

### *On the SGPS and the SGPS Council...*

#### **What is the SGPS?**

According to the SGPS Bylaw and Policy, the SGPS' purpose is:

- a. To provide services to and serve the interests and needs of the Membership;
- b. to represent its members in dealing with the University and other organizations;
- c. to facilitate communication between its members and with other University and community bodies;
- d. to maintain concern for the welfare and human rights of its members; and
- e. to advocate on behalf of its members on policies and practices of the University.

In order to fulfil this purpose, the SGPS requires that legislation be passed, both so that the SGPS may act on the wishes of its membership, and to ensure that the processes, bylaws, and policies governing its functioning are fair, just, and equitably represent the needs of the Organization.

#### **What is the SGPS Council and why do we need it?**

The SGPS Council is the legislative body of the SGPS, responsible for decision-making on behalf of the SGPS and to which the SGPS Executive reports. The SGPS Council upholds, maintains, and amends the bylaws and policies which govern the SGPS, passes motions on key items including SGPS fees, schedules, elections, and other legislative or other decisions that the SGPS must make to achieve its operational goals.

#### **Who is in the Council?**

The SGPS Council is comprised of the SGPS Executive, the Officers of Council (Speaker and Deputy Speaker), SGPS Commissioners, Student Liaisons, ex-officio (i.e., non-voting) members including the Graduate Student Trustee and Graduate Student Senator, and the SGPS Councillors. Each group reporting to the SGPS Council has a unique role.

- 1) **SGPS Executive** act as advocates for, and representatives of, the SGPS. The Executive report to council on the progress of their initiatives as laid out in their year plan, relevant updates about University initiatives and information relevant to Council, putting forward motions, and more.
- 2) **Officers of Council** are responsible for the operation of Council, the Speaker and Deputy Speaker are the Officers of Council. Together, they are responsible for enforcing [Robert's Rules of Order](#), taking minutes, creating and distributing the agenda, chairing and convening committees, and ensuring a smooth and enjoyable Council experience.
- 3) **SGPS Commissioners** are each responsible for a portfolio and for reporting to council on the progress of advancing that portfolio. This portfolio is decided based on the role of the commissioner (e.g., social commissioner is responsible for the coordination of social events, in part) and on discussions with the VP Community who oversees the operation and functioning of the commissioners.
- 4) **Councillors** or **Council Representatives** are elected student representatives from various departments across the University. These representatives bring issues, questions, and motions to the SGPS Council either as requested from their department, or as the representative deems of concern to their department.

### *About SGPS Council Representatives....*

#### **I have just been elected as an SGPS Council Representative for my department. What now?**

Congratulations on being elected, we are really excited to be working with you! Please contact the Council Speaker to make sure that you are added to the mailing and Council lists. If you have done that, you should receive an e-mail closer to the Council meeting (second Tuesday of every month) containing the agenda, meeting minutes, and Zoom link.

## What is my role as an SGPS Council Representative?

Councillors form the backbone of the legislative arm of the SGPS. Their role is twofold:

1. Contribute to SGPS Council discussion, which may look like:
  - a. Bringing issues from your department to the SGPS Council in the form of:
    - i. Motions
    - ii. Points of Information
    - iii. Points of Discussion
    - iv. Other Business (e.g., inquiries, requests, points of clarification, general discussion)
2. Report and disseminate relevant information to your department. This includes:
  - a. Information coming from discussions, motions, and other business at SGPS Council Meetings.
  - b. General information which you deem relevant or impactful to your department or to the membership more broadly.
  - c. The role of each SGPS Council Representative, however, may vary slightly depending on the support available within the departments. If you have any additional questions about this, please contact the Speaker.

## What are Council Meetings?

On the second Tuesday of every month (except for June and July), the SGPS Council meets to discuss the agenda, which includes at minimum the reports of the Executives, Commissioners, Committees and Speaker, but may also include motions, items for discussion, or points of information.

Councillors can bring forward formal motions if they wish to have an item formally approved by the SGPS Council, or informal points of discussion, debate, or information. To do this, you must give written notice of the requested motion to the Speaker at least 7 days before the Council Meeting.

Representatives may also bring forward points for discussion or information when the Speaker requests “Other Business”. This does not require advance notice and may be requested *during* the Council Meeting.

## What is a General Meeting?

General Meetings occur a minimum of once per calendar year. They provide an opportunity for the entire SGPS membership to attend, vote, and/or bring forward issues which are of concern or consequence to them. In a General Meeting, all SGPS members (both Councillors *and* non-Councillors/SGPS ordinary members) can bring forward motions, items for discussion or information, and have one vote on any agenda item (unless granted a proxy vote for an absent Ordinary Member).

Mandatory General Meetings are referred to as an “Annual General Meeting”. The President may also call General Meetings in the Fall or Winter term if necessary. If over 50 SGPS members request it, a Special General Meeting may be held.

## Do I have to attend Council Meetings?

Yes! It is important that you attend Council Meetings to ensure proper representation of graduate students within your department. If you cannot attend, you may appoint an individual to attend in your stead so long as you inform the Speaker in advance.

## I'm still confused...

If you have any questions, please get in touch with the SGPS Council Speaker, Aileen Editha (she/her) at [speaker@sgps.ca](mailto:speaker@sgps.ca). You can also find more information on our website at <https://www.sgps.ca/sgps-council> (including our Council schedule for the year and all documents for previous meetings).

**When you attend meetings, please make sure your display name has the following: **First Name, Last Name (or Initial), Department (or Position)**. You may also include your pronouns.**

**Example:** Aileen Editha [she/her], Law or Aileen E [she/her], Council Speaker