



Good Afternoon Colleagues,

Welcome to the end of 1 year of remote SGPS and the beginning of the new push to return to normal. Thank you all so very much for your dedication and commitment during these times, the SGPS is so much stronger with you on the team!

INCOMING EXECUTIVE TEAM

President Justine Aman
VP Graduate Rohit Shukla
VP Professional Jennifer Li
VP Community Anthony Lomax
VP Finance & Services Courtney Bannerman
Graduate Student Senator Emils Matiss

BUS SUBSIDY

During the early days of the pandemic the AMS had made the decision with the City of Kingston to terminate the 'Bus-it' contract which provided students with a bus pass. This contract required all eligible students to pay a \$90 mandatory fee which in turn gave these students access to Kingston Transit. This incredibly low fee was possible in part because of the large numbers of students who pay into mandatory fee slates. With the majority of students being off-campus or learning virtually it was appropriately decided that charging this fee to all students was not fair or equitable.

This did however, mean that students that would still be in Kingston or attending classes on campus would have to buy alternative bus passes which totaled \$119/per semester. This meant an increase of \$267/year for students to be able to access reliable transportation. Myself and the SGPS vowed that these students would not suffer financially and we are proud to have been able to deliver on that promise. Due to a rebate from the City of Kingston we have been able to create a collaborative subsidy program for students that covers up to \$90/per semester for transit passes. This means that a student who buys three passes over the year will only be paying the original price of the Bus-it contract, \$90.

After the second round of the Winter2021 subsidy we have been able to subsidize the cost of transportation for approximately 350 SGPS students. It took a lot of work on the part of both student societies but is an incredible example of how out of the box thinking and commitment to the financial success of our students can lead to agreeable outcomes. We are committed to students being only charged for services and fees that they are able to access and it was a wonderful to see that changes can be made to previous policy and programming to ensure that everyone can thrive. This program will continue into Summer2021 and for the 2021-22 school year.

SOCIAL EVENTS/SUPPORT

Over the past year we have had incredible engagement with SGPS Members to determine what social programming actually works during this time and what students really need/want to participate in. Students are experiencing a number of stressors on top of the regular academic programming and it is our goal to provide fun and social engagement in a way that will benefit the health of our students. Students are struggling and it is important that we prioritize social, emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual health with academic expectations.

Here are just a few examples:

- Cooking with Grandmas
 - o Collaboration with Student Affairs Faith and Spiritual Life where folks learn from the pros to cook a

delicious home cooked meal

- SGPS Gets Real
 - An open-ended venting/talking session with members of the Graduate Peer Support Centre (GPSC) and Peer Academic Advisors (PAA) present to allow students real-time advice and a compassionate ear
- EmpowerME
 - 24/7/365 access to support services within North America and 20 additional countries
 - Free support from qualified individuals on a number of topics from financial insecurity to anxiety or depression
- President Office Hours
 - Weekly open hours with myself to engage with students and reply to any questions or concerns and provide appropriate resources
- Graduate Peer Support Centre Hours
- Loom beading and soap felting workshops
- International Student Check-ins
- Active Club
 - Walk, run, bike club to allow students to keep active with their peers
- #SGPSatHome
 - Campaign to show the realities of working and living at home paired with a contest for students who share their home-work stations
- Queen's ESPORTS x SGPS Games night
 - Monthly games night for QEA and SGPS communities
- Monthly Townhall meetings

ANTI-RACISM PORTAL

On August 13th, 2020 our SGPS advocacy page went live; EDII reports and statements from the Principal, Vice-Principal and Provost (Academic), Rector, and Dean SGS from the past decade were collected and placed in one location. We hope that by creating a platform of institutional memory there will be a reduction of labor to individuals looking to hold the Administration accountable and that these offices will be faced with their previous empty promises when crafting new statements. The SGPS Equity Commissioner and Indigenous Student Liaison and Commissioner team have recently updated the portal with an EDII resource guide meant to help students create a more EDII conscious departments. This has been an incredible collective effort of SGPS Commissioners, Academic Advisors, and the Executive team and the project is under investigation to become a national campaign through the CFS. Please take the time to visit our portal to see more on the Anti-Racism work the SGPS has committed to. <http://sgps.ca/advocacy/>

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT ENGAGEMENT

Student engagement will continue this semester with a number of new initiatives implemented in Fall 2020 carrying forward into 2021. These include but are not limited to :

- Bi-weekly President newsletter
 - Every other Tuesday
 - If you ever have a Graduate or Professional program advertisement or PSA you would like to include in my bi-weekly newsletter, please, please reach out! Our Executive Director, Andria does an amazing job bringing together important dates and notes but we are always looking to support you!
- Weekly President office hours
 - Tuesdays noon-1pm EST
 - Feel free to send any of your constituents my way if they have an issue that may be SGPS related and I can *virtually* sit down with them to discuss. The meeting rooms are private so they will have the ability to engage 1-on-1 with no outside pressure
- Monthly Town Hall
 - First Saturday of each month @2:30pm EST
 - While these are largely informal updates provided to interested students by Executive I encourage you

to bring up any issues to me in advance that you would like to spend time discussing. We leave open the ability to add agenda items all the way up to Saturday morning.

Transparency within an organization like the SGPS can often be overlooked and my goal with this newsletter was to make sure our Membership is aware of the current goings-on. It will be my recommend that this incoming President take up this newsletter as a communication tool and would like to expand it so Departmental Representatives can also share information. We receive a few requests to promote events and such but it would be amazing if Representatives could use this as a way to advertise outside of their departments, encouraging extradepartmental collaboration! Although we are all unique and important as individual departments, we are one SGPS and I can see so much good coming from our shared engagement.

I really do hope that you are all well and the stressors have been kept to a minimum lately. Please if you have any questions or need anything at all, feel free to contact me any time.

Yours in Health and Wellness

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Aman".

Justine Aman BAH, MSc(c)
President, Society of Graduate & Professional Students



Hello everyone!

Here is a little summary of everything that has been happening this semester.

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.

Tri council funding: The graduate student societies of the U15 universities have joined together to advocate for the interests of graduate students. One of our biggest interests is an increase the value of tri council funding awards. I look forward to bringing everyone updates as things progress.

Cheers!

Courtney Bannerman



Dear Council and SGPS Members,

Below is a summary of progress of the various aspects of my portfolio for the year to date.

2020-2021 Budget

Budgeting was challenging this year, but it appears that we will be ending the year on a good note. We greatly reduced the society fee this year, as well as other fees charged by the SGPS, including the health and dental fee. We also encouraged student groups to reduce their fees.

In January the SGPS also provided a \$25 rebate to members that had paid into the health and dental fund.

As the budget currently stands, we will be ending the year with a surplus that will likely be over \$100,000. This money will either be placed into the health and dental fund reserve or be used to offset part next year's increase in costs associated with the health and dental plan.

Budgeting will continue to be a challenge for next year as the Executive will have to consider the continued impact of COVID, whether in person classes will be resuming, and the impact of the SCI appeal. Additionally, there are likely to be items added into the budget next year, including an HR position.

Health and Dental Plan

The SGPS Health and Dental plan will remain with Studentcare (health plan consultant) and with Sunlife (insurer). Benefits this year were increased to assist with insurance relating to COVID, and in particular travel insurance. These changes were made at no costs to students.

The SGPS Health and Dental fee for the year was set at \$610.00. We also decided on a reserve fund percentage of 25-30% and will meet that goal as of this year. The purpose of the reserve fund is to protect against short-term volatility in claims activity, benefit changes, and other factors that can lead to unpredictability in premiums.

The Health and Dental plan costs are increasing next year as there has been an increase in utilization of the plan. The Executive is currently looking at ways to deal with this increase.

Finance and Services Committee

The Finance and Services Committee will finish their term at the end of April. They assist with evaluation of bursaries and fees. A new Committee will be selected by the incoming VP Finance and Services, Courtney Bannerman.

The Committee this year also discussed whether to leave the bursaries open for the remainder of the term, since some of the bursaries had gone over the budget for the year. It was decided to leave them open since money that had been allocated to grants was not used this year due to issues regarding insurance.

Criteria regarding the current bursaries, and the possible creation of a new SGPS bursary was also discussed, but no action was taken on these items.

Bursaries

Bursary applications will close on Monday, April 5th at 8AM for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Utilization of bursaries to March 10, 2021 is as follows:

Type	Total Applicants	Successful Applicants	Total Disbursed	Total Budgeted
Dental Bursary	24	12	\$7,178.96	\$7,500
Emergency Bursary**	53	31	\$9,808.76	\$11,500
International Student Bursary	72	59	\$11,600	\$7,600
Activity Bursary	5	4	\$600	\$5,000
TOTAL	154	106	\$29,187.72	\$26,600

Grants

Grants remained closed for the year due largely to issues surrounding insurance. It is unfortunate we could not assist student groups with funding their events but appreciate those trying to improve Queen's community in these difficult times. Reopening of grants will continue to be re-evaluated.

Investments

The SGPS renewed its investment of \$1.1 million into GICs which are set to expire in October 2021.

Fees, Referendum and Rebates

Budget reports of student groups were reviewed as per the Fee Declaration Forms.

Only one group was up for fee referendum this year: OPIRG. Council approved the fee to continue on the fee slate.

Student groups were given a choice to provide a rebate this year. This was an administratively burdensome task and something that had not been previously done. The decision to offer student groups the option of a rebate was made in light of the impact of COVID. There were a few groups that chose to give a rebate.

While the process could have been smoother, the SGPS is learning from this experience. It was decided that current student group executives are in the best position to make decisions regarding their budgets for next year. Also knowing now what the process looks like, we decided to give groups much more time to re-evaluate their fees. A email was sent out to student groups asking them to prepare fees based on three different scenarios (business as usual, hybrid, or strictly remote)

I sincerely hope everyone has been able to make the best of the year so far.

Respectfully Submitted,



Tamara Mitterer

Vice President (Finance and Services)
Society of Graduate and Professional Students (SGPS)
vp.finance@sgps.ca



Dear Council and SGPS Members,

This has been an entirely different year from any that passed before. Having to work remotely for the entire school year has been a challenge, and not the experience I was expecting in this role. Despite this challenge, I'm very proud of the service and advocacy we were able to provide during these unprecedented times.

This is my final year at Queen's and therefore will not have the opportunity to represent the SGPS next year. However, I think my successor, Jennifer Li, who I'd like to take this moment to congratulate, will be a good fit. She also hails from my faculty and has prior student governance experience. My sincere hope is that things go back to normal and she is able to get some facetime with our members. An opportunity I wasn't fortunate to get this year.

External HR subscription

One of the more fundamental institutional changes this Executive is trying to implement is the acquisition of an external HR service provider to address some of the fundamental needs we have long overlooked. We were fortunate enough to be joined by a lawyer and articling student from Sherrard Kuzz, a leading labour and employment law firm, who advised us on some of the more dire shortfalls we have been neglecting.

We were attuned to not having or implementing contracts in a manner that excludes us from liability in various ways. Having no knowledge of this, we have been functioning as some would say in 'the dark ages'. We are looking to address this problem by recruiting a service provider that is not only economically feasible, but one that can also serve our organizations particular needs. The Executive is aware that we have very limited staff and don't require a full time HR personnel. However, we are looking to address some of the issues that have been raised by various members of the SGPS and staff. These issues are, but not limited to; hiring, contract management, discipline, workplace training, orientations and the like.

We have currently sent out a request for proposal from various well established law firms and are in the process of determining what will be the best fit with our organization.

Hiring

We have had to hire several positions for the SGPS. These positions included new positions created to address the needs of unrepresented student groups, empty positions and vacated positions.

As HR for the SGPS I sat in and decided on who should be hired as commissioner also. Along with Anthony, our VP Community, I was instrumental in ensuring that the commissioners hired were able to 'hit the ground running' so to speak. Which is why we decided to recruit the successful candidates based on their past relationship with the SGPS, from among the other very qualified candidates.

External Contracts

The Grad Club is an institution within Queen's that provides services to our members. As a result, the SGPS sponsors the Grad Club and furnishes them with funding. The funding is directed toward the Grad Club's trivia nights. I was responsible for drafting a new contract, which outlined the changes we intend to institute with respect to the funding during COVID-19, since trivia is unlikely to be in person. A new contract was submitted to the Grad Club. At this point several terms are to be clarified with them, which will occur during their board meeting. We have received clarification and are now implementing the requisite changes.

Permanent Staff Contracts

We have two permanent staff members at the SGPS, Sandy Beaton, who is our Director of Finance and Andria Burke who is our Executive Director.

Sandy's contract came for renewal in late Fall. I was able to extend his contract for another year with terms that allowed for flexibility during crises, such as the one we are currently facing.

Andria's contract came for renewal shortly after Sandy's. Her contract was for 2 years, which I was able to extend for another 2 years. This contract was more involved and took a little longer to finalize.

Creation of New Position

In discussion with fellow Executives we have decided that the SGPS is in dire need of a separate HR personnel. While the role of HR, and its functions, can be adequately performed by someone in my position, it cannot be done in an efficient manner that benefits the organization as a whole. A key deficiency we identified in how the current HR duties are mandated is the diffuse nature and lack of coordination for how they are to be carried out. Some HR duties fall on me, as VP professional. These duties are enumerated in the SGPS Bylaws but are not adequately expressed. They divide this role between the President of the SGPS and myself. Other duties however, are enumerated in Andria's employment contract. Therefore it is difficult to carry out any acts as HR, as coordination becomes very difficult. The idea behind having a singular party acting as HR, and not anything else, would help coordinate that role and allow for faster access to services. Therefore I have advocated for a separate HR person, to whom my fellow Executives agreed.

Moreover, there is significant oversight with respect to the necessity of institutional memory of the SGPS. Having spoken with our permanent staff during their employment negotiations, I was brought to the attention of inconsistent behavior by prior executive and employees which I would not have known otherwise. With the constant turnover of student representatives who act as leaders in the SGPS, it is difficult to pass on important information. Therefore, an HR person, or even just having that role, would systemically procure all institutional memory and hold it in an easily accessible location. This would greatly enhance the SGPS' ability to render services and draw insight from past decisions.

Change in Services

I have had students request some of the services that we offered in the past. These services include the professional photos we would provide. Unfortunately due to COVID some of these services, such as the professional photos, which required students to attend campus physically, will no longer be available. I've been searching for alternative ways to render these services to no avail, but will continue to conduct this search in the coming months.

Although physical distancing proves offering services difficult it also provides opportunities for increased participation. Observing the success of student groups who have provided seminars over digital platforms, I have initiated my plan to bring a new seminar on business development to professional students. As professionals, students will be required to in most cases bring in new business at some point in their career. Being socially distanced may prove to be a difficulty in accomplishing this. To help guide these students I've planned a seminar on digital business development. I've currently

spoken with personnel in the legal field who are enthusiastic about offering their insight to students, but to avoid being limiting I'm currently in the process of reaching out to medical professionals and other professionals. I'm hoping this seminar will have a transformative effect on our constituents.

Final Thoughts

I apologize for the brevity of this report, with everything having gone digital it is difficult to maintain all records in one place. Despite this, I strongly believe the SGPS is in a much stronger position than we were in 6 months ago. I have confidence in my fellow executives that they will continue to work tirelessly on behalf of our members. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me at my email below.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Jeyaratnam
Vice President (Professional)
Society of Graduate and Professional Students (SGPS)
vp.professional@sgps.ca



Hello everyone!

I want to start off with a big congratulations to the next elected Graduate Student Senator Emīls 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,

I hope you are all getting to enjoy some sunshine and these warmer temperatures!

In this report, I have provided some insight into the events I have been working on since the last general meeting in November.

SGPS Running and Active Clubs

The SGPS Running and Active Clubs have continued to grow. More SGPS members are joining and participating in conversations surrounding routes, attire, and motivation to staying active when it's cold and icy. As the warmer weather approaches, we are looking forward to engaging even more in this active community we have built in the past year.

Virtual Cooking with Grammas

SGPS Cooks with Grammas has continued with our monthly sessions, held the third Wednesday of each month. We have increased participation and have had more SGPS members joining from across Canada. This virtual event has afforded opportunities for those who reside outside of Kingston the opportunity to connect with peers and community members. Thanks to the folks at the Faith and Spiritual Life, grocery subsidies has been offered all year to anyone who requests one, increasing the opportunity for all the join, learn and connect. Sadly, our final event will be next month (April 21) before the end of the semester and summer break begins. This event has been an extremely rewarding opportunity and I wish to see it continue in the future.

Global Grub Cooking Club

On February 23, 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! Grocery subsidies were offered and sent to those who requested one. This event offered an opportunity for an SGPS member to teach other SGPS members a fun new skill outside of academia. There were many laughs shared, as majority attempted to make this wonderful dish for the first time.

Cooking with Kookums

On March 10, during Indigenous awareness week, QNSA and the SGPS collaborated on hosting a virtual cooking event, Cooking with Kookums. The event was led by Elders Wendy Phillips and Deb St. Amant, who shared their recipes for a few popular Indigenous dishes, and shared stories along the way. Similar to previous cooking events, registered participants received a grocery subsidy as requested. While learning how to make a couple new, tasty dishes, we learned and shared stories and had several laughs as well!

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 well as contemporary forms of co-optation and appropriation.

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 you are all keeping well as the winter semester is coming to an end.

In this report, I will highlight the most important projects I have undertaken and participated in since the last General Meeting in November.

Soft Infrastructure Working Group

I noted in my last GM report that we were working to establish a soft infrastructure network that connects graduate student associations across the university. I am happy to report that we finalized the detailed position descriptions for this network and circulated them among SGPS council reps at the end of 2020. We continue to encourage departments to create two additional positions: An Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigeneity (EDI) representative and an International Graduate Student Representative. While the individuals elected/appointed to each of these roles serve their respective departments, they will also have a seat on the respective SGPS committees that are being created to meet the needs of these graduate student populations: The Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigeneity (EDI) Committee and the International Graduate Student Network. Detailed descriptions for each of these positions have been distributed. We are very happy to report that some departments have already created these positions and elected students to fill them. While we appreciate that all departments have not been able to fill each of these positions immediately, we encourage you all to begin the process of writing these positions into your graduate student association by-laws. This soft infrastructure network was conceived to foster solidarity and unity among graduate students, which is more important than ever.

As part of the ongoing work for the Soft Infrastructure working group, Paige (Indigenous Graduate Liaison), Rohit (International Commissioner) and myself have put together a resource guide for the EDI and International graduate student representatives from each graduate student association. This guide features the resources that are available both on campus and off-campus, highlighting the available support for concerns regarding human rights and anti-racism, accessibility, LGBTQ+ support, student organizations and much more. This resource is available on the SGPS website, feel free to refer to it should you have any questions and feel free to share it with your departments and networks.

Committees

As you all know, a large part of my time commitment as the Equity and Diversity Commissioner is taken up by committee work. As such, since November, I have continued to participate in meetings with campus groups, organizations, and committees to represent and advocate on behalf of graduate students. As part of my work with the University Council on Anti-Racism and Equity (UCARE), I sit on two sub-Councils: Inclusive Community Sub-Council and Student Recruitment, Support and Success Sub-Council. In these sub-councils, we have been working methodically through the PICARDI report, identifying those recommendations that have been implemented and highlighting those that still need more work.

Additionally, in my work on the Senate Educational Equity Committee (SEEC), I have been raising issues related to equity and diversity in relation to educational outcomes, surveys, and programs. Moreover, I continue to represent graduate students in the Built Environment Advisory Group (BEAG). In these committees and other meetings, I have highlighted

issues and concerns specific to graduate students and emphasized the need for graduate student representation across decision-making bodies on campus.

Events

Madison (Athletics and Wellness Commissioner) and I are putting together a workshop for the Beyond Boundaries Conference titled "Politics of Movement". This workshop will include a half hour Muay Thai lesson as well as a critical discussion on the historical and political dynamics of sports as well as contemporary forms of co-optation and appropriation. We hope that you will all be able to join us for this hour of movement and thoughtful discussion.

If you have any suggestions, questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to get in touch at equity@sgps.ca.

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



Dear Council and Members,

Here is a preview of some of the things I have been working on as your Indigenous Graduate Liaison:

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. The final circle will be held April 8th 2021.

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. The final circle will be held April 21st 2021.

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 now posted on the SGPS 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. We will be reaching out to graduate student SGPS reps shortly to assist you in the reaction of these EDII reps.

4. Indigenous Grad Caucus

Through discussions with Four Directions and Office of Indigenous Initiatives, I am currently working on the creation of a caucus or sub-council of the Aboriginal Council that will be composed primarily of Indigenous graduate students with some undergraduate representatives present. The aim of this group will be to increase Indigenous student representation at the senior administrative level and increase transparency to the policies, events, and other happenings going on within and throughout the university as they pertain to Indigenous students. Call for members will happen at the end of March and the first meeting will be held mid April.

This will be my final general meeting with the SGPS as my contract will be up at the end of April. I look forward to transitioning the new person who will enter this role. Thank you for wonderful experience and knowledge I have gained in serving the SGPS. Miigwech to the amazing support from the SGPS team in making me feel as comfortable as possible in being the first person to serve this role. Best wishes for the new person who enters this role and best wishes to all the members as we near the end of term.

Gichi Miigwech,

Paige Van Tassel

SGPS Indigenous Graduate Liaison

indigenous@sgps.ca



Hello Council and members,

I hope you are all doing well, I have been enjoying the more mild weather and opportunities to go outside! In this report I will highlight events that I have facilitated as your social commissioner thus far, this month's event, possible future events, and speak about the action group I have joined as an SGPS liaison.

Events to date

- Holiday crating (galaxy painting, ornament decorating, and soap felting)
- Soap felting workshop (short presentation, soap felting activity)
- Show and Tell: Plants" (indoor plant care presentation, show and tell, and plant bingo)
- Show and Tell: Loom beading (presentation, loom beading activity with vibrant beads)
- Show and Tell: Loom beading (presentation, loom beading activity with pearlized beads)

Event this month

"Show and Tell" Loom Beading (no cost)

We had a Loom Beading Event on March 4th (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" involved an Indigenous Graduate worker sharing their knowledge, own beading practice, and guiding us through a loom beading exercise. The event was open to all SGPS members who identify as Indigenous as well as allies. Participants were sent free art kits prior to the event and got to engage in some loom beading during the event.

Upcoming Events

In early April 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 an event accessible from home which is an online Paint Nite involving watercolor birch trees (participants free to paint something else) by using negative space. This event, much like previous crafting events will involve an event sign up for the free art kits and then tuning in to Zoom while we all make art together.

SGPS Liaison on a sexual and gender diversity working group

I have been attending meetings with a group on campus that is currently addressing sexual and gender diversity on campus, at the moment this group is focused on the need for gender inclusive washrooms on campus. As your social commissioner I feel that hosting events in-person (when the time comes), requires additional work to ensure that the spaces being used are accessible in a variety of ways. One important aspect of this is ensuring there are washrooms available for any attendee at these events, as such being in the group allows me to understand the landscape of Queen's washrooms and work to improve existing spaces, as well as identify spaces that we could host events in. As this emerging group grows and begins to share findings and plans I will relay this information to the SGPS council and members.

Host an event with me!

I am seeking to continue to bring you events you can access from home, and hopefully soon, socially distanced outdoor events. As always the “show and tell” series is an opportunity for you to share your knowledge with other grad and professional students, this can include a short presentation and an activity, craft, or game, and/or a discussion. The “show and tell” event often has both educational and social aspects. If you are interested in working with me please don’t hesitate to email me at social@sgps.ca.

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