SGPS Speaker

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

About SGPS

The Society of Graduate & Professional Students (SGPS) represents and advocates for graduate and professional students at Queen's University. We work to enhance the student experience through advocacy, services, community-building, and student representation at all levels of university governance.

About the Role

The SGPS Speaker serves as the presiding officer of SGPS Council and General Meetings, ensuring that the Society's governance processes are conducted fairly, impartially, and in accordance with SGPS governing documents. The Speaker plays a central role in supporting student democracy by facilitating meetings, interpreting SGPS Bylaws and Policies, and ensuring that Council business is conducted in a procedurally sound manner.

Unlike members of the Executive, the Speaker is expected to remain neutral and impartial while carrying out their duties. The Speaker does not advocate for specific positions during meetings and instead ensures that all members have a fair opportunity to participate in debate and decision-making.

This is an Officer of Council position elected by SGPS Council and receives an honorarium.

Why This Role Matters

Strong governance depends on fair, transparent, and effective meeting procedures. The Speaker helps ensure that Council meetings operate smoothly, that all members understand and follow governance processes, and that decisions are made in accordance with SGPS governing documents.

This role offers a unique opportunity to develop expertise in governance, meeting facilitation, parliamentary procedure, policy interpretation, and organizational leadership while helping ensure the effective functioning of SGPS.

Key Responsibilities

Council Leadership

- Chair Annual General Meetings, Council Meetings, and Special General Meetings.
- Ensure meetings are conducted in an orderly, impartial, and procedurally sound manner.
- Facilitate productive discussion and debate while maintaining fairness and neutrality.
- Support an inclusive and respectful meeting environment that enables all members to participate effectively.

Governance & Procedural Oversight

- Provide authoritative interpretation of SGPS Bylaws and Policies.
- Ensure governance documents remain accurate, consistent, and up to date.
- Apply meeting procedures and governance rules fairly and consistently.
- Support Council Members in understanding procedural requirements and governance expectations.

Motions & Decision-Making Processes

- Ensure motions are drafted clearly and appropriately.
- Support effective governance processes by facilitating the orderly consideration of motions and business before Council.
- Assist in maintaining procedural integrity throughout meetings.
- Promote transparency and consistency in Council decision-making.

Governance Continuity

- Support the continuity and effective functioning of Council governance processes.
- Support the transition and orientation of incoming Council leadership.
- Fulfill ceremonial and procedural responsibilities required by SGPS governance processes.
- Ensure required governance procedures and meeting protocols are followed.

What Success Looks Like

A successful SGPS Speaker is a fair, impartial, and knowledgeable presiding officer who enables Council to conduct its business effectively while ensuring governance processes remain transparent, consistent, and accessible.

By the end of their term, a successful Speaker will have:

- Chaired Council and General Meetings effectively and impartially.
- Fostered respectful and productive discussion during meetings.
- Ensured governance documents and procedures were applied consistently.
- Supported Council Members in understanding their governance responsibilities.
- Maintained confidence in the fairness and integrity of SGPS governance processes.
- Facilitated a smooth transition to future Council leadership.

Eligibility & Experience

Eligibility Requirements

- Must be a current SGPS member and retain membership throughout the duration of the term.
- Must be eligible to hold the office of Speaker in accordance with SGPS governing documents and policies.
- Must be willing and able to act impartially while carrying out the responsibilities of the office.
- Must maintain eligibility throughout the term of office.

Relevant Experience

Examples of experience that may be helpful in this role include:

- Chairing meetings, committees, or governance bodies.
- Experience with parliamentary procedure, Robert's Rules of Order, or meeting facilitation.
- Student government, governance, or advocacy experience.
- Drafting, interpreting, or applying policies and governing documents.
- Conflict resolution, mediation, or consensus-building experience.
- Experience supporting organizational decision-making processes.

Core Competencies

- Ability to remain impartial and exercise sound judgment.
- Demonstrated ability to chair meetings and facilitate productive discussion.
- Strong understanding of governance principles, accountability, and procedural fairness.
- Ability to interpret and consistently apply bylaws, policies, and procedural rules.
- Confidence managing complex meeting agendas and procedural questions in real time.

- Strong verbal communication and public speaking skills.
- Attention to detail and commitment to accuracy.
- Conflict resolution, consensus-building, and diplomacy skills.
- Professionalism, integrity, discretion, and neutrality.
- Commitment to transparent and effective student governance.

Diverse Leadership and Representation

SGPS welcomes and encourages students from all backgrounds to put their names forward for leadership positions within the organization. We recognize that effective governance relies on diverse perspectives and experiences, and we are committed to fostering an inclusive student democracy that reflects the graduate and professional student community.

Students from equity-deserving and historically underrepresented groups are encouraged to seek office and contribute their voices to student governance.

Selection Process

The SGPS Speaker is elected by SGPS Council in accordance with SGPS governing documents and procedures.

Students interested in serving as Speaker should review the applicable SGPS governing documents and nomination requirements. Information regarding the selection process will be communicated to Council Members in advance of the election.

Term & Honorarium

- **Term:** December 1 to April 30. Subject to continued eligibility and organizational needs, there may be an opportunity for the term to be extended.
- **Honorarium:** As established by SGPS policy and approved budgets.
- **Status:** Officer of Council, elected by SGPS Council.
- **Time Commitment:** Regular attendance at Council Meetings, Annual General Meetings, Special General Meetings, governance review activities, preparation for meetings, and ongoing procedural support for Council operations.

This role is ideal for students who are interested in governance, parliamentary procedure, meeting facilitation, and supporting a fair, transparent, and effective student democracy.