

The Society of Graduate and Professional Students recognizes the 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 is also a reminder that we are benefitting by living on this land that is a traditional territory of Indigenous people.

I. Announcements

A. Invitation from the Office of the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic):

- . To attend lunch with the auditors from the Ontario Quality Council who are auditing Queen's quality assurance processes.
- . February 7 from 12-1 pm at 315 Richardson Hall.
- . List of specific programs being audited below, but students do not need to have been involved in those programs necessarily to participate:
 1. Education (BEd), cyclical program review in 2020-21
 2. German Language and Literature (BA, BAH), cyclical program review was scheduled for 2021-22 but was only completed last spring.
 3. Healthcare Quality (MSCHQ), cyclical program review in 2019-20 (program run by the School of Nursing).
 4. Jewish Studies (BA), was reviewed with the School of Religion around 2021-22.

For the following two programs, the development of the new program is being audited:

 1. Master of Financial Innovation & Technology (MFIT), Smith School of Business, approved by the Quality Council in 2020
 2. Translational Medicine, MSc, PhD, Faculty of Health Sciences, approved by the Quality Council in 2018

Please e-mail speaker@saps.ca and president@saps.ca if you are interested in attending.

- i. Aileen Editha introduces the topic and invites Devin Fowlie to provide further commentary.
- ii. Devin: Goal of this is the Ontario Quality Council audits, interested in student engagement because it tends to be low, yet students are supposed to be involved. Trying to get a sense of if students are involved and if they are what their level of engagement has been.
- iii. Sarah Waldron asks: If anyone is attending can they maybe bring up the fact that the Provost and Vice-Provost (Academic) refused to attend the general AMS assembly. Can make it obvious that the Provost and Vice-Provost do not have student interests in mind. to see if Queen's is taking care of their students that these positions are not sharing in student interests.

- (a) Aileen elaborates: There is a AMS assembly this evening and following that the Provost was supposed to be present for questions, however a recent PSAC email circulated that Mathew Evans canceled the event, stating he didn't think it would lead to productive conversation.
- iv. Jake Morrow asks: Will the Provost attend (or show up)?
 - (a) Devin: No this is meant to be a third party that's auditing so no, Queen's administration shouldn't be in attendance.
- v. Sarah Waldron: Is this invite just for council members or can this invite be extended to our departmental committees?
 - (a) Aileen and Devin: Can be as broadly distributed as can. Need name of students by tomorrow end of day.

II. Adoption of the Agenda

A. Adoption of the Agenda

MOTION 23/01/24:01

BIRT SGPS Council adopt the Agenda for the January 23 2024 Council Meeting.

Steady Coombs moves, Devin Fowlie seconds. No points of discussion on this motion. No dissenting votes; the motion passes unanimously.

III. Minutes

A. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

MOTION 23/01/24:02

BIRT the SGPS adopt the minutes from the December 12, 2023 Council Meeting.

Steady Coombs moves, Shamus Tobin 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 (oral report)
 - i. Written a piece for university council newsletter highlighting Food Insecurity Relief Program and asking for donations to the food bank to assist with that project.
 - ii. Attended special Senate on Jan 17th – had a presentation from the Provost on an updated budget that have since been released. (Slides from Special Senate meeting: <https://www.queensu.ca/provost/budget-and-enrolment-planning/operating-budget-deficit-updates>). Major takeaways:

1. Faculty Arts and Science in biggest deficit. Taking 1.5% away from departments and moving it into a deficit mitigation fund as they have no carry-over left.
2. University joining Uniforum – network of universities looking internally to improve university efficiencies.
3. International enrolment being sought as a source of revenue. Federal government has said that moving forward for the next 2-years there will be a cap on international student enrolment (~200,000 students lower than what it currently is) – impacting undergraduate students and not graduate.
 - a. Question from Jake Morrow: Is there any info about how that deficit translates on a per-student basis/based on faculty size? It's my understanding that the per-capita deficit is actually larger in other faculties comparatively.
 - i. Devin: Don't recall that information being talked about but the most recent numbers for the deficits in the other faculties seem to be getting smaller so if it was true at one point it may not be now – many have balanced budgets now.
 - b. Shamus Tobin – How do the Executive envision the new limits on international student permits to affect the budgetary situation of Queen's moving forward?
 - i. Devin: Opportunity to talk about this today with Division of Student Affairs and they think it's too early for them to know. My understanding is that intake is frozen for the time being and if that doesn't change it will have a major impact.
 - ii. Vina Li (International Commissioner): Don't think that the cuts imposed by immigration will impact our recruitment- seem to be targeted to more private institutions. They're imposed by raising the standard of proof of funds for international students and our students already have to show above the minimum funding that general populous needs to show.
 - c. Jake Morrow: Is there any sort of connection with St. Lawrence College and if there will be an impact there if we as a community can do anything to support them?

- [deficit-updates](#); From HigherEdStrategy - <https://higherstrategy.com/is-queens-running-out-of-money/>)
- viii. Can be reached at: president@sgps.ca
- b. VP Graduate – Steacy Coombs (report attached)
- i. Member of two committees/groups this Winter and looking for feedback on the areas they cover:
1. Expanding Thesis Research Working Group – expanding the definition of what can be considered a thesis (ex. oral or in different languages). If anyone has thoughts, please reach out.
 2. Graduate Orientation Committee – if you participated last fall or this winter, please provide me feedback on what worked, what you like/didn't like.
- ii. Can be reached at: vp.graduate@sgps.ca
- c. VP Professional – Maya Kawale (report attached)
- i. MedLaw Games – finalized remaining orders and starting marketing soon.
- ii. Grad Club – looking to rebrand and remarket. Grad Club may close in the summer to aid the financial situation.
1. Question from Jake Morrow: Is there any more information about what's going on with the Grad Club as it pertains to the rent increase?
 - a. Maya: Yes, there is a rent increase coming (with the first at the beginning of May) so they're working on financial and trying to put together how they're going to address it to stay viable.
 2. Jake: Has there been any communication as to why this rent raising has occurred- if there is a raise in rent that's substantial it seems like it would be purposeful.
 - a. Maya: Haven't heard of any reasons from the parties raising the rent but just working to combat them to stay afloat.
- iii. Can be reached at: vp.professional@sgps.ca
- d. VP Finance and Services – Gaby Fekete (report attached)
- i. Reopening the Food Insecurity Relief Program this term – will be processed in a randomized order until we exhaust the funds.
 - ii. Grant program is still open for applications – students are encouraged to apply for funding for projects at Queen's that increase equity and accessibility but please ensure events are sanctioned before applying.
 - iii. Financial assistance program has reopened from the holidays.
 - iv. Can be reached at: vp.finance@sgps.ca

- e. VP Community – Tony Hu (report attached)
 - i. SGPS is working in a coalition with PSAC, AMS, and other student organizers to craft a statement in response to the University’s budget situation.
 - ii. Campus cleanliness – PSAC has transferred materials from their Spring Clean campaign over to me. Looking to reboot/revitalize that campaign moving forward.
 - iii. Shift Project – performed through Student Affairs at Queen’s. Looking to shift the campus climate on different equity seeking groups, encourage everyone to check it out.
 - iv. Meeting at City Hall at 6pm Wednesday January 24th – response to motion on rental licensing. Looking to improve quality of housing in student housing areas. Supposed to be some opposition to this so I encourage everyone to show up (information linked in Tony’s written report).
 - v. Can be reached at: vp.community@sgps.ca

B. Speaker Report

- a. Speaker – Aileen Editha (no report)

C. Approval

MOTION 23/01/24:03

BIRT SGPS Council approve the Executive and Speaker Reports.

Shamus Tobin moves, Maya Kawale 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 (oral report)

- a. Operating effectively at Senate (amongst the student senators and coordinating with faculty caucus). Special Senate meeting was scheduled due to work from the faculty and student senators stating that a meeting was needed and hopefully from this we are going to get more communication about what the University is planning in a more timely manner and convey our concerns more effectively.
 - i. Question from Jake Morrow: From the outside attending it felt very incredibly short and as a person who was able to observe I didn’t get anything out of that, but I’m wondering behind the scenes what progress was made.
 - 1. Emils: From the student side we focused on raising student issues. From faculty side we relied on one of their members who was financially well versed to ask pointed financial questions. Biggest take away was to understand the framework that the Provost is using to look at the budget. Budget implementation is falling on

each of the Deans – budget cuts affecting your departments need to be addressed to those individuals.

b. Can be reached at: senator@sgps.ca

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

a. Next Trustee meeting will be held in March, so please reach out if there is anything you want me to bring forward.

i. Abby McLean: Is there anything you can share about budgetary discussions at these meetings as the Provost keeps stating that budgetary decisions are made there.

1. Kana: Everything in the meeting is confidential however what is not is available in the agenda online. The special Senate meeting and all available information is what's being discussed in the Board of Trustee meetings. Information can be accessed here:

<https://www.queensu.ca/financialservices/publications> (reports regarding finances – including annual budget and financial projections).

ii. Jake Morrow: I'm wondering if there are any discussions at board and Senate about why things have to be so confidential. There are issues with lack of transparency and to gain access to those rooms' agreements are made to be confidential. I'm curious if there is any pushback as to why we are keeping these confidential from the community.

1. Kana: Share the same thoughts and this lack of transparency is being advocated against. One thing that student trustees and rector are trying to do are organize a meeting with the Dean to talk more about the financial situation and his strategic planning for the future and how that could come into play with the current budget situation to further inform graduate students.

iii. Jake Morrow: Board of Trustees is partially responsible for hiring Provost Evans, is there any insight into why he was hired and if there was any agenda with that.

1. Kana: You can look at the hiring committee in charge of the hiring online so I will provide that, but unfortunately it did happen before me so I can't speak too much on it. The following link however contains information on administration hiring :

<https://www.queensu.ca/principal/about/special-initiatives/search-committees>

2. Devin Fowlie: We were on the hiring committee and we collectively got to see the Provost candidates, but we subsequently learned that

only one person from our organization could see them so that person moved forward on the hiring committee. We learnt that the entire process was confidential until they decided to hire the candidate – would be helpful to see who else ran but that is all confidential. We do have an opportunity to speak at open board meetings so one thing we could bring up is for the board to expand a bit more and see if they think it was an appropriate decision – I don't have any opposition bringing this up.

- iv. Sarah Waldron: Would it be possible for the exec to provide a guide to understanding the current budget issues. I know many people in my department are struggling to understand what is happening and what the future of the university holds.
 - 1. Devin: Acknowledges the comment and notes that the Executive can put something together.
- b. Bringing awareness to Rector Election happening in this Executive Election
- c. Can be reached at: trustee@sgps.ca

C. Commissioner Reports

- a. Athletics & Wellness Commissioner – Meghan Mendelin (no report)
- b. Equity & Diversity Commissioner – Sangeetha Saravanan (report attached)
 - i. Working with Career Services to create a resume and cover letter workshop for international graduate students – it is a busy time for Career Services, so they are a bit delayed but will keep everyone updated.
 - ii. Board Games night for BIPOC grad students was organized with Gabby and ran on Jan 11th successfully.
- c. Indigenous Graduate Liaison – *position vacant*
- d. International Students' Affairs Commissioner – Vina Li (report attached)
 - i. Working on Tri-council nomination.
 - ii. Can be reached at: international@sgps.ca
- e. Social Commissioner – Gabby Toretto (report attached)
 - i. Throughout January have been holding orientation events for incoming graduate students. Many have been in collaboration with various school groups such as QUIC and Yellow House and we have also made new connections with the Sexual Violence Prevention Response Group and the Queen's Observatory. Lots of student engagement and hoping that they've not only served to foster community but increase awareness of the services available to students at Queen's.
 - ii. Next project - SGPS Awards. Will follow up with more information in the coming weeks.

iii. 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 23/01/24:04

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

Shamus Tobin moves, Sarah Waldron 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

VIII. Main Motions & Discussion

A. Ratification of Ballot Questions

MOTION 23/01/24:05

Council must ratify the proposed ballot questions for the SGPS Executive Elections and the Fee Referendum for 2024-25.

Ballot questions have been attached to the agenda as Appendix A.

Motion raised and presented by Council Speaker, Aileen Editha

Shamus Tobin moves, Emmanuel Ampomah seconds. No points of discussion on this motion. No dissenting votes; the motion passes unanimously.

B. Discussion: JDUC/Student Life Centre Fee

Discussion raised and to be led by SGPS President, Devin Fowlie.

- i. Devin: JDUC has been significantly renovated for the new Student Life Centre- initiated back in 2018. Meant to be more space for undergraduate and graduate students. Since then, costs have increased so need to re-negotiate costs to be in the space. Tri-party agreement dictates what amounts between ourselves, the AMS, and the University, are paid for designated space usage and utilities sharing. Working with a couple of different models to pay what's fair. The cost is going to go up regardless of the model we go with and that means increasing the fee that currently exists for the Student Life Centre. Would be an increase of about \$7 per student – above CPI. Will increase by CPI regardless next year. Once we got

these numbers, we put out a call to have this included within the referendum. It did not meet the 100 signatures so it will not go forward with this current referendum. Two possible options to move forward:

1. By-election – try to get required signatures with this additional amount of time and place the fee on the referendum ballot. We would ask council to recommend special wording to the referendum to go back to the original fee if it doesn't pass.
 2. We give up space to be able to afford it under the current fee scaled to CPI. To do this we have to choose what space should be given up. As an Executive team, the only space that can be reasonably given up without impacting students would be the Executive offices – offset roughly what the increase costs would be.
- ii. Emmanuel Ampomah: What is the implication of giving up that space for the Executives?
1. Devin: Currently we have access to a reception area and a board room which allow us to do what we do. We do use individual offices from time to time, but the impact based on how the team currently works would likely be minimal.
- iii. Jake Morrow: Can you repeat what “giving up” means for the office space? Does that become grad student communal space, or does that become someone else's space?
1. Devin: Giving up would mean giving up to another party within the building (they would likely go to AMS). An alternative would be to make them rooms for students to use.
- iv. Aileen Editha: Is what we decide now forever set in stone or is this debatable in the future?
1. Devin: Once we occupy or give it up that's it.
- v. Jake: Would the \$7 fee be for the one time or is that an ongoing fee?
1. Aileen: The \$7 increase would be a onetime increase and then tied to CPI the way it is now.
- vi. Sarah Waldron: What does the by-election process look like?
1. Aileen: Collection of signatures and then would move onto the vote. It would likely be in March. By-election is like a normal fee referendum just on an altered start time.
- vii. Devin: It sounds like there may be some appetite for increasing the fee if we can change the space from office to non-office.

- viii. Jake: Could have it as bookable offices that are run by the SGPS so that it is predominantly used by executive and then if there is any free time graduate/professional students could book it.

Aileen took an informal poll- majority is interested in a By-Election.

IX. Other Business

X. Notices of Motion & Announcements

XI. Adjournment

Adjournment

MOTION 23/01/24:06

BIRT this meeting of SGPS Council be adjourned.

Emmanuel Ampomah moves, Jake Morrow seconds. No points of discussion on this motion. No dissenting votes; the motion passes unanimously.