Total 4153 Project Working Groups	361.55
Total Income	\$67749.08
GROSS PROFIT	\$67749.08
EXPENSES	
5006 Honoraria	2,579.00
5025 Printing	157.06
5060 Insurance	3,052.71
5070 Interest & Bank Charges	50.00
5090 Office Supplies	540.00
5100 Postage	13.25
5110 Professional Fees	1,695.00
5120 Project Working Groups	4,007.50
Altfrosh Alternative Orientation Week	254.39
Total 5120 Project Working Groups	4,261.89
5121 OPIRG Board Projects Expenses	205.91
5140 Telephone	342.00
5145 Payroll Expenses	
Taxes	1,183.19
Wages	33,181.31
Total 5145 Payroll Expenses	34,364.50
5149 WSIB	231.42
5150 Health Plan	7,849.50
Ministry of Finance (ON) Expense	125.08
Rent or Lease of Buildings	3,400.00
Total Expenses	\$58,867.32
PROFIT	\$8881.76

September 2020 - August 2021 Budget	
Revenues	
AMS Student Fees	\$38,161.00
SGPS Student Fee	\$13,000.00
Fundraising and Donations	\$1,000.00
Grants	\$1,500.00
Provincial PIRG Kingston Equalization current year	\$3,500.00
Earned Interest	\$40.00
<i>Total Revenues</i>	\$ 57,201.00
Expenses	
<i>Programming</i>	
Alt-Frosh 2021	\$1,200.00
Public Interest School	\$400.00
People's History Project	\$1,200.00
Programming - OPIRG Kingston	\$5,000.00
Programming - External	\$2,200.00
Working Group Expenses	\$2,500.00
<i>Total Programming Expenses</i>	\$ 12,500.00
<i>Organizational and Volunteer Development</i>	
Board Training & Retreat	\$600.00
Outreach and Promotions	\$2,500.00
Provincial PIRG Meeting Expenses	\$500.00
Honoraria for interim coordinators	\$7,500.00
Web Hosting and Website Building Expenses	\$3,000.00
AGM Materials	\$500.00
<i>Total Organizational and Volunteer Development Expenses</i>	\$ 14,600.00
<i>Administrative Support and Financial Transparency</i>	
Staff Wages - Coordinator	\$8,750.00
Staff Wages - Summer Students	\$6,988.80
Office Rent	\$4,800.00
Payroll Liabilities, Benefits and Taxes	\$2,635.00
Liability Insurance, WSIB	\$2,700.00
Professional Fees	\$1,500.00
Telephone and Mailing Expenses	\$1,000.00
Office Equipment and Materials	\$1,000.00
Bank Charges	\$25.00
<i>Total Administrative Support and Financial Transparency Expenses</i>	\$ 29,398.80
Total Expenses	\$ 56,498.80
Total Revenues less Total Expenses	\$ 702.20