



Hello Council,

Time has flown by it seems as this is my last report as SGPS President. I want to thank all council representatives, SGPS staff, SGPS volunteers, and my fellow executive for all their work this past year. It has been fulfilling to represent SGPS members and try my best in all instances to lead with empathy but also with strength. I have learned a lot from the students I serve.

The SGPS Executive has been working hard to decide what the health and dental plan will be for the 2023/2024 school year. We are still waiting on confirmation from our StudentCare partner on some details, but I can share that we have decided not to go forward with Conversation given the concerning feedback we have heard as well as the cost it would be to members to continue. In terms of online counselling programming, we have instead decided to try a program called EmpowerMe Plus which is the same program as EmpowerMe we have had for years but with an extended number of sessions (8). We will also be sharing information regarding a government-paid program called Get-Ahead which is an online counselling service free to all college and university students for the foreseeable future. This service claims to provide up to long-term counselling, similar to Conversation, but without all the restrictions that we encountered with Conversation. An important note on Get-Ahead is that there is no guarantee how long until you can see someone. This is not an SGPS service, but I wanted to share this resource.

The Gender-Affirming Care financial assistance applications are open now. It is going smoothly so far. As I'm sure Sandra will report as well, our temporary cost-of-living financial assistance program has gotten a fairly large response in a small period of time. Please spread the word if you haven't already that we are providing \$200 to any members who are struggling with the financial impact of the increased cost-of-living. This is a temporary program at this time and requires no proof of need (just a brief explanation of need). Applications will be accepted until the funds are depleted. Here is a link to the financial assistance page on our website for more information: <https://sgps.ca/sgpsfa/>.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have a question or concern about any of my updates or something I have not covered in this report. My email is [president@sgps.ca](mailto:president@sgps.ca). **Please note I will be off from April 15-24 for my exams with the exception of April 21. I will try to catch up on emails on the 21, but if there is an urgent concern, please email Andria Burke at [director@sgps.ca](mailto:director@sgps.ca).**

That is all from me! I wish everyone well with the rest of their terms.

Sincerely,  
Beth Langdon  
SGPS President



Society of Graduate and Professional Students  
Report of Vice President Graduate  
April 2023

Hey everyone,

I hope you are all keeping well and looking after yourselves as we head into April. I know I often fool myself into thinking that April means I am almost done, but the reality is that it can really be some of the busier times that we have! Final exams, marking, wrapping up term data collection, and so much more. I hope you can find a bit of time to enjoy some of the spring weather or do something that brings you happiness. I have a pretty brief report this month as much of my work has been focused on transition for this past month. Perhaps I should have expected it, but transitioning into a new role while helping Steacy transition into my role has been a fair bit of work! But, of course, I love it and it has been very rewarding.

I just want to take a second to note that I have reviewed some of the key points from this recent federal budget and I am disappointed to say the least. We expected, as did the university, that funding for research and graduate students would be increased this year. All indicators had pointed to this and it just did not happen, signaling very clearly the priorities that Ottawa has right now when it comes to research. But, this has really clarified for me where some of our efforts will need to be focused for this coming year. The reality is that students are suffering and that the government needs to provide more money. It is going to take a lot of creativity, advocacy, and working with the university to make our voices heard but I am hopeful that we can make a serious impact.

On that note, I'm excited to remind you all that the Faculty of Arts and Science Graduate Summit is coming up on May 1<sup>st</sup>. This is the first year that this Summit has taken place. Our team has had a chance to speak with Dr. Fraser a number of times and he is truly committed to helping graduate students, which was his goal in starting this Summit. As part of the Summit, Graduate Chairs and other university administration will spend an entire day hearing about the issues that are important to graduate students and having deliberate conversations about what can be done to improve those conditions for students in the coming year. I am going to attend for some of the day and our wonderful incoming VP Graduate, Steacy, will be there for the entire day. We have plenty to talk about, but please never hesitate to reach out if you have specific issues that you want addressed.

Finally, we are nearing the end of getting together a survey of graduate and professional students at Queen's which will cover a large number of topics including funding and housing. As I mentioned before, the university has asked for this kind of data and we are committed to making sure that your time and responses will not go to waste. Our funding report had wide reception and I still hear it brought up at meetings I am in, so I am hopeful that this will be another set of data that we can point to which will help us make student needs known. If you have anything you think we should ask, please let me know and I will happily add it.

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



Hello Council,

I hope every is having a good end of the semester. This is my last councilor as an executive and SGPS employee. I just want to thank everyone for the last two years; I have appreciated my time at the SGPS and I wish the new executive all the best as they start their terms.

During March I have largely focused on transitioning the new VPC, Tony, into this role. This has included meeting with Tony, providing them with a transition manual, and having them attend some meetings with me. Also, during March we started the process of renewing contracts for commissioners staying in their positions as well as starting to advertise for positions which still need to be filled. We are currently looking for an Athletics & Wellness Commissioner, Indigenous Liaison, and an Equity & Diversity Deputy Commissioner. Please visit [sgps.ca](http://sgps.ca) for more information about these roles and to apply for them.

Also, in March we took students to Kingston Grand for the “Treaty: Reconciliation Revelry”. The event was successful, and the concert was very good.

In April I will focus on wrapping up my time at the SGPS and continue to transition Tony into the role.

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



Hello everyone,

These are the things that I have been working on:

1. **Revision of the SGPS Bylaw and Policy Document** is under way. The Executive Director, Deputy Speaker, and I are working on doing a complete and thorough revision of the document to:
  - a. Ensure visual accessibility of SGPS Bylaws and Policies;
  - b. Ensure consistency throughout the document;
  - c. Enforce already-approved changes (e.g. salary increases or gender-neutral language);
  - d. Make sure that everything in SGPS BP Document is up-to-date, by deleting unnecessary and outdated provisions;
  - e. Improve inclusivity, accessibility, and efficiency of the organization and SGPS Council.
2. **Efforts to increase inclusivity and productivity of SGPS Council** are very much still in progress. Although Bylaw and Policy and best practices for Speaker-SGPS Council relations continue to be evaluated, there are several changes that I have implemented and will continue to implement throughout SGPS Council and General Meetings:
  - a. Ahead of the meeting:
    - i. Send out call for motions or topics for discussion;
    - ii. Encourage the submission of written Council Reports to ensure the smooth and timely running of meetings;
    - iii. Ensure visual accessibility of agenda, meeting minutes, and Council reports.
  - b. During the meeting:
    - i. Enable closed captioning feature on Zoom;
    - ii. Share screen for agenda to make sure attendees can follow the flow of the meeting;
    - iii. Impose speaking time limits for reports to ensure that Council and General meetings do not last longer than necessary, and to leave ample time for Main Motions and Discussion.

Finally, these efforts would not be possible without your help as each of you play a valuable role in making SGPS Council happen. So, we kindly request that you:

1. **Try your best to attend.** If you cannot attend, please e-mail [speaker@sgps.ca](mailto:speaker@sgps.ca) and let me know beforehand. Per Bylaw and Policy, if you are unable to attend, you are entitled to one proxy vote so long as you notify me beforehand.
2. **Come prepared.** Please take some time to read through the agenda, relevant documents, and Council Reports provided. This will not only increase participation but will also ensure the smooth running of meetings.
3. **Get in touch with me.** As Speaker, I depend on Council Representatives to let me know what and how we can do better. If you have any questions or concerns, please e-mail [speaker@sgps.ca](mailto:speaker@sgps.ca).

SGPS Council Speaker (Aileen Editha (she/her))



Hello Council Members,

I'm so excited to finish off this school year! In my Elle Woods voice: We did it! 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.
2. Collaborations
  - a. Events across campus have finished and were a huge success!!!
3. Gender Affirming Bursary
  - a. The bursary is live and have already supported 1 applicant!!
4. SGPS Awards
  - a. I'm sitting on the selection committee for the 2023 SGPS Awards! The day I am submitting this report is the last day for nominations. By the time of Council, we would have had our first meeting and maybe selected the recipients.
5. Committee Commitment
  - a. Public Service Alliance of Canada DCL 901 (PSAC 901) – on hold until summer
  - b. Provost's Action Group for Gender and Sexual Diversity (PAGGAS) – on hold until summer
  - c. Soft Infrastructure Network – paused until Deputy is hired this month
  - d. Built Environment Advisory Group – had our final meeting this semester!
  - e. University Council on Anti-Racism and Equity (UCARE) – had our final meeting this semester! We will brainstorm new ideas and create direction for the committee in the summer!
  - f. Inclusive Communities UCARE Sub-Committee – had our final meeting this semester! We will brainstorm new ideas and create direction for the committee in the summer!
  - g. Steering Committee related to review of CSES response to Hate Crimes – had our final meeting this semester!
  - h. Senate Educational Equity Committee – chair stepped down, so meetings have been canceled for the rest of the semester

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



Hello Everyone,

Can't believe it's the end of the year already! There are only 2 more things on the agenda for me as we finish off the year:

1. SGPS Awards:
  - a. The awards committee has been selected (woot woot!). Thank you Jane, Mo and Vina for your help!
  - b. We are currently in the midst of application review and will be deciding on winners for each of the 6 awards by April 10<sup>th</sup> in time for the monthly newsletter
  
2. End of year Trivia Night:
  - a. Scheduled for April 19<sup>th</sup> from 7pm to 9pm at the Grad Club!
  - b. All graduate and professional students are welcome (19+ event)
  - c. Still deciding on the 4 trivia categories (3 question based, 1 picture-based round)
    - i. If anyone has any suggestions on some fun trivia categories, please email/Slack me!
  - d. Prizes and catered food will be provided
  - e. More details coming soon, be sure to keep an eye out on Instagram for tickets!

Please don't hesitate to reach out to [social@sgps.ca](mailto:social@sgps.ca) with any questions or concerns!

Gabby Torretto (she/her)  
SGPS Social Commissioner  
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