

First, I must first acknowledge the hard work that Jawad did during his term and thank him for his assistance during transition. I have been able to meet with both the Principal and the Provost in March. I also attended the Grad School Executive Council meeting and look forward to forthcoming meetings.

I thought for my first report (since it is only the 5<sup>th</sup> day of my term when writing this) I would focus on the forthcoming year.

#### SLC- O& M Agreement

Council approved the O&M document as well as the Constitution at previous council meetings. I have recently been advised that there may be some minor revisions. As such, I anticipate I will be meeting again with the University administration and the AMS over the course of the year. With respect to the Constitution, there was one small amendment with respect to the non-student member. The document now specifically indicates that this member should be a Queen's Alumni.

#### Bursaries/Awards

This is an ongoing project that the SGPS started last year. In addition, we are trying to increase the awards, bursaries and grants for our membership. Additionally, if you have any suggestions, please feel free to contact me.

#### Committees

There will be a number of vacancies for Graduate and Professional Student reps. I encourage you all to inquire about any of these volunteer positions for various committees both within the SGPS and external.

#### Student Affairs

I have had the opportunity to meet with the Dean of Student Affairs last week. He has been sincere and direct in his dedication to Professional and Graduate students. Dean Pierce remains committed to engaging with Graduate and Professional Students. I am optimistic that this will be relayed to the new Dean of Student Affairs will be just as committed. If any of you would like to join the Social / Equity /Committees for the upcoming year in order to articulate graduate / professional student needs, and assist in transitioning the new Dean.

In conclusion, I am thrilled to have the fantastic team that you chose. I look forward to the upcoming year and all of the challenges and rewards it will bring.

Respectfully submitted,

Jillian Burford-Grinnell  
President – SGPS  
[president@sgps.ca](mailto:president@sgps.ca)

### **Hello to all SGPS Councillors and members!**

First, I would like to thank Jillian Burford-Grinnell, former VPFS and current President, for all of her hard work last year. She has facilitated my ability to get to work immediately, trying to find ways to best meet the needs of SGPS members. I especially appreciate Jillian's diligent contributions to the Student Life Centre constitution, and I look forward to serving with the various SLC committees to ensure that graduate and professional students remain an integral part of future decision-making.

### **Services**

As I continue to adjust to my new role and learn the VPFS ropes, it will doubtless become more apparent where to focus my energy most effectively. I intend to continue the work begun by the outgoing (and continuing) Executive by integrating equity into the services that the SGPS provides and endorses for its membership. To that end, in addition to chairing the Finance and Services Committee, I look forward to serving with the Strategic Planning Committee to develop a plan that will guide and strengthen SGPS member services. I will also actively contribute to various external Boards and Committees, such as Queen's Daycare, the Ban Righ Foundation for Continuing University Education, and the Senate Committee on Scholarships and Student Aid.

### **Bursaries and Student Aid**

Last year, Jillian began the arduous task of compiling information about bursaries and awards that are available to graduate and professional students university-wide, and I intend to continue this work. I take former VP Professional Shaughnessy Hawkins very seriously when she recommends that SGPS could improve their support of LSS members who are seeking bursaries with the School of Law, and I hope to work with current VPP Mark Noble to strengthen that advocacy.

I am pleased with the system in place for awarding internal bursaries and grants, and I will remain vigilant about gaps in policy that prevent our members from benefiting from those funds when needed.

### **Finance & Services Committee**

It's that time of year again, and I'd like to put out a call for anyone who is interested in joining this exciting and helpful team. We get to give people good news, so the work is incredibly rewarding without being overly onerous. Please advertise this call for committee members widely to your departments, and ask interested parties to contact me at [vpfs@sgps.ca](mailto:vpfs@sgps.ca).

### **Tax Time**

As your friendly neighbourhood financial person, I'd like to remind everyone that dental and medical expenses are eligible for tax deductions under specific Canada Revenue Agency guidelines: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/ndvdl/tpcs/ncm-tx/rtrn/cmpltng/ddctns/Ins300-350/330/llwbl-eng.html> so please be sure to spread this news around your departments as well.

### **Referendum Results**

SGPS members voted on March 28 and 29 to renew the mandatory fee for CFRC Radio at the existing level of \$3.75 per student.

I look forward to an excellent year!

Respectfully submitted,  
Andrea Phillipson  
VP Finance and Services

I learned a valuable lesson during my last term, and particularly over the past few weeks. The task of representing our constituents can be difficult at times, but it is crucial. In this regard, the outgoing Executive did this complex task justice by bringing our divergent needs to the forefront of innumerable committee agendas. Though, in my opinion, the SGPS and our members are more visible as a result, though we have carved room for ourselves, and positioned ourselves as an autonomous but indispensable body, our efforts mean little if they remain outside our members' grasp.

Unfortunately, there appears to be a significant gap between what we do, and our members' knowledge of what we do. This was made especially clear to me during, and in the wake of, our Annual General Meeting (AGM), when several members expressed being confused about our process/procedures – even at times about the issues that were discussed. This is as much a problem of transparency as it is one of equity: the content of our discussions, the structure of our organization (as well as that of our university), and the procedural rules under which we operate must be made sufficiently accessible for our work to be meaningful.

As such, the work I plan on undertaking over the next year is very much reflective of my title. Specifically, I want to undertake campaigns which I hope will revitalize a sense of belonging to the community that is the SGPS membership. For one, I want to work closely with Councilors to help them maximize departmental communication with the SGPS. To this end, I invite you to contact me if you would like to discuss new ways of relaying information to your departmental colleagues before Council meetings, and again after Council has met. I also want to organize teach-ins to help our members become acquainted with Robert's rules, as well as with writing motions. These ideas come out of the excellent feedback we got at yesterday's Q & A session on the AGM and the SGPS structural process.

Based on mine and my colleagues' observations at the AGM, I think it would also be beneficial to organize town halls on those issues which cannot be adequately addressed within the parameters of our monthly meetings: academic freedom, democratic representation, and anything else relevant to past and/or upcoming Council discussions. I also want to do a better job of demystifying any misconceptions, and addressing general apprehensions about our membership within the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS). As the only existing organization which lobbies on behalf of graduate students (approximately 70,000 of them across the country) at the provincial and federal levels, the CFS is also the sole voice to represent graduate students – a significant segment of our own membership – in their work with Human Resources & Skills Development, Industry Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Department of Finance, the National Advisory Group on Student Financial Assistance, various House of Commons Standing Committees, the Canadian Consortium for Research, and the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT). In recent years, their lobbying efforts resulted in the introduction of: an Ontario Trillium Scholarship for international doctoral students; double the number of available Ontario Graduate Scholarships; and permits for international students to work off-campus, amongst victories. For many of our members, the benefits of our continued affiliation with the CFS extends much beyond the services –most notably free ISIC cards- which they help us to provide.

Over the next few weeks, I will be focusing my attention on two specific campaigns. I have already mentioned the first one to Council in a previous report: I want to raise awareness of Queen's recently implemented Safe Disclosure Policy, which grants us whistleblower protection. I invite Councilors once again to discuss the policy with their departments, to identify any concerns or questions about how the policy relates to the work that you do, and to communicate these back to me. My second immediate project will be to collaborate with the AMS Academic Affairs Commissioner, Kieran Slobodin, to encourage student voting in the upcoming federal elections. Please note that advanced polling stations have been arranged for in Wallace Hall for the 22, 23, and 25<sup>th</sup> of April.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne-Marie Grondin

## **Greetings!**

My name is Irene Karagiorgakis and I am the new Vice President Graduate for 2011/2012. I began my term as VP Graduate a couple of weeks ago and I am still in the process of familiarizing myself with the role of the VP Graduate. Daniel has left me with a list of ongoing commitments and some items that currently need my attention. I am currently reviewing this list and as such, my report this time around is brief; expect a more thorough report next council meeting.

## **Student Advisors**

It is my understanding that we will need to hire two Student Advisors for the next academic year. I intend to send out a call for applications within the next month or so. If you or anyone you know is interested in finding out more information about the Student Advisor program or how to apply, please don't hesitate to contact me. Stay tuned for more information.

## **Academic Affairs Standing Committee**

As you may know, the VP Graduate chairs the Academic Affairs Standing Committee. The outgoing VP Graduate did a great job of reviving this committee during his term. I am committed to continuing on his efforts for the coming academic year. If you are interested in finding out more information about how to get involved with the committee on short-term projects to do with academic issues that face Queen's graduate students, please feel free to contact me.

## **Free Queen's**

There are two more Free Queen's workshops coming up for this academic year:

### *Information Management*

April 21, 2011  
5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

### *Negotiating Formality with Personality*

April 28, 2011  
5:30 – 8:00 p.m.

For the coming 2011/2012 academic year, I will aim to continue offering Free Queen's workshops and to advertise the workshops to our members. For more information or to sign up for an upcoming Free Queen's workshop, visit [www.keys.ca](http://www.keys.ca).

That's it for now! Please know that I am very committed to doing my best to serve you and the academic interests of the graduate students that you represent. I am also interested in increasing non-academic services that the SGPS provides, as well as bolstering the relationship between professional and graduate students. While Daniel has left me with some very big shoes to fill, I am excited to take on the challenges that lie ahead. I look forward to serving you and working with you this coming year!

Respectfully submitted,

Irene Karagiorgakis  
VP Graduate  
vpg@sgps.ca

Hello Council,

Not too much going on this month with GCS, but thought we should keep with the habit of submitting a report to all of you fine councilors!

Things are wrapping up for another Winter term, meaning that summer is just around the corner, an exciting premise over in the School of Computing. It also means that the term of the current GCS Council will be wrapping up and a new Executive is going to be elected in the Summer Term, so keep your eyes out for our August report, which will likely contain the results of that Election.

As for the current events of GCS, we do have two events that are planned for the last day of classes (so yes, they will have happened by the time Council rolls around, but we might as well let you know what we are up to). We are holding an end-of-term lunch break featuring some coffee and treats (provided) and, a chance to catch up with those we may not have seen as often as we would have liked. Our second event is a movie night, but with a twist, instead of a movie, we will be watching a selection of some of the best Doctor Who episodes.

Other than that, not too much else to say from our end; hopefully this council meeting won't last as long as the AGM!

Have a great week, and see you soon.

Eric Rapos and Layan Nahlawi  
SGPS Relations Officers  
Graduate Computing Society  
<http://sites.cs.queensu.ca/gcs/main/>

Dear Councilors,

The Council on Employment Equity has compiled its annual report to the Principal, which includes representational statistics of Queen's employees. The only category in which we compare favourably to the general Canadian workforce is in terms of visible minority representation; thus, it appears that collective bargaining agreements may be working in terms of recruitment and retention. We also spent significant time reviewing the new Employment Equity Award criteria, which will be open to student nominees in the coming years. We also got an update on the Accessibility Coordinator position. This role has been vacant for a year now, and due to transitioning of the VPs portfolio it has yet to be filled. Apparently the senior administration is taking time to learn what the Human Rights Office and Equity Office do, and thus are asking the Director of both, Irene Bujara, for a visioning document about what she feels is appropriate at this stage. She will likely be recommending that we need an Accessibility Coordinator to oversee accessibility issues and another position to continue the work of the Federal Contractors program; if one or the other position is not fulltime, then the same person will have to look after each portfolio, but there must be financial commitment to this role.

Queen's Accessibility Committee discussed new technologies that may assist accessibility in the classroom. We discussed work being done on video capture with powerpoint as well as a dictation software text project that has been percolating. Trent University has recently had success with audio-visual-text capture, so the technology exists. The question is who should look after a project such as this: because various single units have not had success carrying this initiative on their own, it would make sense for a future subcommittee of QAC to take the lead in this regard, which will ensure many units from the university are involved. We also discussed the new Integrated Accessibility Standards of the AODA: these standards are highly problematic because it puts the onus on the individual who identifies as having a disability to ask for an 'accommodation', while the organization has final say as to whether the accommodation is implemented. This is highly problematic and does not even meet basic human rights requirements.

I've also been sitting on the Steve Cutway Accessibility Award Committee. We have chosen three people (one staff, one faculty and one student) to be recognized for their contribution to accessibility on campus this year: Julie Harmgardt, Founder of Queen's InvisAbilities; Jeanette Parsons, Director, Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies (and former Accessibility Coordinator for Queen's); and Dr. Leela Viswanathan, Assistant Professor, School of Urban and Regional Planning. Congratulations to all! We are particularly excited that Julie Harmgardt was recognized, as a number of our members are involved in InvisAbilities initiatives. The Ceremony was held on Tuesday, April 5<sup>th</sup> and the Principal presented the three individuals their awards with Steve Cutway in attendance.

Finally, (Dis)Ability Awareness Month went smoothly, with a very provoking Speaker's Corner event organized by the SGPS. I would like to thank SGPS member Stephanie Cork in particular for all the excellent work she's done in assisting DAM planning and coordinating.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Prouse  
Equity Commissioner

### SGPS Computer Network

- I have partially completed the office computer network diagram. I hope to complete the diagram in the next month.
- I have terminated access to our mail/wiki/computer system for last year's Exec and I have given access to the new Executive.
- The hardware of our old server is prepared. I am now working on software package installations so the server is prepared for web development so we can begin developing online bursary applications.
- I am working on a proposal for off-site backup. More to come in the next month or two.
- I have added another workstation to our office workflow.
- I have finished upgrades to office computers that protect against potential attackers.

### SGPS Website

- I have updated the people section of our site to reflect the new Executive.
- The available positions the SGPS is hiring for are available on our website.
- I have diagnosed an issue with delivery of our website to older blackberry devices (2 years old or more). I have completed a fix, however, I do not have access to an older blackberry to test. If anyone has one, please let me know if the website is showing up properly.

### Communications

- Work continues on the 2011-2012 Dayplanner/Agenda.
- I have met with various parties around Queen's to finalize details for the optional fee opt-out procedures for the 2011-2012 academic year.
- I continue to work to finalize details for mailing lists for sub-societies of the SGPS. The process is delayed (I assume because of the SOLUS system and the pressing issues that need to be dealt with).
- The EGSS used the SGPS online election system to conduct their annual election. Overall, the process went very well. Other sub-societies are more than welcome to request to use our online voting mechanisms. 3 weeks of notice is required.
- The response to the SGPS Awards was amazing. Thanks to everyone that submitted a nomination.
- Tickets for the SGPS Semi-Formal are still available for purchase:  
<http://www.sgps.ca/events/social.html>

Respectfully submitted,  
Sean Richards - [info@sgps.ca](mailto:info@sgps.ca)

Hello All,

The SGPS social team is excited to inform you of the great events that we're going to be holding this month. Our events range from a variety of purely social, athletic and healthy living events. We hope to see everyone come out and interact with the diverse community that is our SGPS members.

### **SGPS Bowling Night**

The SGPS is thrilled to inform you about our Bowling Night at Cloverleaf Lane. This should be an entertaining night of cosmos moonlight bowling, split between amazing strikes and more entertaining gutter balls. Additionally, this will be an excellent opportunity to show off or brush up on those invaluable bowling skills. Please email [social@sgps.ca](mailto:social@sgps.ca) if you're planning on coming out, hence we can reserve enough lanes.

Date: April 1st

Time: 9:00-11:00 pm

Location: Cloverleaf Lane (10 Bath road)

### **SGPS Spring Semi-Formal Banquet**

The SGPS is excited to inform you about our upcoming Spring Semi-Formal. Come out and join us for a fabulous dinner at the very elegant Confederation Place Hotel. For only \$35 you can enjoy appetizers, a delicious buffet dinner with a glass of wine and a complementary drink ticket as well. A cash bar will be available throughout the night. After dinner, we'll be heading to Zappas Lounge for a fun night of dancing. You can acquire your ticket online at <http://www.sgps.ca/events/social.html>, or by purchasing it from the SGPS office in person (021 JDUC). There is a limited quantity of ticket due to this event being heavily subsidized (actual cost \$70/person), thus get your tickets before they run out. For more information please contact us at [social@sgps.ca](mailto:social@sgps.ca)

Date: Friday, April 15<sup>th</sup>

Time: 6:00 pm- 10:30 pm

Location: Confederation Place Hotel (237 Ontario st)

## Social Coordinator Job Openings

The SGPS is looking for energetic and creative individuals to become members of the social team. The social team plans and executes social and athletic events in hopes of bringing graduate and professional students together. In particular, there is three coordinator posts available: Planning, Logistics and Athletics. The jobs include a remuneration of \$2000 for the each position, and not too much of a time commitment. If your interested in joining us and improving the social life of your fellow SGPS members you can find more information at the SGPS website (below). Additionally, feel free to contact us at [social@sgps.ca](mailto:social@sgps.ca) for more information.

<http://www.sgps.ca/jobs/jobs.html>

Lastly, the social team would love to hear your feedback regarding the types of events we are organizing and ways we can make them more appealing to our SGPS members. If you have any general inquiries or feedback don't hesitate to contact us at [social@sgps.ca](mailto:social@sgps.ca).

Respectfully Submitted,

Abdullahi Abunafeesa  
Social Commissioner  
([social@sgps.ca](mailto:social@sgps.ca))