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

II. Adoption of the Agenda

A. Adoption of the Agenda  
   MOTION 24/03/12:01
   BIRT SGPS Council adopt the Agenda for the March 19th Council Meeting.

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

III. Minutes

A. Approval of the Meeting Minutes  
   MOTION 24/03/12:02
   BIRT SGPS Council adopt the minutes from the February 13th Council Meeting.

   Anton Kaduck moves, Jake Morrow 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. Attended a joint board/Senate retreat after the Board of Trustees meeting a few weeks ago. Discussed the future of shared governance at Queen’s – discussed how Senate has more student representation, especially at undergrad level, can be more involved and aware of what’s happening at the Board (dealing more with financial side). An interest for more meetings of this joint nature moving forward.
      ii. Health and Dental plan renewal – made some final decisions on that and they will be reported to the incoming team.
      iii. Working on Student Life Centre (SLC) agreement – in process of renegotiating the Tri-Party agreement. Just received draft agreement from University on Friday. Having meetings with AMS this week to determine the
March Council Meeting Minutes
March 19th 2024 – 5:30 pm
Zoom

best way forward as there is need for continued negotiation. Hoping this won’t delay move in but we’re open to it if that’s the case.

iv. Student Leaders Meeting – discussed recent announcement from Federal Government that funding from the government is only half of what the Blue Ribbon recommended – not going to help with structural deficit. Advocating that we take those funds and put them towards funding graduate students. Not going to change structural level budget but could elevate graduate student funding (amount is ~$6million).

v. Can be reached at: president@sgps.ca

b. VP Graduate – Steacy Coombs (report attached)
   i. Faculty of Arts and Science Graduate Council – Devin Fowlie had previously had a meeting with Dean Crow and James Fraser, where the Dean expressed some concerning opinions about graduate student funding specifically that she doesn’t believe grad students should be funded. We are concerned by these comments, and I brought this up at Graduate Council to share it with graduate students for transparency. James Fraser was not happy that this was shared, as he feels FAS is doing everything they can to support grad student funding even if the Dean feels this way, however these opinions are still concerning.
      1. Anton Kaduck comments: James Fraser was unwilling to say “The Dean did not say those words” though
      2. Jake Morrow asks: Was James Fraser not happy about it being brought up or about the opinion?
         a. Steacy Coombs: A bit of a mix. He felt like the Dean did not express those opinions so he was not happy that we brought it up but also that we understood it in that way.
   ii. Food Services - Hoping to start an additional food service for students (either fresh food boxes or mason jar meals). Wouldn’t start until this spring/summer. Looking for feedback from students around timing of this service (ie. would it be best every week or month?) and for general interest.
   iii. Can be reached at: vp.graduate@sgps.ca

c. VP Professional – Maya Kawale (report attached)
   i. Med/Law games were successful and looking forward to running them again next year as well as streamlining the processes over the summer for the next VP Professional.
   ii. H&A Sustainability Meeting – Queen’s is trying to go from the general level to the silver level.
March Council Meeting Minutes  
March 19th 2024 – 5:30 pm  
Zoom

iii. Grad Club Meeting – grappling with the rent increase of 400% and stating that if major changes are not made it is unlikely that the Grad Club will be around past the next year.

1. Shamus Tobin asks: Curious as to what measures the Grad Club is considering taking to meet the finances needed to sustain the rent increase or whether they’re looking to fight the increase all together?

2. Maya Kawale: They’re considering fighting to reduce the rent increase – discussion with Queen’s. Also looking to rebrand the Grad Club to bring in a wider audience.

3. Jake Morrow asks: The focus of the Grad Club seem to be on ways to change the profitability however they are not a business. Curious how that aspect is coming up in discussions with the University- it’s a service that we pay for as part of the SGPS and is a grad space. So curious how those are coming up as to how the Grad Club can be profitable.
   a. Devin Fowlie comments: Just spoke with the university the other day about this. Grad Club is not a business so the University sees it that they must be able to at least break even. Grad students do pay a fee and that should cover a lot of the operating costs so the issue is why it isn’t able to and how they continue to lose money while they’re heavily subsidized and pay little in rent. The rent increase would be from about ~$1000 to ~1200 in September. The University’s reason for wanting to increase rent is because they need to hit a net zero across all their properties and they don’t want to offload more costs into other areas (such as the university district which brings in the most revenue) to offset the Grad Club.

4. Shamus Tobin asks: Interested if to meet the revenue short fall of the Grad Club we could see our student fee increase?
   a. Maya Kawale comments: Not sure exactly what the path forward is for the Grad Club, but this hasn’t been in the discussions.
   b. Devin Fowlie adds: If they wanted to increase the fee they would need to go to referendum like all other student fees, where students vote on them, and if they lost they would
lose their fee entirely, so it would be a risky situation for them.

5. Jake Morrow: I know there was a fundraiser link passed around on social media to try and generate income for the Grad Club. I believe that Queen’s was redirecting the funds to not actually go towards what it was intended, is there information on that?
   a. Maya Kawale: I haven’t heard that the funds were redirected.
   b. Jake Morrow: I’ve seen emails from the University where apparently the funds are going towards back log of maintenance pay and they stated that if people didn’t want that then they would refund the funds, but people weren’t able to directly provide funds to Grad Club.
   c. Aileen Editha: Will raise this in the April Council Meeting and see if there is any further information that has arisen on this.

iv. Can be reached at: vp.professional@sgps.ca

d. VP Finance and Services – Gaby Fekete (no report)
   i. 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 (no report)

C. Approval
   
   MOTION 24/03/12:03
   BIRT SGPS Council approve the Executive and Speaker Reports.

   Anton Kaduck moves, Shamus Tobin 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 – Sakura Koner (subject to ratification)

B. Trustee Report – Graduate Student Trustee – Kana Ogawa (oral report)
   a. Providing updates from items discussed in the open session at the recent Board of Trustees meeting:
      i. External relations committee shared that the Ontario government will provide $700 million to universities/colleges over 3 years, continuation of the domestic tuition freeze for the next 3 years, and an additional $100 million to universities/colleges to support STEM programs. For Queen’s this means Queen’s will receive $6 million next year and a one-time $10 million
to support STEM programing. These costs are helpful but not sufficient to offset the current deficit.

ii. Update from the Provost- current budget model is divided amongst faculties with the largest deficit in Faculty of Arts and Science. To offset this, 1.5% has been cut from the other Faculties as a deficit mitigation fund and looking ahead they look to continue this through 2026-27 (scale of ~$60 million/year) with deficit mitigation fund raising another 2%. By 2024-25 they are reducing 91 enrollment places in the Faculty of Arts and Science and allocating them to Health Sciences and Engineering.

iii. This information can be summarized in a recent Queen’s Journal article: https://www.queensjournal.ca/board-of-trustees-convenes-amidst-budget-cut-protest/

iv. As a note, the open session portion of the Board of Trustees meeting is available to everyone. Kana will provide further information about how to access closer to the next meeting.

b. Anton Kaduck question: Is the $6 million dollars a one-time payout or is it recurring? As well, you mentioned that the deficit mitigation fund is increasing can you clarify the amount.

i. Kana Ogawa: I believe that it is a one-time amount, and the deficit mitigation fund is increasing by 2% next year.

c. Jake Morrow question regarding who the governing body is that’s responsible for making these budgetary decisions as Kana had mentioned that the Board of Trustees does not make the final decisions but rather advises administrators. Further wants to better understand the strength of the confidentiality agreements employed in these spaces as they get in the way of sharing information.

i. Kana Ogawa: The information shared at the Board of Trustees are more so updates from administration as to what is being done rather than consultation on decision making. With the Faculty budget model, the Deans and Provost are responsible for making financial decisions as to where/how the cuts are being made as they pertain to those faculties. Agree that more clarity is needed. I could talk to the Board of Trustees and Senate to give a presentation on levels of administration and decision making – will update on that.

d. Can be reached at: trustee@sgps.ca

C. Commissioner Reports

a. Athletics & Wellness Commissioner – Meghan Mendelin (report attached)

i. Can be reached at: athletics@sgps.ca

b. Equity & Diversity Commissioner – Sangeetha Saravanan (report attached)
i. Collaborating with Vina Li and Career Services to generate workshops for international grad students. Had our first session on March 18th and have a second session on March 26th. If anyone is interested, please sign up, the link is posted on the SGPS Instagram.

ii. Still looking for reps interested in joining the Soft Infrastructure Network. This is network that was previously used to share equity relating issues/policies/events that occur on campus. Interested in having a representative from each department to ensure that information is distributed across graduate and professional students adequately.

iii. Can be reached at: equity@sgps.ca

c. Indigenous Graduate Liaison – position vacant
d. International Students’ Affairs Commissioner – Vina Li (oral report)
   i. Discussion with Career Services around these workshops and they have agreed that they can be a more regular occurrence to help support international student needs.
   ii. International Student Affairs standing committee will be taking place at the end of this month so I will provide updates following that.
   iii. Can be reached at: international@sgps.ca

e. Social Commissioner – Gabby Toretto (report attached)
   i. Can be reached at: social@sgps.ca

D. Committee Reports
E. Department Reports
F. Other Reports
   a. University Rector – Niki Boytchuk-Hale (no report)

G. Approval
   MOTION 24/03/12:04
   BIRT SGPS Council approve the Senator, Trustee, Commissioner, Committee & Other Reports.

Devin Fowlie moves, Anton Kaduck 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 (from January meeting minutes).
A. Devin Fowlie: I think this has been addressed, but happy to take any questions if there are any.
   *None were raised*

VIII. Main Motions & Discussion

A. **Motion to Ratify Results of the 2024-2025 By-Election**
   BIRT 2023-24 SGPS Council ratify the results of the 2024-25 By-Election, and approve Sakura Koner’s appointment as the Graduate Student Senator.
   See: Appendix A 24-25 By-Election Results

   i. Aileen Editha [speaks on Katie Zutautas, Deputy Speakers, behalf]: This motion is to ask Council to approve the results of the by-election before we approve Sakura’s appointment to the position. Please see the attached SimplyVoting ballot results.

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

B. **Discussion: Relationship between the SGPS and SLC**
   Discussing how the SLC might allow groups to rent their tables on campus and use them in ways that don’t align with SGPS values.
   *Discussion item raised and presented by Abby McLean, Council Representative (Cultural Studies)*
   See: Appendix B for an addendum emailed to the SGPS Council on March 20th providing corrections and clarifications for this discussion.

   i. Abby McLean: On March 4th there was a bake sale in the ARC at one of the SLC tables available for rent, raising money for an organization called “Friends of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF)” – whereby the money would go to the IDF. Students raised concerns over this, which the SGPS addressed in a statement on their social media, but they didn’t name the issue, which was unfortunate, it just said that this was an unsanctioned event with limited ability to vet/screen. Two major questions: 1) As the SGPS has numerous voting members on the SLC council, I’m wondering if this can be brought up to reconsider the kinds of groups and events that are allowed to rent out things for the SLC and whether groups need to state what they’re renting for. 2) More broadly wondering who has this oversight (if the AMS and SGPS
weren’t responsible for vetting this event) and further as students contribute funds to the SLC, what if we don’t feel comfortable that this is allowed, are there actions that can be taken? I’ve spoken with other council members that have also expressed similar concerns.

1. A number of council reps agreed with Abby’s concerns.

ii. Anton Kaduck commented: Regardless of it being the IDF that the funds were for, it does feel odd to have a space where we can raise money for any military force.

iii. Shamus Tobin: Caution the SGPS from taking any definitive stance as we have to take into account how we would be presenting towards any politically affiliated groups on campus.

   1. Abby McLean: I think it’s the military aspect that is the most concerning.
   2. Shamus Tobin: The military is a political instrument, so I’m just concerned that whatever we decide, we have to make it a blanket way to address politically affiliated group otherwise we would be signaling out groups on an ad hoc basis.

iv. Devin Fowlie: Shamus touches on some of the rationale for why we cannot do this. This is a free speech issue to not allow groups to put a table up and the University is very clear about this. Certainly, if there was someone who was trying to raise money for a group that would be considered a hate group that could be different but this doesn’t directly fall into that category despite how individuals may feel about this organization. If there was more knowledge of this table beforehand, often tables like this would be put in another room and a sign would be put in the main lobby so that students who felt they wanted to support them could still locate and find the table, but it would not be front and centre in a space that would be visibly open to the public where it could harm others. When the group registered to have a table it was put under a single person and they said they wanted it for a bake sale. So the way the form is structured (run by the SLC manager – affiliated with the AMS) didn’t have a space to require someone to say who their group was, unless they registered as a community organization. They have now added an additional layer to include an explanation of what they’re going to do before they apply for a table. I cannot see many circumstances where this kind of table wouldn’t be allowed because of the above issues outlined, but we did speak with the AMS as soon as this event was known about and moving forward have increase the robustness of the system to prevent these kinds of events from being publicly displayed.
1. Abby McLean: What does our SLC fee actually go to? This fee seems to be for our space in the JDUC and the tri-party agreement but then why is it affiliated with the renting out of table space?

2. Jake Morrow: Are we as a body able to push that policy changes? It’s one thing to talk about where people stand on a controversial issue but to have a space in which people are able to come in and fundraise for a foreign military occupation and one that is currently on trial for genocide, there must be a line somewhere and it has to be before this.

   a. Devin Fowlie: I understand what you’re saying but I don’t know what that would look like. I understand the concerns but it doesn’t mean discussions can’t be had. When the tri-party agreement comes into effect again, there will be a new version of the SLC council and that will discuss things like this and whether they’re fulfilling the SLC mandate. I can pass it along to the future executive team so they can bring it up in future discussions.

   b. Aileen Editha: Jake, are you asking for something specific to come from this as in a statement or anything?

   c. Jake Morrow: I’m asking if we could make a motion to pass into policy that the SGPS, in entering into those tri-party discussions, have the position that military funding and military presence is not a welcome activity.

   d. Shamus Tobin: Is this possible to have written down because I can see issues with wording, especially as it would apply to all military, like even the Canadian forces.

   e. Aileen Editha: Yes, it would be written down in a BIRT SGPS statement before anything was passed.

   f. Devin Fowlie: I want to be clear that I don’t think that it’s possible for Council to force a future executive to take a position before they’ve taken their seat in office. I have no issues with members bringing this forward, I just want people to understand what that motion would do and I don’t know if it would be able to functionally do anything.

   g. Jake Morrow: What you’re getting at is that it would be a symbolic motion and as grad council is a more democratic body than the executive committee, and if this body were to vote that the exec have this stance before going into those
meetings on this topic, then even if it is a symbolic vote I would expect the future exec to take it sincerely and thus think it would still be worth it.

3. Aileen Editha: To be clear, bringing it into a motion wouldn’t bring it into an SGPS By-Law. I am not stopping anyone from moving a motion and to clarify all council reps have speaking rights and the right to raise, move, and second motions as well.
   
   *Continued discussion around motions, how binding they are, and the role of departmental reps in facilitating changes at Council.

4. Devin Fowlie: The question is whether a motion like this, can compel the executive to act in a way that council wants them to act. If they can, then executive have to act on that, and if they can’t than its purely symbolic and rather a show of councils’ opinions. It is a question for the Speaker as to how By-Law is interpreted.

5. Jake Morrow: Is there any document we can look to see the SGPS’s stance on a procedural level around the time of South African apartheid and other humanitarian issues, could be helpful for this body to look too.

6. Aileen Editha: Will continue to look through By-Law and other documents like what Jake has raised, however from my understanding the executive answer to the SGPS Council and Council can ask for a vote of non-confidence, and that’s the main reason why the Executive Reports come to Council. Thus there would be consequences if Executives deliberately go against By-Law provision or what has been decided by the SGPS Council that has been democratically voted on. I would leave this to our Council reps as to whether we would like to raise a motion to this.

7. Abby McLean: Regarding the motion, as previously mentioned, we would need to have it in written form and there would be wording considerations. Is there a way to expedite that so it doesn’t roll over into next council meeting?

8. Aileen Editha: I cannot assist in writing the motion as that would impose my own bias, so you and others interested would need to generate the motion. Once it’s written you can send it to me and then we would conduct a vote through email.

C. Discussion on the “Queen’s Statement on the Palestinian flag incident”
Discussing the University’s statement which referred to the flying of a Palestinian flag on campus as a “hate-motivated act” (this phrase was later quietly edited out). See archived version here: https://archive.is/rWu8o; see current version by clicking this link.

Discussion item raised and presented by Jake Morrow, Council Representative (English)
See: Appendix C for an addendum emailed to the SGPS Council on March 20th providing corrections and clarifications for this discussion.

i. Jake Morrow provides background: About two-weeks ago there were a number of events held on campus by solidarity for Palestinian human rights (the Queen’s chapter) as part of Israeli apartheid week – events included a die-in, some fundraisers, as well as a large rally on Friday (this was the same week that the bake sale to raise funds for Friends of the IDF took place in the ARC and that a rally was held in support of the Israeli occupation effort). At the end of the week there was another rally and walk out, where students demanded that Queen’s divest from companies to ties with the Israeli military operations. As part of that protest the university administration had security out filming people and intimidating protestors with threats of calling By-Law. During this protest an anonymous individual raised a Palestinian flag above Grant Hall to which the University the next morning released a statement talking about the raising of the flag. In the original statement it’s insinuated that the raising of the flag was a “hate-motivated act”- that was the language used. Due to social media backlash condemning Queen’s statement, the phrasing of “hate-motivated act” was quietly altered to an “illegal act”. This is another incident in what is becoming an increasingly alarming pattern of anti-Palestinian racism on campus coming not only from individuals but also the administration and its indifference to suffering and genocide. This is also an anti-Semitic stance as it suggests that Jewish and Palestinian people are inherently and inevitably involved in conflict and that is offensive. Wanted to bring discussion of this and I will be motioning that SGPS make a statement condemning that statement.

i. Abby McLean: I agree with Jake and am also curious if the SGPS has anything in its mandate around humanitarian issues if we are considering taking a stance as other University bodies have not responded.
ii. Aileen Editha: Again, this reflects on the previous discussion (from Discussion point B) to see what actions the SGPS has taken, and I will look through those. Of course, we are trying to get things done before our next meeting, but I can outline this within my report. The Equity policy could also be applicable, but again I will look further.

ii. Devin Fowlie: My reading of the statement is not that the raising of the flag was called a hate-motivated act and I’m not certain that that’s the only inference one could make from that statement. Another view is that the University could have seen this act as raising tensions which could have led to a hate motivated act. This is just a question I have as to how certain we are that that specific part of the statement was referring to the raising of the Palestinian flag specifically.

i. Jake Morrow: There were parts of the statement that were not later altered, referring students to the protocols for reporting discrimination, harassment, or racism on campus. I take exception with those as well. This is a statement that is called “The statement on the raising of a Palestinian flag” with the first paragraph referring to the raising of the flag itself is where the language “hate-motivated act” appears. If that was not what they were referring to with that language, then why was it later changed?

ii. Devin Fowlie: It’s not in the first part of the statement, it’s in the second where they include all the other campus resources.

iii. Jake Morrow: The point remains, what about this raises the university administration to say that people have experienced a hate motivated act. What is the specific means of saying people who witness a motivated act as opposed to people who are victims to hate. The specific mention there is a “witness of hate motivated act” and that was changed to “witness of an unlawful act”. That specifically is in reference to the raising of the flag as they are phrasing it as a criminal act of break and enter and that is what the framing is about, calling that act an unlawful act or a hate motivated act.

iv. Abby McLean: Think it’s also important to address the mention of police on campus and the breaking and entering part. Grant Hall is a building on campus and this was during work week hours. Concerning that this has been labelled as a break and enter and that the University immediately jumps to police presence. Important that
the SGPS speaks on, as the AMS does so in regard to things like homecoming.

v. Devin Fowlie: I see it somewhat differently and also see that it’s important that we want to support people that are affected by this specifically and if people feel strongly that this impacts the community negatively and folks want to request that we put forward with some sort of statement about this then we can discuss it further as an executive team.

iii. Jake Morrow brings forward a motion which then undergoes some revising. All iterations of the motion are found below:

i. BIRT the SGPS issue a response to Queen’s March 9th statement condemning the insinuation that the raising of a Palestinian flag on campus could be seen as a hate-motivated act.

ii. BIRT SGPS issue a response to the Queen's University's “Statement on the Palestinian Flag incident” on March 9th condemning the insinuation that the raising of a Palestinian flag on campus could be seen as a hate motivated act (revised by Aileen)

iii. BIRT SGPS issue a response to the Queen's University's "Statement on the Palestinian flag incident" on March 9th, in which the SGPS condemns the insinuation that the raising of a Palestinian flag on campus could be seen as a hate motivated act (second round of revision by Aileen and Jake)

iv. Aileen Editha: Next steps could be for the executive to draft up a response and provide to me so I can circulate to council reps for editing, response, or questions.

BIRT SGPS issue a response to the Queen’s University’s "Statement on the Palestinian flag incident" on March 9th, in which the SGPS condemns the insinuation that the raising of a Palestinian flag on campus could be seen as a hate motivated act.

Abby McLean moves, Claire Genest seconds. No points of discussion on this motion. No dissenting votes; the motion passes unanimously.

IX. Other Business

A. Feedback on Student Signatures for SLC Fee to be Included on Referendum

Raised by Devin Fowlie, SGPS President
a. Devin Fowlie: Distributing a form to request student input on whether or not they included their signature to have the SLC fee placed on the referendum ballot. If you chose to not add your signature, we would love to hear from you to use those reasons and thoughts as further advocacy for the SLC.
   i. Aileen Editha: Is this being distributed to SGPS Council alone or the larger membership?
   ii. Devin Fowlie: A good question. At least to Council but may be larger, not sure yet.

X. Notices of Motion & Announcements

A. Notice of Motion by Abby McLean to extend the SGPS Council Meeting
BIRT SGPS Council agree that the meeting of March 19th 2024 shall be extended to 7:30pm.

At approximately 6:45, Abby McLean put forward a notice of motion to extend the March SGPS Council meeting by 30min to ensure adequate time for discussion of the discussion point C within the Main Motions & Discussion section.

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

XI. Adjournment

Adjournment

BIRT this meeting of SGPS Council be adjourned.

Abby McLean moves, Sarah Waldron seconds. No points of discussion on this motion. No dissenting votes; the motion passes unanimously.
Follow up Re: March 19 Council Discussion: Relationship between the SGPS and SLC

SGPS Council Speaker <speaker@sgps.ca>

Thu 3/21/2024 3:44 PM
To: SGPS Council <council@sgps.ca>

Good afternoon Council,

I hope this e-mail finds you well.

I am reaching out to follow up on the SLC discussion in our March Council Meeting.

The addendum attached provides important corrections and clarifications about the information provided on March 19th pertaining to Discussion Item B on the relationship between the SGPS and Student Life Centre (SLC).

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to let me know.

In light of a recent incident, Abby McLean (Council Rep, Cultural Studies) brought a discussion item on the relationship between the SGPS and the Student Life Centre (SLC) forward. A student had submitted an application to the SLC requesting space to hold a bake sale but did not disclose that they were fundraising for an organization called “Friends of the Israel Defense Forces” (FIDF). SGPS members were surprised and concerned that this was permitted by the SLC especially since members pay a fee for the SLC. The discussion asked how the SGPS may prevent the SLC from allowing and hosting fundraising events for potentially contentious causes. This was and continues to be a challenging issue due to existing governmental laws, SGPS bylaw and policy, and governance and management of the SLC. The purpose of this addendum is to follow up on this discussion point and list several actions that can be taken.

In August 2018, shortly after winning the provincial election, Premier Doug Ford required all colleges and universities in Ontario to devise policies upholding free speech on their campuses. These policies were to be in place by January 1st, 2019. The apparent goal was to ensure that colleges and universities become places where students can exchange ideas and opinions in open and respectful debate. The expressed purpose of this policy was to protect free speech and ensure that hate speech, discrimination, and other illegal forms of speech are not allowed on campus. The provincial government monitors compliance with these requirements, and institutions that do not comply may face a reduction in operating grant funding. As a result, Queen's had to create a University policy that reflected the provincial legislation. This policy can be found at https://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/administration-and-operations/free-expression-queens-university.

For the above reasons, the SGPS cannot compel the University or its partners (in this case, the Student Life Centre management) to deviate from provincial legislation. However, this provincial legislation does not preclude individuals from taking action in response to events that they find harmful or problematic. As frustrating as it may be, individual action is the only recourse available to students. Specifically, the filing of a harassment and discrimination report through the University. The University is obligated to
investigate reports of harassment and discrimination, and filing an official report creates a paper trail that individuals can follow up on. Individuals who wish to file such a report can use the link - https://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/harassment-discrimination/filing-report.

Individuals may also wish to share their personal experiences with the Human Rights and Equity Office (hrights@queensu.ca) and/or the Vice Principal Culture, Equity, and Inclusion (vpcei@queensu.ca).

We are aware that these bureaucratic avenues can be complicated and require the affected parties to advocate for the stoppage of their experiences of harassment and discrimination. We acknowledge that this is not fair. We encourage any student who wishes to pursue that route but would like assistance doing so to reach out to the SGPS Student Advisors at advisors@sgps.ca.

Best wishes,

Aileen Editha (she/her)

SGPS Council Speaker
Society of Graduate & Professional Students (SGPS)
Queen’s University

I am working remotely, and I will endeavour to respond to you within two business days. Please note that I will be unavailable or slow to respond during these periods: February 13-15; February 29-March 1; March 15-16

The SGPS is committed to an inclusive community that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. All communications from the SGPS are available in alternate formats upon request.

Queen's University sits on the lands of the Haudenosaunee & Anishinaabe peoples.

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Update on Follow up Re: March 19 Council Discussion on the “Queen’s Statement on the Palestinian flag incident”

SGPS Council Speaker <speaker@sgps.ca>
Tue 3/26/2024 10:59 AM
To: SGPS Council <council@sgps.ca>

Good morning, Council

I am writing to update you on the e-mail I sent last week (see below). We have not received any e-mails regarding drafting a statement, nor has any Council member worked on the shared document. Because of this, we will not be opening the SimplyVoting ballot at this moment.

If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know.

Best wishes,

Aileen Editha (she/her)

Out of office dates:

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Queen’s University sits on the lands of the Haudenosaunee & Anishinaabe peoples.

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Good afternoon Council,

I hope this e-mail finds you well.

I am reaching out to follow up on the discussion regarding Queen’s statement on the Palestinian flag incident from our March Council Meeting.
The addendum attached provides important corrections and clarifications about the information provided in relation to Discussion Item C on Queen's Statement on the Palestinian flag incident.

It also addresses some mistakes I made on outlining the next steps of the motion "BiRT SGPS issue a response to Queen's University's "Statement on the Palestinian flag incident" on March 9th, in which the SGPS condemns the insinuation that the raising of a Palestinian flag on-campus could be seen as a hate-motivated act."

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Jake Morrow (Council Rep, English) raised and presented a discussion item to discuss the University's "Statement on the Palestinian Flag Incident", made on March 9th, which implied that the raising of a Palestinian flag on-campus was a "hate-motivated act". This was later quietly changed to "unlawful act".

- See the archived version of the statement here: https://archive.is/rWu8o
- See the current version of the statement here: https://www.queensu.ca/gazette/stories/queen-s-statement-palestinian-flag-incident

In light of this discussion, SGPS Council passed a motion stating that: “BiRT SGPS issue a response to Queen's University's "Statement on the Palestinian flag incident" on March 9th, in which the SGPS condemns the insinuation that the raising of a Palestinian flag on campus could be seen as a hate-motivated act."

After the motion was passed, the Speaker erred in saying that the SGPS Executive shall provide a draft statement to distribute to Council. This was incorrect because: (1) the motion did not explicitly mention the SGPS Executive, and (2) of the relationship between the Executive and Council according to SGPS Bylaw. Bylaw B.6.c states that the Council is "responsible for directing and overseeing the activities of the Executive for formulating and authorizing SGPS policies". As the legislative body of the SGPS (B.6.a), the Council’s reach over the Executive pertains to the formulation and authorization of policy which does not include the issuing of statements.

Upon further consideration and review based on SGPS Bylaw and Policy, the Officers of the Council strongly recommend that this statement or response come from SGPS Council (in partial or full), as the body who raised the issue and passed the motion. Doing this does not contradict the motion passed, since we agreed that the SGPS—not mentioning a specific branch—should respond.

This addendum seeks to immediately correct any misinformation I provided, follow up on outstanding points, and outline the next steps to fulfill that motion, if the Council so choose.

**Addressing points made during the discussion:**

**SGPS Bylaw B.3.d** states that one of the SGPS's purposes is "to maintain concern for the welfare and human rights of its members." While this is true and correct, it is important to recognize that this concern extends to all members, even those who may not be in support of a statement being issued. As elected officials, the Executive (per B.7.1.1) is required to "uphold the mandate of the organization throughout the duration of their term by consistently promoting the interests of the SGPS and its Membership". This membership, again, may consist of individuals in direct opposition to a statement being issued or are in opposition to the purpose of the statement itself.

No comparison can be made to the SGPS's response to the South African apartheid
During the discussion, reference was made back to research into a precedent for humanitarian stances the organization has taken. It was suggested that Officers look into the SGPS’s stance on the South African apartheid. Upon review, a comparison cannot be drawn as the incident occurred prior to the SGPS becoming an incorporated entity that is legally obligated to operate based on its governing documents. Thus, even if the information were retrieved, it would not be relevant in the current context (due to the different organizational nature, goals, and structure).

**Comparison to the Graduate Student Senator’s statement on Ukraine**

However, a comparable and potentially helpful precedent is the Graduate Student Senator’s “Statement on the Russian Invasion of Ukraine” (https://sgps.ca/2022/03/04/sgps-senator-statement-on-the-russian-invasion-of-ukraine/). Here, an elected official and “branch” of the SGPS wrote and issued a statement outlining their views. The production and publishing of statements by SGPS officials and branches is supported by the SGPS Equity Policy (P.13.1.a):

> The SGPS seeks to continually create, maintain, and advocate for an equitable, diverse, and inclusive experience for all Ordinary Members and employees...through direct and indirect actions (i.e. protests, demonstrations, statements...)

**Proposed next steps to fulfill the motion**

As a branch of the SGPS, the Council is free and welcome to put forward a statement. **This initiative must be led and organized by Member(s) of the Council with full voting rights**, composed of Representatives, the Executive, and ex-officio members (per B.6.1 and B.6.2). The list and contacts of Council members with full voting rights has been provided in this e-mail.

The Officers shall remain impartial throughout this process, and must only facilitate and provide logistical support to ensure that all Council members are aware of the statement and so individuals can choose whether to sign off on it. The link to the working document can be found below:

- All members with full voting rights will have editing access: [Draft Statement.docx](#)
- All non-voting members will only have viewing access: [Draft Statement.docx](#)

We propose a two-question Council vote through SimplyVoting in order to maintain the anonymity and integrity of the vote. The options provided will be presented to voters in a randomized order.

**Proposed Ballot**

Question 1: [A finalized copy of the statement will be presented]. Do you agree to this statement’s publication on the SGPS website, provided it meets the signature requirements stipulated below?

- Yes
- No
- Abstain

Question 2: How many signatures are required to publish the statement?

Note: The total number of Council members with full voting rights is 59. 12 voting members is the quorum for Council meetings.

- 12-20 or above
- 21-30 or above
- 31-40 or above
- Abstain
**Proposed Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addendum circulated to Council <em>Document for draft statement included above</em></td>
<td>Thursday, Mar 21 by 4 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft statement locked and can no longer be revised</td>
<td>Monday, Mar 25 at 4 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SimplyVoting opens</td>
<td>Monday, Mar 25 at 4:30 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SimplyVoting closes</td>
<td>Wednesday, Mar 27 at 12 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline for signature collection <em>It is advised to collect as many signatures as possible as the threshold will still be voted on.</em></td>
<td>Wednesday, Mar 27 at 3 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results communicated to Council via e-mail</td>
<td>Wednesday, Mar 27 by 3:30 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement posted to the SGPS website (if successful)</td>
<td>Wednesday, Mar 27 by 4 pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Best wishes,

Aileen Editha (she/her)

![Hear my name](image)

SGPS Council Speaker
Society of Graduate & Professional Students (SGPS)
Queen's University

I am working remotely, and I will endeavour to respond to you within two business days. Please note that I will be unavailable or slow to respond during these periods: February 13-15; February 29-March 1; March 15-16

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