

### **Queen's Centre**

A design review of Phases II and III is currently underway, with the aim of identifying cost-saving options. It is hoped that options can be presented to the Trustees at the October 3/4 session. It has been stressed to the Review Committee that the SGPS requires more space, not less, in order to accommodate our expanded functions.

### **Graduate Residence**

Discussions with the University are underway regarding a new Graduate/Professional Student Residence to replace the current Graduate Residence above the JDUC slated for demolition in Spring/Summer 2009. Providing public space and SGPS offices in the ground floor of the new residence building is an option being considered.

### **Graduate Student Capital Funds**

As part of Ontario's Reaching Higher program, Queen's is set to receive approximately \$43,000,000 over the next several years for space needs related to the growth in graduate student enrollments. More than \$3 million has already been received by the University, with a further \$2.6 million expected in the coming year. Currently the University administration is drafting a campus capital plan that is intended to lay out future spending priorities for structures. To date, the University administration has not met with the SGPS to discuss spending priorities for Reaching Higher capital grants, but the SGPS Executive is endeavoring to insure that Graduate and Professional Student needs are met.

### **SGPS Offices**

We are in the process of locating a suitable space to house the SGPS during Queen's Centre Phase II and III construction. We hope to have a location established for consideration by Council by October.

### **International Graduate Student 5<sup>th</sup> Year Fees**

A few months ago (Spring 2008), international PhD students at Queen's who qualified for tuition fee waivers were notified by the SGSR that the policy of charging them the domestic tuition fee rate in their fifth year and beyond would cease effective this September. The SGPS succeeded in convincing the SGSR to reverse their decision for students in their fourth or later year who would be affected with little advance warning. We will attempt to reverse the decision for all qualified students.

### **SGPS Executive Director**

After an extensive search, Sean Richards was hired as the new Executive Director of the SGPS. After training in June, Sean assumed his new position in July. Councilors who would like details of his contract are invited to come to the SGPS office.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Welsh  
President



**Teaching Assistant and Teaching Fellow Survey**

Three hundred and seventy-seven people responded to the recent SGPS teaching assistant and teaching fellow survey. A draft of the final report summarizing the survey results is attached to this report as a separate document. It will be tabled at the August SGPS Council meeting.

**Student Advisor Program**

The Student Advisor Program hiring committee received 17 applications for the two vacant student advisor positions. In June, the committee hired Patrick Egbunonu. Welcome (back) Patrick! We will repost the second position in mid-August. We hope to attract a larger pool of qualified female applicants for the position.

In order to raise awareness about the Student Advisor Program we will be giving away fridge magnets during orientation week. We are also reviewing other ways of raising awareness about the program.

In July, Paul, Dana, Helen, and I met with David Rappaport (Associate Dean, SGSR) to discuss systemic issues effecting international graduate and professional students (e.g., abusive supervision, financial stress). At a follow up meeting, scheduled in mid-August, we will present David with strategies to raise awareness about these issues.

**TA Consultative Committee**

When the TA Consultative Committee meets in the fall committee members will discuss the results from a recent survey of TA employment practices across departments. The committee aims to report on the survey findings to Senate in the late fall or early winter.

Patrick Deane recently informed the SGSR that effective September 2008 the hourly rate for graduate TAs will increase to \$35.95 and the maximum stipend for graduate TFs will increase to \$6,669. The table below shows TA wages, tuition, and minimum PhD funding from 2003 to present.

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Minimum PhD Stipend	16,500	17,000	17,500	18,000	18,000	18,000
TA Rate per hour	23.00	32.50	33.50	34.50	34.50	35.95
Domestic Graduate Student Tuition	5,159	5,159	5,159	5,159	5,159	5,572

Source: SGSR

The executive is concerned that the TA wage increase, while adopted to offset inflation over the past two years, does not improve overall funding for graduate and professional students. First, PhD students receiving an internal funding package haven't seen an increase since 2006. Since TA wages are a part

of many funding packages, an increase in TA wages without an increase in the overall minimum funding package has no effect. Second, tuition fees are increasing this fall – by 4% for continuing students and by 8% for new students. This wipes out any benefit from TA wage increases, especially for students without TAs. The Executive plans to bring these issues to the attention of the university administration during the fall semester.

Sean Tucker  
August 5, 2008

**CFS PROVINCIAL DAY OF ACTION AND ACTIVIST ASSEMBLY (NOV. 5<sup>th</sup> and SEPT. 28-29, respectively)**

Planning continues for both events locally. With respect to the Day of Action, I am seeking interested participants to join an organizing committee who would help with the planning and organization of the Queen's component of the Day of Action. I will elaborate the goals of the Day verbally at Council. I will also outline the purpose of the Activist Assembly – all those interested in attending/participating are encouraged to contact me. Finally, discussions have begun with other student groups on campus regarding the Day of Action.

**CFS National AGM (May 22-25, Ottawa)**

Attended the National Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Federation of Students. At the meeting I participated in the policy sub-committee which dealt with a number of policy related matters, such as the Federation's policy positions on student codes of non-academic conduct, culturally appropriate foods on campus, the use of bottled water and the timing and organization of government elections as well as elections on campus. I also participated in the National Graduate Caucus which discussed a number of issues related to the commercialization of research, academic freedom and the Federation's support of a student researcher, Chris Radziminski, in his disputes with NSERC and the University of Toronto. The meeting provided a great forum for discussion and networking as well as the articulation of strong policy and campaigns for the upcoming year.

**CFS Skills Symposium (June 13-15, Toronto)**

Attended the annual CFS Skills symposium. This symposium is a collection of workshops and sessions designed to provide student union executives and staff with the expertise, knowledge and background information necessary to perform their positions well. Some of the sessions I attended touched on topics such as: student union finances; the fiduciary duties held by directors of non-profit organizations; the status of student codes of non-academic conduct; the tuition fee framework in Ontario; dealing with media; and health and dental plans run by student unions. This symposium was quite useful, not only for the amount of information that is directly conveyed at the sessions, but also by providing a forum to share best practices between student unions.

**Journal Board Meetings (Meetings in June and July)**

Attended the Journal Board meetings on behalf of the SGPS. Both meetings were productive – the Journal is on solid ground on all accounts and has an ambitious and interesting series of plans for the upcoming year.

**Queen's / Kingston Housing Committee**

We (the SGPS) have started to attend this committee, which is composed of reps from the Queen's community as well as the city and private participants. We are advocating on behalf of graduate and professional students in order to see Queen's and Kingston meet their housing needs.

**New Policy on Research Integrity for Queen's University Advisory Research Committee**

There is a draft proposal circulating for a new policy regarding Integrity in Academic Research. We have identified a number of concerns for graduate and professional students, viz., the lack of student representation on the investigative committee; the grounds for appeal; and the lack of adequate language guaranteeing protection for whistleblowers against retaliation. I will bring these concerns to the committee when it meets next. Please contact me if you would like a copy of the draft Policy.

**CFS Ontario AGM (August 7-10, Toronto)**

By meeting time I will have attended this conference and will provide an oral report for council at the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Mark Rosner, VP External

I hope to find all members of the SGPS Council well and sound after our long break. It has been a busy summer for the SPGS Executive and I am glad be able to present our work to you here.

### **Health & Dental**

There has been a brief introductory meeting with Gerry, the insurance broker for SGPS. There has not been much discussion of insurance plan and there is no plan for any changes as of now. Our plan has been negotiated for the 08/09 session and the new rates come into effect as of September this fall.

In 07-08 fiscal year, the dental bursary has been successfully implemented with an increasing usage over the time. The SGPS Executive will be lobbying the University administration for the continuation and expansion of this program this year.

### **Operations & Finance Standing Committee**

We have seen a smooth operation of the Committee this summer. Most committee members continued from last year and we had two new members join us. The Committee has met twice this summer to process the very last batch of the Conference Expense Bursary and again to review the 08/09 budget. The Committee has also been very active through online communication. We are now looking for more committee members as most of the veteran members will be leaving Queen's. If you are interested in joining the Committee, please contact Joellen Lin, our Committee Coordinator.

### **Budget**

Please refer to Appendices I and II for the 08/09 budget and a walkthrough of it. I welcome all comments, questions and suggestions.

### **Other Business**

It has been a busy summer for the SGPS Executive, from the hiring of the new Executive Director to the active participation in the Queen's Centre planning. In addition to all Operations-related activities and joint tasks with the SGPS executive, I also sat on the Supervisor Award in Excellence Committee over the summer. We met twice throughout the summer and had 2 weeks to go over candidates. The Committee unanimously awarded two supervisors, one in Sciences and one in Humanities. These awards will be presented at Convocation.

I am in the process of discussing with the Executive as well as the Operations and Finance Committee on revising policies and guidelines for various financial support programs at the SGPS. I am hopeful the results of this discussion will be available by our next Council meeting in September.

This year, I plan to lobby the various bodies of the University administration on issues that I feel are relevant to the financial rights of our members. Some of my priorities are

lobbying for conference expenses and continuation and expansion of the dental bursaries. I will submit regular reports on these projects throughout this year.

Respectfully Submitted,

Victoria Bae  
Vice President Operations



Society of Graduate and Professional Students  
Report of the Social Commissioner  
August 2008

Firstly, I'd like to thank the SGPS council for giving me the opportunity to be their social commissioner this upcoming year. I am looking forward to taking this position on with the immense help and hard work from my social committee we are planning a lot of great social events for 2008/2009.

On July 19<sup>th</sup> we had our first whitewater rafting summer event at River Run in the village of Beachburg about 1.5 hours outside of Ottawa. We rented a bus from Stover's Busline for the amount of \$945.00. Each person paid \$60.00 for a full day of rafting with lunch included. The total cost for rafting after student payment was \$2901.48. This event was a huge success. SGPS received positive feedback from individuals such as "SGPS should organize events like this more often". I want to thank SGPS council for their support and understanding during planning for our first summer event.

Lastly, the social committee and I have been hard at work planning our upcoming orientation week. Our social activities include Haunted Walk, Boat Cruise, a multicultural night and much more. The orientation guide was sent out to our students July 31<sup>st</sup>. We are very excited for this year's events; please visit <http://www.sgps.ca/orientation> for details on how to register for orientation week, a detailed schedule as well as a description of every event. I would especially like to thank Sean Richards for all his guidance and support throughout planning for orientation week since he's been very helpful to our social committee and myself.

Respectfully submitted,  
Diala Habib  
Social Commissioner

### Orientation Week

- Last year there was an excellent reception to the O-Week Guide that was published by the SGPS. This year I decided to continue producing the guide for all new and returning graduate and professional students. I increased the number of pages this year to 20 (from 12 last year). Increasing the page count allowed me to include more useful information to our members (such as info about our services, fees, etc). The guide was snail-mailed to all students August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008. I welcome any feedback you would like to provide regarding the Orientation Week Survival Guide.
- Full Orientation Week details are available on our website and in the Orientation Guide.  
<http://www.sgps.ca/orientation>

### E-Newsletter

- The E-Newsletter continues to be a very important part of the SGPS Communications Strategy. More than 1000 of our members are reading each issue of the E-Newsletter. I am currently negotiating with many different groups on campus to improve the overall relevance of the newsletter. As always, comments and feedback are encouraged.

### Grad Handbook and Free Tote Bags

- I edited the SGPS handbook for this year. We reduced the number of SGPS specific pages this year as a cost saving measure and also as a response to comments from our membership. I believe I was able to incorporate all of the same important information as we have presented in the past. I was able to remove information that was not useful to our members. Some of the less important but still useful information has been moved to our website.
- Each new and returning student will receive a free handbook (contains information and a day planner) in an environmentally friendly and reusable tote bag. The tote bag will also contain a lot of useful information about services available at the SGPS, Queen's and services available in the Kingston community.

### Communications Commission

- The positions of webmaster, layout manager and grad guide editor have been incorporated into the contract of the Executive Director.

### Orientation Week Poster

- I have created a poster that gives brief details about Orientation Week, SGPS Health & Dental Plan, Optional Fees and SGPS Services. Please take one or more and put them up around your department. We are trying to promote these items as widely as possible so all our members are aware of what is going on.

### SGPS Website

- The website is currently being updated with information for the 2008/2009 SGPS Health and Dental Plan. The website is also getting updated information on committees. Our website will continue to evolve as the year moves forward. Please let me know if there are any items you would like to see added or modified.

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

Month of May:

- Attended initial “introductory” meeting with Jeff Welsh and Shauna Shiels
- met with Susan Anderson to discuss issues and needs of International Graduate students (Susan and I met on 2 different occasions)
- applied for funding to the Women’s Campus Safety fund (secured 5000\$ to conduct a research project)
- Attended the initial meeting on issues of Graduate Student Life as set up by Jennifer Massey in Student Affairs (this is a working group exploring ways to improve support, services, and opportunities for social engagement among graduate students –herein called the Graduate Life Working Group)
- Met with Miao Li (the Chair of the International Student Standing Committee) and discussed the organization of events during the summer months to provide opportunities for international graduate students to socialize and interact with other students who would be remaining on campus over the summer.

Month of June [please note I was away on holidays for 2 weeks in June]

- Met with members of the committee that will be overseeing the project I am putting together for the Women’s Campus Safety project.
- Miao and I met again with Susan Anderson to talk about Orientation week.
- Shauna and I met with Carolyn to talk about issues of accessibility on campus. We have scheduled a second meeting to explore ways on enhancing and improving accessibility. We are seeking to learn what projects are currently underway and will locate the gaps and pursue ways of filling these gaps over the course of the year.

Month of July

- submitted application to ethics for the Women’s Safety project
- meeting with Daniela (a summer student working for Health, Counselling, and Disability Services) to participate in a project being conducted by above and looking at international students and the challenges they are facing on campus.
- agreed to take part in faculty orientation day at the request of Jason Laker.
- meeting with Jeff and Shauna to talk about projects for the upcoming year. Shauna and I are intending to put together a Gender(ed) Violence Speaker and Film Series that will take place over the course of the fall and winter terms.
- also coming out of the meeting with Jeff and Shauna were a list of projects that Shauna and I will be pursuing. My projects include: seeking a follow-up report to the Henry Report (I have mentioned this to Irene Bujara already and will be meeting with someone from the Human Rights office within the next couple of weeks); pushing for anti-oppression training for all staff, faculty, and graduate students (I already have asked the AMS (via Kavita) and they are supporting this venture); and I want to put together at least one or two events to take place during **Break the Silence of the Congo Week** (Oct. 19-26). This week is being recognized across the world at the initiation of Friends of the Congo (can be accessed online at [friendsofthecongo.org](http://friendsofthecongo.org)) who are seeking to have 100 countries and 1000 campuses involved in

raising awareness of the violence/human rights violations that are taking place in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

--A second meeting with Carolyn and Shauna to continue our exploration of accessibility (I will be looking into how to improve "note-taking" services at Queen's).

--Shauna and I met to work on formatting out speaker/film series

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Sutherland



Society of Graduate and Professional Students  
Report of the (Committee Coordinator)  
August 2008

### **Senate Nominating Committee**

Formal application procedure is waved for the SGPS Committee Coordinator. My name will be forwarded for election in September 25 Senate Meeting.

### **Internal Academic Review Team**

The Dean of Arts and Science requested a graduate student representative to sit on each of the Review Teams attached to the Internal Academic Reviews of Economics, Chemistry, Art, and Mathematics. The 4 positions were successfully filled in early June.

### **Other University Committees**

Queen's University Animal Care Committee: the 2 positions were successfully filled.  
Queen's Accessibility Committee is looking for a graduate student representative; Matthew Shuster has applied for the position (acceptance not yet confirmed).

Queen's Day Care Board is still seeking a graduate student representative, particularly a student parent, to sit on the Board. First meeting of the 08-09 academic year is scheduled on August 19<sup>th</sup>. I will be attending the meetings until a student representative is found.

### **SGPS Appointing Standing Committee**

Starting August, I will be working closely with each of the SGPS standing committee chair to make sure that the description of the committee and the list of its membership are up to date. SGPS Appointing Standing Committee is currently seeking members to help with these important tasks.

I started writing a "committee column" for the SGPS E-Newsletter, began with the July 15<sup>th</sup> issue. Comments welcome.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joellen Lin  
Committee Coordinator