

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

II. Adoption of the Agenda

A. Adoption of the Agenda

MOTION 12/12/23:01

BIRT SGPS Council adopt the Agenda for the December 12 2023 Council Meeting.

Steady Coombs moves, Tristan Lee-Coughlin seconds. No points of discussion on this motion. No dissenting votes; the motion passes unanimously

III. Minutes

A. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

MOTION 12/12/23:02

BIRT the SGPS adopt the minutes from the November 14 2023 Council Meeting.

Devin Fowlie moves, Steady Coombs 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. Released a statement in response to the Queens Coalition Against Austerity Teach-In (<https://sgps.ca/news/>). If there are any further questions on this matter please reach out.
- ii. Rosemary Gasparro has resigned as the Indigenous Student Liaison position is available. Speaking with Four Directions to determine next steps for that position and whether it will continue to be a position moving forward depending on how best we can support Four Directions.
- iii. Attended Faculty of Arts and Science Faculty Board – learnt that graduate students weren't invited to the town hall that took place yesterday (Dec 11). Raised this to Barbara Crow (Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science), noting that we need a meeting to rival the ASUS general meeting

undergrads are happening with the Provost and Dean. Dean Crow noted that something was being organized and I will update when I hear more.

- iv. Attended the Board of Trustees Open Session past Friday – in my oral report I emphasized a need for open communication. Many concerns coming from SGPS membership comes from a lack of communication and understanding about what is happening with budgetary cuts moving forward.
- v. Food insecurity – opportunity in February to ask the University Council for something. Will speak about our food insecurity program and look for more support on this to support students.
- vi. Food insecurity advisory committee meeting – first meeting today. Working document going to support an AMS parallel committee along with Rector to provide graduate student perspective.
- vii. Questions from Jake Morrow:
 1. Resignation of Indigenous Liaison- curious to know if there are any concerns about how the position is being run that someone left so quickly or if that's not a concern based on that resignation?
 - a. Devin: There are concerns whether it's running well and that's why we're speaking with Four Directions. I don't think it's an internal thing based on how the other commissioner roles have been working but there could be unique facets of this role to ensure that it functions well. This resignation was due to personal reasons however it is worth investigating further to ensure the position is functioning as it should. For context this happened with the previous Indigenous liaison as well.
 2. Food security request for support- PSAC has an open letter to Steven Smith requesting a donation of support for their fund. Wondering if that's an opportunity for collaboration.
 - a. Devin: Appreciate flagging the PSAC letter. We are having productive discussions with university and other stakeholders so I think we will continue to pursue those independently first.
 3. Reaching out for similar to ASUS event where Provost can speak with us. One of the things at town hall event is that the kind of segmenting of university community into undergrad vs grad vs faculty event is playing into the hand of keeping us separate as a community. AMS has invited faculty and staff to attend their event

and wondering if SGPS would consider a similar sense to support as a community in solidarity.

- a. Devin: Definitely value to inviting faculty and staff, so I'm not opposed.
 - b. Emils Matiss: University is inherently siloed and even how the budget directives occur are similarly siloed. Blanket freeze is the easiest way the budget can be addressed but each faculty is responsible for administering their own cuts. Smaller town hall meetings have been serving individual faculty needs, but I agree we would benefit from continued communication.
 - c. Jake: Was asking more specifically for faculty attendance within their respective departments. Having been in attendance at yesterday's town hall, something that was upsetting was that it was very confrontational and there was a lot of silencing of graduate and undergraduate students. Organizers were trying to take the microphone from graduate students that were teaching assistants and fellows trying to express concerns. Only when professors demanded that grad student employees were allowed to speak that they were allowed. The AMS Executive tried to ask one question regarding their membership, and they were not allowed. The Queen's Journal was not allowed in. The reason AMS has invited faculty and staff to attend their meetings is because the University is taking an aggressive and confrontational tone and taking advantage that we are siloed to pit different groups against each other. Being collaborative is needed.
 - d. Emils: provides his email (senator@sgps.ca) for follow up.
 - e. Devin: Voices that future town halls can continue to be open to all.
- viii. Can be reached at president@sgps.ca
- b. VP Graduate – Steacy Coombs (report attached)
 - i. Report outlines some changes to Community Housing - a link to these changes is in Tony's report.
 - ii. The SHIFT survey results were presented in November highlighting the challenges that graduate students face in housing and food security with

international students and students with disabilities most at risk – yet no solutions have been offered.

- iii. EmpowerMe+ - working to secure more financial support for this mental health service. Received support from the Division of Student Affairs and now working with the School of Graduate Studies and Post-doctoral Affairs.
- iv. Can be reached at vp.graduate@sgps.ca
- c. VP Professional – Maya Kawale (report attached)
 - i. Working towards the MedLaw games - proposed date of March 1st
 - ii. Meeting with H&A Sustainability working group and a Grad Club meeting this month.
 - 1. Jake Morrow: I know there was a Grad Club board meeting this past week and I heard that Grad Club rent was going to be quadrupled by the University and I wanted to know if there is truth to that?
 - 2. Maya: Based on my information I don't think that's true but thank you for raising that awareness to look out for.
 - iii. Can be reached at vp.professional@sgps.ca
- d. VP Finance and Services – Gaby Fekete (no report)
 - i. Food Insecurity Relief Program- were shocked by the number of applications received in 24hrs, more than 450. Only able to assist 52 students. We will reopen this program in January and with the help of students who provided testimonials and data collected from this round, we are pleased to announce that the Division of Student Affairs is willing to provide \$5000 per term going forward for this program.
 - 1. Jake Morrow comments in Zoom chat: "PSAC also has a ton of testimonials based on their fund that was also exhausted over the course of the past year."
 - ii. SGPS Annual Winter Closure starts Dec 15th to Jan 8th. Financial assistance applications will not be processed during this time.
 - iii. Can be reached at vp.finance@sgps.ca
- e. VP Community – Tony Hu (report attached)
 - i. Can be reached at vp.community@sgps.ca

B. Speaker Report

- a. Speaker – Aileen Editha (report attached)
 - i. Provided a review of the year and all the things that have been accomplished by the department representatives.
 - ii. Can be reached at speaker@sgps.ca

C. Approval

BIRT SGPS Council approve the Executive and Speaker Reports.

MOTION 12/12/23:03

Jake Morrow moves, Emils Matiss 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. In January we will be holding a meeting of the Student Senate Caucus to establish clear goals of how students should be organized within Senate for the next 3 or more years. With high student turn-over it can be hard to have a long-term strategic vision. Want to seek input through a brief survey to gain any ideas/concerns/ want to see moving forward. We kindly request that you consider not only completing it but also encouraging your peers to do the same. The more responses we receive, the better equipped we'll be to address your specific needs and concerns. <https://forms.office.com/r/RmHgQuzYKW>. Your dedication and involvement are truly appreciated, and we look forward to the insights you'll contribute.
- b. Can be reached at senator@sgps.ca

B. **Trustee Report** – Graduate Student Trustee – Kana Ogawa (no report)

- a. Devin, Rector, and I, advocated for students concerns around housing, finances, and food security, as well as the challenges of international students. Working to create a platform to relay non-confidential information for students to stay informed on Trustee information.
- b. Can be reached at trustee@sgps.ca

C. **Commissioner Reports**

- a. Athletics & Wellness Commissioner – Meghan Mendelin (report attached)
 - i. In the stages of planning fitness classes for January orientation.
 - ii. ARC space meeting – key takeaways noted in report.
 1. Suggestion of reserved time and space was a definite no. The way to move forward would be through a programming capacity- some ideas include a do your own workout in a studio class, would have sign-ups and class limits. Hope to have an update through the Winter term.
 - iii. Question from Eden Monastirsky: “Are there any current opportunities for open rec sports dedicated for grad students? if not, would this be an option?”
 1. Meghan – I don’t think there is any open rec grad programming specifically, they are free to currently add in, but we can definitely look to implement that.

- iv. Can be reached at athletics@sgps.ca
- b. Equity & Diversity Commissioner – Sangeetha Saravanan (report attached)
 - i. Working with other commissioners to create new events for BIPOC students – collaborating with athletics to think about wellness and social to think about incoming students to network and focus on wellbeing as a community.
 - ii. Attended a meeting for a new committee called the Student Action Group on Gender and Sexual Diversity– looking to build a comprehensive calendar with all events; if there’s anything anyone wants to add for next term let me know.
 - iii. Collaborating with Vina (International Student Commissioner) to organize a careers workshop for international students as students have voiced a need for additional support in preparing for the transition to working in Canada.
 - iv. Can be reached at equity@sgps.ca
- c. Indigenous Graduate Liaison – position vacant
- d. International Students’ Affairs Commissioner – Vina Li (oral report)
- e. Social Commissioner – Gabby Toretto (report attached)
 - i. Holiday Trivia Social happened last week at the Grad Club and it was very successful so looking to capitalize on that activity in the January Orientation
 - ii. Some dates for January Orientation are solidified and available on the SGPS website and social media pages. We have some Grad Club events and then also working with the other commissioners- Meghan mentioned there will be athletic events, with Sangeetha we’re coordinating a Yellow House games night, and Vina and QUIC to host a movie night for international students, and working with the Sexual Violence Response service to host a booth on January 16th.
 - iii. Reaching out to indigenous graduate and professional students- looking to work with Misty Underwood again to see about hosting another walk-talk like that which was held in the Fall semester.
 - iv. 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 12/12/23:04

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

Devin Fowlie moves, Gabby Torretto 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

- A. Update:** Further information on “O Canada” and “God Save the King” in convocations – [meeting minutes, still awaiting report from SGPS President]. In the meantime, please see Queen’s Journal article here: <https://www.queensjournal.ca/senate-committee-recommends-queens-keep-o-canada-at-convocation/>
- a. Devin will find the file and send it: <https://queensuniversity.civicweb.net/Portal/> provides all the previous Queen’s governance minutes and all currently public agendas for Senate open sessions. Can access those without needing to sign in. The specific meeting minutes (April 2018; pg 7)
- B. Update:** Financing question arising from the VP Finance and Services November Report
Gaby Fekete and Devin Fowlie prepared this response to a question that arise in the last council meeting:
- At one point, the SGPS had a health and dental plan under the CFS. Before anyone's time who is currently in the organization, the decision was made to leave the CFS plan and switch to another provider (StudentVIP). In this move, the SGPS was paid out a sum of money by the CFS plan. This money did not do anything for a while. When Studentcare came into the picture they helped the organization grow the pool of money by getting an additional amount that we should have been paid. This resulted in a larger pool, which grew in 2020-21 due to COVID refunds. This has brought the fund to where it is today, minus any supplementing of costs as are appropriate for the fund.
- C. Update:** Question on proposed changes to university housing, arising from the VP Community November Report
- a. Addressed in Tony and Steacy’s report, with a link in Tony’s report outlining the specific changes.
- D. Update:** Conversations on how to improve ARC experience for graduate and professional students, arising from the Athletics and Wellness Commissioner’s November Report.
- a. Addressed in Meghan’s report.

VIII. Main Motions & Discussion

- A. Discussion:** Educational Society (*postponed from September Council Meeting – waiting for Raj Gill to be in attendance*)
- a. Dean Christidis speaks on Raj’s behalf, noting that he will reach out to him to inquire further
- B. Discussion:** Winter 2024 Council meetings
- Nature: in-person, hybrid, or fully online meetings?
 - Date: meetings are currently held the second Tuesday of the month – would a different day work better?
 - Times: meetings are currently held at 17:30 pm, but there were conversations about whether it would be better to “poll” time to ensure more people can attend
 - Governance: currently, meetings and Council proceedings are governed by Robert’s Rules of Order. There have been conversations in the past about whether this should be changed to a different system. I have attached *Appendix A* to this agenda, which provides a brief overview of our discussion and deliberation.
- a. Aileen introduces this topic to gather feedback from council representatives.
 - b. Sarah Waldron: Weary about changing date and time from already established as in BioGrade Student Council, it’s set in the constitution which means it would be needed to be updated consistently. So just wondering how flexible are we looking to be and how will that impact others departmental meetings if they are set in stone to speak.
 - i. Aileen: Can be thought out more between this time and next council meeting to see peoples’ thoughts, but I agree there are numerous factors to consider.
 - c. Jake Marrow in Zoom chat: “On in person, vs. Online, vs hybrid council meetings: I think there should always be a hybrid option and it should be worked on how to better integrate. Possibly even invested in. In person is important due to the community and conversation it can spur, but for accessibility sake it’s paramount that organizations like this strive to make inclusivity a central part of their planning to remove barriers to participation”
 - i. Sangeetha Saravanan adds: “To add on to this, I personally would be on practicum at times, and not in Kingston - similarly, if folks are not in Kingston, but still want to attend having an online option to attend would be beneficial”
- C. Discussion:** Council Representatives’ thoughts on organizing a Winter 2024 meet-up for SGPS Council? This was previously held earlier in the Fall 2023 term but, since then, we

have had new members and so it might be a good idea to do it again. On the other hand, I understand how people might not want to get together during the Winter times!

- a. Aileen introduces the topic and seeks thoughts from everyone. Please follow up by email as needed.

IX. Other Business

A. Letter from BGSC international student reps looking to connect with other departments and professional programs (introduced by Sarah Waldron, Biology):

Greetings! We Andrea (Andy) and Sreevatshan, are current international graduate student representatives from the Biology Graduate Student Council (BGSC) at the Department of Biology. We extend an invitation to meet and connect with you, to discuss our shared goals and explore ways to collaboratively enhance the experience of international graduate students. Recognizing common concerns and challenges, we believe that pooling resources and expertise across different departments can effectively address pressing issues within our community. We look forward to the opportunity to work together for the betterment of our international graduate student experience at Queens. Our email IDs are 22kpg1@queensu.ca (Sreevatshan) and 22ags4@queensu.ca (Andy) to further connect with us. Hope to hear from you all.!

- a. Sarah Waldron introduces this topic:
 - i. Asked by international student reps to approach SGPS Council with a letter that they wrote to connect with other departments international reps. Even if your program doesn't have one, if there is someone on your departmental council who would be suited to respond to this letter or would be interested, please reach out to the emails enclosed within the letter.
 - ii. Aileen Editha comments: Wonder if there is space there for collaboration with Vina to pool resources and expertise to better the international graduate and professional student community.

X. Notices of Motion & Announcements

XI. Adjournment

Adjournment

MOTION 12/12/23:05

BIRT this meeting of SGPS Council be adjourned.

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