



Hello Council,

Introduction and SGPS Closure

I won't be at Council this month due to my exams, so I am just providing a written report. If you have any questions about my report or otherwise, feel free to email me at president@sgps.ca.

Please note: The SGPS will be closed for Winter Break starting Monday, December 19, 2022, until Monday, January 9, 2023. During the break, SGPS staff are not expected to respond to emails or work. If you have an urgent matter, please reach out to another resource as we are likely unable to assist you before we come back from the break. Please feel go ahead and email us non-urgent matters, and we will get back to you once we are back. I personally will also not be responding to emails Dec 10-15 due to my exams, but I will make sure to get back to you before I am off for the closure.

Update on Issues with Conversation

At the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in October, multiple students expressed some concern over Conversation, a new online counselling service we are trialing this year. At the last council meeting the SGPS was waiting for a meeting with Dialogue and StudentCare. We had that meeting recently, and our understanding is still that Dialogue's Conversation does provide long-term counselling; however, there seems to be a disconnection between their front-service staff and the counsellors/doctors who run the service. We have provided that feedback. We also have come to understand that Conversation is specifically goal-oriented, and we recognize that this is not necessarily what students are looking for in their counselling. The executive hasn't had a lot of time to regroup and discuss this service since our meeting with Dialogue, but we will be continuing to discuss in the new year. We are working closely with StudentCare and are seeking estimated costs on different options we have for our health and dental plan this Winter term, so that we can get student feedback before making decisions. If you have further feedback Conversation (good or bad), please feel free to reach out to me at president@sgps.ca.

University COVID Protocols

I wanted to note that we have included the university's current COVID protocols in our most recent newsletter. Nothing has changed but the university has been stressing in the last month the importance of staying home when sick and wearing a mask when needed. If you find yourself sick with suspected COVID during exam season, it is expected that academic accommodation will be granted, without medical documentation. You will need to follow your faculty/department's extenuating circumstances procedure. Here is the information included in our most recent newsletter:

- The university strongly recommends that you wear a mask indoors when physical distancing can't be maintained.
- Stay home if you're sick – once you have no fever and symptoms improve for 24 hours (or 48 hours if gastrointestinal) you can return to campus.
- Please wear a mask for 10 days after your symptoms start.

- Academic consideration will be granted if you need to miss a class, exam, or academic requirement due to COVID-19 illness, symptoms, or self-isolation. **Medical documentation is not required.**
- More information can be found at <https://www.queensu.ca/covidinfo/update-masking-and-public-health-measures-queens>

For everyone working through exams, papers, and/or marking, I wish you all the best. Wishing everyone a restful break!

Sincerely,
Beth Langdon
SGPS President



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of Vice President Graduate
December 2022

Hey everyone,

I hope you are all doing well and taking care of yourselves as best you can while we wrap up this semester. This can be a mix of the busiest times if you have grading or other TA duties, or it can be a nice break for some others. Whichever boat you are in, please keep well.

I will try to keep my report brief, but I do have a few important things to touch on. The first concerns the town halls that Emilia and I have been running; as most of you know, the last of those town halls wrapped up at the end of November so we are now in the process of compiling everything we have learned and distributing it to the people who matter. The funding report has been on the desks of the SGSPA for a little while now and it should have come to all of you by the time you are reading this report. I think we learned some really valuable things from all of you, and this has helped open a discussion to put a strong push on the Minimum Funding Working Group to get the minimum graduate funding raised. The SGSPA has been working on also increasing their transparency around amount of funding offered – a common theme and concern that came up in our town hall – so that incoming graduate students can make an informed decision. I'm happy to chat more about this if you want to send me an email or stop by office hours.

Thank you to all of you for your interest in assisting the daycare. Some of you provided letters directly to us since last council, so thank you so much for that. For others of you I know it is hard to find the time to manage our own schedules at times, let alone find the space to write a letter in support of the daycare no matter how much you care. We have been in touch with the daycare and are drafting a general letter from the organization, with the hopes that anyone who wants to sign it (councilors, executives, staff, commissioners, etc.) can do so and provide their support in that way. If you have not already received that general letter by the time you are reading this, then it should be in your inbox by the end of the week. For those of you interested in my discussions with the daycare, I am currently in talks with their Board of Directors and the University about how we can get consistent graduate student representation as a voice on the daycare decision-making process.

Finally, I am very excited to be working with Aileen to create a document and graphics to guide new SGPS Councilors on the structure of the organization, their place in the organization, and what they can do at council. Thanks very much to Aileen for the hard work on getting this initiative rolling, and I'm excited to share what we have with you all in the New Year.

As always if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please reach out to me at vp.graduate@sgps.ca

Take care,

Devin Fowle
Vice-President Graduate



Hello everyone,

It's hard to believe that we are entering 2023 soon. I would like to give some updates on what I have been working on throughout Fall 2022 and what I will continue to work on in Winter 2023. My focus throughout my 2022-23 role would be to improve **accessibility, inclusivity, and engagement** within the SGPS Council and the broader organization more generally.

1. Accessibility

- a. Changed outline and graphics of agenda and meeting minutes to increase visual accessibility [Status: Completed]
- b. Enable live transcription for Council and General meetings [Status: Pending]
- c. Ensure visual accessibility of SGPS Bylaws and Policies [Status: Pending]

2. Inclusivity

- a. Encouraged members to bring issues and topics for discussion anonymously [Status: Completed]
- b. Ensure the use of gender-neutral language across SGPS Bylaws and Policy [Status: Pending]
- c. Ensured Land Acknowledgement and Introduction at the start of Council and General Meetings amount to more than a "tick-box" exercise. In addition to improving inclusivity, it also brings greater awareness to pertinent issues [Status: Completed]

3. Engagement

- a. Create and write formal documents explaining the role of the Council (with VPG) [Status: Pending]
- b. Create infographic(s) on the role of the Council (with VPG) [Status: Pending]
- c. Create infographic(s) on the Robert's Rules of Order (with VPG) [Status: Pending]
- d. Increase Representatives' engagement with SGPS Council on both formal and informal bases [Status: Pending]
- e. Increase student awareness of and engagement with their Council Reps [Status: Pending]

I hope you all have a wonderful break over the Holidays. If you have any questions or concerns, please e-mail speaker@sgps.ca (for Council purposes) or elections@sgps.ca (for elections).

Warm wishes,

SGPS Council Speaker
Aileen Editha (she/her)



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Athletics and Wellness Commissioner
December 2022

Hello everyone!

It is the end of the year! I ran a contest for people who recorded runs in the last two weeks of November on Strava that ended last week, and I am just working on getting the prizes and selecting a winner! Looking towards the new year, I am going to book a group exercise class for SGPS members monthly starting in January. I am thinking about having a yoga class, one more strength-based class and one Zumba class, so look out in the new year for more information on the dates and times of those classes. I am looking at doing another Instagram giveaway in the new year to help drive Instagram engagement, if anyone has any ideas in the wellness domain for what the prize should be, please send me an email (athletics@sgps.ca).

I hope everyone has an amazing holiday vacation! Good luck on exams/final assignments 😊

Best,

Clare Gaherty
Athletics and Wellness commissioner
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.

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 Emilia 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 events for the new year
 - b. The get-to-know-me interview with the Yellow House is now published on their website and sent through their newsletter, hoping to increase 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. Mask Mandate
 - a. Myself and other students and faculty have met with Stephanie Simpson, Associate Vice Principal (Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion) to discuss the importance of a mask mandate on student physical and mental health.
 - b. Our ideas are currently being brought to the Dean, aligning with other University's mandates and practices.
5. 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. VP Community Emilia and I will be working to hire a Deputy in the new year in hopes of implementing this initiative.
6. 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 phonetic 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!
7. 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 (PAGGAS) – Invited to its student subgroup, SAGGAS, have met and are ready to work!
 - c. Soft Infrastructure Network – paused until Student Activism Bursary is live and a Deputy is hired
 - 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
Equity and Diversity Commissioner
Society of Graduate and Professional Students



Hello Everyone,

As I am stepping down from my role, this is my last council report. It has been a rewarding experience working with SGPS and I hope the organization keeps on working towards the wellbeing of the graduate community.

- International Student Affairs Standing Committee (ISASC) members will have their last committee meeting with me before I leave my office on December 16th. Most members wish to meet in person and we will hold the meeting at the grad club. The committee has been an invaluable support system for me with their advice and support to the betterment of Queen's University. I hope the new commissioner will continue to hold the meetings to ensure they get much needed direction in their role.
- Intercultural TA/TF support working group –I have informed the group about my decision to leave my role. They have shown interest in continuing with the work. If the future commissioner wishes, they can attend the meeting and continue advocating for the student body.
- Iranian solidarity month has been quite successful. As discussed, QUIC, Yellow House, and I as an SGPS representative took the back seat while providing necessary support to the student body. Based on the support, students were able to hold art show, human chain, actions of solidarity, and a performance at the Union Gallery. The students are still continuing with their work.
- I attended the Union Gallery event organized by PSAC and the Gallery where students were provided space to voice their concerns and create posters in an act of protest. I performed at the event and spoke about the issues that concern the well being of international students. It was an emotional event as the Iranian students did a performance in the end.
- Sultan Almajil (Director, QUIC):
I have met Sultan monthly and we discussed the relevant concerns of the student body. He was present at the Iranian solidarity month planning committee meeting and has been providing support to the cause.
- Sandra den Otter (Vice-Provost International):
I have met with Sandra's office, and we also discussed her strategies to improve on the idea of Queen's as a global campus. We have been discussing how to bring the student issues to the forefront of their strategies. The global strategy has been finalized in a draft. I will hold one last meeting with Sandra on December 12 to go over the draft and advise them accordingly.

- In my capacity as Graduate Inclusivity Fellow, I also highlight SGPS and sit in committees to advocate for student concerns we hear through our office. I have decided to join committees that are interested in addressing funding and housing issues for students.
- I have also been working towards leaving my role in a week's time. I wish the next in coming commissioner all the success and hope to support them in their role.

Do reach out to me at international@sgps.ca with any questions, support, or initiative ideas! We welcome any kind of insight you could provide us to grow and do better.

Best wishes
Sabrina Masud



Hello everyone! November was my first full month as Social Commissioner! Throughout that time, I have been able to get acquainted with my role, complete trainings, meet the other amazing Commissioners on the team, as well as go over upcoming social commission projects with Emilia.

As I mentioned last council meeting, for the remaining weeks of the semester I have and will continue to be focusing on planning the SGPS Winter Orientation Week period in January. I've come up with 3 main social events aimed at introducing students to the Queen's community and providing them the opportunity to meet and build connections with others. All events will require students to sign up and pay a \$5 ticket (to ensure commitment).

1. Trivia at the Grad Club (January 17th, 7pm-9:30pm)
 - Grad Club entire main floor has been booked
 - Will coordinate catering options and sound/projector equipment with Grad Club manager (Virginia Clark)
 - Will be a 19+ event
 - Working on compiling Trivia questions

2. Movie Night at the Screening Room (January 24th, 8:30pm-10:30pm)
 - Screening Room has been booked
 - Coordinating movie and food combo options with manager (Jordan)
 - If we are showing our own movie, we would need to purchase a movie license
 - Challenge: would need to find a DVD/Blu Ray version of a movie

3. Board Games and Hot Chocolate at the Queen's Centre (January 31st, 5pm-7:30pm)
 - Queen's Centre Rm 505 has been requested through Student Life Centre (Waiting for confirmation)
 - Family-friendly event (Students welcome to bring friends and family)
 - Board games, colouring and bracelet activities will be available for students and family to use
 - We are looking into having CoGro (Common Ground Coffee House) catering
 - o As not many graduate and professional students know about CoGro, we are looking to partner with CoGro such that we promote CoGro in Instagram advertisements for the event and they will provide us with merch/vouchers that can be used as incentives/prizes for students.
 - o Working with Jennifer Chew (CoGro Communications and Marketing Manager)
 - Offered a CoGro Tote Bag and Cake Voucher as sponsorship items

I am also excited to be incorporating other Commissioners' January events with the Winter Orientation Period to promote incoming student engagement with their events/initiatives!

Currently, I am working on finalizing the budget for Winter Orientation Week as well as getting started on SGPS sanctioning forms.

If you have any questions or comments about my report/events, please do not hesitate to contact me at socail@sgps.ca

That's all for me, best of luck everyone with the final weeks of Semester 1!

Gabby Torretto (she/her)
SGPS Social Commissioner
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