



Hello Council Members,

Happy New Year and welcome back! I hope you had a relaxing winter break and that the start of the semester is going 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.

Elections

The self-nomination period was open from January 15th – 22nd. There has been quite a bit of interest in the SGPS executive positions, and we are so excited to see it! For those of you who missed out on self-nominating but are interested in being involved with the SGPS, there are still great opportunities! You can continue to join our monthly council as departmental SGPS representatives or look out for commissioners hiring this spring (<https://sgps.ca/sgps-commissioners/>).

I will be graduating this spring and will not be rerunning for election, but I look forward to voting for our next SGPS executives on February 6th and 7th. You can find more information on the position responsibilities and election timeline on our website (<https://sgps.ca/elections/>).

EmpowerMe+

As I mentioned in previous months, there were some changes this fall to the Health and Dental Plan; one of these changes include 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. We have also confirmed financial assistance from SGSPA!

Though many of the committees have not yet started up for the year, I have many I'm looking forward to:

Expanding Thesis Research Working Group

There are many forms of research, and sometimes, a traditional written thesis is not the best way to present the material. This group will be reviewing the definition and form requirements for research-creation based theses, collaborative research (particularly in relation to student and collaborations), and presentation of research in different languages and orally. If anyone has ideas they would like me to share to this group, I would be happy to pass them along!

Graduate Orientation Committee

This committee aims to review September 2023 orientation activities and the recent January 2024 orientation – what worked, what didn't? Specifically: Grad Essentials Online modules, Side Walk Sale instead of Resource Fair, Welcome Receptions by SGSPA, Program orientations, Website, and Support Services – QUIC, Ban Righ, Yellow House, Four Directions, Campus tours. If you took part in orientation and have any feedback you'd like to share, please reach out!

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)!

Stacy Coombs

Vice-President Graduate, SGPS



Good Evening Council,

Happy New Year! We warmly welcome you and look forward to our discussion tonight at our first council meeting of 2024! I hope that you have had a restful winter break and that you have all had a smooth transition back to classes. In my report I have summarized the key aspects that I have been tackling this month as well as dates to be aware of.

Elections

SGPS Elections are coming up rapidly! The nomination period took place from January 15th – January 22nd. We are excited to see all of those who are running, best of luck in the election process!

If you would like to be involved in the SGPS and missed this deadline, you should check out other opportunities such as attending our council meetings as a representative for your department. You can also become involved with the SGPS as a commissioner. Applications will open during the spring; I have attached the link [here](#). We look forward to seeing the results of this election! Remember to vote for the next executive team on February 6th and 7th. More information on the positions, candidates, and timelines can be found [here](#).

Med Law Games

The Med Law Games are confirmed for March 1st. The sign-ups will be posted shortly, so please keep an eye out for those. The Med Law Games is a legacy event at Queen's and will continue to prevail post-pandemic. We are really looking forward to hosting this event and working alongside the ARC, Law Students' Society, and Aesculapian Society. We have already garnered a lot of interest in the event and are looking forward to seeing many of you March 1st. I am currently working on the orders for Grocery Basket, the T-shirt order, and completing the last details for the event. Once these elements are finalized the planning of the Med Law Games will be complete.

H&A Sustainability Working Group Meeting

The Housing and Ancillary Sustainability Working Group is now being converted into a committee. This meeting will take place January 25th. I look forward to updating you all at the next council meeting.

Grad Club

I have a meeting with the Grad Club on January 21st. I look forward to updating you at council.

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



Greetings,

Happy New Year! Welcome back to school everyone. I hope you had a restful, healthy and happy holiday. Our executive team took a break but are back and ready to serve our members!

As I reflect on what remains of my time with the SGPS, I think about what I can do to better serve our members. With that, we are excited to reopen the food insecurity relief program which was opened for the first-time last term. In addition to providing students with food insecurity relief, I am pleased to remind everyone that the financial assistance program is open again. Lastly, to those with an idea about an event or activity that enhances equity and diversity, sustainability or accessibility at Queen's please consider applying for the grant program.

1. **Food Insecurity Relief Program**

Last term we introduced the food insecurity relief program. This program provides successful applicants with grocery gift cards. Domestic students are eligible to receive \$150, international students are eligible to receive \$200, and all members with caregiving responsibilities are eligible to receive \$250. These amount differences are in recognition that domestic students often have greater access to financial resources than international students.

Last term we provided 52 gift cards to members to relieve food insecurity. We heard from many students living with food insecurity. These conversations were important to us, and we look forward to continuing to build on this experience by advocating to the University on our members behalf. In addition, we are pleased to announce that we will be reopening with the food insecurity relief program this term. Stay tuned for more details.

2. **Grant Program**

We are pleased to remind everyone that the grant program remains open to student-led initiatives **that have been sanctioned**. 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. **Financial Assistance Program = OPEN**

The financial assistance program is reopened and applications are being processed.

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



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Vice President Community
January 2024

Dear Council,

Happy New Year. A warm welcome to the first Council meeting of 2024.

University Budget Situation

In December, the SGPS released a statement in response to the Queen's Coalition Against Austerity Teach-In. Since then, media attention regarding the Queen's University budgetary situation has changed immensely. The SGPS is at the vanguard of anti-austerity organizing. Earlier this month, I met with representatives from Queen's Students vs Cuts, PSAC 901, and the AMS. We are organizing to build collective power and collaborating on a set of principles, which will be used to release a joint statement on the University's budgetary situation. After Council on January 23rd, the Provost will be attending AMS Assembly at 7 PM. I strongly encourage SGPS members to attend the meeting with the Provost, either in-person at Chernoff Hall Auditorium or virtually. If you are interested in organizing, please contact me.

Campus Cleanliness

In September 2023, Council representatives expressed concern over the cleanliness of the physical infrastructure on campus. In October 2023, I was made aware that PSAC 901 had previously run a "Spring Clean" campaign on reporting campus cleanliness/health and safety complaints. Recently, PSAC 901 transferred their campaign materials to the SGPS, and I will be working on reviewing and revitalizing the existing campaign.

Queen's Shift Project

In August 2020, the Queen's University senior leadership team signed a Declaration of Commitment to Address Systemic Racism. Recall the confluence of events that occurred in summer 2020: the death of George Floyd and the subsequent Black Lives Matter protests that spread around the world, Pride Month, and National Indigenous History Month. Following the Declaration, the division of Student Affairs and the Human Rights and Equity Office created the Student Experiences Survey (now called the [Shift survey](#)). Administered every two years, the survey asks a number of questions to understand and address overall campus culture and climate, including experiences, perceptions, and behaviors with respect to diversity and inclusion at the University.

The [Shift Project](#) grew out of the results of the 2021 Student Experiences Survey. The Project is a collection of events and initiatives aimed at centering equity-deserving student experiences, providing opportunities for dialogue around topics outlined in the survey, and acting on next steps towards improving campus culture at Queen's. Most recently, the Project has released season 2 of the [Shift Podcast](#), a podcast featuring students from diverse backgrounds speaking about their lived experiences at Queen's, their visions for a safer and more inclusive campus climate, and what needs to happen for there to be a meaningful and lasting culture shift. Another inspiring initiative are Shift Shorts, videos of students sharing their lived experiences and perspectives on important campus issues. The Project has been working with Queen's Athletics and Recreation to hear from [Queen's University Men's Soccer players on](#)

[creating a culture of consent](#) and [Queen's University Women's Basketball players on allyship and inclusion](#).

City of Kingston Updates

[In December 2020](#), Conny Glenn, Sydenham District Kingston City Councilor, introduced a motion directing city staff to review and update the [2018 draft rental licensing program](#) to reflect provincial legislation, and, that as part of this update, staff consider the potential for a phased-in program starting with the Districts of Sydenham and Kingscourt-Rideau. City staff will be presenting an updated rental licensing program to the [Special Administrative Policies Committee on January 24, 2024](#). The purpose of a rental licensing program is to ensure rental properties meet certain standards to safeguard the health and safety of renters. The Kingston Rental Properties Association will be at the meeting, and they are opposed to any form of licensing. SGPS members are strongly encouraged to attend the meeting to make comments and share their stories.

Committees and Meetings

- CFRC Radio Queen's University Board
 - FM antenna set to be moved in January.
 - New social media platform @cfrcmusic focused on CFRC's music programming launched to bypass Meta's decision to end access to news on its social media sites in response to Bill C18.
 - Radio Queen's University Annual General Meeting taking place on January 29, 2024 at 6 PM at the Grad Club. All members (you are automatically a member if you opted-in to the CFRC fee) are welcome to attend.

Yours in service,

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



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Equity and Diversity Commissioner
January 2024

Hello Council Members,

Here is what I have done in December:

1. Committee Commitment
 - a. Attending committee meetings, and bringing in the SGPS perspective
 - b. Specifically, working with SVPR to raise awareness of supports/resources available to graduate students

2. Reaching out to Career Services for the International Grad Student Resume / Cover Letter workshops
 - a. Still waiting for response, followed up

3. Organizing Board Games night with Social Commissioner
 - a. Happened on January 11th

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
Equity and Diversity Commissioner
Society of Graduate and Professional Students



Hello Council,

Hope this report finds everybody well! This past month I have continued to focus on collaborating with international student-related organizations and events on campus and Here are some updates from December/January.

January SHIFT Survey Meeting

The SHIFT advisory committee has had its first meeting of 2024. We continued our discussions on equity and diversity issues at Queen's as well as different initiatives including the Anonymous Question Box, Shift Shorts and Compassion vs Comprehension topics. A major issue brought up in the meeting was that international students have been and still are a population that is somewhat left out in equity and diversity discussions due to cultural differences. We brainstormed potential avenues to push for equity and diversity awareness among international students including through QUIC Newsletters, international student orientation etc. I will continue to act as a member of the advisory committee and connect between the SHIFT committee and other organizations.

Resume and CV workshop for international students

Sangeetha and I have submitted a request to the career centre for a potential CV and resume workshop specifically catered to international students. We are still waiting to hear back from them but will keep council posted.

International student affairs standing committee meeting (ISASC)

Since the new year, I have received responses from interested students for my outreach last year to re-structure the ISASC from both the biology and chemistry department. I am sending out another call to the departments to encourage students to join the committee. I have had a meeting with two of the interested students on Thursday (Jan 18th, 2024) to discuss the role of ISASC and potentially the service it is able to provide. Currently I am planning on having monthly meetings with students as they join in and will keep council posted.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns at international@sgps.ca.

Sincerely,
Vina Li
SGPS International Student Affairs Commissioner



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Social Commissioner
January 2024

Hello Council!

This month, I hosted SGPS Winter Orientation Month 2024, consisting of various social and resource events to welcome incoming graduate and professional students and inform them of resources and supports available to them! Reflecting on the Orientation events so far (list below), I'm very happy with the level of engagement we've had with grad and professional students! It's also very fulfilling seeing connections and friendships being made through these events. As well, through collaborations with the Queen's Observatory, Yellow House, QUIC and the Sexual Violence Prevention Response (SVPR), SGPS built and strengthened relationships with different student populations on campus. **Our last event, Trivia at the Grad Club is coming up on Tuesday January 23rd!**

SGPS Winter Orientation Events

January 9th (2pm) – **Queen's Observatory Tour**

January 11th 5pm-7pm – **Board Games Night at Yellow House (w Sangeetha)**

January 15th 7pm-10pm – **Speed Friending at the Grad Club**

January 16th 12pm- 2pm – **Consent Week Boothing with SVPR**

January 16th 5:30pm-8:30pm – **Movie Night at QUIC (w Vina)**

January 23rd 7pm-10pm- **Trivia Night at the Grad Club**

I'd also like to give a big thank you to Sangeetha and Vina for their help running our EDII and International student focussed events!

Running events throughout January has highlighted what works and what doesn't in terms of social events for grad students. Looking forward to improving our events throughout the semester to promote an environment of welcoming and inclusivity.

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

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