



Hey everyone,

I hope that you are all doing well as we transition into exam period. For some of you this means a lot of exams and a high stress time, and for others this likely means a lot of grading of exams. Whatever April has in store for you I hope that you find some time to rest as you wrap up your semester.

### **Student Life Centre Agreement Updates**

As you know, a great deal of our time this year has been occupied with navigating the student life centre agreement that governs the JDUC, Queen's Centre, and Gray House. I am pleased to say that on Thursday, April 4<sup>th</sup> I, alongside my AMS counterpart Kate, met with Principal Deane, Provost Evans, and Vice-Principal (Finance & Administration) Janiec to discuss the agreement. A draft agreement had been circulated and we had some reservations about some of the clauses and the continued breakdown of shared cost allocation.

This was an extremely productive meeting. I am meeting on Friday, April 5<sup>th</sup> with the AMS to discuss the meeting more formally, so I will hold off on a fulsome update in this report, but I will have plenty to report at council about this meeting. I look forward to sharing this information with all of you.

### **Executive Team Transition**

Finally, our team has been working hard to transition the new team of Executives into their roles. I had the opportunity to attend some of the training sessions for the new team, bringing them up to speed on just a few of the most pressing issues. It was great to see such strong engagement from the new team – I have no doubt that they will continue to work hard for students over the next year. I am going to continue working closely with the whole team, including incoming President Emils Matiss, as they transition into their roles by May.

### **Thank You**

Before I close I just wanted to express a sincere thank you to each and every one of you, whether you are able to attend council regularly. I can honestly say that this is the most engaged council membership that I have seen since I started working with the SGPS 5 years ago. It has been truly a pleasure to work with each and every one of you and to hear your ideas, thoughts, and ways forward. We have a lot of momentum and I hope that this continues for many years to come. I am appreciative that you have allowed me to be involved with this organization for so long – it has been a constant in my graduate school career and something that I will cherish for a long time.

With all my best,

Devin Fowlie  
President



Good Evening Council,

Thank you for joining us at our April Council meeting. It is always a pleasure to see all of you every month. We love seeing all our valued members and hearing your opinions. We are very excited about some of the elements we are talking about tonight. In my report, I have highlighted some of the main areas of focus for this month.

### **H&A Sustainability and Advisory Meeting**

I had a Housing & Ancillary Services Sustainability meeting. This included highlights about various initiatives and projects which I will highlight below:

#### **i. Sustainable Move-Out**

There are boxes available to ensure a sustainable move-out process. These boxes have been used in Queen's food service operations. These boxes are available in The Lazy Scholar, location 21 and in all three dining halls on campus. There is also going to be a drop off location in residence buildings for shoe and clothing donation. This will be picked up by Diabetes Canada.

#### **ii. 'Second-Hand Shuffle'**

'Drop or Swap' has been renamed to 'Second-Hand Shuffle.' Last year it seems that students thought they needed to bring to receive. This is not the case, you can bring, receive, or bring and receive. Items can include furniture, desks, pots, pans, etc. This will take place in Rideau Hall Parking Compound (207 Stuart Street) from April 28<sup>th</sup> until April 30<sup>th</sup>. The drop off times are from 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM and pick up is from 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM. To access more information about this event you can click the link [here](#).

#### **iii. Cold Beverage Agreement**

Part of the Cold Beverage Agreement includes various funds that have different aims. Firstly, there is the Annual Indigenous Fund. The decision makers for this fund are comprised of various stakeholders including 4D, Student Awards, and student representatives. Given the ongoing concerns with food insecurity on campus, amplified by equity-deserving groups, this fund will be run through 4D to provide kits. These kits will include teachings on how to make traditional Indigenous foods.

Secondly, there is the Sustainable Initiatives and Education Fund. This fund will be used to support the waste audits that Queen's is planning to do.

Thirdly, there is the Sustainable Achievement Award. This award will be given to a candidate with a strong academic average as well as demonstrated volunteer work in the realm of sustainability.

#### **iv. Consumer Packaging**

Queen's is looking at post-consumer packaging. There is \$60,000 being allocated per year to be used for regulation and legislation compliance.

**i. Good to Go Container**

There has been digital tracking of good to go containers. The trial of this initiative will commence in May. Queen's wants this to be fully in effect by September 2024. Thus far, they have noticed a higher return rate of the containers and that there are not as many inventory control issues. So far this year, there have been over 223,000 swaps. The goal for this initiative was 260,000 swaps so we are very close to the goal.

**ii. Reusable Cups**

Queen's is also interested in introducing a cup fee in May for hot beverages. This would be in the efforts of cost recovery, Queen's will take out the cost of the packaging so that if people choose to get a hot beverage in a compostable cup, they will need to pay the additional fee.

**v. Apiary Project**

Queen's has a beekeeper who produces our honey. We will only have this beekeeper for one more year so after their contract expires, Queen's will need one more beekeeper. Queen's will keep the 10 hives they currently have and are hoping to have a similar honey yield once a new beekeeper is secured.

**Housing Meeting**

Some of the current and future executives met with student housing. They conveyed that they spoke with the City, and that based on CMHC data that not all the data is there because it is either not counted or missing. They stated that condos specifically are not included in the vacancy rate which is the source of some inaccuracies. Queen's has said that they are not trying to increase rent to reflect the market average. The Applications for housing will open in May and this will function as a lottery system.

**Med Law Games**

All of the payments for Med Law Games will be taken care of shortly. This concludes all elements for the 2023-2024 Med Law Games. Thank you to our amazing Executive Director, Andria Burke who has been so diligent throughout the Games and to all the volunteers who made this event possible. We look forward to hosting this event next year and cannot wait to see you all there!

**Hiring**

We are in the process for hiring the 2024/2025 Social Commissioner and Student Advisor. We have selected our interviewees for both positions and interview will take place Wednesday April 10<sup>th</sup>.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at [vp.professional@sgps.ca](mailto:vp.professional@sgps.ca).

Maya Kawale  
Vice President Professional, SGPS



Greetings Council,

I hope everyone is well. I know that this time of year can be a stressful time for some, and the SGPS is proud to support our members as you navigate your academic careers. You can find more information about our Mental Health support offerings [here](#).

### 1. Closing Note

Thank you all for trusting me to act as your Vice President of Finance and Services. It was a privilege to serve our members this year, and one I thoroughly enjoyed. I am proud to have overseen the financial assistance program, introduced the Food Insecurity Relief program, worked with a Wealth Management Firm to invest health and dental funds, introduced the Campus Safety Program and reopened the Grant program. As I work with the incoming VP Finance on her transition, I am enthusiastic for our members and how she plans to serve them in her tenure.

### 2. Financial Assistance Program- Summer Closure

Please note that the Financial Assistance Program will be closing on Friday, April 19, 2024, at 11:59 pm for year-end accounting. The Program will reopen during Summer 2024.

### 3. Food Insecurity Relief Program

The SGPS reopened the Food Insecurity Relief Program on Friday, March 15 at 8:45 am. Thanks to financial support from Queen's Department of Student Affairs, this round of the program had \$15,000 to distribute to applicants through direct aid.

We received constructive feedback from SGPS members that led us to make three changes to the program in the interest of fairness.

- The first change involved having a set deadline and guaranteeing that the application period would stay open regardless of the number of applications received. The application opened Friday, March 15, at 8:45 a.m. and remained open until Monday, March 18, at 11:59 p.m.
- The second change we implemented was grouping the applications with individuals who expressed exceptional circumstances (i.e. whether the applicants self-identify as parents, caregivers, or individuals with a disability) in one group and then individuals who did not express exceptional circumstances in another group. We then divided the allotment of funds equally between each group, providing \$7,500 to each category.
- The final change we implemented was randomizing applicants within the groups. We would no longer attempt "first-come, first-serve;" instead, we would select applicants randomly in their application groups.

We also promoted the program extensively. The SGPS newsletter notified SGPS members of the program's reopening and the abovementioned changes. We posted numerous times on our social media accounts before and during the application period. We also provided information in

advance of the application period that programs and faculties could distribute via the School of Graduate Studies' internal mailing list and our internal professional faculty list.

#### **4. Campus Safety Grant Program**

We are pleased to continue providing training that makes Queen's University safer. Please follow this link for a complete list of potential training services provided through the SWS. If you would like to participate in training that requires a registration fee, please email Andria Burke at [director@sgps.ca](mailto:director@sgps.ca) for more information.

#### **5. Student Code of Conduct**

The SGPS welcomes constructive feedback from our members. We recognize that our members are facing stressors in their life that contribute to feelings of frustration. With this said, we ask that members ensure that their communication (especially email) is respectful and constructive. The Student Code of Conduct sets out expectations of our members when we are corresponding with them. Please see the proposed Code of Conduct in Appendix A.

#### **6. SGPS Investment Thesis**

The SGPS is pleased to invest funds on behalf of students to safeguard the financial health of our organization. The funds for this investment came from a large payment made to the SGPS in 2014 from a former insurance provider upon termination of our business relationship with them. This funding is limited in the capacity that it can be used and must be used to support student's access resources that enhance their health and wellness. Currently, the SGPS disburses this funding through the SGPS General Health Subsidy and Dental Subsidy. These subsidies help subsidize the cost of health and dental claims that students need support paying for. Currently, these funds are being managed by a Wealth Management Fund. We wanted to create an investment thesis going forward that will stipulate how these funds should be managed. Please see the Investment thesis attached in appendix B.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider this note.

Sincerely,

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



Dear Council,

This is my final report as Vice President Community. What an honor it has been working for students on the SGPS this year.

In the fast-paced life of a student union executive, it can be hard to find the time to slow down and reflect on what has been accomplished. Still, as it is the end of my term, I would like to briefly sketch out some of the work that has defined my time as Vice President Community. I began my term focused on building relationships with community partners, for example, attending a migrant rights action in solidarity with other community groups outside Kingston and the Islands MPP's office. I spent some time working with the Canadian Federation of Students to amplify the voices of SGPS members at the provincial and national level. For example, I arranged a bus to take students from Kingston to the Provincial Legislative Building in downtown Toronto for a province-wide action demanding better provincial funding for post-secondary education. At the National Graduate Caucus level, a new student parent and caregiver campaign has been launched. Given the difficult financial situation of Queen's University, I have been meeting with senior administrators to express the concerns and needs of graduate and professional students. Lastly, there has been some movement on the housing front with the SGPS and AMS making joint delegations to the municipal government on a rental licensing program. I will refer you to my previously submitted monthly reports for more details on my work this year.

My priority in April is transitioning my successor, Simran Sharma, into the Vice President Community role.

### **Indigenous Student Liaison**

The Indigenous Student Liaison role has not been fulfilling its mandate to provide services to Indigenous SGPS members. This is a multifaceted issue. Nonetheless, it is clear that Indigenous SGPS members are not being well served by the Indigenous Student Liaison. Despite fears around the optics of removing the role, there have been internal conversations about cutting the role. Before any decisions were made, Four Directions Indigenous Student Centre (4D) was consulted. In fact, 4D is having difficulties recruiting Indigenous graduate students for its own positions.

I would like to present the view that the issues with the Indigenous Student Liaison role are not due to a paucity of capable Indigenous students who would do a great job in this role. Rather, the onus is on the SGPS to prove that it is a safe space for Indigenous students. I put forward this hypothesis in an act of radical transparency. We must not hide the fact that we are not doing well here and there is a strong imperative to do better.

My hope is that the SGPS can recruit Indigenous students to run for top roles, which might further decolonization efforts. In the meantime, I ask each member of council to reflect on their positionality, their understanding of the key issues, and how their lived experiences profoundly impact those beliefs.

It will be up to the next SGPS executive to decide what they will do with the Indigenous Student Liaison role.

### **Committees and meetings**

- Meeting with Donna Janiec, Vice Principal (Finance and Administration)
  - Discussed poor cleanliness of buildings on campus, especially the ARC
  - Increases expected in deficit mitigation fund (tax levied on all faculties to fund the Faculty of Arts and Science)
- Radio Queen's University

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact me at [vp.community@sgps.ca](mailto:vp.community@sgps.ca).

Yours in services,

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



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

Hello Council Members,

Here is what I have done in March:

1. Organizing Collaboration with Career Services and the International Commissioner for International Grad Students
  - **Job Search Strategies:** Monday, March 18, 3-4 pm (virtual)
  - **Resume/CV and Cover Letter:** Tuesday, March 26, 3:30 – 4:30 pm (virtual)
2. Participated in an equity group for PSAC 901 for the collective bargaining
  - If anyone has anything they would like for me to pass on, please reach out

I am always open to collaboration efforts – and happy to work with anyone to develop new initiatives, or to chat about anything! Feel free to reach out!

Best,  
Sangeetha Saravanan | BEd Candidate  
BSch, BA, DIPA Certificate  
[equity@sgps.ca](mailto:equity@sgps.ca)  
Equity and Diversity Commissioner  
Society of Graduate and Professional Students





Hello Council!

As we're nearing the end of the semester, I'm finishing up my final projects as Social Commissioner.

### **SGPS Awards**

The SGPS Awards nomination period closed on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Our 5-person judging panel has been hired and they are currently reviewing applications for our panel meeting next Friday. I aim for the winners of the 6 awards to be finalized and announced the week of April 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Social Events**

I ran an "end-of-classes" trivia event at the Grad Club on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, and I'm happy to share that the event was very well received! I plan to have one final social event for students before I finish my role with SGPS next month. So stay tuned for updates in the SGPS newsletter and Instagram account!

### **Social Commissioner Hiring**

I am currently writing my transition manual for the incoming Social Commissioner. I have also met with applicants who were interested in learning more about my responsibilities as Social Commissioner. I have aided in the review of written applications for the position. I look forward to welcoming the new student taking on this role, and helping transition them into the role!

Thanks everyone! If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out at [social@sgps.ca](mailto:social@sgps.ca)

Gabby Torretto (she/her)  
SGPS Social Commissioner  
Society of Graduate and Professional Students  
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