



Hello Council and General Members,

### **Introduction**

It has been a busy August and September for the SGPS, as I am sure it has been for most people at the university. We have been engaged giving orientation talks, running welcome back events, and managing matters related to our health and dental plan.

I will continue to support events for October, and I am very happy as to the success of the events this fall. Thank you to Emilia, our VP Community, for her dedicated efforts organizing these events!

### **Conversation – a New Counselling Service**

We were pleased to welcome a new counselling service called Conversation as of September 19. This service should provide unlimited sessions to students until remission through virtual counselling. We are excited to try out this service for the 2022/2023 school year and get student feedback regarding their user experiences. More information about the service can be found here: [https://www.studentcare.ca/rte/en/IHaveAPlan\\_SGPS\\_Conversation\\_Dialogue](https://www.studentcare.ca/rte/en/IHaveAPlan_SGPS_Conversation_Dialogue). Note: only students opted into our health and dental plan will have access to this service. We hope Conversation is a successful service, so we can work with Queen's to offer this to the student body at large in order to make sure mental health care is available to every student.

We have received some feedback already regarding issues with Conversation that we are actively working through. Please let me know if you have any feedback – positive or negative – about the service so we can best assess whether to continue with the service going forward.

### **Bus Access**

Students can again use their student cards to ride the bus. They can easily use Kingston Transit by showing the bus driver the validation sticker (for 2022/2023) on their student card as get on the bus.

### **Graduate Student Trustee**

With the help of the Council Speaker and Deputy Speaker, as well as the SGPS Director, we ran a successful election for Graduate Student Trustee to ensure graduate and professional students were represented at the Board of Trustees. This was very important, and I am proud that we were able to elect this role amidst a very busy end of August and early September.

### **Advocating for Students**

At various levels and types of university meetings, I have advocated for students regarding affordable housing issues, graduate funding minimums, and the issue of graduate and professional students not knowing what services are available to them (lack of targeted marketing towards SGPS members). I answer many student inquiries on a weekly basis, issues big and small, with many questions arising regarding the health and dental plan in September as well as questions about bus passes. I get a lot of emails; however, I always prioritize student emails over university staff emails, and I do my best to let students know if I need time to look into whatever questions or concerns that they may have.

The SGPS is highly represented in the university this year, and we have been working hard to ensure the student voice is heard in as many discussions as possible. I have been working hard to ensure the University sees the SGPS's voice as important and reliable, as I have heard sometimes that our presence in the past has been unreliable (for whatever reason, members missing meetings they are meant to sit on and not being actively engaged in the discussions). I have also been keeping in close communication with the Alma Mater Society (undergraduate student society) and the university Rector to provide a united student voice when needed.

I know there will always be lots of work to do to continue advocating for students.

**Some High-Level Plans Heading into the Winter**

-Organizing a conference for the 2023 Winter Term

-I am collaborating with the VP Community and our Equity Commissioner on how to improve the SGPS from an EDII perspective. This includes discussions we will be having regarding our health and dental plan and related financial supports.

-Supporting and leading conversations regarding the feedback we receive from our town hall events. This includes sharing student feedback and concerns with faculties, staff, and the Board of Trustees.

I hope everyone's fall terms are going okay so far. I know it has been a bit of an adjustment being back in person for many of us. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have a question or concern. My email is [president@sgps.ca](mailto:president@sgps.ca).

Sincerely,  
Beth Langdon  
SGPS President



Hey everyone,

I hope your semester is off to a great start and you are feeling like you are getting your feet under you. I also hope you had a great fall break for those of you who are just coming back from your fall break. We have had an excellent turnout for all of our social events, so it is clear that many of you are excited to be back and it has been so great to welcome you all!

Since I began my time as VP Graduate I have been fortunate enough to be involved in a lot of discussions with the university about important issues, and have made some progress on moving forward issues that I know you all care about.

First, I have been making a strong push to increase graduate student funding. This is something that the university recognizes as a problem, and there is a lot of agreement that many of the issues students face can be solved with increased funding. Of course, with any issues like these it is important and helpful to gather as much data as possible so that we can make a strong argument to the university. I am pleased to say that we are mostly done with the information gathering process and I am now compiling a formal report to present to the School of Graduate Studies and Post-Doctoral Affairs (SGSPA). This report will consist of letters that I have received from students, including some of you, formal reports or letters that departments have sent to us, and the results of our most recent town hall discussion.

To that end, thank you so much to everyone who helped spread the word and who came out to our first town hall. We had a good turnout and we heard some very compelling stories about issues that graduate students are facing around funding. This is not the only issue we want to push forward, though, and housing is next on the list. This second town hall will take place on Tuesday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, followed by another on November 8<sup>th</sup> (topic: physical and mental health) and a final one on November 22<sup>nd</sup> (general discussion). These town halls will take place in Kingston Hall 101, with the final one having a Zoom option for anyone who cannot attend in-person and wants to reach out. In addition, we have a QR code with a link to a Form page for everyone to send feedback who cannot attend at all, which are sent through the newsletters.

Though not related to the town halls directly, we have also scheduled a meeting for Ann Clachan residents to attend so that they can have their voices heard about some issues they are facing with their housing situation. We will be facilitating the meeting as a discussion between Community Housing, the residents, and campus security. This meeting is taking place on Thursday, October 20<sup>th</sup> at 5pm on Zoom, so if you know someone who is in this housing and wants to talk about issues they have had with Community Housing then please have them attend.

Finally, I have been pushing for graduate student preference at the Queen's daycare. The first step in this is to increase funding for the daycare; they have been in discussions with the university to make this happen, and have requested that anyone who has used the daycare, knows

someone who does or could use the daycare, or would like to speak about the value of the daycare write a short letter. If you are interested and feel that the daycare should benefit from this increased funding, I would ask that you please take some time to write a letter and send it to me so that I can pass it along.

As always if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please reach out to me at [vp.graduate@sgps.ca](mailto:vp.graduate@sgps.ca)

Take care,

Devin Fowlie  
Vice-President Graduate, SGPS



Hello everyone,

I hope everyone is having a good semester so far and are enjoying being back on campus.

For those who are new to council, my name is Emilia Ganslandt, and I am the VP Community for 2022-2023. During my time as VP Community, I hope to work on issues related to housing and food insecurity, improving the SGPS' relationship to the town of Kingston, and sustainability. I also hope to work on making the SGPS more accessible to its members and making it a space where members can grow. As part of this I am also working on creating a good working environment for our commissioners and liaison who work under my commission. For more information on my goals, please see the end of this document.

During the summer, I have worked a lot with our commissioners on getting them their training and properly on boarding them to the SGPS. We have focused on providing training on accessibility, equity, and professionalism to make our employees as well rounded as possible. I also spent the summer working on developing my goals for this year and starting to work towards those. I have communicated with and met with potential community (both external and internal to Queen's) partners including Sustainable Kingston, the AMS, Loving Spoonful, the AMS foodbank, CFRC, the Journal, and PSAC 901. Through some of these partnerships I am working on some very exciting initiatives so keep an eye out for those.

Unfortunately, our Social Commissioner Madeleine had to leave the organization due to personal reasons in August at which point the executive had to take over the orientation planning with me in the lead. I am happy to report that we did have a great orientation with 3 out of 4 of our major events fully sold out.

During September, Devin (our VP Graduate) and I also worked on developing a townhall series which provides students with the opportunity to provide us with feedback and insights on issues that are important to them. We had our first town hall October 4<sup>th</sup> which focused on funding, and we still have three more to go. These are:

**Townhall 2:** Discussion on Housing, October 25<sup>th</sup>, 4:30pm-6:30pm Kingston Hall 101

**Townhall 3:** Physical and Mental Health, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 4.30-6.30pm Kingston Hall 101

**Townhall 4:** General Discussion, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 4:30-6:30pm Kingston Hall 101/online option will be available

If you cannot come out to one of the townhalls, we are working on ways to provide input in other formats. The information collected at these townhalls will be compiled into a report which will be presented to relevant University & community partners.

October so far has been busy planning some awesome fall events which are:

**Pumpkinferno:** On Monday October 17<sup>th</sup> at 7.15pm we have tickets to go together to Pumpkinferno at Fort Henry  
**Ghosts of Queen's University-** Private tour for SGPS member to explore the Ghosts of Queen's University. On Monday October 24<sup>th</sup> at 8.15pm.

**SGPS goes to the Theater-** SGPS is going to Kingston Grand to see Firewater Thunderbird Rising 2. The piece which is composed by the Indigenous choreographer Christine Friday touches on themes of ancestors, dreams, blood memory and the land. October 26<sup>th</sup>, at 7.15pm.

So far two of these events have sold out but students have the option to be on a waitlist in case people with tickets can no longer attend so I encourage you all to go check them out on our website and our social media accounts. The tour of the Agnes Art Centre has now been moved to November 10<sup>th</sup>.

Other than that, Chloe (our VP Professional) and I are in full swing of reviewing applicants for the Social Commissioner position and we are hopeful that this position will again be filled by November 1<sup>st</sup>. During November I will keep working on our townhall series, work to get our new Social Commissioner oriented and trained and attend the Canadian Federation of Students General Meeting. I will keep advocating for student concerns in committees and in conversations with the University and the City. I am also working on some initiatives about how to disseminate information to our members and more information about this will be communicated on our social medias.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, or are interested in getting involved with the SGPS, please don't hesitate to reach me at [vp.community@sgps.ca](mailto:vp.community@sgps.ca).

Sincerely,

Emilia Ganslandt

Vice President Community, SGPS

Objective 1	<b>Advocating for affordable and decent housing for SGPS members</b>
Description	During the last few years, the cost of living has dramatically increased and with that the cost of housing. This rapid increase has made the current scholarships insufficient for covering these expenses. The aim of this objective is to advocate for affordable housing both with university administration, community partners, and city council.
Benefits	Targeting one of the biggest financial strains on students, momentum for this right now
Difficulties	Expected reluctance from the city and landlords to work on this
Long-term	Hopefully long-term this will lead to better housing for graduate students
How	Potentially talking to university administration, talk at city council meetings, talk to councilors, run collective campaigns with CFS for example
Partners	TBD

Objective 2	<b>Improving the working structure and training for commissioners</b>
Description	Making the commissioners feel more part of the SGPS team and ensure that they have optimal conditions to succeed
Benefits	Commissioners who do so much important work for the SGPS will be able to do their jobs even better. Also, this could potentially help avoid burn out among commissioners and improve employee satisfaction
Difficulties	Time limitations as a VPC and remote working conditions
Long-term	Hopefully finding some long-term solutions for commissioners which can be implemented year after year
How	Regular feedback to commissioners, resource kits, extensive training, regular meetings, better relationships between commissioners and executives
Partners	Potential: VPP

Objective 3	<b>Increasing SGPS presence in Community Affairs</b>
Description	Work at Queen's and in Kingston to raise SGPS profile and create more lasting and fruitful relations with community groups, the city, partners and membership at large.
Benefits	Raising the role of the SGPS both on campus and in the Kingston community. Improving a fraught relationship between the town and the University.
Difficulties	Requires a lot of time and resources and may be difficult to begin with.
Long-term	Begin building relationships so these can be continued by future VPCs
How	Election campaigns, cold calls, emailing, partner campaigns, visiting different groups, more collaborative campaigns and events with the community.
Partners	TBD

Objective 4	<b>Championing sustainability on campus and in Kingston at large</b>
Description	Environmental degradation and climate change are huge issues which will impact young people today. This goal will be about championing sustainability efforts on campus and in the Kingston community at large and work to create both campaigns and events which target this goal
Benefits	A livable planet
Difficulties	Getting the university and town to priorities climate and environmental initiatives
Long-term	Creating policies and practices which mitigate the harm on our planet
How	Campaigns and events
Partners	Potential: AMS, Queen's Sustainability office, Sustainable Kingston, community groups

Objective 5	<b>Make the SGPS more accessible to members and a safe space for students</b>
Description	Making the SGPS more accessible to members and their concerns. Also working on making it a space where all our members feel safe and at home.
Benefits	More happy members and also making our executive and staff more aware of members concerns
Difficulties	This year space is a big barrier, also will require some leg work in the beginning
Long-term	Even better community within the SGPS membership
How	Potential: Office hours, more events, sharing circles, promoting general meetings more, physically being present on campus
Partners	TBD





Hello everyone!

Our final September event was a major hit!

- On September 26<sup>th</sup>, the SGPS hosted a graduate and professional student only triple threat fitness class at the athletics and recreation center! This was well attended, and we are hoping to continue to do classes at the athletics and recreation center.

Looking forward to this month:

- I am looking into creating a Strava group and doing some challenges related to outside walks, runs and bike rides before the weather gets too cold. Look out on our social medias for more information about this soon.
- I will be meeting with my athletics and recreation contacts to try and plan another fitness class and get more information on different events that are already planned for the ARC.
  - This being said, please send any ideas for workout classes to [athletics@sgps.ca](mailto:athletics@sgps.ca) and we can try and get a class of all of your favorite exercises.

The Food Insecurity Advisory Committee (FIAC) are starting to meet at the end of this month, if there is anything related to food insecurity that you are working on that you would like mentioned, you can send me an email at [athletics@sgps.ca](mailto:athletics@sgps.ca) and I can relay that to the committee!

Best,

Clare Gaherty  
Athletics and Wellness commissioner  
[Athletics@sgps.ca](mailto:Athletics@sgps.ca)



Hello Council Members,

As we get settled for the school year, here is a summary of what I have done for the past month. If you have any questions on any of the materials presented here, please do not hesitate to contact me at [equity@sgps.ca](mailto:equity@sgps.ca).

This is the first semester of the role:

1. Student health coverage
  - a. Currently, there are gaps within our insurance for graduate students as to what and what is not covered. I understand that we must strike a cost-benefit balance, and I am working to ensure that this analysis prioritizes the medical health needs of marginalized students. We are at our budding stages as to how to help for future years.
  - b. VP Community Elimila and I are in the budding phase of looking at redistributing roll-over funds to collaborate with the Gender Affirming Assistance Project on a gender affirming care bursary.
2. Collaborations
  - a. There are some really great collaborations that we are doing with the Yellow House. We are currently prepping for a coffee house, and we are in the editing stages of a get-to-know-me interview with the Yellow House and it'll get sent out through their newsletter for increasing SGPS visibility.
3. Hiring Boards
  - a. There are currently numerous departments undergoing hiring, some of which, have been inequitable. I have sat on numerous hiring committee boards and meetings to ensure that there are no immediate inequitable practices. In addition to this reactive approach, I am working on proactive and sustainable approaches to equitable hiring practices and collaborating with other equity positions on campus.
4. Student Activism Bursary
  - a. The division of labour, particularly emotional labour of equity, diversity, and inclusion work, typically falls on marginalized students. I am working with VP Community and the President of SGPS to see if we can create a bursary akin to the bursary from the AMS for students that pay marginalized students for their labour.
  - b. For this month, after checking in with the VP community, this is going to be part of a larger project so that we can put together an honorarium for student labour, which will be commence soon once tax lawyers have been consulted.
5. Name Pronunciation Project
  - a. A person's name can be a core part of someone's identity. Unfortunately, a lot of racialized names get mispronounced. Whether intended or not, these mispronunciations can be felt as microaggressions. As such, the Psychology's EDI committee has created this project, where all faculty and staff will have the phenetic pronunciation and audio recording of their name being pronounced integrated on their department staff directory.
  - b. I am scaling this project to be university wide. Currently, this is about to go live within the Faculty of Education, and other departments are getting on board too!
6. Committee Commitment
  - a. Public Service Alliance of Canada DCL 901 (PSAC 901) – still currently working on a mask mandate
  - b. Provost's Action Group for Gender and Sexual Diversity (PEGGAS) – paused
  - c. Soft Infrastructure Network – paused until Student Activism Bursary is live
  - d. Built Environment Advisory Group – some wonderful discussions about how to increase bathroom accessibility were discussed and are going to begin construction soon.

- e. University Council on Anti-Racism and Equity (UCARE) – overviewing historical racist and anti-racist timeline brochure, very exciting!
- f. Steering Committee related to review of CSES response to Hate Crimes – overviewing dispatch response
- g. Senate Educational Equity Committee – just starting back up again, reviewed the goals and objectives for the year.

Best,

Jane Mao BSCh, SXGD Certificate, M.Ed Candidate

[equity@sgps.ca](mailto:equity@sgps.ca)

Equity and Diversity Commissioner

Society of Graduate and Professional Students