



Hey everyone,

I hope that the winter term is coming along well for you. I have a few key updates below.

Elections

First, thank you so much to everyone who voted in the most recent election. There was a very strong pool of candidates this year and we are so pleased to be welcoming Emils, Zaid, Katie, Simran, and Maya into their new roles as we begin the transition out of our roles early next month. Many thanks to all of you for voting and participating in this important process!

Budget and Administration Communication

We have continued to notice a clear lack of communication from the University administration around a number of issues, most notably the budget. I have been in close communication with the Provost's Office and am pleased to report that I have a meeting scheduled with them for later this month. These meetings are *not* confidential and so I hope to have some very frank discussions and bring back some meaningful insights to all of you. Steacy and I also have a meeting scheduled with Dr. James Fraser (Associate Dean, Graduate FAS) and Dr. Barbara Crow (Dean FAS) which will happen the morning of council. We hope to have some information to bring back to you about some of what is happening in FAS. Communication is critical and I am hopeful that these meetings will be productive and effective ways of having more frank discussion.

Updates from the University

We heard at Senate this week that the Faculty of Arts and Science will have its timeline for getting its budget in balance to 2026-27. This means that the course cap which would have closed courses under 10 at the undergraduate level and under 5 at the graduate level will be extended by one year. This will be a really important extension which I hope will allow departments to find ways to expand existing courses or come up with solutions for smaller courses.

We also heard that the 1.5% "tax" that is being placed on all departments will indeed be used as part of the deficit mitigation fund, which will be used to offset the deficit that is being faced in the FAS. The Provost has indicated that this tax will likely also need to increase. To be clear, this is a solution that the University has used in the past and is a typical solution for providing some runway to Faculties while they get their budgets under control. However, we continue to express our concerns with the FAS because it has continued to grow its deficit when it is supposed to achieving balance, and we have concerns about the impact of increased taxation on other Faculties. We will continue to monitor this closely and advocate for sustainable solutions.

With all my best,

Devin Fowle
President



Hello Council Members,

Though this semester continues to be challenging for both students and staff at Queen's, I hope your studies are going well. Here are my updates from the last month:

Elections

The self-nomination period was open from January 15th – 22nd and voting on February 6th and 7th. There was quite a bit of interest in the SGPS executive positions, and we are so excited to see it! I hope you were all able to vote and make your voice heard. Starting in March, the transition period for the new elected executive begins and they will start shadowing us. Congratulations to the new elected SGPS executive!

EmpowerMe+

This mental health program is now available to all graduate and professional students! This program provides members of the SGPS Health and Dental plan access to this a mental health and wellness service that allows students to connect with qualified counsellors, consultants, and life coaches for a variety of issues (<https://sgps.click/empower>).

Community Housing

Community Housing is aware of the community tenant group, Queen's Community Housing Residents Associations. Concerns with the rents increase, changes to the lottery system, and limitations on length of lease have been voiced. They are working to arrange an open meeting with tenants, as requested.

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!

FIAC

We are seeing an increased need for low-cost food options for our students. There are hours long wait times at the AMS Food Bank and the Peach Market sells out everyday. We are seeing that graduate students, specifically international graduate students, are heavily impacted. We are hoping to work with the Good Food Boxes to create more low-cost food resources for our members.

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,

We extend our gratitude to everyone attending our February Council meeting. Your presence is greatly appreciated, and we are excited about the discussions we will have tonight. In my report, I've summarized the key areas of focus for this month and emphasized important upcoming dates that require your attention.

Elections

Thank you immensely for entrusting me with another term as your Vice-President Professional. I am beyond grateful for the opportunity to continue serving in this capacity for another term. It's been an absolute pleasure serving you this past year, and I can hardly contain my excitement about continuing to champion your needs in the coming term. I look forward to working with this incredible organization for another year, and I am eagerly anticipating the opportunities that lie ahead. Together, let's make this next year even more remarkable than the last!

For those who are interested, while undergoing the campaign process the executive candidates did an interview for CFRC and they aired it on the radio and also included the segment in their podcast which I will hyperlink [here](#). I also interviewed with the Queen's Business, Science, and Technology Journal. Lastly, the SGPS Executive debate took place which I will link [here](#).

Med Law Games

The Med Law Games are taking place on March 1st. The sign-ups will be posted Monday, February 12th, so please keep an eye out for those. The Med Law Games holds a significant place in Queen's history, serving as a cherished tradition that will endure beyond the challenges posed by the pandemic. Anticipation runs high as we eagerly prepare to once again welcome participants and spectators alike to this esteemed event. Collaborating closely with the ARC, Law Students' Society, and Aesculapian Society, we are committed to ensuring that the upcoming iteration of the Games is nothing short of exceptional.

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



Dear Council,

With election season behind us, two months remain in my term as Vice President Community. Instead of winding down, however, my work is rocketing along at full speed.

Residential Rental Licensing

As I mentioned in my report last month, [in December 2022](#), Conny Glenn, Sydenham District Kingston City Councillor, 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, consider the potential for a phased-in or pilot program starting in the districts of Sydenham and Kingscourt-Rideau. The purpose of a rental licensing program is to ensure rental properties meet certain standards to safeguard the health and safety of renters.

City staff presented the updated residential rental licensing program to the [Administrative Policies Committee on January 24, 2024](#). Three options were presented. Option 1 proposed a residential rental registry, option 3 proposed a full residential rental licensing program, and option 2 landed between options 1 and 3. The Committee heard from seven speakers representing landlord interests (read: opposed to any form of licensing). The Committee also heard from seven speakers representing tenant interests. Among those seven speakers, there was a representative from the AMS, and I spoke in support of a residential rental licensing program.

Unfortunately, at Administrative Policies Committee, the weakest proposal, option 1, was recommended to City Council. While I would have preferred to see options 2 or 3 recommended, there seemed to be little interest from the Committee for option 3, meaning option 2 was the best that could be realistically hoped for.

At the [February 6, 2024 meeting of City Council](#), councillors again discussed the issue of residential rental licensing, with the recommendation from Administrative Policies Committee that option 1, as amended, be adopted. City Council heard from three speakers representing landlord interests. City Council also heard from three speakers representing tenant interests. Among those three speakers, there was a representative from the AMS, and I spoke to encourage City Council to support option 2, a residential rental licensing program. Critically, students were able to present a united front to City Council with the AMS and SGPS allied on the issue of housing quality. Together, the AMS and SGPS represent nearly all students enrolled at Queen's University at Kingston. Despite our efforts, a minority of councillors supported option 2. Option 1 was passed with a nearly unanimous vote.

Committees and Meetings

- Queen's University Anti-Hate Advisory Group
 - Established in response to Chown Hall incident.
 - First meeting ironing out terms of reference.
 - One identified goal is to streamline process for reporting and responding to hate crimes and hate-motivated incidents.
 - Currently, there exists many pathways to reporting which leads to decision fatigue for reporters and confusion about referrals for responders.
- Anti-austerity organizing
 - Met with AMS and PSAC901 to discuss our shared values and demands for Queen's University senior leaders.

- Next meeting February 9.
- Canadian Federation of Students Ontario lobby week
 - I will be in Toronto from Sunday, February 25 to Wednesday, February 28 to speak with MPPs.
- Canadian Federation of Students National Graduate Student Caucus
 - I will be in Halifax from March 1 to March 4 to work with graduate student leaders across the country.
- Vice Provost Global Engagement
 - Discussed announcement from Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Marc Miller.
 - Implications:
 - Graduate students not affected by cap on student visas.
 - Housing guarantee not extended to international graduate students.
- Radio Queen's University AGM
 - Expensive, unforeseen, and unmitigable antenna changes this year.
 - Campus radio station in a strong financial situation.
 - Want to increase staffing to augment capacity at the station.
 - Increased staffing will increase expenditures, need to increase revenues.
 - Lots of coverage of AMS and SGPS elections.
- City of Kingston Postsecondary Working Group
 - I am the SGPS representative to this newly created working group that brings together stakeholders from the city and the three post-secondary institutions in Kingston: Queen's University, Royal Military College, and Saint Lawrence College.
 - First meeting February 8.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact me at vp.community@sgps.ca.

Yours in service,

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



Dear Council,

I hope you have all had a great start into the new year. This report outlines upcoming fitness & wellness events and provides an update on the ongoing efforts to address the ARC space issue.

1. Three upcoming SGPS fitness classes

- **Triple Threat Class, February 15, 4:30pm**
A class that combines cardio, strength, and core exercises all in one session. You'll work up a sweat to the beat of the music while having a blast!
- **Barre Class, March 6, 4:30pm**
Barre is a fun, music-filled class that will challenge your strength and balance through sculpting moves that make for a full-body workout.
- **Pilates Class, March 13, 4:30pm**
Strengthen your core, improve flexibility, and reset your mind in this rejuvenating workout.

Spread the word about these free fitness opportunities!

2. SGPS Fitness Programming Proposal for the ARC

- A proposal to address the ARC space issue through a programming has been drafted and will be presented to the leadership team of Athletics & Recreation in the coming weeks. It proposes the implementation of an SGPS-only group fitness program and a regularly scheduled SGPS-only self-directed workout class in one of the ARC studios.
- **A survey to determine preferred class types, days, and times will be distributed to members in the coming weeks.** If you could kindly encourage the members in your departments to fill out the survey, it would be greatly appreciated. We want to ensure that the offerings will be beneficial to members.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact 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



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 January/February.

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.

Vice Provost-Global Engagement (VPGE) Check-In Meeting

I met with Heather Kincaide (the director of VPGE office) and Tony (our VP Community) on Jan 25th. The university budget issue was an important topic during the meeting with regards to the potential reduction in international student enrollment due to the upcoming visa policy. More meetings were planned between the SGPS executives and the VPGE office concerning this issue. A conversation session between the VPGE and the graduate international student population was also brought up in the meeting, which will be scheduled with the department student reps and potentially interested international students in the future.

International Student Affairs Standing Committee (ISASC) Meeting

International student affairs standing committee (ISASC) was in place but had diminished involvement before my term due to student graduation. Since my last report, I have received feedback from department student reps in the department of philosophy, computing, biology, education and the department of biomedical and molecular sciences. A when2meet has been sent to the reps for a potential meeting time in March. The meeting is going to involve more students in the future as more student reps join the committee.

Tricolour Council Award candidate selection & interview

The first round of candidate ranking and selection was completed last week (Feb 2nd), and the interviews will take place throughout this weekend (Feb 10-11th). I will be in the interview panel and am preparing the question bank up till the interviews.

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