



Hey everyone,

It is hard to believe that we are already here at the General Meeting. I hope you had a good reading week and are keeping well. This is a difficult time for so many of us and our peers and I hope that you are finding space to feel connected and supported – we are always here for you, so please reach out if you need support.

I am pleased to report that conversations about the new JDUC are moving along well and we are nearing the final stages of those discussions. We have developed a new process for governance of the space that we hope will maximize student participation and engagement. When we have a finalized version of this agreement we will be sharing any major updates with council, so please continue to follow council meetings even if you are not a councilor for updates on that front.

We have also been consulting on the University's Policy on Sexual Violence. I am pleased to report that this policy has now finished the consultation phase and the final draft should be circulated to us to review soon. There were some really great changes to the policy that makes the process much more survivor-led in ways that I am hopeful will reduce the burden on survivors. I won't elaborate more on the process, but I am happy to have discussions about the new policy if you would like to learn more.

We continue to advocate for student financial stability, which comes with additional challenges during this time of serious budgetary constraints at the University. I am pleased to note that these discussions continue to be fruitful. Recently, Provost Evans indicated that a request has been put forward to the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs to provide the University with recommendations on ways to further increase graduate student funding. I am confident that these recommendations will be strong, and I am hopeful that they will be impactful. I will continue to discuss the issue with Provost Evans and the SGSPA and report back on the progress of these discussions.

I have also had the opportunity to attend the first Senate meeting of the term before reading week and I am pleased to say that it was a productive and engaged conversation. I articulated our concerns about the state of the building cleanliness and repair on campus. The University indicated that they have hired a sizeable volume of new custodial staff at an increased wage, in an effort to retain these staff, and have indicated that they will protect janitorial and cleaning considerations from the same budgetary constraints that other areas are facing. They expect that the new staff should be beginning their terms very soon, if they have not already. We will continue to monitor the state of the buildings and I would appreciate any feedback on this so that we can monitor their progress.

The University continues to be interested in the issues of generative AI and Academic Integrity, but I think it is important that graduate and professional student voices are represented on this matter. Academic Integrity concerns look very difficult for graduate and professional students, but there is an opportunity in this space for a broader discussion about ownership of intellectual property, use of secondary tools such as AI, and so on. Any and all thoughts you have on this space are very welcome.

A huge thank you to Tony who has been tackling the issue of housing head on. Tony coordinated a meeting with Conny Glenn, the councilor representing Sydenham district, and we had a really productive discussion about how student leadership can interface with the City on issues such as housing. There is such a massive shortfall of housing, as we all know, and I was heartened to hear in the meeting that the City has started a post-secondary working group which includes members of the University. We will have a representative on this working group, which I hope will continue to be a productive avenue for more discussion. In our discussion, Councilor Glenn also expressed some interest in supporting the Food Bank, which we know is a crucial resource for students right now.

Progress can seem really slow at times, but I am reminded of Hemingway who said that he went bankrupt slowly, then suddenly. I think that is true for many things, and I think some of our successes in incremental increases in supports for student financial stability have shown that to be true so far. I am very hopeful that our continued discussions, slow as they may seem, are resulting in real and meaningful impact that will happen more suddenly than slowly. In the meantime, I hope that our financial support continues to help those who need it. We are far from done, but we are moving in the right direction.

Okay, that is all from me! If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please reach out to me at president@sgps.ca

Take care,

Devin Fowlie
President



Hey everyone,

Welcome back from fall break! We are now halfway through the semester, and it is truly flying by. As we approach midterm and finals season, I would like to remind everyone to continue to prioritize your mental health and reach out for resources. EmpowerMe+ is a great resource for over the phone mental health counselling, and available to our graduate and professional students enrolled in the SGPS Health and Dental Plan.

I have been meeting monthly with the School of Graduate Studies and Post-Doctoral Affairs (SGSPA) and Department of Student Affairs (DSA) separately. The SGPS continues to advocate and work toward increased funding for our graduate students and access to affordable housing. We have also been working with the Housing Discussion Group to ensure any application and lease changes to An Clachan and John Orr Tower are made in the graduate and professional student best interests.

We have also been made aware that Queen's would like to permanently stop the practice of hooding Master's Theses recipients at convocation, a practice which was stopped due to COVID-19. The SGSPA firmly believe the hooding of Master's Theses at convocation should be reinstated, and we at SGPS agree. We have been urged to show support through writing a letter. If you and your department also agree that the hooding of Master's Theses at convocation should be brought back, please write a letter as well.

I have recently been working and collaborating with James Fraser, Associate Dean (Graduate Studies) in the Faculty of Arts and Science. He is an amazing advocate for graduate students and has many ideas he would like input on. If he hasn't already, he will be reaching out to our FAS SGPS student representatives. He is interested in meeting you all, and to bounce ideas and possible changes off the group. We have also been meeting with the FAS Advancement team to help generate ideas for how to get donations for supporting our graduate students. We are hoping to see an increase in scholarships and bursaries.

In November, I will be attending The Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS) 61st Annual Conference on Inclusive Excellence in Graduate Supervision and Mentorship (remotely). I look forward to hearing the interesting speakers and knowledge they will be sharing. The remote content will be streamed on YouTube, so if anyone is interested in this, you are welcome to also watch.

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

All the best,

Stacey Coombs
Vice-President Graduate, SGPS



Greetings Council,

Welcome, and thank you to all those who are attending the October council meeting. I hope everyone has had a great start to the school year.

1. Expanding the Emergency Assistance Subsidy

The Financial Assistance Committee recently expanded the criteria for the emergency assistance subsidy. Prior to this decision, the emergency assistance subsidy was only available to cover costs associated with unexpected travel arising from family emergencies or unforeseeable events. The committee found this criteria to be too narrow to assist students in the capacity it was intended. The subsidy has now been expanded to include academic related expenses up to \$150. This includes and is not limited to textbooks, laptops and tablets, and materials related to a student's capacity to perform their academic obligations.

The emergency assistance subsidy remains unable to assist students with costs of living, and tuition. Due to legal reasons, we are unable to assist with these costs or any costs that would require the committee to assess a student's financial need.

2. Opening the Grant Program

We are pleased to announce the official opening of the grant program. Students can apply for funding for initiatives that improve diversity and inclusion, accessibility, or sustainability for the broader Queen's community or for graduate and professional students.

3. Representing members in negotiations for space in the new JDUC building

Negotiations continue to take place for the Tri-Party Agreement. This agreement will govern SGPS space in the new JDUC building once it is complete. I continue to work closely along side Andria Burke, Executive Director of the SGPS, to ensure that we negotiate terms that are in the interests of current and future SGPS members.

Sincerely,

Gaby Fekete (she/her), Vice President Finance and Services



Good Evening Council,

Thank you for coming to our October Council meeting! We warmly welcome you and look forward to our discussion tonight at our annual general meeting. I hope that everyone has had a great month! During my report I would like to highlight what has been completed as well as some elements that will be coming up.

Initiatives

i. SLC – Governance and Organization

During the month of September, the Executive has been actively engaged in the planning of the new Student Life Center (SLC). The TriParty Agreement Negotiations were happening in efforts to finalize some elements of the buildings management board, organization, and elements of the SLC committee. Our recommendations have been accounted for and there will be a meeting in the near future comprised of the entirety of the TriParty Agreement Negotiations where we will discuss and proceed with next steps.

ii. Sexual Violence Working Group

The Sexual Violence Working Group is amending their policies. This group has been dedicated to reviewing the policy and ensuring a fair and just process for all individuals during the course of hearing complaints. This has been successful, and the policy will be implemented once it goes through the various approval processes.

iii. Grad Club

I have been engaged in several meetings with the Grad Club. During these meetings we are largely focused on marketing initiatives as well as reviewing the sustainability of the current regime and how it can be changed to ensure increased profitability. We are also revising broader elements that could lead to higher success rates for the Grad Club.

iv. EDII Anonymous Suggestion Forum

I have been working to put together an anonymous feedback form for marginalized SGPS members to report any instances where they have felt discriminated against or oppressed. We are hoping that this will allow for individuals to share their experience without fear of being identified so that the SGPS can understand issues that our members face. This will help us become better advocates and foster change in the Queen's community. We are hoping to have this form live very soon.

v. DSA Meeting

In our monthly DSA meeting we discussed the hardships that students are facing with the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. Student Affairs has communicated with the Deans of all the faculties to ask them to give students more leniency and accommodations during this difficult time. The SGPS is committed to ensuring all students feel safe and supported and we hope that this will aid in some additional pressures being alleviated during these trying times.

vi. SGPS Handbook

The Handbook that I have been putting together for the SGPS is near completion. I will continue to update this guide during the year so that the Handbook is really a comprehensive manual where future executive teams can refer to if they have questions about their role and the timeline of tasks they must complete. Going forward I hope that this will aid in providing the executive teams an institutional memory in written form to aid in the transition process.

Upcoming

i. Housing & Ancillary Services Sustainability Working Group

On October 26th I will be attending the meeting for Housing & Ancillary Services Sustainability Working Group. The goal of this group is to look at Queen's University Climate Action Plan and the University's priorities under the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The new Cold Beverage Agreement has been confirmed. Therefore, additional focus for this

committee will likely be spent directing the use of the Sustainability Fund and the Sustainability Achievement Award. I look forward to this meeting and hearing about the goals for the year as well as developing ideas for the execution of these goals.

ii. EDI Roundtable

I will be attending the EDI Roundtable hosted by the Faculty of Law on October 30th. I will be representing the SGPS and demonstrating our allyship as well as standing in solidarity with the issues that individuals in marginalized communities are facing at the Faculty of Law. I look forward to not only hearing about concerns, but also to delving into these issues and coming up with potential solutions.

iii. MedLaw Games

I am beginning the process of planning the MedLaw Games that will take place next semester. I will be reaching out to both the Law Students Society and Aesculapian society so that we can work together on the implementation of this event. I will also be reaching out to the ARC shortly to discuss times for the MedLaw Games to take place.

iv. Ombudsperson Advisory Committee

I have not met with this group yet, but I look forward to meeting with them this year. The Ombudsperson Advisory Committee is responsible for providing guidance, advice, and support to the Ombudsperson. This is largely encompassed by advocacy work and providing recommendations.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at vp.professional@sgps.ca

Best regards,

Maya Kawale
Vice President Professional, SGPS



Hi everyone,

My name is Tony Hu, and I would like to introduce myself as your elected Vice President Community. Outside of my role on the SGPS, I am a second-year medical student. My past post-secondary education was in chemistry, which I studied as a member of Innis College in the Faculty of Arts & Science at the University of Toronto. Last year, I served as the Graduate Student Trustee, elected by SGPS members to the Queen's University Board of Trustees. On May 14, I left my role on the Board of Trustees to start my new role as Vice President Community. This report covers all the work I have done since starting in May.

Hiring

The SGPS received several applications for the unfilled positions of Athletics Commissioner, Deputy Equity Commissioner, and Indigenous Liaison. These positions were heavily contested, and I want to thank all who applied. The hiring committee, composed of the SGPS Executive and the Equity Commissioner reviewed all applications. Apart from these positions, all other Commissioners have been hired, thanks to recent changes made to streamline the process of renewing the contracts of Commissioners who wish to serve another term. Jane, our previous Equity Commissioner, completed their contract. Sangeetha, the previous Deputy Equity Commissioner, has transitioned into the Equity Commissioner role. The profiles of the final Commissioner team are available on the SGPS website (sgps.ca).

Planning for the 2023-2024 year

I have completed the 2023-2024 Strategic Plan for the Vice President Community. The Strategic Plan has three objectives.

Objective 1. Affordable and decent housing for SGPS members

Description. Following several periods of sustained inflationary pressure, the cost of living has increased dramatically. Housing is a necessity. Unfortunately, graduate student stipends have slipped and are no longer adequate. Further, the University's ambitious enrollment targets are increasing the demand for housing, thereby pushing the cost of housing even higher.

Benefits. Housing is one of the biggest stressors for students. Financially, housing is a major expense. The unaffordable housing market in Kingston causes significant stress for many students who struggle to balance their budgets with their academic and personal commitments. Inadequate or poor-quality housing can also detract from a student's general sense of wellness and belonging at Queen's University.

Difficulties. Status quo.

Long-term. Better housing for graduate and professional students.

How. Talking to University administrators, city council, non-profits, housing developers on public-private partnership model. Tenant right education. Creation of a University-wide housing advisory group to understand the University's role in fixing the housing crisis. Collective action through the Canadian Federation of Students.

Objective 2. Amplify SGPS' presence in the Kingston community.

Description. Queen's University is at Kingston. Queen's students are Kingston residents. Town-gown hostilities preclude meaningful and valuable collaboration between SGPS members and the greater Kingston community. Allying with community organizations accelerates progress towards the goals of the SGPS.

Benefits. Increasing awareness of the SGPS in the Kingston community, increased opportunities to work and volunteer with the community, solidarity on issues affecting SGPS members.

Difficulties. Relationship building takes time.

How. Meeting different groups, sending emails, seeking opportunities to collaborate, attending community events.

Objective 3. Advocating for more robust mental health support for SGPS members.

Description. Mental health is health. SGPS members—graduate and professional students—are not immune to facing mental health challenges. The need for more robust mental health support is felt acutely by SGPS members due to several compounding factors: precarious financials, limited housing, and holding multiple roles at the University including teaching and research. Mental health support must appear before students face crisis situations. This means being proactive about health promotion, especially mental health promotion. This means increasing access to counselors for short- and long-term counselling.

Benefits. Graduate and professional students are core stakeholders of the University. They engage in learning, research, and teaching. In so doing, they advance the University's mission and profile internationally. Fragile mental health support stops the ability of these students from achieving their potential.

Difficulties. Substantial funding limitations on the University's operating budget because of inflationary pressure and province-mandated inability to raise revenue. No single group is most responsible or held accountable for student wellness. The SGPS health and dental plan is already expensive.

Long-term. Better mental health for graduate and professional students.

How. Talking to University administrators, provincial government, and collective action through the Canadian Federation of Students.

Canadian Federation of Students Ontario General Meeting

I attended the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) Ontario General Meeting (OGM), held in Mississauga, ON from August 17-20, 2023, as the delegate from Queen's University Society of Graduate and Professional Students. We are member local 27.

The four-day OGM began with an orientation, followed by anti-oppression training, opening plenary session, meetings of the Ontario Graduate Caucus, meetings of the budget sub-committee, several workshops, and the closing plenary session.

The SGPS was joined by the University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union, Nipissing University Student Union, Ontario College of Art and Design Student Union, Western University Society of Graduate Students, University of Windsor Graduate Students' Society, York Federation of Students, Trent Central Student Association, Carleton University Graduate Students' Association, Algoma University Students' Union, York University Graduate Students' Union, Association des étudiantes et étudiants francophones de l'Université Laurentienne, Student Association of George Brown College, Glendon College Student Union, University of Ottawa Graduate Students' Association, Association of Part-Time Undergraduate Students of the University of Toronto, Scarborough Campus Students' Union, University of Toronto, Toronto Metropolitan Association of Part-Time Students, and the University of Toronto at Mississauga Students' Union.

Motions raised by member locals and passed at OGMs dictate the direction of the Canadian Federation of Students Ontario. Once raised, motions are referred to the relevant subcommittee: either the Budget Committee, the Campaigns and Government Relations Committee, the Organizational and Services Development Committee, or the Policy Review and Development Committee. Motions are also discussed by caucuses and constituency groups. After receiving a referred motion, the subcommittee generates a report, and the motion is voted on at the closing plenary session. Next year, the SGPS might consider sponsoring a motion that challenges CFS Ontario to set more ambitious targets for graduate and professional student-specific advocacy.

November 8: National Day of Action

November 8 is the Federation's National Day of Action featuring its Fight the Fees campaign. The Fight the Fees campaign is centered around three principles: 1) free and accessible post-secondary education, 2) education justice, and 3) increased funding for graduate students. While the needs of SGPS members are represented under the aegis of the

National Day of Action, the needs of undergraduate students have historically been prioritized in this action. The Federation will release a Know Your Rights Guide to help folks with precarious status such as international students who require a visa organize. The SGPS will, in collaboration with CFS Ontario, send a bus full of students to Queen's Park in Toronto in support of this action.

Ontario Graduate Caucus

A caucus is a group of member local associations with common characteristics (i.e., student associations composed in whole or in part of graduate students). Food insecurity appeared to be a focal point of Ontario Graduate Caucus discussions, with delegates discussing foodbank organizing. I spoke about graduate student stipends, the housing crisis, and recent organizing efforts at Simon Fraser University with the gradCOLA campaign. The challenge of inter-department variability on graduate student stipends was echoed by the delegate from Western University. For example, some departments claw back funding for students who receive scholarships like the Ontario Graduate Scholarship. This highlighted the need for graduate student networking and education. A petition by the McMaster University Graduate Students Association for more graduate funding was also discussed.

Orientation

During September, I delivered orientation talks at the following departments: Gender Studies, English, Sociology, and Global Development Studies. The talks were a great way to meet our members, to educate our members on the services we offer, and to encourage our members to get involved. On September 7, I tabled at the An Clachan Meet and Greet with Vina, the International Student Affairs Commissioner. Many of the residents at An Clachan are international graduate students, and it was a great opportunity to promote our services and to listen to our members' concerns. On September 9, I staffed the SGPS booth at Sidewalk Sale. University Avenue saw a lot of foot traffic, and it was another great opportunity to meet and talk to our members.

Canadian Federation of Students Annual National General Meeting

I will be attending the Canadian Federation of Students Annual National General Meeting from November 24 to November 27. An update will be provided to Council after the National General Meeting.

Committees and meetings

Canadian Federation of Students (CFS)

- The Vice President Community is the SGPS' representative to the CFS. We are Local 27.
- The Executive Committee of the CFS-Ontario met on July 20. Unfortunately, I sent my regrets to this meeting.
- The CFS Support Student Parents and Caregivers Campaign Working Group met twice over the summer. I am a member of this working group.

The Support Student Parents and Caregivers Campaign aims to provide student parents, caregivers, and supportive students with the research, resources, and materials they need to advocate for parent-friendly campuses; and to join in solidarity with childcare advocates, early childhood educators, and groups fighting to end child poverty by echoing local and national demands. The campaign pillars are (1) universal, public childcare, (2) financial support for student parents to help end child poverty, (3) on-campus childcare and child-friendly spaces, (4) academic accommodations for student parents and caregivers, (5) research and data on single parents on campus, (6) representation of student parents on childcare boards on campus, and (7) diverse and inclusive family support, including queer family support.

- The CFS Mental Health Working Group met once over the summer. I am a member of this working group. The working group reviewed seven recommendations.
 1. Invest in public health care and mental health care systems, including eliminating tuition from care profession programs and paying health care workers living wages.
 2. Ensure all forms of health care and mental health services are universally accessible and free.
 3. Provide funding for the implementation of community-based, rapid response teams on campuses and in communities.
 4. Provide funding for Statistics Canada to conduct research on disaggregated data and mental health statistics for international students eligible for public health insurance.
 5. Make international students eligible for public health insurance.

6. Increase investments in accessible mental health supports that are adequately funded and staffed in order to compensate for the loss of campus resources and the increasing rise in mental health needs amongst post-secondary students and recent graduates.
7. Remove barriers to accessing mental health support by offering grants to community-based and culturally relevant service providers that treat post-secondary students.

Student Wellness Services (SWS)

- Met with Cynthia Gibney, Executive Director of SWS on May 11.
- Discussed limitations of SWS's budget model.
 - SWS is funded by a Ministry of Education grant, meaning addition funding for SWS means less funding for the educational mission of the University.
 - SWS does not receive any funding from the Ministry of Health.
 - Demand for SWS increased by convoluted policies around academic accommodations.
 - SWS is working on an online booking system, although funding remains a challenge.

Provost's Advisory Committee for the Promotion of the Arts (PACPA)

- PACPA adjudicates proposals for the Brockington Visitorship, the Chancellor Dunning Trust Visitorship, the George Taylor Richardson Memorial Fund, and the Robert Sutherland Visitorship. I sit on the committee.
- I took the opportunity to speak to the Committee about the financial challenges faced by SGPS members.

Office of the Vice-Provost Global Engagement

- Met with Heather Kincaide, Director and Strategic Internationalization Lead.
- November is Queen's Global Month.
- Working in collaboration with SGPS to design student activities during Queen's Global Month.

Community Engagement

- One of my year goals is to amplify SGPS's presence in the Kingston community.
- I have been contacting community organizations who already have a layer of connection with the SGPS. Specifically, community organizations who have a mandatory or optional fee on the SGPS fee slate. The short-term deliverable from this outreach is a new SGPS service that lists community partners, a description of their work, and an easy way for SGPS members to get involved with these groups.

Housing Advocacy

- Housing is one of the biggest issues faced by SGPS members. Decent and affordable housing for SGPS members is one of my goals for the year.
- In collaboration with the SGPS President, my housing advocacy efforts have proceeded with a focus on building partnerships. Key partners include student groups like the AMS and CFS, and community organizations. Advocacy will target the Queen's, Kingston, Ontario, and Canada levels.
- A major initiative this year will be to get a housing working group established under the auspices of the provost with broad student representation to generate recommendations on the University's role in the student housing crisis.
- A recent advancement at the municipal level, championed by Councilor Conny Glenn, is the creation of a postsecondary working group, reporting to City Council. City staff are putting together the membership list, consisting of city councillors, city administration, by-law, non-student representatives from St. Lawrence College, Queen's University, and Royal Military College of Canada at Kingston, the Alma Mater Society, the St. Lawrence Student's Association, RMC Student Government, and the SGPS.
- Several changes have been proposed for the An Clachan site, managed by Queen's University Community Housing. These include: 1) move from online first-come, first-served access to spaces at An Clachan and John Orr Tower to a lottery allocation system, 2) introduce limits to lease renewals to a total three-year maximum tenancy, 3) eliminate lease assignments, 4) refine eligibility requirements to students enrolled in on-campus undergraduate and graduate programs in full-time status, with exceptions for students studying part-time due to an accommodation, 5) introduce a policy requiring a minimum 1:1 bedroom-to-student ratio, 6) introduce access for

post-doctoral fellows, and 7) introduce rent increases above the Provincial Guidelines. We are in conversations with Community Housing on the impacts of these changes to students.

AMS Commissioner of External Affairs

- The AMS is focused on housing affordability as a central issue.
- Queen's first year residence guarantee was cancelled, blindsiding students and the city.
- The Commissioner of External Affairs' goal is to get partnerships between the school and the city; to get clear and definitive promises on housing supply and sustainable housing for students.
- At the city level, focus on housing quality via by-law enforcement of property standards.
- Consider AMS-SGPS joint delegation to city council.

Dean of Student Affairs

- Questioned change from first year residence guarantee to first year residence commitment.
- An estimated 5-15% of first years who want to live in residence will have to find alternative living arrangements under the first year residence commitment.
- University budget cuts will result in a 3.5% cut to shared services, including Student Affairs. This is an absolute cut of 2-2.5 million dollars.
- Cuts will result in reduced personnel across all departments in Student Affairs.
- Goal is to keep service levels at Student Wellness Services.
- Continuing conversations with the SGPS around the impact of cuts on students.
- Deans from all faculties have released statements encouraging students affected by the events in the Middle East to seek academic accommodations, as needed.

Sexual Health Resource Centre management board

- Centre updates: 11 executives, 20 volunteers, 10-15 new volunteers hired in September.
- Online ordering paused with return to in person.
- New website launching late August/early September.
- Budget sustainable without grants.

CFS and SGPS organizing meeting: Discussed ways the CFS can support the SGPS in organizing for the National Day of Action.

Global Climate Strike: September 15

Migrants Rights Network Regularization Action: September 17. I joined Migrant Justice YGK, Just Recovery Kingston, OPIRG Kingston, Providence Centre for JPIC, Mutual Aid Katarokwi Kingston, Health Providers Against Poverty Kingston, and advocates across Kingston outside MP Mark Gerretsen's office to rally for regularization (permanent residency for undocumented immigrants).

Task Force on Street Parties: I cautioned against the recommendation of increased police presence, given the disproportionate negative impact of policing on students with disadvantaged identities, and other intersecting underrepresented identities.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact me at vp.community@sgps.ca.

Yours in service,

Tony Hu (he/him or they/them)
Vice President Community, SGPS



Dear SGPS members,

I'm pleased to provide an update for the 2023 year on Senate-related matters since the Spring. I serve as the Graduate Student Senator and the Student Senate Caucus Chair. Senate has now returned from its hiatus, and we just had our first senate session on October 5th.

I would like to update our members about a pressing issue at Queen's. The university is currently facing a challenging financial situation with an operating deficit of \$62.8M. Given the current political and economic circumstances, it is unlikely that government funding will see any or sufficient increases. As a result, the university has implemented a hiring freeze and set a target to cut budget allocations by 1.5%, reflecting the need for cost-saving measures. To address the deficit and restore financial stability, the university has set a target to balance its budget by the 2025-2026 fiscal year. Unfortunately, this goal implies that significant cuts may be anticipated across various aspects of university operations in the coming years.

On a more positive note, student activity at senate has focused on the following goals:

1. **SOP Materials for New Senators:** We have been coordinating with the secretariat on the creation of comprehensive SOP materials for new senators. These materials are essential for onboarding and will be used during elections. By providing clear and informative resources, we aim to ensure that incoming senators are well-prepared to fulfill their roles effectively.
2. **Orientation Format and Date Review:** To better accommodate student volunteers and incoming students, we are currently reviewing our orientation formats we will be referring these matters for review by the Senate Orientation Review Committee (SORC). While this committee is concerned with undergraduate orientation, changes to sessional dates may also affect graduate students.
3. **Lobbying for Funding:** In hopes of securing better funding for our university and graduate students, we are seeking engagement opportunities with the administration in advocating at both the provincial and federal government levels. We believe that student voices can be powerful in conveying the importance of supporting research and graduate students at Queen's.
4. **Documentation and Active Engagement:** To preserve the history of student work within the Senate and to ensure that student concerns are heard and addressed effectively, we are focusing on two key areas. Firstly, we are working on enhancing the documentation of student work for posterity. Secondly, we are striving for more effective use of mechanisms within Senate, with the aim of streamlining the process for addressing student issues and concerns.

These actions reflect our commitment to serving the best interests of our members and ensuring that the Student Senators remain a dynamic and impactful part of governance at Queen's. I look forward to your support and collaboration in achieving these goals.

If you have any questions or would like further details on any of these initiatives, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Emils Matiss (He/Him/His)

Graduate Student Senator and Student Senate Caucus Chair



Hello Council,

Thank you for attending the SGPS Annual General Meeting. I hope everyone has had an enjoyable term so far. This report outlines the work I have done and the events I have organized in my role as the Athletics & Wellness Commissioner since beginning this role at the start of June 2023.

1. Summer Zumba Event

The Zumba event hosted in August gave SGPS members an opportunity to experience a group fitness class at the ARC, including finding the location of the studios and getting information about the free trial week happening in September and the option of purchasing a group fitness class pass.

2. SGPS Orientation Events

The Orientation events I organized in the month of September included a Zumba class, a Triple Threat class, and two tours of the ARC. These events allowed SGPS members to become familiar with the classes offered and resources available to them through their ARC membership.

3. Website updates

In collaboration with the SGPS Executive Director and the Social Commissioner, the Athletics & Recreation section of the SGPS website has been updated to include the Fall Group Fitness Class schedule for easy access by members. It now also includes a video that provides a virtual tour of the ARC for those who may have missed the in-person tours or for anyone who wants a brief overview of where to locate certain facilities.

4. Representing members in the ARC Space issue

I have been working with the executive team on the issue of lack of space for graduate students in the ARC. We will be reaching out to contacts at the ARC and other stakeholders over the next few weeks to discuss potential solutions to this issue so that SGPS members can comfortably and effectively utilize the space and resources of the ARC.

5. Plans for the rest of the academic year

The SGPS will continue to host SGPS members-only group fitness classes through the ARC, aiming to provide 2 different classes every other month. Members are encouraged to let the Athletics & Wellness Commissioner if there are any specific classes they would like to see scheduled! I am also working on setting up some wellness workshops through the Student Wellness Services department tailored towards graduate students.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at athletics@sgps.ca. I would also welcome any ideas for athletics and wellness-centered events that members would like to see come to life!

Sincerely,

Meghan Mendelin (she/her)
SGSP Athletics & Wellness Commissioner
athletics@sgps.ca



Hello Council Members,

September has involved me onboarding into the Equity Commissioner role! I'm excited to take on this position, and continue the amazing work Jane has done! Jane was in this role until the end of August.

Here is what I have done in September:

1. Supporting the Gender Affirming Bursary committee
 - a. Reviewing applications, and working with the committee to approve some/all grant requests
2. Reorganizing the Soft Infrastructure Network
 - a. Determining who is still interested/at Queen's
 - b. Based on this, I will reach out to various departments if we do not have anyone there, to see if anyone is interested
3. Committee Commitment
 - a. Public Service Alliance of Canada DCL 901 (PSAC 901) – No new information, planning to reach out to inquire
 - b. Provost's Action Group for Gender and Sexual Diversity (PAGGAS) – No new information
 - c. Soft Infrastructure Network – working on it!
 - d. Built Environment Advisory Group –
 - e. University Council on Anti-Racism and Equity (UCARE) –
 - f. Inclusive Communities UCARE Sub-Committee – connected with the Associate Director, meeting scheduled for November
 - g. Steering Committee related to review of CSES response to Hate Crimes – no new updates
 - h. Senate Educational Equity Committee – attended meeting on Oct 10
 - i. Faculty of Arts and Science EDII Council – meetings scheduled (conflict with prac – next meeting Oct 26, 1-2:30)
 - j. Sexual Violence Prevention and Response (SVPR) Education Advisory Working Group – meetings scheduled (conflict with prac – next meeting Oct 18, 10:30-11:30)

I am also currently on practicum, where I'm a student teacher at a highschool. Because of this, I am unable to make a few of these committee meetings – if anyone has more availability, and is willing to attend one/few of these, let me know, and I can share some of the invites!

I am always open to collaboration efforts – and happy to work with anyone to develop new initiatives, or to chat about anything! Feel free to reach out!

Best,
Sangeetha Saravanan | BEd Candidate
BSch, BA, DIPA Certificate
equity@sgps.ca
Equity and Diversity Commissioner

Hello Council!

Hope everyone is enjoying the beautiful fall season!

SGPS September Orientation has officially finished, and I'm happy to share it was a big success! It's been so great to see the connections and friendships made through these welcome events. As well, our collaborative events have strengthened SGPS's connections with ASUS, QUIC, Yellow House and QIP, and I'm excited for more collaborations with these organizations for future social events as well as January Orientation! Thank you again to our SGPS Exec and Commissioner team for volunteering their time to make Orientation happen!

My next project is hosting **Ghost Tours** with Kingston Haunted Walks. We are currently selling \$9 tickets for tours on **October 23rd and 26th from 7pm-8:30pm**. These guided tours will introduce participants to the most haunted landmarks around downtown and the residential areas of Kingston! Tickets are available through the link in our Instagram bio (@queenssgps). There are still lots of spots available for both dates, so if you or anyone you know would be interested in attending, check out the details to register on our Instagram page!

Lastly, given the high level of engagement and positive feedback from our Orientation Walk Talk event with QIP Indigenous Educator, Misty Underwood, I am working to organize a second Fall Walk Talk with Misty in November! Details for this event will be made available on the SGPS Instagram page.

That's all from me, if anyone has any ideas for social events or have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to reach out to social@sgps.ca!



Gabby Torretto (she/her)
SGPS Social Commissioner
Society of Graduate and Professional Students
social@sgps.ca