

### **Non-tuition Student Fees**

The SGPS is discussing the terms of a general university protocol for non-tuition student fees, to be approved by the VP (Academic) and the Board of Trustees. Presently, Queen's has a system whereby each student society (AMS and SGPS) passes its own student fees according to its own rules, after which the Board of Trustees votes to approve having the Registrar's office charge the fees to student accounts on behalf of the AMS and SGPS. However, although this exists in practice, there is no detailed written policy, despite being required by Ontario legislation in 1994 to develop one. The legislation states that any policy on non-tuition student fees must be approved by the student societies and the university. The VP (Academic) and the Chair of the Board of Trustees have stated that the details should be worked out by the two student societies and brought to them for approval, with the VP (Academic)'s only stated concern being the fairness of the system. Therefore, the SGPS Executive and the AMS Executive will be developing proposals to bring to our respective societies. In the meantime, please let us know if you have any specific concerns or suggestions.

### **Graduate School Governance**

The University Senate approved changes to the governance structure of the School of Graduate Studies in May, which took formal effect July 1<sup>st</sup>. The various representative graduate Divisions, organized by general disciplines, have been abolished. They have been replaced by a graduate council or committee in each Faculty (including the professional schools). There will still be a student rep on each council/committee. The Graduate Council has been stripped of its voting power, and is now merely a consultative body. Instead, the SGS Steering Committee has been replaced by a larger Executive Committee, on which the SGPS President and a graduate student Senator will be voting members. The remaining student representatives from the Faculties will have Observer status, entitling them to attend and to speak, but not to vote.

### **Graduate and Professional Housing**

Adequate and appropriate housing for our members remains an important issue. The SGPS membership has grown substantially over the last decade, but no new housing has been developed by the university for graduate and professional students. We are developing a survey that will help inform the university's decisions on developing more apartment-style housing for couples and families, more dedicated residence space for graduate students, month-to-month housing for students defending theses, and housing designed to meet the needs of professional programs (e.g., 8 month leases, a Law Residence, dedicated Education housing on West Campus, etc.). In addition, we are exploring the possibility of investing in our own housing stock, which will be discussed extensively with Council.

### **Cont'd...**

#### **Organizational Support**

Having strengthened our central administrative capacity over the past year, we will be offering support to our members in various departments and schools to help them achieve their own

goals more effectively. For example, last term we helped the graduate students in computing establish a formal society structure and their own student fee to support their own initiatives. Similarly, we helped the Education Graduate Students' Society establish their own fee to support their activities. Should your Department/School colleagues wish to strengthen their internal structure, generate their own revenues, join in group purchasing for T-shirts, etc., please contact an SGPS Executive. In the meantime, we will be speaking to new and continuing Council reps in October about ways in which we can further support individual programs.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeff Welsh

### **Student Advisors Program**

The annual program evaluation process has been completed. All three student advisors, Paul Quick, Patrick Egbunonu and Lisa Binkley, received positive reviews from the student clients and Queen's staff who had worked with them for the past year. Paul had successfully completed his term of service at the end of April, and Patrick will be leaving us at the end of the summer. SGPS office will be hiring two new student advisors in the Fall. Please advise the students in your department who may be interested in the position to check our website ([www.sgps.ca](http://www.sgps.ca)) and up-coming SGPS newsletters for hiring information. 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 summer office hours of the student advisors are Tuesday 10a.m.-12p.m. (or by appointment). The student advisors can be reached at [studentadvisors@sgps.ca](mailto:studentadvisors@sgps.ca).

### **SGPS Staff Positive Space Training**

Thanks to our Equity Commissioner Usmen for organizing the Positive Space training, where I received a general introduction to the program and the meanings and the significance of the Positive Space sticker that we see on campus. The training kept us up to date on the efforts made by the Positive Space program and other Queen's initiatives to make Queen's a more inclusive campus. I encourage the Council to check out the program ([www.queensu.ca/positivespace](http://www.queensu.ca/positivespace)), and if appropriate, encourage the students to attend an information session. In addition, The Positive Space Committee is also looking for members. Interested students can e-mail [posspace@queensu.ca](mailto:posspace@queensu.ca) for more information.

### **Hiring of the Committee Coordinator**

SGPS hiring committee hired Laura Gale as our Committee Coordinator for the 09-10 year. She has been doing a wonderful job recruiting graduate students to sit on University committees. Laura can be reached at [committee@sgps.ca](mailto:committee@sgps.ca).

### **Other Important Items Relating to Graduate Students**

#### 1. Graduate student vacation time

In July, 2009, Dr. Janice Deakin, the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies released a memo to department heads with graduate programs, graduate program coordinators and graduate program assistants recognizing the importance of vacation time to a graduate student's well being. The guideline recommended that each graduate student should be able to take up to 10 working days (equivalent of 2 weeks) of vacation time per year. The guideline is attached with this report and can also be found at [www.queensu.ca/sqs](http://www.queensu.ca/sqs).

#### 2. Early tuition increase for Master 2 students

It has brought to our attention that second year master students are being charged 4% more than expected tuition fee for the Spring/Summer term while completing their degree on time. After much discussions between SGPS office, SGS, and the office of university registrar, it was concluded that it was the University Policy to access the increase in tuition fee based on the University's fiscal year (May 1<sup>st</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup>) rather than the academic year (September 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>). A memo from Dr. Janice Deakin, the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, addressing the concern is attached with this report.

### 3. Registration and tuition payment

A new minimum tuition payment deadline has been implemented this year. The deadline for the minimum tuition payment (\$1,000 for domestic and \$3,000 for international students) or setting up an automatic payment plan is due August 1<sup>st</sup>, instead of the usual August 15<sup>th</sup>. Please inform the students in your department that if they have not met the payment requirement, they should do it immediately.

Steps in completing registration can be found here:

New students: <http://www.queensu.ca/registrar/preregistration/grad.html>

Continuing students: <http://www.queensu.ca/registrar/preregistration/gradret.html>

Tuition Fee Tables:

Domestic: <http://www.queensu.ca/registrar/fees/grad-dom.html>

International: <http://www.queensu.ca/registrar/fees/gd-intnl.html>

More information on the pre-authorized payment plan:

[http://www.queensu.ca/registrar/international/feepayment\\_files/dm.htm](http://www.queensu.ca/registrar/international/feepayment_files/dm.htm)

For most recent FAQs from graduate students to the SGPS office, please check out our current SGPS e-newsletter.

Respectively Submitted,

Joellen Lin  
Vice President Graduate  
vpig@sgps.ca

### **The Learning Curve**

Warmest regards to all Council and SGPS members. At our last Council meeting in May I had little to report, having just moved from Front Desk Staff into the impressive shadow of Mark Rosner and the position of VP External. Since that day we have changed the formal title and I have spent a good part of the first third of my term learning. Luckily the curve is steep and with the kind and wise help of my predecessor, our Executive Director Sean Richards, our President Jeff Welsh, and the other members of the SGPS executive, I have been brought up to speed with many of the particular people and elements of the University, the Kingston community, and the CFS, that fall under the purview of the CCA umbrella. Generally speaking, my efforts have been directed towards fostering closer ties with the city and residents of Kingston, and of strengthening our connection with the CFS and our fellow graduate and professional students at institutions across Canada. I thank you all in advance for your patience over the summer and hope to work with several of you in our efforts to improve the lives of SGPS members here at Queen's and in Kingston.

### **Housing**

As President Welsh points out in his report to Council, the issue of housing for graduate and professional students remains an important issue for the SGPS. With an ever growing membership, and an institutional and governmental push to expand the SGS, it is dismaying to see that graduate and professional housing remains wholly inadequate, and often inappropriate. As such, several avenues are being explored by the Executive:

#### Retiree Village:

- a project involving the City of Kingston, the Province of Ontario, RMC, St. Lawrence College, Queen's Residence, private developers, and sponsors
- goal is to construct a condo-style residence for affluent retirees who wish to re-engage (or engage) with Queen's as active participants in the community
- I attended several think tank meetings to discuss particulars of location, type, and involvement of graduate students
- the project would include heavily subsidized units for graduate students
- overall impression is that this is years off and though apparently popular and somewhat common in the United States, I remain skeptical as the overall impact for graduate and professional students will be minimal

#### SGPS Housing Think Tank:

- President Welsh and I engaged approximately 20 graduate and professional students for an evening to better understand the particular needs of a variety of graduate and professional students' housing needs and desires
- issues discussed included the needs of individual schools (ie: education students and their practicums), residence design, deregulation of utilities, international student needs, geography, landlord accountability, accessibility, flexible leases, security, etc

-this important information gathering will be broadened by a survey which will aid us in our deliberations with the university regarding graduate and professional student housing

#### Housing Committee:

-at the behest of Amir Nosrat, our VP of Finance and Services, to develop new venues of revenue for the SGPS, I suggested the possibility of purchasing our own housing to help facilitate increased revenue AND to address the housing issues graduate and professional students face at Queen's and in Kingston  
-much of my summer hours have been dedicated to developing this with the SGPS Executive and our efforts will be discussed with Council

#### **Internal Affairs**

The summer has yielded some very productive meetings with the Executive, particularly our concentrated planning session in July. I have attended regular meetings with the School of Graduate Studies and have sat in departmental meetings of the Department of Art History to voice our concerns, in a broader context, over the new budgeting plans for Queen's. In response to our VP of Finance and Services request for solid proposals for revenue generation, I researched the possibility of SGPS ownership and operation of a *Booster Juice* franchise, only to have my dreams of SGPS financial freedom crushed with the revelation of said franchise already being installed in the new Queen's Centre. Although not specifically under the domain of the VP-CCA, I am currently investigating the possibility of extended periods of study for student executives and SGPS members who devote so much of their time to the effective governance of the SGPS. Although this isn't common in Ontario, several universities outside the province make such an accommodation. More information will be forthcoming as the school year progresses. Attempts are also afoot to make the TA Award offered by the SGPS more visible to graduate and professional students (and their nominators). On a dissimilar note, a rearrangement and revamping of the SGPS offices to foster a more efficient and ergonomic work place, is underway with the assistance of the Executive Director Sean Richards.

#### **City of Kingston**

Although meetings with the Improving Relations Committee City of Kingston and Queen's did not run past early spring, and have been pushed back until August 20<sup>th</sup>, initial discussions focused around student move-out, green bin distribution and use, and Fall Orientation. At our August meeting I will broach the issue of the proposed nuisance by-law and how it will affect Queen's students. This is of particular importance to SONAD and current issues of academic discipline for non-academic incidents. More to follow I am sure.

#### **CFS National General Meeting**

I attended this year's NGM and met with representatives from across the country and learned an immense amount about campaigning, graduate issues, and government/student relations in general. I participated in the CFS policy sub-committee and developed policy surrounding the use of technology and the concerns over its potential replacement of traditional modes of education ("pre-packaged" lectures, etc.), and the importance of student support services and adequate access to said services. Additionally I represented Queen's students at the National Graduate Caucus where much debate surrounded the inclusion/exclusion of a Quebec local. Roundtable discussion centred on the dangers of commercializing research, post-residency fees, the Whistle Blower campaign (being developed by York), and balanced copyright policies. However, the lengthiest discussions focused on granting councils and the directed funding formulas instigated by the national government. The NGC subsequently called for the

resignation of Mr. Goodyear, Minister of Science. General discussions also included the Drop Fees Campaign, issues in post-secondary education, Rock the Vote's effective campaigning in the United States, Phil Fontaine's address to the CFS and the worsening support for aboriginal post-secondary education, and consideration of motions served with due notice to CFS. There is far too much to detail here, but I would look forward to the opportunity to discuss the issues on one on one basis.

### **CFS Ontario Skills Development Symposium**

A hugely beneficial symposium! My participation at this year's sessions included Students' Unions Representing Diversity; Effective Campaigns and Events Organising; Mastering Media Relations; Successful Speech and Presentations (for lobbying); Who's Who in Post-Secondary Education; Budget Construction; and Students' Union Rights and Responsibilities. What was particularly revealing was that despite Queen's reputation as a "highly conservative, elitist" institution, the SGPS already has in place many student support services that do not exist elsewhere. As a society we should take pride in the hard work of our predecessors in establishing student advocacy, equity commissions/training, international student support networks, and positive space training, and remain diligent to continue what they have created.

### **Campaign Planning**

Though this list is not finite or final, I have thus far focused on the Drop Fees Campaign and the November 5<sup>th</sup> day of action, a bottled water free campus/renewal of Coke's exclusivity contract, and the above mentioned issue of graduate and professional housing. I am always looking for support of any sort in the implementation of these campaigns and would also look forward to discussion of other issues of particular concern SGPS members may wish to have addressed in a broader context.

Respectfully submitted,  
Steve Osterberg

**Budget:**

The 2009-2010 Budget draft has been prepared and presented to Council for its first reading in August. We are expecting a surplus for this fiscal year, but will not know the exact amount until the end of the fiscal year on August 31<sup>st</sup>. We are expecting a \$25,000 increase in revenue for next year's budget because of the Society's growth in membership over the last year.

**Wages and Stipends:**

The Executive and the Finance and Services committees have re-initiated discussions on how to increase wages and stipends for elected, appointed, and hired positions of the SGPS. This is primarily due to an outdated compensation scheme that offers little incentive for personnel renewal in the SGPS. This phenomenon has been most starkly illustrated in the past few elections.

**SGPS/AMS Service Agreement:**

The SGPS and AMS have begun re-negotiating an agreement on the conduct and protocol of the two societies' shared services and fees. I met with VP Operations and Finance Leslie Yunn of the AMS and we have agreed on a general timeframe for the negotiations and expect to have signed agreement by the end of the Winter term. The meeting was positive and we hope to have negotiating teams assembled and ready to meet by August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Nevertheless, past experience demands the exploration of alternatives. I hope to work with the Finance and Services Committee to develop contingency plans in the event that negotiations provide undesirable results.

**Bursaries:**

The SGPS Executive is looking at the possibility of augmenting and improving our Bursaries and Grants.

**Office Space:**

The SGPS Executive is looking at the possibility of securing additional office space to meet the needs of our growing administrative personnel.

**Financial Policy:**

Review of the financial policy is underway and proposed amendments will be brought before Council in a timely manner.

**Housing Authority Task Force:**

The Housing Authority Task Force organized and convened over the summer and after a number of meetings has prepared a preliminary presentation about implementing a new Housing Authority under the auspice of the SGPS. We would like to ask Council to formally strike a Special Housing Committee with authority to initiate the process of creating a housing authority and to search for suitable property.

Respectfully submitted,  
Amir Hossein Nosrat  
VP Finance and Services

## **Senate, May 20, 2009**

Upcoming meetings (Unless specified, Senate meetings begin at 3:30 p.m.):

Thursday, September 24, 2009  
Thursday, October 22, 2009  
Thursday, November 26, 2009  
Thursday, January 28, 2010  
Thursday, February 18, 2010  
Thursday, March 25, 2010  
Thursday, April 22, 2010  
Wednesday, May 26, 2010 (9:30 a.m.)

1. Proposal to introduce a Collaborative Program in Biomedical Engineering in the School of Graduate Studies and Research

This motion passed with unanimous approval.

2. There were two important questions raised during Question Period, both by QUFA President, Senator Christie.

Question 1: Will Principal Williams provide a written report of the Queen's Solicitor's opinion about the role of the Deans and Senate that she presented orally at the last Senate meeting?

As per the April 23 Senate meeting, the Solicitor's opinion (as highlighted in the minutes) is the official position of the Principal. See Section 5, Minutes, May 20 Senate package. To the point: "Principal Williams noted that all financial decisions are made in a collegial and consultative environment. There were no questions or comments."

Question 2: Is the Board of Trustees planning to change the governing structure of Queen's University and revoke the powers of Senate?

A committee has been struck mandated to review the University's governance structure. It is crucial that the SGPS, along with other student governments, faculty and staff representatives, keeps close tabs on the developments of this committee. It appears that the inability of senior administrators to deal with the budget deficit (i.e., reopening contract negotiations with faculty and to strike an agreement with non-unionized staff *viz-a-viz* open elections and consultation) prompted the Board to examine the existing governance structure.

3. Motion to review the new governance structure for the SGSR (now the School of Graduate Studies)

This motion was approved, but several issues were raised that pertained to: the governance of interdisciplinary programs; managerial authority bestowed upon the line faculties and their Deans; and student representation. While the existing proposal and document was approved, there is room down the road to make minor changes.

4. Official credit unit weighting and grading at Queen's

Motion approved (20 in favour, 10 opposed, 4 abstentions). The intention was to create a set of standards amenable to interdisciplinary and inter-university transfers. In the process, Queen's credit unit scale has been changed to a letter, rather than a percentage based grading scale. Most programs utilize GPAs already, so this shift would establish consistency and standardization across disciplines and universities. An attempt to table this motion until September failed. There were objections to this motion by undergraduate Commerce and Arts & Science senators.

5. Patrick Deane gave a report on "Contexts and Imperatives for Renewing the Curriculum". For the discussion paper:

<http://www.queensu.ca/vpac/curriculumdiscussion.html>

Deane's report stems from a discussion paper that addresses a range of issues related to the internationalization of post-secondary education, transferring credits, standardizing protocols between institutions, financial challenges, the dissemination of knowledge, and academic "accountability". Deane anticipates that a new regulatory model will be in place by 2011.

**Meeting with SGS, May 25, 2009**

This was the first of my monthly meetings with the SGS (attend by the SGPS executive as well). A number of important issues were addressed, notably the collection of equity-related data. Considering that the exit survey conducted by the SGS is extremely dated, the Deans and graduate school administrators were supportive of revisiting the current list of questions and moving towards an on-line version. The revised survey, it was agreed, should include questions pertaining to equity and the related experiences of graduate students at Queen's upon completion of their programs. It was suggested that the SGS and SGPS utilize the data compiled from a recent health and wellness survey, since it focuses on equity issues. This will be an ongoing project that must include our own Equity Commissioner.

Second, there has been some interest to formalize aspects of the student-supervisor relationship, particularly as it relates matters of fairness, respect, mutual responsibilities, as well as the ethics and practices of publishing. I took the liberty of forwarding the CFS policy supervision to the Committee.

Finally, thanks to concerns raised by the SGPS, the SGS was made aware of problems existing within vacation policies, or rather the lack thereof. The SGS followed up by circulating a draft set of guidelines (attached here).

**Principal's Ad Hoc Committee on Safe Disclosure Policies, June 9, 2009**

Thanks to the SGPS initiative on this matter, Queen's has commissioned the Principal's Ad Hoc Committee on Safe Disclosure Policies. This committee is essentially mandated to develop a set of guidelines and practices for what is commonly known as "whistleblower" legislation. Several Canadian universities, institutions, provinces, and cities have already instituted safe disclosure policies, so Queen's will be following their lead. In recent years the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) has actively campaigned for the development of "whistleblowing" regulations. While there is ample academic literature and policy in place, Queen's has decided to draft some guidelines from scratch. Ultimately these guidelines will have implications for faculty, researchers, staff, and graduate students at this university. I highly encourage the SGPS membership to send me recommendations or thoughts on this matter, particularly those working in the applied, natural, and biological sciences. If there are any best practices that people know of, experiences, reservations, or uncertainties about what these guidelines will mean, please get in touch.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrew Stevens



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

## Graduate Student Orientation Week

The social team and I have organized the following events for our orientation week. We hope to see you all there!

### **Tuesday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

#### **11:00 – 2:00 pm “Welcome back Lunch and Information Fair” (SGS, SGPS, SA)**

Be sure to head to the Biosciences Complex for a delicious lunch to go and an opportunity to talk to many people at Queen’s including student career services and our very own Principal. Several services at Queen’s will have booths set up with lots of information. There will also be several senior graduate students present to answer your questions. Campus tours are also available!

#### **6:30 – 10:00 pm 1000 Islands Evening Boat Cruise (\$15/person)**

Come out to the exclusive SGPS cruise! Be at the pier ready to board between 6:15 and 6:30. The cruise will give you an excellent tour around the Kingston area and will provide great scenery while you meet other members of the SGPS. Guests are welcome. Delicious appetizers will be served during the cruise. This is a popular event each year! **Family Friendly, Registration Required. \*Let us know if you require a babysitter, we will be happy to help you find one.**

### **Wednesday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

#### **1:00 – 4:00 pm Sports Day**

Join us for an afternoon of exciting activities! Pick on of the following:

1. Beach volleyball at the Mansion (FREE, patio bar will be available)
2. Rock Climbing at the Boiler Room (\$10/adult, \$5/child, climbing shoes will be provided) \* Children’s permission forms are required and will be available at the SGPS office
3. Field day sports (FREE)-Ultimate Frisbee or soccer baseball

Meet at the Union St. entrance of the JDUC and don’t forget to bring proper shoes, clothing and water! **Registration Required**

#### **7:00 – 10:00 pm Speed Meeting at the Grizzly Grill (\$10/person)**

Come out to meet other graduate students in a speed meeting fashion that is similar to speed dating minus the romantic agenda. This event has been a huge success in the past. Appetizers and a free drink of your choice will be provided. We hope you will join us! **Registration Required**

## **Thursday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

### **8:30-3:30 Registration: New students photo ID student card pick up**

Head down to BEWS Gym in the Physical Education Center to register! Last names starting with A-M will be registered between 8:30 – 12:00 pm, letters N-Z will be registered from 12:00 – 3:30 pm.

### **6:00 – 8:00 pm Haunted Walk (\$6/person)**

The famous Kingston haunted walk tours will be departing from the Courthouse at 6:00 and will end at the Grad Club. Be sure to come inside the Grad Club after your walk and enjoy a fabulous night of trivia with free food! **Registration Required**

### **9:00 – 11:00 pm Trivia Night at the Grad Club (FREE)**

Come and join us for a night of fun trivia! Win fabulous prizes and enjoy some free food!

## **Friday, September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

### **8:30 – 4:30 pm TA Training Day**

Head to Bioscience complex room 1101 for registration at 8:30. The Opening Plenary is at 9:00. The day includes keynote plenary talks followed by concurrent sessions. Free lunch and refreshments provided. Registration through CTL required, see SGPS website for details.

### **9:00 – 5:00 pm Sidewalk Sale**

Come down to University Avenue and see all the vendors and student groups. This event attracts over 10, 000 shoppers every year from both the student body and the Kingston community!

### **6:00 – 10:00 pm Semi-Formal Dinner “Waterfront Soirée” (\$25/person)**

Come out and join us for a fabulous dinner on the water at the Confederation Place Hotel in downtown Kingston. We will be offering a delicious buffet, a glass of wine at dinner, as well as a cash bar. See SGPS website for food selection details. After dinner, we'll be heading over to the Grizzly Grill for a fun night of dancing. We look forward to seeing you there! **Registration Required \*Let us know if you require a babysitter, we will be happy to help you find one.**

## **Saturday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009.**

### **10:00 - 12 pm QUIC Family Information Day. Venue: International Centre, JDUC**

This will be a great opportunity for international students with families to network, find out information on health care, schooling for the kids and how your partners can find work in Canada while you are studying. Please bring your family with you! Activities for children and adults are planned.

**11:00 am Corn Maze (\$10/adult, \$5/child)**

A must try experience for anyone living in Kingston! The trip also includes a hayride from the ferry to the corn maze and a delicious BBQ lunch with dessert (can be taken to go). Meet at the Wolfe Island ferry clock (Ontario and Barrack St) at 11:00. The ferry leaves at 11:30, don't be late! **Family Friendly, Registration Required**

**5:00-8:00 pm Bowling Night (\$10/adult, \$5/child)**

Be sure to come out and join us for a fun night of bowling at Cloverleaf lanes. Bring your kids, family and friends along. Pizza and non-alcoholic beverages will be served for dinner.

**Family Friendly, Registration Required**

**8:30 pm Grad Club Mixer (FREE)**

Come out to the Grad Club to win some prizes and a for night of fun with your fellow graduate students. DJ will be playing great music so be sure to join us! Everyone is welcome!

**Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009.**

**11:00 – 2:00 pm Picnic at City Park (\$5/adult, Kids are FREE)**

Meet us at City Park, near the children's playground for a family afternoon of fun! This will also be a great opportunity for families to meet other families! An assortment of Subway sandwiches will be provided along with non-alcoholic beverages, fruit and snacks. Be sure to bring all other materials needed for picnic. Some sports equipment will be provided. **Family Friendly, Registration Required.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Diala Habib  
Social Commissioner

### SGPS Computer Network

- The new SGPS mail server is active. We have transitioned from the old exchange server with no major issues. The new server has rectified all of the issues we were having with the old server.
- The new SGPS file server is active. The server allows us to remotely (and securely) access important files. It also serves as a platform for the office to keep up-to-date backups of all of our important files. This was a very important step for the office in terms of functionality and security of our files.

### SGPS Website

- I have completed work on the back-end of the SGPS website. This does not change the way people view our website, however, it does greatly improve updating the site.
- The orientation section of the SGPS website has been updated for the 2009/2010 academic year.

### E-Newsletter

- I am working to finalize details regarding ads in the E-Newsletters. Putting ads in the newsletter will give us the opportunity generate some extra revenue to put towards the SGPS operating budget. If you have any comments or concerns, please let me know.

### Communications

- The dayplanner/agenda for the 2009/2010 academic year has been completed. Copies of the dayplanner will be ready for our members (new and returning) by September.
- The Welcome Week Guide for 2009/2010 has been completed. The booklets are going in the snail-mail during the week of August 4<sup>th</sup>.
- I have worked with the Social Team for their planning of Welcome Week events for September, 2009. Check the report of the Social Commissioner for more details. More details are also available at the orientation section of the SGPS website.
- I have updated all the forms for the SGPS (bursary applications, health and dental, in-office forms). Mostly this work was done to get the forms ready for the 2009/2010 year. Some of the work was to update some of our older forms to match better with our other forms.
- I have been working with the Executive to update the descriptions for the SGPS Awards and the SGPS Bursaries. The goal is to make the descriptions more clear.
- I have been working with the VP Finance to investigate the viability of making our bursary applications available via an online form. More details to come later.
- The student activity fee document has been updated for the 2009/2010 academic year and has been posted on the SGPS website (information section, fees page).
- I am in the process of preparing a special document for the incoming B.Ed. students. The document will inform the new students about the SGPS and everything they need to know about being our members.
- I have been working to promote SGPS Orientation talks to all member departments /schools/faculties. The SGPS would like the opportunity to speak to students during orientation week. We would appreciate it if you could check with your coordinator to ensure we have scheduled a time to speak (we only need 5 minutes).

Respectfully submitted,  
Sean Richards - info@sgps.ca

### **Equity Coordinator**

Our new Equity Coordinator position has worked out well this summer. In fact, Lara is currently in the final stages of publishing a “resource encyclopedia” for members of the Queen’s community from historically marginalized groups. It will be given out during Graduate Student orientation week as well as at Alternative Frosh week. The Human Rights office has also expressed an interest in having copies of this resource encyclopedia.

Lara will also be working through the year with CultureShock! (a publication put out by the Social Issues Commission at the AMS) or CARED to put together a regular performance series that highlights marginalized voices by inviting artists in a variety of media to perform or display their work at Queen’s.

As such, I recommend the Equity Coordinator position be continued through the school year.

### **Equity Study**

I will be working with the Equity Office and the School of Graduate Studies to plan an “Equity Study” that will hopefully point to gaps in the support/recruitment/retainment of graduate students at Queen’s from historically marginalized groups.

### **Alternative Frosh Month**

The SGPS, in conjunction with OPIRG and QCRED, is inviting the Narcycist, a conscious Arab-Canadian political rapper, to perform during Alternative Frosh month. The Narcycist is actually a graduate student who is completing his PhD into the intersections of media and its portrayal of Arab people.

### **Accessibility Education**

The Accessibility subcommittee on the Equity committee is currently working on a “Forum on Accessibility” that will give members of the Queen’s community facing accessibility issues a chance to voice their concerns. We plan on having this forum in October. It will be moderated by Tara Flanagan, a professor at McGill who specializes in radical outlooks on disabilities. The findings of this forum will be presented to the Equity Office.

### **Aboriginal Land & Resource Extraction**

A conference titled Mineral Resources and Aboriginal Lands was held over the summer at Queen’s sponsored by the Policy Studies department. The conference had speakers from different stakeholder groups, but the conference was missing some key voices from the Aboriginal community here in Canada who would be more critical of mining. Several people who went to the conference felt that this critical perspective was missing from the conference.

I would like to work with QNSA and OPIRG to bring this critical perspective to

Queen's through organizing an academic event on mining that puts activist Aboriginal and critical Aboriginal voices front and centre.

**Islamic History Month**

The SGPS will be working with QUMSA and the Islamic Society of Kingston to co-sponsor events during Islamic History month. Although the month is still in its planning stages, there will most likely be an event that highlights the research of graduate students at Queen's in Islamic studies. I hope to use the resources of SGPS to support such a symposium.

**Queerorientation**

The SGPS will be co-sponsoring an event during Queerorientation week with EQUIP. As part of our plan to support and attract Queer grad students, we will be co-sponsoring a BBQ at the Grad Club.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Usman Mushtaq



Society of Graduate and Professional Students  
Report of the Rector  
August 2009

Dear Council,

Here are some key updates from the May Board of Trustees meeting and announcements since:

The Principal responded to QBACC's (Queen's Backing Action on Climate Change) requests at the March Board meeting, where he committed to tracking direct and indirect emissions (gas, natural gas and electric and water use at Queen's) in the near future. Quotes were to be secured during the summer. The COU (Council of Ontario Universities) was working on a made-in-Ontario document for universities to sign to make a commitment to tangible action in the area of environmental sustainability. 2 executive searches are underway to fill the vacancies in upper administration. AMS President Michael Ceci will be sitting on the VP (Vice-Principal) Finance and Administration search committee, and I will be a member of the VP Advancement search committee. Both committees have met once and the position job descriptions can be found on the Queen's website.

A hefty discussion on the University's budget met pushback from Trustees as the University is planning for a structural deficit in each of the next three years but currently lacks a plan for eliminating that deficit. Queen's has made two large funding announcements over the summer months: \$58-million dollars has been pledged by the federal and provincial governments towards a new Medical School building, and up to \$15-million towards the Performing Arts Centre project. QUSA, the Queen's University Staff Association, rejected a proposed offer from the administration regarding their employment agreement. Their current agreement (QUSA is not unionized) expired this spring.

As always, I am happy to answer all of your questions and receive your comments. Please feel free to contact me at [rector@queensu.ca](mailto:rector@queensu.ca);613-533-2733

Respectfully submitted,

Leora