



Hey everyone,

I will try to keep things brief as it has not been quite as long since we last spoke at the AGM. I want to highlight just a few focal issues that we have been working on and where we are going from here.

First, conversations about the new JDUC continue and have been productive. In partnership with the AMS we released the JDUC Retail Survey recently which requests feedback from students on the kinds of retail spaces that they want to see in the JDUC. We expect to review the results of the survey with the AMS over the coming weeks and I expect that conversations about the retail spaces will continue over the next few months and perhaps into the next team's term.

There was a lot of discussion at the AGM about community housing and what recent proposals from community housing mean for members there. I can elaborate more on this in my oral report but in short we learned that rent will indeed increase, likely by a significant percentage, though we do not have the exact numbers. Community housing also indicated to us that John Orr and Ann Clachan would shift from being open to all students to only being available to graduate students, even though graduate students presently make up a large portion of their occupants this would formalize that. We also learned that the proposed 1:1 student ratio for rooms would *not* apply to those students who have children or dependents but rather only to students living with students. Finally, community housing indicated that they would consider an equity-based weighting system in lieu of a full lottery, though details are yet to be discussed on how precisely that would work.

While we continue to advocate for student financial stability, we are abundantly aware of the pressing financial constraints faced by students. As an Executive team we have been having discussions about what kinds of immediate, short- to medium-term solutions we can offer to our members that will help ease some of the financial burden. We hope to have more to report on this front next month.

I had the opportunity to attend the University Council AGM recently, which took place on Saturday, November 4<sup>th</sup>. Tony attended alongside me and we were both able to have some really interesting discussions. The focus of this year's AGM was promoting community engagement through pedagogy. It was really great to see so many engaged student voices and to meet many prior alumni who are doing excellent work in their communities around the world.

Finally, I attended two packed days of Senate meetings on November 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> last week. The special meetings on November 1<sup>st</sup> gave stakeholders an opportunity to learn about the Smith Engineering gift and name change before it occurred formally, as well as to provide feedback. I was disappointed to see that of the \$100 million generously donated to Smith Engineering there

was not a single dollar allocated for graduate student stipends. In fact, the university reported that 86% of the funds are earmarked for hiring and supporting of faculty. I made very clear that Smith Engineering must have a plan to adequately fund the new graduate students that are going to be working in the labs of these new faculty. Unfortunately, we have yet to see this plan. At Senate on November 2<sup>nd</sup> there were some great discussions and there is an interesting item that has been referred to the Senate Committee on Academic Development and Procedures (SCADP; we have a seat): The proposal is to remove the singing of “God Save the King” from convocation. Additionally, Nathan Brinklow from Indigenous Studies requested that SCADP consider removing “O Canada” from convocation. I would love feedback on both of these proposals so that I can discuss them competently at SCADP.

That is all from me for now. A huge thank you to everyone who attended the AGM and was so engaged with all of the content. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please reach out to me at [president@sgps.ca](mailto:president@sgps.ca)

Take care,

Devin Fowlie  
President



Hello Council Members,

Welcome everyone our November Council Meeting! We are now more than halfway through the semester, and I hope that the final stretch of the semester continues to go well. I'd like to highlight some items from the events and meetings I have attended, as well as inform you of my plans moving forward.

### **Community Housing**

As many students have heard, there are proposed changes to Community Housing (An Clachan, John Orr Tower). These changes include the lottery (application) process, limitations of lease renewals, and increase in rent. Though SGPS does not endorse these changes, it does appear to be inevitable. We have met with Leah and Community Housing to ensure these changes will continue to prioritize our most vulnerable and in-need students, while not disrupting the current tenants. We have also been informed that PSAC 901 has helped form Community Housing Tenants Association.

### **Smith Engineering**

The Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science at Queen's University has announced a \$100 million donation. It is with extreme disappointment that little-to-no money from the donation has been allocated to increasing graduate student funding. I have an upcoming FEAS Graduate Council where I will continue to express this disappointment.

### **FAS Faculty Board**

James Fraser, the Associate Dean (Graduate Studies) in the Faculty of Arts and Science (FAS), invited SGPS to create a panel of graduate students to speak to the faculty board in October to voice the challenges and needs students are currently facing. Myself, Devin, and 2 passionate graduate students from FAS joined us at the FAS Faculty Board to stress the dire financial situation students are facing, the importance of not cutting courses, teaching loads, and scholarships. We unfortunately faced backlash from some faculty. It was disappointing to hear such opposing views, however we will continue to advocate for our graduate and professional students.

### **Food Insecurity Advisory Committee**

This past month, I joined the Food Insecurity Advisory Committee (FIAC). All members were able to share the different resources available to students, including:

- Whole Bowls through MacCorry
- Grocery card program: CARE (60 \$50 gift cards)
- Swipe It Forward

A list of food resources can be found on the Student Affairs website, and further resources can be obtained through Student Wellness Services and the Ban Righ Centre.

**EmpowerMe+**

As I mentioned in previous months, there were some changes coming this fall to the Health and Dental Plan; one of these changes include the new EmpowerMe+. It has been evident to Queen's that graduate students need reliable access to mental health services, and we are hoping to provide this through EmpowerMe+. We are still working with SGSPA and DSA to ensure student accessibility to this program, while not being a financial burden.

I am managing a disability and will be working mainly remotely, but I'm happy to meet with you online should the need arise ([vp.graduate@sgps.ca](mailto:vp.graduate@sgps.ca))!

Steady Coombs

Vice-President Graduate, SGPS



Good Evening Council,

Thank you for coming to our November Council meeting. I would like to extend a warm welcome to all. We eagerly anticipate our discussion during the meeting tonight. I trust that everyone has had a wonderful month. In my report, I intend to emphasize what has occurred over the last month and provide insight into upcoming developments.

**i. Housing & Ancillary Services Sustainability Working Group**

On October 26th I attended the meeting for the 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). This group is transforming from a working group to a committee. This committee will now be focused on governance which will be able to delve into formal compliance for the use of certain elements. Prior, this working group was derived for compassion and support for change across campus, but now with this amendment, the committee will look at how funds are being used, new innovations outside of this, and the implementation of formal agendas and minute taking will be established.

Our provider will be Coca Cola. This is an exclusive contract which includes any and all places on campus serving beverages; whether that be spaces that are leased, student run, or university run. There is a campus wide update coming soon. This will be reflected on the Housing & Ancillary Services website.

**ii. EDI Roundtable**

The EDII Roundtable has been rescheduled for the upcoming month. As a representative of the SGPS, I will be showcasing our allyship and expressing our support for the challenges encountered by individuals in marginalized communities. I am eager not only to listen to concerns, but also to engage deeply in these matters and explore potential solutions.

**iii. MedLaw Games**

I am continuing with the preparation for the MedLaw Games, scheduled for the next semester. I have initiated and established contact with the Law Students Society and I am looking forward to setting up a channel of conversation with the Aesculapian Society to collaborate on organizing this event. Additionally, I will soon be in touch with the ARC to arrange suitable timings for the MedLaw Games.

## **Upcoming**

### **i. DSA Meeting**

We will be having our monthly meeting with the Dean of Student Affairs. If anyone has anything pressing that they would like us to touch upon, please let us know and we would be happy to cover those aspects during our meeting.

### **ii. Grad Club Meeting**

Our meeting for the Grad Club has been postponed. I look forward to meeting with them in the near future and discussing some more of the initiatives and plans that we want to implement to ensure the success of the Grad Club moving forward.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at [vp.professional@sgps.ca](mailto:vp.professional@sgps.ca)

Best regards,  
Maya Kawale  
Vice President Professional, SGPS



Greetings Council,

Welcome, and thank you to all those who are attending the November council meeting. I hope everyone enjoyed their holidays in October and are managing the term with as much ease as is feasible. Kindly see the below for my council report updates.

### **1. AGM Audit Presentation and Correction**

We had the pleasure of having auditors from KPMG present the 2022 audit at our Annual General Meeting. Following the AGM the Queen's Journal reported on the audit, and unfortunately made an inaccurate statement regarding our financial position. For clarification, the audit report represented a \$69,899 deficit. The reason for this deficit is because the SGPS paid for Conversation (a mental health service) from the health and dental fund which isn't reflected directly. Without this expense, which was paid for from a separate fund, the SGPS is in a surplus position.

### **2. Proposal for the Food Insecurity Relief Program**

We are pleased to propose the Food Insecurity Relief Program for approval from Council. This program would provide grocery gift cards to students facing food insecurity. The program would be open for anyone facing food insecurity to apply. Grocery gift cards of \$150, \$200 or \$250 would be available to students depending on their family status and whether the student is a domestic or international student. The most a student could apply for would be \$250, and this funding would be available to students with caregiving responsibilities. International students would be eligible for \$200 to reflect the fewer resources available to these students compared to domestic students, who would be eligible for \$150.

The proposed program would be open for the Fall and Winter term to pilot its effectiveness. This program would cost \$20,000. This year we expect a budget surplus of \$80,000 which is how the SGPS intends to fund this program.

### **3. Working with the SWS to provide programming to promote campus safety.**

The SGPS is pleased to collaborate with Student Wellness Services to provide training sessions and programming that promote campus safety. Please look out for promo codes in future newsletters which you can apply to sign up for programming such as safeTalk and Suicide ASSIST for free. In the future, we also hope to offer FirstAid sessions. Details will be posted in SGPS newsletters.

#### **4. 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.

#### **5. Winter Closure and the Financial Assistance Program**

The SGPS annual winter closure will begin on December 15, 2023. We will be back for our regular scheduled programming on January 8, 2023. Please note that during this time financial assistance applications will not be processed. If you expect you will require financial assistance, please apply before our winter closure.

Sincerely,

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





Dear Council,

Just last month, the 2023-2024 SGPS team hosted its first General Meeting. Those who attended, both virtually and in-person, enjoyed scintillating discussion. This month's report builds on the successes of my report in October at the General Meeting.

### **Committees and meetings**

- Canadian Federation of Students Ontario Executive Meeting
  - I was acclaimed to the role of Ontario Graduate Caucus Vice Chairperson. Cherin Chung, VP Advocacy at the Society of Graduate Students (SOGS) at Western University, was acclaimed to the role of Ontario Graduate Caucus Chairperson.
- CFRC Radio Queen's University Board
  - RQU is replacing its 35-year-old FM transmitter and cabling.
  - Costs likely to be at or above \$5000.
  - Should remain in budget.
- Community Housing Update
  - Adam King (previously Off-Campus Learning Advisor, Queen's; Residential Property Manager, Limestone Property Management; Business Development & Leasing Manager, Limestone Property Development) is moving into the role of Manager, Community Housing, effective October 30.
  - Met with Leah Wales, Executive Director, Housing and Ancillary Services and Adam King, Manager, Community Housing alongside Devin and Steacy to discuss our concerns with the proposed community housing changes.
- SHIFT Student Advisory Group
  - [2023 SHIFT survey results are out.](#)
  - Follows the 2021 SHIFT survey results with a few exceptions.
- November 8 Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) National Day of Action Fight the Fees
  - I joined the CFS National Day of Action outside the Ontario Legislative Building in downtown Toronto. Despite the weather, it was great to see so many current and former students working together to fight for free and accessible postsecondary education. Across the province, there were seven actions.
- CFS National Annual General Meeting
  - The Canadian Federation of Students' 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual National General Meeting will be taking place in Toronto from November 24 to November 27. I am registered to attend and am excited to meet with other student leaders from coast to coast to coast to discuss opportunities for collective action. Councilors can anticipate a fulsome update on the CFS Annual National General Meeting in December.

Yours in service,

Tony Hu (he/him or they/them)

Vice President Community, SGPS



Dear Council,

I hope everyone has had a pleasant November so far! This report outlines the events and initiatives I am working on for the month of November.

1. **SGPS x ARC – Yoga Class**

The SGPS is offering a free Yoga class for members on **Wednesday, November 15 at 4:30pm**. This class offers members an opportunity to try a Yoga class at the ARC, suited for all levels of fitness and experience.

2. **SGPS x ARC – Triple Threat Class**

The SGPS is offering a free Triple Threat class for members on **Tuesday, November 28 at 4:30pm**. This class type received positive feedback from our members the last time we hosted it. The class is suited for all levels of fitness and experience.

3. **Representing members in the ARC space issue**

Initial outreach to stakeholders at the ARC has been made regarding the issue of limited space in the ARC for graduate and professional students. We hope this outreach will spur a productive collaboration with representatives at the ARC to find a solution that will allow SGPS members to utilize the ARC spaces and resources effectively and comfortably.

I am excited for the upcoming fitness classes and look forward to seeing you there. Please don't hesitate to contact [athletics@sgps.ca](mailto:athletics@sgps.ca) if you have any questions, feedback, or ideas for fitness and wellness related events.

Sincerely,

Meghan Mendelin (she/her)  
SGPS Athletics & Wellness Commissioner  
Society of Graduate and Professional Students  
[athletics@sgps.ca](mailto:athletics@sgps.ca)



Hello Council Members,

Here is what I have done in October:

1. Continued to support 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. We do have an honorarium for this!
  - b. Sent a google form, currently identifying areas where there are no responses, and drafting emails to see to different programs and departments!
3. Committee Commitment
  - a. Public Service Alliance of Canada DCL 901 (PSAC 901)
  - 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
  - j. Sexual Violence Prevention and Response (SVPR) Education Advisory Working Group – meetings scheduled
4. Preliminary Athletics x Equity Initiative
  - a. Still in the planning stages, but planning to run an event with Athletics & Wellness focused on equitydeserving groups

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](mailto:equity@sgps.ca)  
Equity and Diversity Commissioner



Hello Council,

Hope this report finds everybody well! Here are some updates from October/November.

### **Committee for International Student Success (CISS) Meeting**

I attended the first CISS meeting of Fall 2023 and the committee welcomed new Commissioner of Campus Affairs from the Alma Mater Society, Callum Fraser. The committee had the following updates for this academic year:

1. The new transition program has been introduced for incoming international students. The program aims to integrate existing services and strengthen collaborations between different service advisors. The integrated program includes immigration advising, support program specially for students with spouse and children, referral to academic support as well as connection to community programs and services.
2. Other minor updates including updates of terms of reference and re-iterating academic support resources were also brought up during the meeting.

### **Global Education at Queen's Conference**

I am attending the Global Education at Queen's Conference (Nov 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>) hosted by QUIC and CISS. The conference touches on Queen's overarching strategy for enhancing international student experience and positioning Queen's as a global education hub. Major topics covered on the 9<sup>th</sup> include inclusive listening, personal growth abroad and inclusivity of the English language for multilingual students. More updates will be provided in the next report. The complete program can be found [here](#).

### **October Shift Survey Meeting**

I attended the October Shift Survey Meeting. The most recent Shift survey results were shared with the advisory committee members. The results are consistent with results from past years. Advisory committee members were consulted on the appropriate avenues to share survey results with Queen's students. Suggestions that came up included creating a safe sharing space, establishing guidelines for asking respectful questions without stifling curiosity and creating an open forum/google survey to collect questions.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns at [international@sgps.ca](mailto:international@sgps.ca).

Sincerely,

Vina Li

SGPS International Student Affairs Commissioner