

### **General Meeting Called**

A special General Meeting of the SGPS has been called for Wednesday, April 29<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of the General Meeting is for the SGPS Executive to consult with Council and the membership regarding attempts by the university administration to remove student society control over the setting and approval of student fees. More information will be forthcoming at Council on April 14<sup>th</sup>.

### **Faculty Opposition to Mandated Programme Suspension**

In response to programmes being ordered suspended by the Dean of Arts and Science without the proper approval of faculty, a motion was presented and approved from the floor at Arts & Science Faculty Board, April 3, 2009. The motion read:

Given that Faculty Board Bylaw 1.10(B) identifies the procedures for “substantial change” to concentrations or programmes, Bylaw 2.5(B)(iv) states that such changes are to be “submitted to the [Curriculum] committee from the department(s) concerned” and Bylaw 2.3(C)(i), (ii), and (viii) require these changes to be examined by the Committee of Departments, and that recommendations on such proposed changes go to the Faculty Board, “which shall make the final decision (Bylaw 1.10(B); and,

Given that the proposed programme “suspensions” did not originate with the affected academic units or departments and have not followed the bylaws of the Arts & Science Faculty Board;

We move the following:

1. All “suspensions” of “degree types”, programmes or concentrations that did not go through the appropriate and properly scheduled departmental and faculty curriculum committees (i.e., October 2008 through January 2009) be withdrawn.
2. All programmes and concentrations proceed for 2009-2010.
3. All curriculum review discussions be re-convened in a collegial manner following appropriate procedures as specified by our Faculty Board Bylaws. That is:
  - a. All curriculum review requests made by the Dean’s Office of the Faculty of Arts & Science go to the departments formally, in writing.
  - b. The departments review these suggestions and develop recommendations regarding the curriculum review in a timely manner, so that the departmental plans proceed through the departmental curriculum committees and departmental meetings, using the usual procedures and timelines to bring these departmental recommendations to the Faculty Curriculum Committee in October.
  - c. The Faculty Curriculum Committee follows Faculty Board Bylaws and reviews each proposal from each department.
  - d. The Faculty Curriculum Committee Omnibus Report then goes to the Committee of Departments and the Faculty Board of Arts & Science according to the usual schedule.

A similar motion will be presented to Senate at their next meeting on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. One result of such a motion passing would be that student representatives would have a voice in the decision making process regarding program suspension.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeff Welsh



Society of Graduate and Professional Students  
Report of the Vice President Graduate  
April, 2009

### **Student Advisors Program**

The three student advisors are currently undergoing their annual performance evaluations. Any council member who has experience(s) working directly with the student advisor(s) and wishes to comment on his/her performances, please contact me before Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Student advisors program provides vital services to our members, particularly on helping the students dealing with issues on supervisor conflicts, authorship of papers and ownership of the data or upper-year student funding. Please encourage (and/or refer) the students in need in your department to our service. The office hours of the student advisors are Monday afternoon 2:30-5:30p.m. (or by appointment). The student advisors can be reached at [studentadvisors@sgps.ca](mailto:studentadvisors@sgps.ca).

### **TA Consultative Committee**

The committee has finished analyzing data collected from the departments and now in the process of drafting a report with recommendations to the Senate. The committee will discuss the draft report during the April meeting.

### **SGSR Council Meeting (March)**

At the March meeting, Division V (Social Sciences and Professional Schools) continued expressing their concerns on the issue of QGA re-allocation. Further discussion is expected for the April meeting. In addition, the Senate Committee on Academic Procedure (SCAD) is proposing a change in the current Queen's official grading system to a GPA (grade point average) system that can be more easily interpreted by other universities and companies in the hope to enhance the competitiveness and to assure fairness of Queen's students during recruitment processes. The new system is expected to be implemented in 2010-2011 or 2011-2012. More discussions on the grading system are also expected for the April meeting.

### **Health Sciences Education Award Committee**

The Health Science Education Award is the highest recognition within the Faculty of Health Sciences on teaching excellence and innovation in teaching methods that, together, bring a significant impact on Health Sciences education at Queen's. Nine nominations were received and six of them had advanced to the committee for consideration. The committee met in March to discuss the nomination process, reviewed and finalized award criteria and the selection process for this year. The committee is meeting again in April to select the final award winner of 2009.

### **Health and Dental Policy Review Committee**

I also participated in the committee to help Jamie select the most competitive Health and Dental provider for our members.

Respectively Submitted,

Joellen Lin  
Vice President Graduate  
[vpig@sgps.ca](mailto:vpig@sgps.ca)



Society of Graduate and Professional Students  
Report of the Vice President Professional  
April 2009

Hi everyone! I'm excited to have joined the executive as VPP for this year! I don't have much to report since my term only just started but here goes!

I sat down for a transition meeting with former VPP Jamie Kneen, and we went over the issues that were important over the past year, especially those that will be continuing into this year. I am looking forward to continuing her efforts in areas such as ensuring the best possible health and dental plan, addressing concerns from the Professional Students Standing Committee about residence space, better defining our relationship with the Grad Club Board, and examining changes in bylaw and policies that might make them easier to work with.

Next week I will be attending a more general transition meeting with the rest of the executive to gain a better understanding of the administrative structure of the SGPS and any other ongoing issues.

Finally, the SGPS is looking to hire both an athletics coordinator and an equity coordinator. Email if interested!

Kate Kahn  
vpi@sgps.ca



Society of Graduate and Professional Students  
Report of the Social Commissioner  
April 2009

Hello Everyone,

I would just like to take this opportunity to let you know about your upcoming spring social event "Speed Meeting...Meet a Friend or More!"

Place: Grizzly Grill (lounge area)

Date: May 5<sup>th</sup>

Time: 7 pm

\$10.00 a ticket, this includes a free alcoholic beverage and food.

Come on out and meet other graduate students at Queen's in a speed meeting fashion. We hope to see you all there.

Our upcoming spring/summer events will include white water rafting, movie night and much more, please stay tuned.

If would like to see any particular SGPS social events this summer please e-mail me at [social@sgps.ca](mailto:social@sgps.ca).

Respectfully Submitted,

Diala Habib



Society of Graduate and Professional Students  
Report of the Communications Commissioner  
March 2008

#### Handbook

- I have solicited a good number of ads for the handbook so far. I am still looking into getting a few more.
- I have re-worked some of the content of the handbook. I have also created a few more SGPS specific ads to promote such things as the H&D plan and other services we offer.
- The handbook is due April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

#### E-Newsletter

- Our last E-Newsletter was the most read newsletter I have released. There was almost 2000 downloads of the newsletter.

#### Computer Network

- All the kinks have been worked out with our new e-mail and file servers. I plan to migrate to the new servers in May, when our web traffic is lower.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sean Richards - info@sgps.ca

### **Personal Harassment Policy**

The University is attempting to create a standard and universal personal harassment policy for all employees of the university (including graduate students). As graduate students, we face personal harassment on many levels: from supervisors, employers, or even undergraduate students. There has not been any sort of escalating grievance process to address these concerns as current options for graduate students facing personal harassment are to go to the SGPS Student Advisors or the Human Rights Office. In many cases by the time graduate students use these resources, relationships between parties are already strained.

Since graduate students do not fall under a collective agreement like many other employee groups on campus, there has been a lack of a consistent and student-centric approach to dealing with the problem of harassment in the past. A new university-wide harassment policy is a step in the right direction. However, I'm currently advising the Council on Employment Equity (which is drafting the policy) that any university-wide harassment policy must recognize the dependent nature of graduate students and, therefore, have multiple yet escalating steps towards addressing grievances. This is especially important in the case of grievances between a supervisor and graduate student as there is a large power imbalance.

### **Washrooms**

The Positive Space Committee is currently looking at making washroom facilities in the Queen's Centre accessible for transgendered individuals (more unisex washrooms). We are specifically concentrating on the Queen's Centre as the plans for it are still flexible as opposed to the rest of campus.

### **Equity Coordinator**

The problems revolving around equity on this campus in education, university policy, and student culture are too numerous to detail in this report. If the SGPS is committed to advancing equity for the graduate student body at Queen's, we are definitely in need of another Equity position. I humbly ask the Council to consider and approve the request for the Equity Coordinator position, which will enable me to expand the reach of the SGPS in dealing with equity issues on campus. I foresee the coordinator being largely responsible for helping me with event organization for various campaigns.

### **Stolen Sisters Campaign**

The Canadian Federation of Students has a "Stolen Sisters" campaign as part of their broader "Where's the Justice?" campaign, which addresses the federal government's reluctance to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples completed in 1999. The campaign aims to raise awareness of the roots of violence, poverty, and discrimination faced by Aboriginal people. The Stolen Sisters campaign seeks to fight violence and discrimination against Aboriginal women in Canada and to shed light on the numerous cases of violence against Aboriginal women that have gone unnoticed by the Canadian government. The Queen's Native Students Association will partner with us to set up a table or two providing free coffee/tea during

Finals time in Stauffer Library while giving out information regarding the “stolen sisters” campaign and getting students to sign postcards asking the Prime Minister to take action on this issue.

For more info: <http://www.cfs-fcee.ca/aboriginal/english/campaigns.php>

### **Needs of Muslim Students**

The Canadian Federation of Students compiled a report on the “Needs of Muslim Students” through a Task Force that went to various Ontario universities to collect data and testimony on how well Muslim students are accommodated on campus. Queen’s University was mentioned five times in the report. It was the most mentioned university in the report. All five mentions in the report were of a negative nature. This coupled with the break-ins in the prayer area earlier this year and the Islamophobic incidents on campus last semester paint Queen’s University in a very negative light. I’m currently discussing with the Human Rights Office what actions we are taking at Queen’s to respond to the recommendations of this report. It would be helpful to see which recommendations have been implemented and how well they’ve been implemented.

### **Language Programs**

The Arts and Sciences Faculty has decided to suspend programs that have had “fewer than 25 students enrolled over the past several years” in response to the current fiscal situation of the University. In the next registration cycle, over 40 degree types might be suspended unless they can be “restructured”. While it is understandable that the university restructure in this recession, many of the degree types affected by this suspension add diversity to our education curriculum and provide critical studies for incoming graduate students. For example, many language programs are currently in danger of suspension due to their low enrollment rates. This is problematic for several reasons as far as equity but also for the future competitiveness of Queen’s as a University.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Usman Mushtaq