



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the University Rector
October 15, 2024

Hello Councillors,

Happy fall! I hope you're adjusting well to your new course/research load, making space for replenishing activities, and connecting to support when needed.

Rector's Digest | My latest column in the Queen's Journal urged students to attend the Sacred Fire on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Read [Recognizing Reconciliation](#) for more of my reflections.

Board | As the Rector, I am a member of the Board of Trustees and four of its standing committees – External Relations and Development, Finance and Strategic Initiative, Governance and Nominating, and University Culture. Through the month of September, each committee met to discuss, review, and approve items ahead of the full-Board weekend. The Board has a fiduciary duty to the university's financial stability and must act in ways that will achieve a budget that is structurally balanced.

During my open session speech, I addressed my fellow Trustees on the topic of potential cuts to the Queen's Graduate Award (QGA). I acknowledged the reality that cuts need to be made while urging them to consider the costs to our student experience, diversity, culture, research, and reputation. I continued to bring up these concerns during closed session discussions. The Board is expected to meet in November to continue these considerations and in the meantime the administration is initiating work on the 2025-2026 budget, informed by discussions at September Board.

While I encourage all interested student to review open session materials on the [Governance Portal](#) and attend open session by emailing trustee@queensu.ca to get information right from the source, I would like to highlight the 2024 consolidated financials that were presented. The university's budget as a whole was in surplus because of strong, one-time returns on its investments. The operating component of the budget, where staff and faculty salaries and other costs associated with running the university reside, showed a structural deficit of approximately \$30M. To manage risk, the use of returns from unpredictable investment funds to balance annual operating budgets is usually limited. For that reason, the university transfers a minimal amount (\$5.2M) annually from our investment surplus to the operating budget and the remainder goes into a fund for new buildings, renovations, and other significant campus improvements. The University has committed to reviewing the amount of investment income budgeted annually to support operations to determine if it should

be increased moving forward. Any adjustments to the budget will be considered in the context of the University's risk tolerance. If you have any strong reasonings for increasing the investment returns transferred to the operating budget, I recommend you write to the administration in the near future as they engage in the review process.

Student Leader Development Day | Over 40 student leaders from the AMS, SGPS, Senate, and campus clubs joined the first [SLD Day](#), hosted by my office and supported by the Principal. Members of the administration led sessions to enhance our understanding of the institution we are working in, including a session on the budget by the Provost. We also received communications training and other insights from two members of our alumni community that have extensive expertise from their time at Queen's and beyond. I'm looking forward to exploring options for next year. Based on positive feedback, I am confident each attendee left with new skills and knowledge to better effect change and support their constituents. I hope to host this development day again next year and expand its reach now that it has been proven to be a beneficial use of time.

Upcoming | The next major events in my calendar are University Council & Homecoming (October 17 – 19) and Convocation (November 11 – 15).

I encourage you to check out the [events page](#) for signature events that are free and open to students, like the football game and fall harvest. You may also find that your Faculty is hosting tailored events for alumni that are open to students. While at [University Council](#), I will be updating alumni about my goals as Rector and current student experiences on campus.

The deadline to apply for graduation this fall has passed but an important next step is to pre-order convocation regalia. Please help amplify on your department socials and newsletters that same-day rentals are more expensive and not guaranteed to have your degree hood available. All details can be found on the [Registrar's page](#). There is a stellar line up of Honourary degree recipients, starting off with Kent Monkman.

That's all for now! Please reach out to me if you have any questions, need support, or would like to share an experience that can help me convey student voices to the administration.

At your service,



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Please note that due to a conflict with my studies, I am not able to attend council meetings. While I will be in class on Tuesday evenings, I will continue to submit fulsome reports and welcome you to [reach out](#) with questions or to set up a meeting at any point.