



Hello everyone!

Elections: The by election for the VPG position is currently underway with the nomination period happening from March 2nd to 8th. If you have any questions about the VPG position, please send me an email! Please encourage your friends and classmates to consider running! I know the nomination process sounds very intimidating, but I promise it's not nearly as scary as it seems.

International tuition reduction: Although it maybe a little bit of old news by the time everyone is reading this, the campaign to reduce international PhD tuition to a domestic level has been a success! This would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work by ISWG. This change will be taking affect in September 2021.

All international PhD students starting their degree in September 2021 will automatically be accessed domestic tuition levels. Any international student who started before September 2021 will be sent an email with instructions on how to have their tuition accessed at a lower level. As students were accepted to Queen's at a certain funding level being accessed a higher tuition rate, Queen's can't drastically alter a student's funding and tuition. ***It is extremely important that students follow the instructions in the email to accept a lower tuition rate by May 1st, 2021.*** Students who do not opt to move to a lower tuition rate by May 1st, will be charged the higher tuition rate.

Spaces and services: A few minor updates

1. The university is currently reassessing the capacity in its buildings. Increased numbers of graduate students will be allowed on campus in the coming weeks.
2. The ARC has given students a 10% refund for gym closures during January/ February to their Solus accounts.
3. The Office Vice-Principal (Research) is hosting a number of seminars on promoting your research and research ethics. Sign up here: <https://www.queensu.ca/vpr/resources/resource-series>

Accommodations and Grad students: I have been hearing some reports of graduate students struggling to access timely accommodations from QSAS. I am meeting with the management of QSAS, but if you are a student who has been struggling with this please reach out to me at vp.graduate@sgps.ca

Cheers!

Courtney Bannerman



Hello everyone!

I want to start off with a big congratulations to the next elected Graduate Student Senator Emils Matīss! I know he'll do an amazing job in the role.

Senate occurred on February 23rd and the following key points were discussed:

1. The sessional dates for 2021/2022 have been selected. The upcoming fall reading week will be attached to Thanksgiving, except for Law who will have their break November 1st to 5th. The plan for the upcoming school year is to have most classes happening on campus in the fall semester (aside from large lectures), and complete return to campus for all classes by the winter semester.
2. Senate approve the creation of the Senate Orientation Review Committee and the dissolution of the Senate Orientation Activities Review Board, effective January 2022.
3. The Principal is currently in the process for drafting a new mission and vision for Queen's. He took comments and feedback on the wording, however this is still a work in process.

Cheers!

Courtney Bannerman



Hello Council,

It has been a busy month, with many more events coming up!

Virtual Cooking with Grammas

SGPS Cooks with Grammas continues again this month on March 17 at 5:00pm-6:30pm. Registration (can be found here) is now open and closes on March 14th, with a cap of 20 participants. The recipe will be St. Patrick's Day themed and released soon! SGPS Cooks with Grammas is always a wonderful night, where we learn a new recipe, kitchen tips and tricks and engage in conversations with peers and community members!

Global Grub Cooking Club

On February 23rd, Rohit (International Commissioner) and I held Global Grub Cooking Club, a unique opportunity for SGPS members to learn to cook an international dish instructed by a fellow SGPS member! We learned to make Amritsari Chana, a delicious chickpea curry! We are in the planning stages for our next event, so stay tuned!

Cooking with Kookums

On March 10 from 7pm-8:30pm, during Indigenous awareness week, QNSA and the SGPS we will be hosting Cooking with Kookums. This virtual cooking session, led by Elders Wendy Phillips and Deb St. Amant, will be sharing their recipes for a few popular Indigenous dishes: NDN tacos, strawberry drink, and bear paws (a dessert made with bannock). Similar to previous cooking events, registered participants will receive the ingredient and equipment list prior, and we are offering grocery subsidies. Registration is open (can be found here), with limited spaces, so don't delay!

Politics of Movement Conference Panel

I am collaborating with Fifi (Equity & Diversity Commissioner) in creating a panel for the upcoming Beyond Boundaries Conference. The panel will be held on March 20 at 2:30-3:30pm, focusing on the "Politics of Movement". This panel will combine physical movement with critical discussion. We will begin with a Muay Thai practice, instructed by a SGPS member, followed by a critical discussion on the politics of movement. This panel offers the opportunity to physically learn something new and engage with graduate students on the politics surrounding different movement practices. As always, please feel free to contact me (athletics@sgps.ca) with any suggestions, questions, or comments about these or other events.

Sincerely,

Madison Danford
Athletics and Wellness Commissioner



Dear Council,

I hope everyone is keeping well!

Throughout the past month, I have continued my advocacy around equity and diversity at the University. The UCARE sub-council on Student Recruitment, Support and Success had its meeting finalizing some priority areas related to equity, diversity, and inclusion in relation to student recruitment and retention. Having worked through the PICARDI recommendations, this sub-council has identified key areas that need to be addressed and will be presenting these findings to UCARE. The Senate Educational Equity Committee also had a meeting last Wednesday, February 24th, to discuss the findings of a survey on domestic and international undergraduate students' academic success and achievement.

An important issue that I had noted in last month's report is the upcoming Queen's Student Experiences Survey. This campus climate survey aims to gather information about the overall campus culture and climate, focusing specifically on experiences and perceptions related to diversity, inclusion, and sexual violence at Queen's University. I have been present at several meetings where this survey was discussed and raised a number of issues. One of the most important things I have consistently raised in these meetings is the importance of demonstrating that the survey results will be meaningfully used by the university to enact change. While collecting data in an attempt to understand the overall climate on campus is important, it cannot be an end, in and of itself. The collection of data has to be a step towards making structural change at the institutional level. I have repeatedly noted that asking students to commit their time and energy to filling out surveys without producing/promising tangible outcomes amounts to little more than cataloguing trauma.

Beyond this advocacy work, I am collaborating with Madison (Athletics and Wellness commissioner) to organize a panel for the upcoming Beyond Boundaries conference. Focusing on the "Politics of Movement", this panel will combine a physical exercise section with a critical discussion on the politics of movement and the politics of sports more broadly.

Finally, once again, I would like to gently remind everyone on council to circulate the information regarding the creation of EDII and international graduate student representative positions within your respective departments. We will be reaching out to you all soon to provide assistance in this regard. If you have any suggestions, questions or would like to pitch an idea for an event, please do not hesitate to get in touch at equity@sgps.ca.

All the best,

Fikir (Fifi) Haile
Equity and Diversity Commissioner 2020-2021



Dear Council,

Here is an update on a few of the things I have been working on over this term:

1. Indigenous Reads Talking Circle

New membership has closed for the rest of term as we are dealing with sensitive and often personal issues. Cultural counsellor of Four Directions has joined in on the conversation to help facilitate a safe and welcoming space for Indigenous and non-Indigenous allies to speak on such issues.

2. Indigenous Writing Group (SELF IDENTIFIED INDIGENOUS STUDENTS ONLY)

In working with the SAGE/Indigenous Student Advisor at Four Directions, I am facilitating a student-led writing group which will run for twice a month with one of those meetings each month being attended by a professional to answer questions and provide guidance on the writing process with an Indigenous mindset and methodology. If you know of any self-identified Indigenous peers in your departments who would be willing to participate in this activity please give them my contact information, indigenous@sgps.ca.

3. Soft infrastructure working group

I have been working with the SGPS Equity and Diversity Commissioner and International Commissioner on the creation of the soft infrastructure working group. We are currently working on a EDII SGPS resource guide that will assist students in navigating EDII work within their respective departments which is in its final stages and will soon be live on the website. If you need any assistance in the creation of an EDII student rep position within your respective departments, please do not hesitate to contact myself at Indigenous@sgps.ca or equity@sgps.ca

4. #PivottheGradClock

I have been approached by many BIPOC grad students for the call on one-year funded extension for all PhD programs. This has been a problem pre-pandemic where nearly 70% of students across all departments finishing within NINE years and now this is further exacerbated by COVID. PSAC Local 901 has taken to Facebook to call on the SGS, however, I believe that SGPS should also act on this front to better persuade the University into extended all PhD programs for one year.

5. Indigenous Awareness Week

Queen's Native Student Association (QNSA) is hosting it's annual Indigenous Awareness week from March 8-12th virtually this year and one of those events, Madison and I are collaborating on a session of Cooking with Kookums with elders Wendy Phillips and Deb St. Amant, which will be held March 10th at 7pm-

8:30pm. The entire week, QNSA will be having events so keep an eye on their Facebook and Instagram for updates.

If you have any suggestions, ideas, or concerns as they relate to Indigenous matters and happenings at Queen's, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Gichi Miigwech,

Paige Van Tassel

SGPS Indigenous Graduate Liaison

indigenous@sgps.ca



Hello Council and Members!

#PivottheGradClock: Funded Extension for all Queen's Graduate Students!

Being International student, we already have limited time and funding to finish our studies and on top of it we have lost more than a year in our progress. The pandemic has bought unprecedented situation for all graduate students not only International. Hence, a campaign is being organized by the members of PSAC-901 on Facebook to bring the notice of School of graduate studies on the loss of research time due to COVID-19. The idea behind the campaign is we need funded extension of 1 year from SGS so that we are able to finish our graduate programs. I believe the event is providing the necessary platform to put our concerns. So, I would request the other SGPS council and members to support the cause here in order to gain more momentum and attention.

International Student Check-in

International students are going through tough time, So I am trying to create an opportunity for them to voice their concerns, share their experiences and bring their questions. Hence, Please come and meet me, as well as Queen's Vice-Provost, International - Sandra den Otter and Heather Kincaide - International Strategy Lead for the Office of the Vice-Provost, International during an informal International Graduate Student Check-In. Let's create an international graduate student community! Due to the nature of this event, registration will be required. Please Register at <https://sgps.click/031721>

Campus to Career: Panel discussion on Effective Networking

I am organizing a panel discussion workshop at the the upcoming Beyond Boundaries Conference in collaboration with Career Services. The panel will be held on March 20 at 2:30-4:00 pm, focusing on the "Effective Networking". The panel will deal specifically with transitioning from student to professional life. The event will focus on various fields of interest and are designed to provide students with an opportunity to connect with experienced panel; gain insight into areas of interest to them and get advice from professionals currently working in the field.

Global Grub Cooking Club

In collaboration with Madison, the Athletics and Wellness Commissioner, we hosted an exciting cooking event on Feb 23rd for SGPS members to learn to cook an International cuisine instructed by a fellow SGPS members! This time we had Gagandeep Kaur who taught us "Amritsari Chana" an Indian cuisine. The session went pretty well, and we are hoping to plan our next international cuisine event.

Support Advocacy

I am having monthly meeting with the Director of QUIC to get a regular update on International students. I am also having monthly meetings with Vice Provost International in order to discuss concerns and enhance International student experience on campus. If you have any issue/concern/suggestions which you want me to bring to these people, please reach out to me. I am also committed to supporting the needs of clubs/groups who are advocating on behalf of international students. If you know of any advocacy groups/clubs directed at/for international students, who needs our support please let me know. I have been in touch with ISWG and PSAC 901 through their monthly meetings and remain available for any conversations regarding international students and their advocacy.

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.

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

Best,

Rohit Shukla



Hello Council,

I hope you are all doing well, we have a Loom Beading Event coming up on March 4th,

“Show and Tell” Loom Beading (no cost)

Join us this March 4th at 5pm for another session of the “Show and Tell” series which brings together graduate and professional students to share their unique knowledge and skills. This session called “Loom Beading” will involve an Indigenous Graduate worker sharing their knowledge, own beading practice, and guide us through a loom beading exercise. The event is open to all SGPS members who identify as Indigenous as well as allies. Participants will be sent art kits prior to the event and will get to engage in some loom beading during the event.

Upcoming Events

In late March we hope to host a “Show and Tell” that is nature/hiking/ birds themed, where we meet at a conservation site and hike on easy trails (1-2m wide fine gravel) and feed the birds (mostly finches, sparrows, chickadees), led by a nature/hiking/bird connoisseur. In addition, we hope to host a Paint Nite involving watercolour painting a birch tree winter wonderland (participants free to paint something else).

These events will all be incentivized by offering a free art kit/materials, or gift cards for a door prize draw/games.

Please feel free to contact me at social@sgps.ca if you have any feedback, questions, concerns, or want to be involved in future events as a speaker/ co-facilitator or volunteer.

Warmly,

Kel Martin
Social Commissioner