



Hey everyone,

It has been an eventful month, as you are no doubt aware. Much of what we have been tackling can be summarized in the statement that we released earlier last week, so I encourage you to take a look at that. In short, we have not been given a complete picture of what is happening at the University as it relates to budget cuts and have not been given an opportunity to advocate for students appropriately. I hope that more productive conversations can be had going forward.

### **Housing Insecurity**

We continue to work hard on housing insecurity. I have been having a lot of discussions with the University Rector to come up with a strategy for working collectively to tackle housing insecurity at Queen's. You all should have received an email from me which discusses some of this, but many of those discussions are confidential at the moment so I won't elaborate more here.

We are working on moving forward with the JDUC Triparty agreement and I'm hopeful that we can come to an agreement soon. There have been a number of sticking points around financials and operational practices that would really be quite harmful to our members, so we have taken the time that is needed in negotiations to make sure that the agreement best serves our members. This means that we are slightly more delayed than we had hoped but we will not come back to our membership with anything less than the best possible agreement. Subsequent to this agreement, I am hoping that we can continue conversations about graduate student housing in the JDUC. There used to be some housing there for graduate students and the University has the capacity to reserve some rooms there if they chose to do so. Once we finish negotiations our attention will shift immediately to discussing these rooms.

### **Financial and Food Insecurity**

Last month, as many of you are aware, we launched a food insecurity relief program on the approval of council. The demand was incredibly overwhelming and we exhausted our funds for the fall round almost immediately. We have been discussing the issue internally and deciding how we can implement this program in the winter in a way that maximizes the benefit to students. We are hoping that Student Affairs and University Council will continue to have discussions with us to provide some more support; our hope is that this, combined with other decisions about the program, will help ensure its longevity. We have also been discussing more creative solutions to food insecurity beyond simple monetary support for students. The details of these discussions are early, but if discussions continue to go well I should have more to report in the winter term.

### **Advocacy**

It goes without saying, but advocacy continues on all fronts. This is a very difficult time for students and the current climate does not make things any easier. We are working as hard as we can to continue to have difficult discussions that best serve the needs of our members.

With all my best,

Devin Fowlie  
President



Hello Council Members,

Happy end of the fall semester! I hope the final weeks of reports and exams go well for everyone, and you enjoy the holidays. 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 changes coming 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. Please see Tony Hu's (VP Community) council report for the policy changes.

### **Graduate Studies Executive Council (GSEC)**

Once per month, I meet with the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies (SGSPA), the Associate Deans (SGSPA), and the Associate Deans of the graduate and professional faculties. In November, the SHIFT survey results were presented, showing things we already know. Graduate students are facing both housing and food insecurity with international students and students with disabilities most at risk. It was clear that the graduate school cares and understands how dire the situation students are in, however no solutions were proposed.

### **Indigenous Student Liaison**

Unfortunately, our Indigenous Student Liaison had to step down in November. The SGPS remains committed to supporting our indigenous students. Recently, Devin and I were welcomed to the SAGE Feast at Four Directions to meet some of our indigenous graduate and professional students. We look forward to working closely with 4D in the coming semester.

### **EmpowerMe+**

As I mentioned in previous months, there were some changes this fall to the Health and Dental Plan; one of these changes include the new EmpowerMe+. As presented in the SHIFT survey, 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 have successfully negotiated some financial assistance toward supporting EmpowerMe+ from DSA and are now working with SGSPA.

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 last Council meeting this term! We warmly welcome you and look forward to our discussion tonight. I hope that everyone has had a great end of the semester. We are wishing you all good luck with your exams and final assignments. During my report I will spotlight what has been achieved since our last meeting and provide insights as to upcoming events.

### **1. Med-Law Games**

I am currently deeply involved in the extensive planning phase for the upcoming Med-Law Games scheduled to take place in March. To ensure the seamless execution of this event, I have actively engaged in ongoing discussions and collaborations with key stakeholders, primarily the Law Students Society and Aesculapian Society. This concerted effort aims to foster a collaborative environment, pooling resources, and expertise from both societies to enhance the overall quality and success of the Med-Law Games this year.

In addition to these collaborations, I have established a line of communication with the Athletics and Recreation Center (ARC) to solidify the logistical aspects of the Med-Law Games. We are currently in the final stages of determining the most suitable timing for the event, taking into account various factors to optimize participant experience and overall event dynamics. It is also worth noting that last year was the first year that the Med-Law Games took place after the pandemic. The ARC played a pivotal role in initiating discussions about bringing back this cherished event, and its successful return has inspired ongoing conversations about refining the planning process for future iterations. The ARC and the SGPS are looking to explore potential improvements in the planning framework for the Med-Law Games. Our conversations have extended beyond the immediate logistical concerns, delving into the broader scope of future planning methodologies. There is a growing consideration for transforming the approach to event planning, potentially fostering a more structured partnership. This could potentially be achieved by establishing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which is being explored. This agreement, if implemented, could help define the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of both the SGPS and the ARC, fostering a symbiotic relationship aimed at streamlining the planning and execution of the Med-Law Games in the years to come.

These discussions are in efforts to ensure not only the immediate success of the upcoming Med-Law Games but also to lay the groundwork for a more efficient and collaborative approach to event planning in the future, ultimately benefiting all stakeholders involved.

### **2. ARC Meeting**

We explored the idea of graduate student hours. I am sure this will be comprehensively covered by Meghan who is doing an amazing job advocating and taking action in response to the feedback that she has been getting from students. This term, the ARC is averaging 519 more people per day in the building per day in comparison to last year so getting something in place will take a little bit more work. The ARC seemed the most receptive to

implementing classes or a shared space via certain programming. The SGPS will be putting together a proposal for the ARC, and we will look into next steps after this.

### **3. SGPS Health & Dental Plan**

We had our meeting with Studentcare about the Health & Dental plan. In this meeting we were closing off the annual claims from our last team. In terms of claims, most of the plan costs comes from the claims and very little in administrative costs which is something that we were very happy to see.

#### **Upcoming:**

##### **1. H&A Sustainability Working Group Meeting**

The Housing and Ancillary Sustainability Working Group is now being converted into a committee. This meeting was postponed until December to allow for the membership to be determined as it will be a smaller group.

##### **2. Grad Club Meeting**

A Grad Club meeting is supposed to take place this month as well.

#### **Warm Wishes:**

I would like to take a moment to extend warm wishes to each and every one of you. The holiday season is upon us, and it is a time for reflection and gratitude. On behalf of the entire council, we wish you and your loved ones a joyful holiday season and a prosperous New Year. Thank you for your continued commitment to our Council meetings, and I look forward to seeing all of you in the New Year.

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



Dear Council,

Happy holidays. 2023 has certainly been an eventful year, and a break spent with family and friends to celebrate, recharge, and reset is in order. In that vein, the SGPS will be closed from Monday, December 18 to Monday, January 8. As we head towards the SGPS' annual winter closure, I will focus on compiling transition documents for the remainder of the month.

November has been a busy month for me as the liaison between the SGPS and the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS). Recall that the SGPS is part of two larger student collectives: the CFS and CFS Ontario. The former is the national organization, the latter is the provincial component. We are local number 27. November 8 was the Canadian Federation of Students National Day of Action Fight the Fees. I attended a rally outside the Ontario Legislative Building in downtown Toronto alongside other students and solidarity partners across Ontario. November 24 to 27 was the Canadian Federation of Students 42<sup>nd</sup> National Annual General Meeting.

#### **Canadian Federation of Students National Annual General Meeting**

At the Canadian Federation of Students National Annual General Meeting, I profited from networking opportunities with other student leaders. The opportunity to discuss important issues such as the Israel-Hamas war, the [blue-ribbon panel's recommendations for financial sustainability in the Ontario post-secondary sector](#), and LGBTQ2S+ rights was highly valuable. It was interesting to appreciate the tensions inherent between Universities and so-called autonomous student organizations when Universities are responsible for assessing and remitting student fees and many Universities own and lease the office spaces of student organizations. I also had a chance to speak with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers about the challenges the SGPS is experiencing with filling the Indigenous Student Liaison position. One theory is that the SGPS is not doing enough to ensure that it is a welcoming space for Indigenous students.

#### **Committees and meetings**

- CFRC Radio Queen's University Board
  - Rogers is decommissioning the telecommunications tower CFRC previously used
  - RQU is refurbishing its 35-year-old FM antenna with new cabling
  - Working with WestTower, the site contractors, to move the refurbished FM antenna to a new telecommunications tower
  - Costs at least \$20,000
- Community Housing Update
  - Housing discussion meeting December 7
  - Community Housing [policy changes](#) sent out to current tenants
- University Anti-Hate Advisory Group
  - I was invited to the new University Anti-Hate Advisory Group as the SGPS representative

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



*Queen's University is situated on traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee territories.*

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As the calendar year comes to a close, I wanted to say a huge thank you to everyone who has attended, interacted with, and participated in any of our meetings. Here is a year in review:

### **A Year in Review**

Here's what we've accomplished in 2023 Officers of the Council:

1. Met with Council representatives to discuss ways to increase engagement and involvement;
2. Council handover document and introductory videos (and other resources);
3. Revised Bylaw and Policy document;
4. Council meet-up at The Grad Club;
5. Increased engagement, involvement, and attendance in SGPS Council – *thanks to all of you!*

### **2024 Goals**

1. Discussion of Council meeting times with Council Reps;
2. Discussion of Winter 2024 Council meet-ups;
3. Discussion of in-person or hybrid meetings;
4. Discussions surrounding SGPS Council governance (esp. Robert's Rules of Orders);
5. Continue increasing Council engagement and involvement.

Do you have any suggestions on how to better improve Council meetings? Do you want to see specific changes implemented? Do you have any fun ideas on what to do during meetups and informal gatherings? Don't be shy! Remember that Council is brought by you, for you, and all about you!

Please e-mail [speaker@sgps.ca](mailto:speaker@sgps.ca) with any questions, comments, ideas, or suggestions.

**SGPS Council Speaker**  
**Aileen Editha (she/her)**

Extra warm Winter wishes from my fur child Pablo and [my housemate's foster cat Groot \(who is up for adoption through the Kingston Humane Society\)](#):





Dear Council,

Happy end of term! This report outlines the events and initiatives as this term comes to a close.

**1. SGPS x ARC – Winter Term Group Fitness Pass Giveaway**

The SGPS is giving away a free Group Fitness Pass for the winter term on Instagram which will give members unlimited access to group fitness classes at the ARC. Please encourage members to participate in the giveaway by following @queenssgps, liking our post and tagging a fellow SGPS member!

**2. January Orientation Fitness Classes**

I am planning to offer two free fitness classes at the ARC as part of the Orientation in January. Class types, dates and times to be determined.

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

Executive members and I met with the active living leadership and facilities leadership team at the ARC to discuss the issue of limited space in the ARC. Please see below the key takeaways from this meeting:

- **No Exclusive Reservation for SGPS Members:**
  - Reserving space exclusively for SGPS members on certain days/times is not feasible.
  - The ARC is committed to not determine facility use by 'type of member' (i.e., undergraduate or graduate student or faculty member) as all members should be free to use all space of the ARC at all times.
- **Challenges with SGPS-Members-Only Studio Time:**
  - Implementing SGPS-members-only studio time is also not feasible.
  - Monitoring entrance and exit would require additional staffing due to historical ineffectiveness of signage.
  - Ensuring safe equipment usage poses challenges.
- **Addressing the Issue through Programming:**
  - The viable solution involves a programming approach.
  - Suggestions include scheduling more SGPS-only group fitness classes and hosting special events like 'SGPS night' or SGPS-only swim sessions.
- **Potential Recurring 'Do Your Own Workout' Class:**
  - Exploring the possibility of a recurring class open only to SGPS members.
  - Involves a qualified fitness instructor supervising and monitoring the session in one of the ARC's studios. These studios feature some general workout equipment which could be used during the session.
  - Members would sign up through the ARC portal to cap the number of participants.
  - Specifics such as days, times, frequency, and budget considerations need clarification.

- **Increasing SGPS-Only Group Fitness Classes:**
  - Another option is scheduling more regularly occurring SGPS-only group fitness classes.
  - Details required include class types, frequency, and other relevant information.
- **Overall, the focus is on addressing the space issue through a programming approach, with potential solutions such as specialized fitness classes and events available for SGPS members. Discussions on how to move forward are ongoing and feedback from members on these viable options is welcome.**

As always, 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 November:

1. Connecting with the Yellow House
  - a. Working with them to develop several events in collaboration with Socials, and Athletics
  - b. Developing events for BIPOC students to network, and focus on wellbeing as a community
2. Committee Commitment
  - a. Attending committee meetings, and bringing in the SGPS perspective
  - b. New committee group - Student Action Group on Gender and Sexual Diversity (SAGGAS)
    - i. We're looking to build a comprehensive calendar with all events – so if you have anything that can be added for next term, please let me know
3. Collaborating with SGPS International Students Commissioner
  - a. Organizing a Career Services workshop to support international students in resume/cover letter writing
  - b. High demand for specific assistance for this
4. Creating a comprehensive manual for the role (ongoing)

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  
Society of Graduate and Professional Students



Hello Council!

Can't believe it's the end of the semester already! I have 2 ongoing projects I will be providing updates on: our holiday/end of semester social events and Winter Orientation Month.

Firstly, to celebrate the holiday season and end of the semester, I am running a Trivia event at the Grad Club on Wednesday, December 6<sup>th</sup> from 7pm-10pm. I'm happy to share that tickets are now sold out for this event, with 100 registrants! Given the popular demand for Trivia, the SGPS will be running more of these kind of events in the new year!

This January, the SGPS will be hosting another "Orientation Month" with the goal of welcoming incoming graduate and professional students beginning their programs in January! I have had meetings with my fellow Commissioners, Vina, Meghan and Sangeetha to discuss Orientation and what events we should run to ensure all students feel welcomed and included at Queen's. The final schedule will be announced in January but here is a list of some of the events we have lined up so far!

January 9<sup>th</sup> (Time TBD) – **Queen's Observatory Tour**  
January 15<sup>th</sup> 7pm-10pm – **Speed Friending at the Grad Club**  
January 16<sup>th</sup> 5:30pm-8:30pm – **Board Games Night at QUIC**  
January 23<sup>rd</sup> 7pm-10pm- **Trivia Night at the Grad Club**

I am also in contact with Queen's Indigenous Pathways Programs Coordinator, Misty Underwood, to plan a Winter Nature Walk Talk event, given how well received our September Walk Talk was.

If you have any ideas for events next semester or have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to reach out at [social@sgps.ca](mailto:social@sgps.ca)

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