

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 territory of Indigenous people.

I. Announcements

A. Seeking candidates for the Graduate Student Senator By-Election

Please e-mail senator@sgps.ca if you have any questions about the role, or e-mail elections@sgps.ca if you have any questions about the election process.

B. URGENT: Seeking two volunteers to serve in the Elections and Referenda Appeals Committee

C. E-mail announcement from Matthew Evans sent to student leaders:

- i. Devin Fowlie comments: The Provost, in response to our requests, has decided it would be beneficial to send out an email monthly (that's the goal) to provide university updates that are within his purview. Will be distributed to Devin as President, and it can be distributed through Aileen Editha to council representatives.

Dear student leaders,

After conversations with many of you over the past several weeks, I have decided to start sending you monthly newsletters during the academic year. I intend to keep these as simple, fact-based messages, which can be shared with your respective members.

The main updates from my office are related to Queen's budget situation, a matter I know is of great importance to students. Moving forward, it is my goal to send you updates on a broad array of initiatives – on budget and beyond – arising from my portfolio.

Thank you for your interest and concern, and I wish you well over the next few weeks.

Updates from the Office of the Provost & Vice-Principal (Academic)

Virtual student Q&A session on university finances

- Students are invited to join Patrick Deane, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Donna Janiec, Vice-Principal (Finance and Administration), and me virtually on Monday, February 12 from 6-7 pm for a student Q&A session on university finances. The Q&A will be moderated by Queen's Rector Owen Crawford-Lem.
- [Please register here to join.](#)

Principal Deane released a message on Friday, January 26th, addressing Queen's financial challenges. [Read the full statement in the Gazette.](#)

Queen's Renew Project

- This new initiative, launched last week, will examine Queen's systems, processes, and the delivery of professional services to ensure the university is structured and operating effectively to deliver on our academic mission. A further goal is to create a working environment where professional services staff, who deliver administrative and support work that bolsters Queen's teaching and research mission, are well supported with effective tools, systems, and processes.
- In turn, strong processes and systems will advance our teaching and research, and help us to provide an inspired and motivating learning environment with effective support structures for students.
- The Professional Services Working Group, struck by Principal Deane and co-chaired by Vice-Principal Janiec and myself, will lead the Renew Project.
- This project coincides with Queen's efforts to reach a structurally balanced budget over the next two years. The difficult work to address the deficit continues within the faculties and shared services, and separately, the Renew Project will seek to ensure we can continue to deliver on our academic mission over the long term, well beyond our current financial challenges.
- This work will be supported by international consultancy firm, Nous Group. They have a leading benchmarking tool that compares and assesses how professional services are delivered at universities around the world. The program will help Queen's to learn from other institutions' experiences, and identify areas where we are doing well, and where we have opportunities to improve.
- [More information is available on the project website.](#)

Operating Budget Deficit Updates

- A special Senate meeting on the budget was held on January 17th. At this meeting, I explained that the forecast (as projected in December) for the end-of-year deficit had fallen to \$48 million from the forecasted \$63 million at the start of the year. This improvement was largely due to better-than-expected financial performance in shared services units. Unfortunately, the situation in the faculties is \$2.8 million worse than forecast, mainly due to an increase in the projected deficit of Arts and Science (now forecast to be \$37 million).
- At the most recent meeting of Senate last week, I announced that the Faculty of Arts and Science will have one extra year, until 2026-27, to bring its budget into structural balance.
- In addition, Dean Barbara Crow announced that undergraduate classes with less than 10 students will be able to run next year, 2024-25.
- [Updates, along with many FAQs, are posted on the Office of the Provost website.](#)
- [The Faculty of Arts and Science also has a dedicated page on its website for budget deficit updates and FAQs.](#)

II. Adoption of the Agenda

A. Adoption of the Agenda

MOTION 24/02/13:01

BIRT SGPS Council adopt the Agenda for the February 13th 2024 Council Meeting.

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

III. Minutes

A. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

MOTION 24/02/13:02

BIRT SGPS Council adopt the minutes from the January 24th 2024 Council Meeting.

Daekwon Blair moves, Devin Fowlie 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. Trying to open up more avenues for communication with administration.
- ii. Met with James Fraser (Associate Dean, Graduate Studies - Faculty of Arts and Science) and Barbara Crow (Dean - Faculty of Arts and Science)- talked about increasing graduate student voice but a lot was spent on increasing funding for graduate students even though we're facing budgetary challenges. Continue to be disappointed with the response of the Faculty of Arts and Science, as their plan to increase graduate student funding is focused around increasing grants faculty members get- problem is that most faculty don't apply or don't write students into their grants (35% of SSHRC grants have grad student funding incorporated and CIHR even less). Focus on graduate supervision being important and non-money related things that can improve the graduate experience. Follow up meeting scheduled.
- iii. Meeting coming up with Provost office.
- iv. Outcomes from last Senate meeting – Faculty of Arts and Science will have the deadline for budget balancing extended to 2026-2027. Course cap which would close courses under 10 at the undergrad and under 5 at the grad level back by a year. The 1.5% tax on Departments will be used as deficit mitigation to offset the Faculty of Arts and Science costs and the Provost, indicated this tax will likely have to increase.
- v. Housing conversations within the city of Kingston:
 1. Sydenham District Association meeting attendance– we now have a formal spot on their board. Talked about the Canadian Mortgage

- and Housing Cooperation (CMHC) accelerator fund, helps to build housing in Kingston. Can share an explainer about this- has implications for zoning by-laws.
2. The city has purchased the Extencicare site which will be developed into transitional housing.
 3. St Helens complex, green space beside the Isabel currently owned by corrections Canada, is set to be potentially developed soon.
- vi. Can be reached at: president@sgps.ca
- b. VP Graduate – Steacy Coombs (report attached)
- i. Faculty of Arts and Science Grad council (happened today) – two SGPS Council reps were also able to attend, Emily and Anton. Tara MacDonald (Associate Dean - School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs) conducted research on graduate student funding across departments and is looking to publish it. Push back from faculty reps, but interested in everyone’s feedback as to whether this should be available to graduate students.
 1. Jake Morrow and Sarah Waldron: Is it just the upper and lower ends or all the funding data? Would it be possible to get the details of that written out?
 - a. Steacy Coombs: The upper and lower, standard deviation, mean, and number of students they sampled from. The concerns with releasing it are that students will complain. Tara was for publishing, as it would be helpful for students to be aware of their finances.
 - b. Anton Kaduck: Plan to publish would be the mean, for incoming students to have a more accurate sense of what funding is for your department. Currently they publish the median, but Tara thinks the mean would be more accurate. There are large disparities in funding across students and this investigation highlights it.
 2. Abby McLean: Do you think they would publish everything and also if they did just report the mean, would it be accessible to all students or just incoming?
 - a. Steacy Coombs: I will bring these questions to Tara and see what she thinks.
 - b. Abby McLean: Would be meaningful to see the low and high ends.

B. Speaker Report

- a. Speaker – Aileen Editha (no report)

C. Approval

MOTION 24/02/13:03

BIRT SGPS Council approve the Executive and Speaker Reports.

Anton Kaduck moves, Emmanuel Ampomah 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. Can be reached at: senator@sgps.ca

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

- a. Can be reached at: trustee@sgps.ca

C. Commissioner Reports

- a. Athletics & Wellness Commissioner – Meghan Mendelin (report attached)
 - i. Upcoming SGPS group fitness classes – keep checking socials for sign up links and free for SGPS members.
 - ii. Update about ARC space – proposal has been drafted and is being forwarded to athletics and recreation team to propose for more specific SGPS programming. Survey will be distributed in the coming days for all SGPS members to determine days/times and class preferences – please distribute so it can be tailored to people’s needs.
 - iii. Can be reached at: athletics@sgps.ca
- b. Equity & Diversity Commissioner – Sangeetha Saravanan (oral report)
 - i. Currently brainstorming for more initiatives, if anyone has suggestions or wants to collaborate, please reach out.
 - ii. Professional development workshops for international graduate students to ease transition to Canadian work force, should be coming in March.
 - iii. Committee meetings – evaluating where more support is needed.
 - iv. Soft Infrastructure Network – still working on getting representatives from all departments, please reach out if you want to join.
 - v. Can be reached at: equity@sgps.ca
- c. Indigenous Graduate Liaison – *position vacant*
- d. International Students’ Affairs Commissioner – Vina Li (report attached)
 - i. Workshop in the beginning of March with Sangeetha.
 - ii. Meeting with international student reps from different departments – getting effective email contact to different departments. Have a list of initiatives and with these discussions hope to determine a priority list.

- iii. Can be reached at: international@sgps.ca
- e. Social Commissioner – Gabby Toretto (oral report)
 - i. Coordinating annual SGPS awards – recognize the exceptional efforts of graduate and professional students through the teaching and academic lens. Want the nomination period to open by the end of February. Looking to send a form out to council in the coming weeks to seek committee member volunteers. These positions will serve 5-15hrs in the last week of March to review applications – honoraria will be provided for participation.
 - ii. Working on transitional documents for future social commissioners to highlight the events held.
 - iii. Can be reached at: social@sgps.ca

D. Committee Reports

E. Department Reports

F. Other Reports

- a. University Rector – *position vacant* (no report)

G. Approval

MOTION 24/02/13:04

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

Jake Morrow moves, Daekwon Blair 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

Budgetary explanation from the SGPS Executive will be provided in March council meeting.

VIII. Main Motions & Discussion

A. Ratification of Executive Election and Fee Referendum Results **MOTION 24/02/13:05**

BIRT 2023-2024 SGPS Council ratify the certified results of the 2024-2025 SGPS Executive Elections and Student Fee Referendum as provided.

See: Appendix A – 2024-25 Election and Referendum Results, attached.

Motion raised and presented by Council Speaker, Aileen Editha

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

B. Ratification of Proposed By-Election Timeline

MOTION 24/02/13:06

BIRT SGPS Council ratify the proposed March 2024 By-Election timeline.

See: Appendix B – March 2024 By-Election Timeline, attached.

Motion raised and presented by Deputy Speaker, Katie Zutautas.

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

C. Motion to approve continuance of the Student Life Centre Fee MOTION 24/02/13:07

BIRT, in the event that the fee increase referendum is unsuccessful, SGPS Council approves that the Student Life Centre fee as it currently stands and is implemented (indexed annually to CPI) will remain in effect.

Motion raised and presented by Deputy Speaker, Katie Zutautas.

- (a) Jake Morrow: The AMS also had something similar happen right with their student fee not going through, so what happens with us?
 - (i) Devin Fowlie: Their fee did fail. It doesn't affect us as the building will still be there and we've paid for it already, this more so affects the space that we will occupy. I'm not sure what the AMS plan is, but I think they're discussing cutting building operational costs and distribution of common space and utilities are being renegotiated to offload more of those costs to the university- would benefit the AMS more than us as they pay more proportionally than us. With my understanding they currently don't have plans to vacate the space they have, they are just looking to work around it.

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

D. Motion to expand Activity Assistance Subsidy budget MOTION 24/02/13:08

BIRT SGPS Council approve the proposed \$2000 budget increase for the Activity Assistance Subsidy (from \$3000 to \$5000).

Motion raised and presented by Vice President Finance and Services, Gaby Fekete.

- (a) Gabby: Explains the activity assistance subsidy and states there is room in the budget to reallocate and expand this subsidy.
 - (i) Emmanuel Ampomah: Is the subsidy limited to individuals or can departmental associations also apply?
 1. Gabby: It is limited to independent students. Students cannot be reimbursed for hosting events, but rather for attendance of events if registration fees are applicable.

- (ii) Daekwon Blair: Expanding on this, for example if a student attends a professional development event where the fee registration is covered but there are fees associated with travel and lodging would that be applicable?
- (iii) Gabby: Typically, we don't cover travel or lodging, but each applicant is reviewed on a case-by-case basis, so the financial assistance committee will do their best to grant students the subsidy within the limits that they have.

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

E. Motion approving the formation of the ERAC

MOTION 24/02/13:09

The Elections and Referenda Appeals Committee is formed to help settle disputes, participate in investigations, and/or address potential appeals from candidates and referenda groups. The committee consists of the Council Speaker and two SGPS Council Representatives, who must not be SGPS Executives or staff.

BIRT SGPS Council approve the formation of the Elections and Referenda Appeals Committee, comprised of *Daekwon Blair* and *Emmanuel Ampomah*.

Motion raised and presented by Council Speaker, Aileen Editha.

- (a) Jake Morrow: What is the time commitment?
 - (i) Aileen Editha: Within the next 3 weeks when this should be. There are several meetings throughout the course of the week, not thinking more than 2hrs of meetings and a few hours to go over documents.

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

F. Discussion: Ensuring timely updates about upcoming (rather than past) events

Discussion raised and led by Jake Morrow, Council Representative (English)

- (a) Jake Morrow: Many updates across the year have been about events to tell departments about but events have already happened. If we're talking about how events went, great, but more often its spreading awareness, and by the time council has met they've already occurred.
 - (i) Devin Fowlie: We should talk about ways to better distribute that information so that they are more timely. Thank you for raising that.
 - (ii) Aileen Editha: This is something that other council members have also noted, so I want to remind everyone that we can use the SGPS Council email more often.

- (b) Jake Morrow: If we can ask the new rector to submit reports and show face, that would be awesome!
- (i) Devin Fowlie: We can encourage the new Rector to attend. Part of I think the challenge this term for the Rector is that our Council happens at 5:30pm and the AMS assembly happens at 6pm, thus the Rector may have just gotten into the habit of attending just the AMS assembly. Hopeful that the new Rector can be more involved.
- (ii) Aileen Editha: Even though there might be a time clash, we can move the Rector around within our Council Meeting so they can attend both meetings.

IX. Other Business

X. Notices of Motion & Announcements

XI. Adjournment

Adjournment

MOTION 24/02/13:10

BIRT this meeting of SGPS Council be adjourned.

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