

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

Various events for current SGPS members regardless of whether you are a new or returning student.

- **SGPS x Yellow House Board Games Night:** September 19th, 5pm-6pm
- **SGPS Movie Night at the Screening Room:** September 25th, 8pm-10:30pm

[Click here](#) or contact social@sgps.ca for more details.

II. Adoption of the Agenda

A. Adoption of the Agenda

MOTION 09/19/23:01

BIRT SGPS Council adopt the Agenda for the September 19 2023 Council Meeting.

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

III. Minutes

A. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

MOTION 09/19/23:02

BIRT the SGPS adopt the minutes from the August 15 2023 Council Meeting

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

IV. Executive & Speaker Reports

A. Executive Reports

- a. President – Devin Fowlie (report attached)
 - i. Welcomes everyone at this first council meeting
 - ii. Trying to work on housing issue that we spoke about in August. Trying to get the university to take a role in the housing issue- been working with Tony Hu. Starts by getting a conversation going, may feel like small steps, but there currently isn't any group that makes targeted progress towards housing, and we see the Provost office as a place to start to get a working group there. Did make some traction this week, so we will have the Dean and Vice Provost of Student Affairs, Ann Tierney, join us for a meeting.

- iii. Black Student Research Associate, Adekunle Omoboye, provided their recommendations on what to do to support black students within the University. Meeting to take stock of what we have and what we want to prioritize moving forward and have extended Adekunle’s term to assist in implementing changes over the fall term. Will update council as that takes shape.
- iv. Changes to the sexual violence policy that involves employee and student relationships. Student Affairs wants everyone to be aware that this implicates teaching assistants.
- v. Some issues with Concurrent Education students in ensuring adequate coverage– if they stay beyond the four-years of undergrad into a fifth then they are considered a graduate student regarding their ability to opt-out of Health and Dental. Continuing to put things in place to ensure these students are accounted for.
- vi. Can be reached at: president@sgps.ca
- b. VP Graduate – Steacy Coombs (report attached)
 - i. Will meet with James Fraser, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, to determine how best to support departments in forming student societies as not all departments do have them. Great way to communicate within the department but then also between. Trying to make a “how to” document- will have our first meeting next week. If anyone’s interested in wanting to help create this how to please reach out.
 - ii. Classroom and lecture hall hybridization – seminar series that will be used as a pilot project. Will provide updates once it gets going.
 - iii. Can be reached at: vp.graduate@queensu.ca
- c. VP Professional – Maya Kawale (report attached)
 - i. Executives gave orientation talks to professional and graduate student bodies. Had the sidewalk sale and graduate students were very interested.
 - ii. Board Games night is tonight- after the meeting could catch the tail end.
 - iii. Working along the sexual violence policy working group- amending some of those processes and the way we want to share information.
 - iv. Engaged in planning for new student life centre, if anyone wants more information about it, please reach out
 - v. In partnership with Sangeetha Saravanan– new Equity and Diversity Commissioner, working on an initiative to create an anonymous feedback form for marginalized individual’s so looking to share that soon.
 - vi. Can be reached at: vp.professional@sgps.ca
- d. VP Finance and Services – Gaby Fekete (report attached)
 - i. Annual budget will be reviewed in the main motion section
 - ii. Briefly, there are changes to financial assistance program- broadening subsidies we have available to support students (general health subsidy- mental and other health services covered by SGPS health and dental plan)

also offering a gender affirming care subsidy. Introducing the grant program to help students finance initiatives to promote accessibility, diversity, and inclusion, and/or sustainability at Queens

iii. SGPS has received a campus safety grant- allowed students earlier this year to access suicide alertness training, so looking forward to providing other services at no cost for students with this funding.

iv. Can be reached at: vp.finance@sgps.ca

e. VP Community – Tony Hu (report attached)

i. Attended the Canadian Federation of Students Ontario Annual General Meeting in August. The SGPS is part of 2 larger organizations: Canadian Federation of Students Ontario and Canadian Federation of Students National. In November, both of those organizations want to coordinate a national day of action (should be Nov 8) which is a campaign on fighting the fees. The three pillars of this campaign are: 1) Free and accessible post-secondary education, 2) Education justice, 3) Increased funding for graduate students. Still determining what our involvement will be, but if you're interested in hearing further, please reach out.

ii. Division of Student Affairs- receiving a 3.5% cut to their budget this year. As SGPS has an important advocacy role, please reach out if there are services that you think are still essential despite the cuts.

iii. Attended a Status for All action on behalf of SGPS

iv. Can be reached at: vp.community@sgps.ca

B. Speaker Report

a. Speaker – Aileen Editha (report attached)

i. Bylaws and Policy updating – pleased to say that it is up on the SGPS council website (<https://sgps.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/SGPS-BP-September-2023.pdf>)

ii. Feedback received last year from council representatives has highlighted an interest in facilitating more inclusion and togetherness as council reps. Going to try and facilitate more events between council reps to try and determine what is lacking at council and how can we improve engagement or conversely what is working well and what should continue.

iii. Can be reached at: speaker@sgps.ca

C. Approval

MOTION 09/19/23:03

BIRT SGPS Council approve the Executive and Speaker Reports.

Shamus Tobin moves, Jack Morrow seconds. No points of discussion on this motion. No dissenting votes; the motion passes unanimously.

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

- A. Senator Report** – Graduate Student Senator – Emils Matiss (no report)
 - a. No new movement at Senate- first meeting will be on October 5th so will follow up at the next council meeting
 - b. Can be reached at: senator@sgps.ca
- B. Trustee Report** – Graduate Student Trustee – *Position vacant* (no report)
- C. Commissioner Reports**
 - a. Athletics & Wellness Commissioner – Meghan Mendelin (report attached)
 - i. Can be reached at: athletics@sgps.ca
 - b. Equity & Diversity Commissioner – Jane Mao (report attached)
 - i. Transitioned out of the role so Sangeetha Saravanan will be taking over
 - ii. Provides a thank you for the role and involvement with Council.
 - iii. Can be reached at: equity@sgps.ca
 - c. Indigenous Graduate Liaison – Rosemary Gasparro (oral report)
 - i. Jessica Parks from Four Directions Indigenous Student Centre – trying to connect in person to determine what the indigenous students at Queen’s would like for events. Still planning on starting a book club which should kick off soon.
 - ii. Indigenous outdoor gathering space has opened by Tindall Field and Mackintosh-Corry Hall - looking to host an event there with Dr. Borrows from Queen’s Faculty of Law
 - iii. Can be reached at: indigenous@sgps.ca
 - d. International Students’ Affairs Commissioner – Vina Li (report attached)
 - i. Met with Taylor from the Ban Righ Centre regarding concerns from international women students with children received via email – looking to streamline bursary application to identify resources for students in need and assist them further.
 - ii. Global Month is coming up and that is in association with the Vice Provost of Global Engagement. Hopefully will have more updates at next council meeting.
 - iii. Can be reached at: international@sgps.ca
 - e. Social Commissioner – Gabby Toretto (report attached)
 - i. Can be reached at: social@sgps.ca
- D. Committee Reports**
- E. Department Reports**
- F. Other Reports**
 - a. University Rector – Owen Crawford-Lem (no report)
- G. Approval** **MOTION 09/19/23:04**

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

Shamus Tobin moves, Steacy Coombs seconds. No points of discussion on this motion. No dissenting votes; the motion passes unanimously.

VI. Question Period and Departmental Issues

VII. Business Arising from the Minutes

VIII. Main Motions & Discussion

i. Approval of SGPS 2023-24 Budget

MOTION 09/19/23:05

File: Appendix A – Proposed 2023-24 Budget

Gaby Fekete, SGPS Vice President Finance and Services (vp.finance@sgps.ca)

Gaby provides overview:

- i. Going to cover what the Executive believes are the biggest changes as they relate to the initiatives the Executives are looking to push forward this year. If anyone has any questions about direct line items, I am available to go over those with you.
- ii. Using some guided assumptions to inform how the budget was built this year:
 - a. Better to utilize funds than over budget for events/initiatives
 - i. Not trying to minimize how much commissioners spend on their events but ensure that the budgets reflect what has historically been used by those positions
 - b. Students no longer attending in-person events at the same frequency as before COVID
 - c. Inflationary pressures mean costs are more likely to rise than fall-orientation and commissioners expenditures would remain relatively consistent and that students will depend more on the financial support system and that will continue for future years
- iii. When the budget was being formed the Executive reflected on how to best serve the needs of all students, what do we want to accomplish and how will we do that, and what our impact philosophy is (ie. is it better to help more people in a less significant way or less people in a more significant way- as resources are limited these are things we need to take into consideration).
- iv. Budget is split into two major branches, subsidy and grant, where subsidies aim to support students on individual basis with expenses they are incurring, and grants are meant to better the Queen's community through increasing inclusion, diversity, accessibility– discussed later.
- v. Major changes to the subsidy program:
 - a. Increased budgets for all subsidies with exception for the emergency assistance subsidy – as we came close to using the entire budget for Activity, Dental, and International/UHIP subsidies

- b. Gender Affirming Care subsidy was a pilot subsidy in 2022-2023 and is now a formal part of the 2023-2024 program
- c. Mental health subsidy is no longer present- been absorbed in the general health subsidy (providing assistance to students on a broader range of health needs)
- d. Cost of living subsidy was a pilot last year and was discontinued this year due to legal inabilities to provide students with finances that could assist with that need – trying to find other ways to support students as we recognize there is still a need
- e. Broadening the scope of the emergency subsidy funds- expanding to cover academic related expenses (laptops, keyboards, iPads) as there are frequent requests for this and it would utilize the allocated funding
 - i. Will formally announce this in the next newsletter
- vi. Overview of subsidies is available in the financial assistance program guide found on the SGPS website (https://sgps.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/SGPS-FA-App-Guide_2023_2024-0923.pdf)
- vii. Re-establishment of the grant program – Program is aimed at helping students lead student led initiatives that increase accessibility, inclusion and diversity, and sustainability at Queen’s. Ran before COVID but was discontinued during COVID and we’re looking to bring it back with students being more consistently in person at Queen’s this will assist them in leading these initiatives
 - a. Funds are conservative for this program but with a successful turnout for this year the funds can be increased in years to come

Question from Shamus Tobin:

- i. Clarification regarding the decrease in emergency financial assistance. It was mentioned that we aren’t able to offer the same program this year that we did last year. Why can’t we when we’re acting with a budget surplus?
- ii. Gaby responds:
 - a. Offered a pilot program which was a cost-of-living subsidy- as SGPS is not legally allowed to request proof of financial need from students thus we can’t provide assistance for cost of living without posing risks to students and our ourselves as an organization
 - b. By broadening other subsidy categories like the general health and criteria for the emergency assistance, we are hoping to support students with financial matters in exchange for the cost-of-living subsidy
- iii. Second question: Increase to line items for executive internal and food, curious as to where this money is expected to go?
- iv. Gaby responds:
 - a. The increase are made in response to having council meetings in person. Hope was that providing food would get a better turnout in person. Exec internal would cover expenses related to room rentals. The Executive are

still toggling on whether to hold them in-person so they can be amended if council meetings continue to be held online

- v. Aileen Editha comments:
 - i. Changes to the budget are reported by Gaby to council, so this is an ongoing conversation – just worth noting

Question from Raj Gill:

- i. Reaching out over our Educational Student Society fees and the transfer of those to our budget to assist in running events and workshops as needed.
- ii. Gaby responds:
 - a. Received an email from one of your colleagues, and they're in contact with the SGPS Executive Director, Andria, and she will get you the information you need
- iii. Aileen Editha comments:
 - a. Will follow up on this in future council meeting to ensure it was addressed

BIRT SGPS Council approve the 2023-24 SGPS budget.

Shamus Tobin moves, Dean Christidis seconds. No points of discussion on this motion. No dissenting votes; the motion passes unanimously.

ii. Discussion: Volunteers to adjudicate the Principal's Teaching and Learning Awards

Devin Fowlie, SGPS President (president@sgps.ca)

- i. Wanted to put this out to volunteers – Keith McNinch is looking for a representative from the SGPS Council (want a student to adjudicate on Principal's Teaching and Learning Awards). The committee is meant to assess nominations for the award and then attend a meeting where the committee discusses them and decides who gets the award. Relatively intensive in February for about 2 weeks and then will culminate in a 2-hour meeting where things are decided. Can follow up with Devin (president@sgps.ca) and he will put you forward.

IX. Other Business

Shamus Tobin raises a concern

- i. Battling custodians to come around to Sterling to clean the building. Students have been fighting for these basic services, talking to custodial staff to get better care and bring attention to areas that need servicing
- ii. Devin Fowlie replies:
 - a. This is not isolated to just your building- this is a university wide issue. Doesn't mean there isn't anything that can be done. The Queen's Centre- the one that houses the arc, has had success in talking to facilities services

(PPS) to get regular cleaning. Some buildings have had specific agreements with PPS to get more regular cleaning so I'm not sure what the SGPS can do to assist but we can get you in touch. If this is something a lot of students are experiencing, we can directly bring this to PPS.

- iii. Haritha Haridas comments:
 - a. Should bring this up at PSAC as the people cleaning are also part of the union so bringing it up there could hopefully put more pressure on the issue.
- iv. Jake Morrow comments:
 - a. There is a lot on the union front as PSAC has been advocating to increase custodial budget – they are collecting reports of unclean, unsafe working environments. The custodial union is CUPE 229 and PSAC can be contacted about this issue at their main staff email: staff.psac901@gmail.com
- v. Aileen Editha comments:
 - a. We can include this in other business for next council meeting to get some updates and keep looking at the progress and conversations/discussion.

Haritha Haridas raises a concern:

- ii. Undergrad students are back and there is limited space in the Arc, is there anything we can do about this?
- iii. Devin Fowlie comments:
 - a. The Arc sees itself as being at full capacity and space usage, thus they are not open to discussions around the dedication of more space for working out - maybe due to the focus on recreation and maintaining recreation space. This is an issue that comes up a lot, however and with an increasing student population this will only continue.
 - b. Have had discussions about whether the combative room could be used to spread more people out but I'm not sure if that will go anywhere.
 - c. Can follow up with our Athletics and Wellness Commissioner, Meghan Mendelin (athletics@sgps.ca), and see if she can act as a liaison on this issue
- iv. Steacy Coombs comments:
 - a. They [the Arc] have tried to accommodate for the space issues by making dedicated grad classes but yes, the conversation around this topic needs to continue
 - b. Having grad/professional student hours could be a suggestion
- v. Aileen Editha comments:
 - a. We will put this in discussion for next council meeting to follow up

X. Notices of Motion & Announcements



XI. Adjournment

Adjournment

MOTION 09/19/23:06

BIRT this meeting of SGPS Council be adjourned.

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