



Dear Council,

It has been a busy start to the year, and I'd like to say a quick thanks to our Executive Director, Andria, and the rest of the Executive for all the work they've been doing.

A few things to note:

First, I'm meeting with the Commissioner team next week in order to discuss some possible changes that I may present to the Executive and Council around how the Commissioner positions are structured within our organization. I won't discuss the specifics of those ideas here yet – before I present them I would like to consult the Commissioners themselves and probably take some meetings with other people throughout the university and maybe beyond. However, I'll let you know my current strategy in thinking this through:

1. Given that all the employees at the SGPS, except for our Executive Director, are part-time, I think that the most effective way to structure the organization is to ensure that Council is the main site of discussion. This is the place where employees and student reps meet, and as many decisions as possible should be coming to this body. Further, I believe that for Council to function effectively, all employees should feel safe to share their opinions during these meetings, regardless of where they sit within the hierarchy of the SGPS.
2. I think it is time for us to revisit salaries for the organization, which have not been raised in a while and, I believe, do not accurately reflect the amount of work done by student leaders. I think if we want to see more folks apply for leadership positions, we need to compensate people adequately for this work.
3. We need a more effective way to measure the time that people spend on work for the SGPS. There are a number of tasks that are hard to quantify in terms of time spent.

Second, we sent out a survey to our members asking for opinions on how we are doing, including questions on our services (like the Graduate Peer Support Centre that is currently paused). We have had an incredible response rate (588 responses as of 7:44pm on November 2, 2021), up from about 80 responses last year. This is largely due to us offering some pretty big prizes (4 \$500 gift cards). Please share the survey, which is available [here](#). The survey will end on November 15 and we are hoping to have something ready to present for our General Meeting on November 23.

Third, I am doing some thinking around how to best support students by advocating for increased funding packages and better mental health supports that realistically meet graduate and professional student needs. I am very much still interested in hearing from people regarding these issues!

All my best,

Anthony Lomax  
[vp.community@sgps.ca](mailto:vp.community@sgps.ca)



Hello everyone,

I hope that everyone is doing well and is looking forward to this next month.

**Upcoming Events:**

**Cooking with Grandma's:**

- I am excited to continue the partnership with the Queen's Women's Association here at Queen's through our Cooking with Grandma's event. The next event for this series will be held virtually on Wednesday November 17<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM. Registration for this event is now open and can be found using the link below.

<https://forms.office.com/r/ZeDD1RixEC>

**Food Collective Group:**

- I have been sitting on the Food Collective Group as a representative for the SGPS. Over the month of October, the Food Collective group hosted a food drive. We were able to collect over 50 lbs of donations for the AMS foodbank!
- The FCG sends out a monthly newsletter to promote events and resources around campus to support students and provide information. Please email me ([athletics@sgps.ca](mailto:athletics@sgps.ca)) if you wish to be added to this newsletter

**November Fitness Challenge:**

- In collaboration with the ARC and Queen's Residence we are hosting a November Group Fitness Challenge. Attend 5 group fitness classes (\$3.00 a class) at the ARC and get the 6<sup>th</sup> class free. Additionally, all participants in the Group Fitness Challenge will be entered into a draw for a Winter Group Fitness Pass.
- Registration for group fitness classes can be found at [gogaelsgo.com](http://gogaelsgo.com)

I will be finalizing my plan for the winter semester at the end of the month and would love to hear any suggestions on events and initiatives that you would like to see. I am excited for all the upcoming events and as always, please feel free to contact me ([athletics@sgps.ca](mailto:athletics@sgps.ca)) with any questions or comments about these or other events.

Sincerely,

Kassandra Coyle  
Athletics and Wellness Commissioner, SGPS



Good Evening Council Members,

I hope you are all enjoying the cooler weather and the beginning of the wonderful harvest season (be it from the land or the stationary store)! Please find my report below, followed by my 2021-2022 goals and year plan. Starting this month, my reports will follow the format of my year plan objectives for quick and easy progress review. If you have any questions on any of the materials presented here, please don't hesitate to contact me at [equity@sgps.ca](mailto:equity@sgps.ca).

### 1. Advocacy

The **Muslim Sharing Circle** held in August and moderated by Dr. Adnan Husain was relatively well attended (8 registrations, 5 attendees) and produced meaningful conversations. Some students who were unable to attend the circle privately shared that they would be interested in attending a circle during the fall semester. The International Commissioner (Sabrina Masud - who played an active role in organizing the circle) and I are discussing the possibility of holding another Muslim Sharing Circle some time this semester.

### 2. Committee Work

- **BEAG** (Built Environment Advisory Group) August meeting was cancelled (nothing to report).
- **UCARE governance and nominations sub-council** – reviewed and selected applicants for vacant positions. The “Alumni/Kingston Community Member” position remains vacant despite one applicant, and a new round of applicants for this position are being reviewed. The sub-council agrees that there are some important representation gaps in UCARE and are working on recommending new positions be created. It will take some time before a formal proposal is made to UCARE by the sub-council.
- **PSAC901 Anti-Oppression Working Group** – creating “dis-orientation” materials aimed at various marginalized student groups. I have been working on a comprehensive guide for students from low-income backgrounds and/or first-generation degree holders (with support from International Commissioner, Sabrina) and a comprehensive guide for Indigenous students (jointly with Indigenous Graduate Liaison, Brittany McBeath). The working group will also be hosting an “Anti-Orientation” meet-and-greet on September 15<sup>th</sup> to discuss the guides and other resources available to marginalized students. Advertising for this event will begin shortly. There are gaps in this group (many marginalized student identities are not represented in the Working Group) that we are still looking to fill, however the group is mindful that these efforts are labour intensive and marginalized students are exhausted.
- **BIPOC Supports Working Group** with HREO and AMS – revising new materials to distribute across the university, including a pamphlet and cards with information for both marginalized students experiencing aggressions and for bystanders. Materials should be in circulation in the coming weeks.
- **Provost's Action Group for Gender and Sexual Diversity (PAGGAS)** – working with the Principal's office to identify and eliminate gaps in supports and resources for 2SLGBTQ+ students, staff, and faculty, whilst also strengthening the campus environment for gender and sexual diversity at Queen's University.

### 3. Projects: Soft Infrastructure Network

As the semester begins I, along with the Indigenous Graduate Liaison (Brittany) and the International Commissioner (Sabrina) have been reaching out to graduate student bodies in departments across Queen's to recommend the creation of EDII focused positions. We are also gathering the names and contact information of the new EDII positions to form an SGPS EDII Council which will form the core of the Soft Infrastructure Network. I hope to begin meetings at the end of September, once the various grad student governing bodies have completed their elections for the academic year.

### 4. Projects: Resource Vlog

The Athletics and Wellness Commissioner (Kassandra Coyle) and I have met to discuss the creation of a short vlog series. The series will comprise of 10 brief (2-5 minutes) videos highlighting various resources to address some common student wellness concerns. A total of 10 videos would be prepared during the fall semester and released biweekly during the winter semester.

Monica Garvie HBSc, MSc

*Equity and Diversity Commissioner – Society of Graduate and Professional Students*



Dear Council,

As I am writing to you, it seems pertinent to acknowledge the importance of this week – the first week of November, which is [Treaties Recognition Week](#) here in Canada. I encourage each of you to check out an event or two this year! There are lots of great events happening around this topic including a very special presentation by Maurice Switzer, the author of *We Are All Treaty People*, hosted by the Queen's University Faculty of Education tomorrow evening (November 4<sup>th</sup> 7:00pm – 8:30pm) – registration for the online event can be found [here](#). The [Annual Indigenous Research Collaborations Day](#) is also happening this week on Friday November 5<sup>th</sup> from 9:00am – 3:00pm. You will not want to miss the Keynote presentation from the Honourable Murray Sinclair, the 15<sup>th</sup> Chancellor of Queen's University. The [23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Indigenous Knowledge Symposium](#) which will be focusing on Indigenous Climate Justice this year, is also happening on Friday November 5<sup>th</sup> and Saturday November 6<sup>th</sup>. Keynote Speakers Winona LaDuke and Autumn Peltier will be sharing important messages from their experiences as Indigenous climate activists.

This month I was focused on building relationships between the Indigenous Student Caucus and staff members from Four Directions Indigenous Student Center and the Office of Indigenous Initiatives. Building strong communication networks will be key to moving forward with the main objectives of my year plan.

### **Committee Work Updates**

#### **Indigenous Student Caucus**

The Indigenous Student Caucus met early last month and this month. Important updates from the Office of Indigenous Initiatives include the commencement of the consultation process regarding Indigenous identity lead by Guy Friedman with the First Peoples Group. There is currently a website being developed to provide updates on the consultation process. Consultation will begin in November and/or December and is open to all Indigenous students, staff and faculty interested in participating. Although details about the process are still being finalized there will likely be two in-person sessions for students to share their thoughts and an online survey that will launch in February and will remain open for three weeks. The Office of Indigenous Initiatives is increasing infrastructure through establishing an outdoor gathering space that extends from the Welcoming Room in Mac Correy for which construction will start soon. The OII is also looking to increase Indigenous faculty by securing new Indigenous hires to replace the two Canada Research Chair positions that the university had previously and also to secure a senior scholar to be the endowed chair of the Indigenous Studies program. Four Directions Indigenous Student Center and the Queen's Native Student Association will be starting preliminary work to form a Pow Wow Committee that plans to host a Pow Wow next year. This event will provide a safe ceremonial space to celebrate and appreciate Indigenous peoples, culture, dance, foods, and the arts.

#### **PSAC901 Anti-Racist/Anti-Oppression Working Group**

I am still working on writing the chapter of the Disorientation manual focused on Indigenous student experiences.

#### **Student Experiences Survey – Student Advisory Group**

The Student Experiences Survey will be publishing a report very soon for which I was asked to provide some reflections to be included in the document. I have committed to lead a circle with Indigenous students in partnership with Four Directions in the coming months.

#### **UCARE Academic and Curricular Diversity Sub-Council**

This month the Academic and Curricular Diversity Sub-Council met to finalize the Curriculum Diversity Plans templates to be completed by all faculties/schools within the University to address PICIRDI recommendation 16.

## **Student Events**

### **Indigenous Reads Talking Circle**

The Indigenous Reads Talking Circle has been meeting bi-weekly to discuss *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. This circle series is completely full

### **Indigenous Writing Group**

The Indigenous Writing Group has been paused due to poor uptake. I am currently working with the SAGE coordinator, student advisor and the SGPS Deputy Indigenous Student Liaison to revamp the concept of the writing circle to make it more appealing and to better meet the needs of students. Right now, we are working on a survey to send through the SAGE network. We are also conceptualizing a speaker series and storytelling circle that may be appealing to the students who are already highly engaged in the Indigenous Reads Talking Circle.

If you have any questions or are looking for more information on any of the committee work or upcoming events, please feel free to contact me via email at [indigenous@sgps.ca](mailto:indigenous@sgps.ca).

Nyawen'kó:wa (Big thanks)!

Brittany McBeath  
SGPS Indigenous Student Liaison



Hello everyone,

I hope everyone is doing good and had a spooky Halloween.

During October I have had the privilege to get to know Derek, the Social Commissioner Deputy for 2021-2022, better and we have had a chance to discuss the Social Commissioner year plan for this year. We are still working through some of the ideas and seeing where they fit with each other. We will have a finalized year plan by the end of the month. I have also worked on some new recipes for our recipe blog which can be found here: [Recipe Blog – SGPS @ Queen's](#). If you have any suggestions for recipes you would like to see or if you would like to contribute to the blog, please contact me at [social@sgps.ca](mailto:social@sgps.ca) or Cassandra, the Athletics and Wellness Commissioner, at [athletics@sgps.ca](mailto:athletics@sgps.ca).

I also hosted the “Witch Lit: How to Write a Ghost Story” event which took place on October 30<sup>th</sup>. The event focused on some key tips and tricks for how to write a ghost story. One thing I am now working through is how to get more engagement for virtual events as I am noticing quite a difference in interest and attendance on virtual events versus our in-person events during orientation.

I am also working on some upcoming events. They are:

- **Eco-workshop #1:** This event will take place on November 24<sup>th</sup> between 7-8.30 pm. This workshop will be led by Carolyn Bonta and will focus on how to mend clothes. More information about the event will be communicated soon through social media so feel free to share that information.
- **Dungeons and Dragon night:** As I mentioned in October, this will be the first event in our Events for Everyone series. I am still working through some kinks on how to host this virtual so more information will be communicated soon about this event.
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I am also still looking for people who either have skills in crafts which they would like to share during the Show and Tell series or who have a unique hobby they would like to share in Events for Everyone. If you think you could provide help on either of these, please reach out to me.

I am excited to start implementing my year plan and for this year to come. If you have any comments, questions, or suggestions about these or any other future events, please feel free to contact me ([social@sgps.ca](mailto:social@sgps.ca)).

Sincerely,  
Emilia Ganslandt  
Social Commissioner, SGPS



Hello Council,

I hope everyone is had a fun Halloween weekend.

I have been working on the following projects and committees with Han Xu, the Deputy Commissioner:

1. The QUIC International Student Success committee has been informed of the International Student Education week organized by CTL. My team has secured a session on November 18, 10-11AM, where we will have a session on the topic of building community and friendship for international students. We have the career service counselor for QUIC who is going to share her resources. I have also invited PSAC and ISWG to participate and share their resources. I will share the posters once it is ready.
2. The Anti-Racism Working Group with PSAC has been brainstorming ways to increase student engagement. One idea that is being developed at the moment involves introducing a creative booth where students can come up with creative ways to address issues related to their concerns.
3. With the HREO BIPOC Support group, we have been finalizing the materials. We are also looking for new members to expand our network.
4. The orientation event for the international Grad and Undergrad students planned by the Queen's International Student Working Group (ISWG) was held on 22 October. The even was well attended both in person and online. We had the Principal, Provost, Vice-Provost International, QUIC, and Elders attend the event and welcome the international students.
5. The Bi-Weekly Student Arrival committee led by Dr. Sandra Den Otter has been attended by Han. I have included her report at the end of mine.
6. Rohit and I have attended a meeting with Associate Dean Chris DeLuca to discuss TA teaching support and training for international students. Chris has set up another meeting with Arunima Khanna and Yunyi Chen to discuss cross-cultural support for international graduate students working as TA.
7. The hiring committee for the Faith and Spirituality Chaplain selected a new Chaplain. The Chaplain will be announced soon.
8. Monice and I are working towards facilitating a session with the Ban Righ center where we shall share our creative process and engage in conversation on how we navigate challenges in life through our work. The session is aimed to have a light conversation of creating and bonding through our craft. A date in November is under discussion.
9. Han Xu:
  - a. The training session was very informative. It helped me understand the history and structure of SGPS and services offered. Job expectations were made clear, and I got the opportunity to meet other deputy commissioners. I was glad to see that over the years SGPS has grown so much as more student groups got on board.
  - b. The air arrival meeting addressed topics including:

- IRCC policy interpretation
- COVID19 vaccines and flu shots offered by Student Wellness Services
- More on-campus eating places
- Fall semester intake arrivals approaching the end & shifting focus to winter intake arrivals
- Generating a list of concerns collectives
- financial support for incoming students' quarantine
- QUIC developing pro-active communication strategy
- Information needed for international professors/visiting scholars
- Sultan AlMajil, director of QUIC, mentioned that it's difficult to engage international students therefore not sure what support students need and QUIC should offer. In their recent zoom session addressing concerns related to mixing vaccines, only two students joined the session. Two student participants of this air arrival meeting, including Tao and myself, shared our perspectives as to why this happened. It was agreed that more work could be done to strengthen and use the existing student network which students often rely on and go to first before seeking help from the university.

If anyone have any suggestions, questions, or wishes to collaborate, please feel free to get in touch with me.

Wish everyone a great rest of the November!

Sabrina Masud