

The Society of Graduate and Professional Students recognizes the traditional and ancestral territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Nations on whose lands we gather on today. This land acknowledgement reminds us that rich Indigenous governances still exist, and will go into the future. This should also serve as a reminder that we are benefitting by living on this land that is a traditional territory of indigenous people.

## I. Announcements

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## II. Adoption of the Agenda

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### A. Adoption of the Agenda

**MOTION 08/15/23:01**

BIRT SGPS Council adopt the Agenda for the August 15th 2023 Council Meeting.

Stacey Coombs moves, Devin Fowlie seconds. No points of discussion on this motion. No dissenting votes; the motion passes unanimously.

## III. Minutes

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### A. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

**MOTION 08/15/23:02**

BIRT the SGPS adopt the minutes from the May 16th 2023 General Meeting

Tony Hu moves, Maya Kawale seconds. No points of discussion on this motion. No dissenting votes; the motion passes unanimously.

## IV. Executive & Speaker Reports

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### A. Executive Reports

#### a. President – Devin Fowlie (report attached)

- i. Focused on improving financial stability and taking a more housing focused approach. No real formal groups at Queen's that discuss the lack of housing so to the extent that we can, it would be good to get the conversation started and have the university take some responsibility in this lack of housing situation.
- ii. Working on JDUC (site of the new Student Life Centre) – currently under renovation/being constructed. Currently renegotiations occurring between us [the SGPS], the AMS (Alma Mater Society – Undergraduate Student Association), and the University around how costs are paid for and how the space is re-allocated. These conversations will continue throughout the school year ultimately with us trying to get the best of everything we can-keeping costs low and space maximum.

- iii. Other report highlights - changes to health and dental plan, sidewalk sale, and expansion of EmpowerMe to EmpowerMe+, please reference my report for more information.
- iv. Can be reached at: [president@sgps.ca](mailto:president@sgps.ca).
- b. VP Graduate – Steacy Coombs (report attached)
  - i. Working with Devin Fowlie to get a new mental health service titled, EmpowerMe+, up and running. Looking to get funding via School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (SGSPA) and Department of Student Affairs (DSA). Service should be starting soon.
  - ii. Advocating for funding and affordable housing – speaking with Christopher Lacroix, the Director of Academic Relations of the Graduate Student Society at Simon Fraser University (SFU), as they recently made strides in student funding. SFU has a campaign called the GradCOLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) campaign- requesting minimum funding be increased for MSc and PhD for an increase to \$32,000 + tuition. Received minimum funding of \$28,000 for PhD for 4yrs, but we still know that that doesn't meet minimum wage standards. Met with Christopher to go over strategies to see if we could implement any of them in our negotiations with Queen's.
    - 1. Haritha Haridas: The GradCOLA initiative looks really good Steacy, and I was wondering if you have a plan on how we could try something like that at Queen's?
    - 2. Steacy Coombs: I don't have a plan just yet as I have only recently connected with Christopher Lacroix. He did provide some strategies on how to approach it and how to get support from faculty and people higher up within the university. So, there is no plan in place yet, but it's something we're discussing.
  - iii. Met with Gavan Watson, the new Vice Provost of Teaching and Learning - looking to hybridize classrooms to increase accessibility, so hopefully a pilot will be able to happen soon.
  - iv. On orientation committee to gauge how graduate orientation is working for students. Something new being implemented is an OnQ course where students can find a checklist and resources.
  - v. Can be reached at: [vp.graduate@sgps.ca](mailto:vp.graduate@sgps.ca).
- c. VP Professional – Maya Kawale (report attached)
  - i. SGPS will be a part of the sidewalk sale- please come by and say hi!
  - ii. Member of the Governance and Organization team (alongside Devin Fowlie) for the new JDUC – in the negotiation stage and will continue to have conversations throughout the term.
  - iii. Member of the Grad Club Committee- looking to expand users to serve not only graduate students but also the broader Kingston community. Looking to launch some new marketing campaigns in the coming months.

- iv. Year goals revolve around 5 main goals: 1) building community, 2) fostering communication, 3) promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion, 4) events for professional students, 5) amend the SGPS Bylaws surrounding human resources. A more detailed look at these goals can be found in my report.
- v. Can be reached at: [vp.professional@sgps.ca](mailto:vp.professional@sgps.ca).
- d. VP Finance and Services – Gaby Fekete (report attached)
  - i. Annual budget- included a process of how it was created, the guideposts for its creation. If there are questions, please reach out. Keys are increases in funding for financial assistance program- subsidies and grant program.
  - ii. Financial assistance program – increased funding for UHIP subsidy as well as health and dental subsidy. Instead of offering a mental health subsidy, we are offering a general health subsidy with the hope of assisting students to access a broader array of health services. Additionally, there is now a gender affirming care subsidy to support individuals seeking or in the process of receiving services or products related to gender affirming care. Lastly, we are bringing back the grant program- hoping this will incentivize students to lead initiatives that boost sustainability, diversity, inclusion or accessibility at Queen’s. More information for all of these programs can be found on the SGPS website: [https://sgps.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/SGPS-Financial-Assistance-Application-Guide\\_2023\\_2024.pdf](https://sgps.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/SGPS-Financial-Assistance-Application-Guide_2023_2024.pdf)
  - iii. Taken up an investment opportunity with some of the excess funding to ensure that money that wasn’t spent previously is getting a return on investment on an annual basis- trying to remain financially sustainable and secure for the future.
  - iv. Promoting future financial stability- advocating on behalf of students with JDUC negotiations to gain a better deal on lease agreement for the space
  - v. Looking at opportunities to fund students with programing that will make Queen’s a safer campus (ex. offered an online suicide alert training course).
  - vi. Can be reached at: [vp.finance@sgps.ca](mailto:vp.finance@sgps.ca).
- e. VP Community – Tony Hu (report attached)
  - i. Hiring is completed for the commissioner team and profiles are available on SGPS website: <https://sgps.ca/sgps-commissioners/>.
  - ii. SGPS Representative to the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) – The CFS is a national group of half a million students, and we contribute about \$40,000 annually to the CFS, with this money mainly spent on their campaign work. For example, they have a campaign on fighting fees as well as fairness for international students. This week, I will be attending their general meeting in Mississauga from August 17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>. Hoping this will be an opportunity to collaborate with other student groups across the province. Will report back at next council meeting.

- iii. Other memberships - part of the Student Parent and Caregiver Working Group as well as the Mental Health Working Group.
- iv. Working on community engagement – a lot of relationship building with community groups with the main deliverable in the short term being a list of community partners for SGPS members to volunteer with for work or engage in other avenues of collaboration.
- v. Three pillars of year plan – 1) affordable and decent housing for SGPS members, 2) amplify the SGPS presence in the Kingston community, 3) advocate for more robust mental health support for members.
- vi. Can be reached at: [vp.community@sgps.ca](mailto:vp.community@sgps.ca).

**B. Speaker Report**

- a. Speaker – Aileen Editha (report attached)
  - i. Have been working to finalize the changes to Bylaw and Policy and creating a hand-over document for council representatives to ensure that people have access to an almost frequently asked questions like document, and to ensure that council representatives are aware of their council responsibilities upon starting their positions.
  - ii. Included some general best practices for council meetings. If there are any questions regarding these please reach out.
  - iii. Can be reached at: [speaker@sgps.ca](mailto:speaker@sgps.ca).

**C. Approval**

**MOTION 08/15/23:03**

BIRT SGPS Council approve the Executive and Speaker Reports.

Emils Matiss moves, Sarah Waldron seconds. No points of discussion on this motion. No dissenting votes; the motion passes unanimously.

**V. Senator, Trustee, Commissioner, Committee & Other Reports**

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**A. Senator Report** – Graduate Student Senator – Emils Matiss (no report)

- a. Senate hasn't started yet but I have been in contact with the secretariat regarding orientation for student senators on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Will have more to report after the first caucus meeting.

**B. Trustee Report** – Graduate Student Trustee – Tony Hu (report attached)

**C. Commissioner Reports**

- a. Athletics & Wellness Commissioner – Meghan Mendelin (report attached)
  - i. Events are starting soon – Zumba class Aug 23<sup>rd</sup> and then during orientation there are two fitness classes. If everyone could re-post the promo graphic or spread this information through word of mouth, that would be great.
  - ii. Working with the ARC to have in-person guided tours and working with Gabby to try and get a virtual tour- just finished shooting the video for that. Also working with Andria Burke (SGPS Director) to work on a Health and Wellness resource page for SGPS members.

- iii. Can be reached at: [athletics@sgps.ca](mailto:athletics@sgps.ca).
- b. Equity & Diversity Commissioner – Jane Mao (report attached)
- c. Indigenous Graduate Liaison – Rosemary Gasparro (report attached)
  - i. Trying to create more orientation events for students involved with Four Directions- example ideas include bowling, dish with one spoon, in-person guided tours of graduate buildings, etc.
  - ii. Looking to implement more events into the year plan as well, beyond orientation. Have reached out to Jessica Parks who is a member of Four Directions to discuss potential networking events for indigenous students. Also want to hold wellness events such as beading, painting events, and indigenous author book club – connecting with Professor Lindsay Burrows from the Law School for assistance with these.
  - iii. Looking to also have a personal presence at Four Directions – want to connect with students there for informal check-ins to gauge how SGPS can better support indigenous students.
  - iv. If there are any ideas or suggestions for events that someone would like to see, please reach out.
  - v. Can be reached at: [indigenous@sgps.ca](mailto:indigenous@sgps.ca).
- d. International Students’ Affairs Commissioner – Vina Li (report attached)
  - i. Current efforts focused on fairness for international students in collaboration with the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) - there’s a working group that advocates for the rights of international students as well as puts out educational material for international students. Nothing is finalized yet but will continue to report.
  - ii. Trying to get more collaboration with the School of Graduate Studies in terms of getting international representatives in various department student councils involved. Been challenging as not all department assistants know what is going on but will continue to work through this and keep everyone on council updated.
  - iii. Can be reached at: [international@sgps.ca](mailto:international@sgps.ca).
- e. Social Commissioner – Gabby Toretto (report attached)
  - i. Planning incoming orientation for graduate students- 3 goals: 1) to provide warm and welcoming introduction – one way we’re doing this is through the side-walk sale, 2) maintain staple social events for incoming students (trivia and movie nights), 3) build new relationships and collaborations and other representatives, want to facilitate connections with different communities at Queen’s. For example, I am currently working with Queen’s University International Centre (QUIC) to have welcome packages given to each international graduate and professional student to make them more aware of SGPS and what we have to offer. Also working on having a misty underwood walk-talk through Queen’s indigenous pathways – this is a new event we’re excited to be working on this year for orientation. Finally,

working with Yellow House to provide a mixer social event aimed primarily for QT bipoc students.

ii. Can be reached at: [social@sgps.ca](mailto:social@sgps.ca).

**D. Committee Reports**

**E. Department Reports**

**F. Other Reports**

a. University Rector – Owen Crawford-Lem (no report)

**G. Approval**

**MOTION 08/15/23:04**

BIRT SGPS Council approve the Senator, Trustee, Commissioner, Committee & Other Reports.

Steady Coombs moves, Devin Fowlie seconds. No points of discussion on this motion. No dissenting votes; the motion passes unanimously.

**VI. Question Period and Departmental Issues**

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**VII. Business Arising from the Minutes**

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**VIII. Main Motions & Discussion**

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**IX. Other Business**

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**X. Notices of Motion & Announcements**

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**XI. Adjournment**

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**Adjournment**

**MOTION 08/15/23:05**

BIRT this meeting of SGPS Council be adjourned.

Emils Matiss moves, Maya Kawale seconds. No points of discussion on this motion. No dissenting votes; the motion passes unanimously.