

**“Proud Citizens” Response**

Dear Ariel and Queen’s AMS;

Thank you for the thoughtfulness and attention you took in assembling a “Student Municipal Election Platform.” I appreciated the links and references you provided that gave deeper foundation to the recommendations you are putting forward. As a former Student Union President, I understand the commitment you have to your roles in the AMS, to Queen’s as students and to Kingston as community members – and all the ways these roles intersect and interact.

Please accept my response to your policy document. I have briefly shared my values and suggested strategies based on your four (4) recommendations. I have also provided two (2) additional recommendations that I think will increase quality of life for students and our community.

I believe that my responses show the consideration I gave your recommendations and the creativity and commitment I will employ as we do more work to champion these issues together. They point to my hope for future work with the AMS as Mayor. Our ability to inspire students to see the role they play in the community and to ask them to engage meaningfully is one of our greatest opportunities and at the same time it is our greatest challenge.

Kingston can move from being a good city to a great city; a city of cooperation, creativity and compassion; a city of innovation, entrepreneurialism and sustainability. This is my vision for our city. A city I want to lead. A city we can build together. Kingston can be a city that sets an example to the rest of the province and country of including and representing students well.

I look forward to further discussing this potential with you in person. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.



Brenda Slomka  
Mayoral Candidate  
City of Kingston

**“You don’t lead by pointing and telling people some place to go. You lead by going to that place and making a case.”**

**- Ken Kesey**

## Values:

I believe that **cooperation** must be present in Town-Gown relations between all of Kingston's post-secondary institutions and the City of Kingston or else we won't see progress on this important relationship.

I believe in student leadership. I believe in the capacity of young people to help redefine what our City will be and I will ask for full student engagement and full student participation in making Kingston a more innovative, entrepreneurial and sustainable place.



These “gears” will move us forward if I, as Mayor, and City Council commit to engaging with, listening to and partnering meaningfully with students.

I will **challenge** us to deepen accountability to working together with **creativity**. I want to **inspire** us to have a shared vision for our community - to **enable** collective contributions. I ask that you do the same.

As we challenge one another, we should do it with **compassion**. It is my hope therefore, with the AMS and SGPS as well as St Lawrence College (SLC) and Royal Military College (RMC), to define a charter of terms of reference for the relationship we will work to foster over the next 4 years.

## Responses:

**AMS Recommendation 1:** the creation of a pilot program for the City of Kingston to train and employ student officers of the AMS-run Housing Grievance Centre to canvas the University District throughout the months of October and March in a proactive property standards blitz. This will help resolve the challenges faced by property standards officers in acquiring tenant

consent and compensate AMS volunteers for their hard work and time. October and March have been selected as the most ideal times when weather permits neighbourhood canvassing. With limited funding of \$8000 to \$9000 annually, it is estimated that student officers could canvass 1000 properties per year and reach the great majority of rental properties within and beyond the University District.

### **BRENDA'S Response:**

I acknowledge the work being done by MAC, Student Affairs and Community Housing in regards to town-gown, educating on property standards and safe student housing. I believe these plans would be more effective with the support of other schools.

To augment your canvassing efforts I suggest that AMS:

- 1 **Partner** with the SLC Police Foundations program to develop a municipal by-law practicum (to increase inter-collegial collaboration and sharing of transferable skills)
- 2 **Connect** with School of Urban and Regional Planning to create a document on best practices in recording and reporting by-law infringements (to bolster academic application and organization accountability)
- 3 **Present** findings to City Council and the By-Law Enforcement Department on project methodology and outcomes – i.e. how survey was conducted and what was found (to foster stronger student-staff relationships)

**AMS Recommendation 2:** that City Council candidates consider the following benefits to a single stream system in addition to the business case for a regional MRF with single stream or dual stream capabilities.

### **BRENDA'S Response:**

I support moving to a single stream system, but recognize - after visiting the waste management facility and speaking with staff - that the City does not currently have the capacity to do this. I believe that there are, accordingly, other options to help curb waste management challenges (no pun intended).

In order to move us from challenges to opportunities in waste management, and before the City develops capacity for a single stream systems, I recommend the AMS:

- 4 **Educate** students on progressive, zero waste practices via the Commission of Environment and the Queen's Sustainability Office (to encourage inter-institutional dialogue and action)
- 5 **Develop** competition for engineering, policy, or other interested students to research and present on possibilities and precedents for prudent single stream systems – winner to be granted special acknowledgement from City Council (to

facilitate community based research and improved Town-Gown relations)

**AMS Recommendation 3:** that City of Kingston augments its arterial sidewalk clearing routes in the University District to facilitate clear pedestrian routes towards and away from Queen's University.

### **BRENDA'S Response:**

I think expanding arterial clearing routes is imperative, not only for the University District, but for highly trafficked areas across the City, for strengthening year-round active and accessible transportation infrastructure in Kingston. I know that for this enterprise to be financially sustainable it needs to occur within a concentrated area without privileging one area over another.

To further your clearing endeavor, I encourage the AMS to:

- **6 Couch** recommendation 3 as a Kingston wide initiative (to promote Town-Gown relations and students' awareness of their potential impact on the wider community)
- **7 Lobby** for areas in and around bike lanes, transit stops and retirement residents/long term care facilities to be considered as "arterial" (to stand for active and public transportation and stand with those with accessibility needs – furthering the benefits of response 6)
- **8 Back** plans to intensify urban growth – for example, through my proposal to waive development fees for "Smart Growth" initiatives (re: benefits of response 6)

**Recommendation 4:** In recognizing the importance of Orientation Week for town-gown relations, the AMS recommends that City Council candidates continue to support Queen's Orientation Week by granting the necessary by-law exemptions after careful consideration, as well as providing a welcoming atmosphere for incoming Queen's students.

### **BRENDA'S Response:**

I contend that the City needs to do a better job welcoming and retaining students. In 2014's "What Students Want" report, the Ontario Undergraduate Student Association said that "over half of students surveyed felt that municipalities were not actively engaging with students. Further, approximately two thirds of students reported that they did not intend to remain in the community where they had undertaken their studies. This suggests that if cities and towns wish to retain the talent and economic potential of recent graduates they may need to explore how to more actively engage and meet the needs of their student populations."

To bolster your by-law exemptions (for safe and inclusive festivities) I ask the AMS to:

- **9 Establish** BBQs with Neighbourhood Associations in given Districts across the city for all off campus students – linked with First Year Not In Residence Students (FYNIRS) as part of the program (to strengthen on/off campus and Town-Gown

relations)

- 10 **Support** a Mayor's task force that will look at the impact of retaining students after graduation (to champion post-graduation local job creation)
- 11 **Create** a multi-disciplinary course with the School of Business and Policy Studies that would - after Senate accreditation - look at best practices in development and implementation of retaining students within a municipality (to augment students' academic agency and applicability)

\*\* e.g. The Simon Fraser University Centre for Dialogue: [www.sfu.ca/dialogue](http://www.sfu.ca/dialogue)

## **Additional Recommendations**

### **Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality.** - Warren Bennis

The following recommendations are intended to examine pertinent issues that, when addressed, will help build a safe and inclusive community at Queen's – a safe and inclusive community that can be mirrored across Kingston.

**BRENDA'S Recommendation (5):** That the AMS strike a working group with Kingston Immigration Partnership, Kingston Community Health Centre's Immigrant Services, Queen's International Centre, Four Directions Aboriginal Centre and the Principal's office with a mandate to revisit the Henry Report (2008) and improve race relations and systemic barriers for international students, First Nations' students and other students of colour.

**BRENDA'S Recommendation (6):** That the AMS, in partnership with the Human Rights Office, Sexual Assault Centre of Kingston and the Mayor's office, review relationships with and policies of campus pubs and clubs with a mandate to create and enforce higher standards for sexual assault prevention training and reporting practices.

**BRENDA'S Recommendation (7):** That the AMS work with the Jack Project, the Provost's Office, Queen's University Senate, the Ontario University Association and a diverse range of mental health service agencies to identify institutional inhibitors of mental well-being, such as course load, course structure and curricula, inter-institutional transfer policy and funding mechanisms.

As we consider the potential of what these recommendations will look like practically – conferences, provincial and national profile, local community engagement and healthier post-secondary experiences – I am committed to collaborating with you and supporting the work that is already being done in order to move us forward and become a great city. I will leave you with this quote that I feel captures my commitment in this: “You have to be burning with an idea, or a problem, or a wrong that you want to right. If you're not passionate enough from the start, you'll never stick it out.” – Steve Jobs