

Motion in support of the Queen's Muslim Students' Association anti-Islamophobia campaign

Please inform all members of your faculty/school/department that on November 27, 2008, Senate approved the following Motion in support of the Queen's Muslim Students' Association anti-Islamophobia campaign:

WHEREAS Queens University has seen an increase in incidents of Islamophobia in the 2008/2009 academic year;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Senate move to endorse the Queen's Muslim Students' Association anti-Islamophobia campaign statement that reads:

In light of recent, hateful anti-Muslim acts including defacement of posters, threats, and harassment of hijab-wearing women, we felt it wholly necessary to voice our profound concern and unequivocal condemnation of manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. We would like to express our keen solidarity with the greater Muslim community at this troubling time. When hatred of Muslims and other minority groups is allowed to flourish, our collective human rights are called into question. Racism in any form is an affront to the dignity of all humankind. We call upon all members of the Queen's community including faculty, staff, and students to combat ignorance and hatred through education and open dialogue.

Thank you.

Georgina Moore
Secretary of the Senate

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Intergroup Dialogue Program

There has been a great deal of public discussion about a new program in Residences. Below is a letter sent to student society presidents by Dean of Student Affairs Jason Laker, followed by a statement released by VP (Academic) Patrick Deane:

Dear Society Presidents-

I am sure you have heard rumours and/or read sinister things over the last couple of days about the new Intergroup Dialogue program. In short, they're incorrect.

The Journal wrote an Editorial without bothering to check what the program actually does—and so it contained misleading and incorrect information. Then, and most unfortunately, the Globe and Post ran with that angle (the Globe was rather sarcastic and unprofessional as well). The staff to which the article refers actually encourage dialogue about issues with willing participants by posing questions and encouraging people to listen to each other. The notion that they would be walking around listening for politically incorrect speech to interrupt or regulate would give me the same reaction as it did for those who have expressed concern...but that is absolutely not what is happening. I would be more upset but I can't say this is the first time a newspaper reported something inaccurately or without a misleading and salacious headline.

The Intergroup Facilitators do 3 things:

1. Plan and offer programs on contemporary topics relating to identity issues, such as viewing and discussing a film or reading a book together.
2. Initiate spontaneous dialogues with willing participants on timely issues that are being discussed around campus, such as Aberdeen, Islamophobia incidents, etc.
3. Mediate conflicts that arise which have shown themselves to be overwhelming or distressing and loaded around identity issues...as a democratic alternative to formal dispute mechanisms such as Human Rights complaints or the like. It should be said that while they are available for #3, they have primarily been doing #1 and #2 above.

It was developed after wide consultation about students' desire to see the University provide support for discussing subjects that can at times be very tense and disruptive to their social and academic pursuits (some of you recall the paper I sent out last year, and consulted widely about:

<http://www.queensu.ca/studentaffairs/about/presentations/diversityandspacesandprogramslaker.pdf>).

The Facilitators get significant training, supervision, and coaching to assure this is done respectfully, safely, and responsibly—and that it is non-judgmental and the Facilitators do not impose their personal views.

In short, the program promotes more (rather than stifling or regulating) dialogue by encouraging active listening among students and their courage to speak to each other about contemporary issues about

which they are curious, but hesitant. You know all too well how tough it can be to discuss some of the identity issues that arise on campus, and so this program was put in place to offer tools to do so respectfully and thoroughly.

This Intergroup Dialogue program is an informal and more humane alternative to attacking, threatening, suing, starting "anti-whomever" Facebook groups, or filing formal complaints. Moreover, Residence Dons, Residence Council Facilitators, Faculty Advisors, Orientation Leaders, Student Government leaders, etc. have throughout Queen's History involved themselves in the intimacy of the lives of students and this has been most beneficial. These Facilitators add additional skill to the mix and they are really wonderful people who know the boundaries between facilitation and regulation.

We have been attempting to correct this misinformation. See:
<http://www.google.com/hostednews/canadianpress/article/ALeqM5h7vIljCACNBbujjErgX5q6dHQRyQ>

As well, Vice-Principal Deane has been conducting media interviews and submitting editorial letters to clarify things.

Thank you for considering this as part of your reflection on this program.

Jason A. Laker, Ph.D.
Associate Vice-Principal & Dean of Student Affairs

Statement regarding the Intergroup Dialogue Program Tuesday November 25, 2008

At the beginning of this academic year, Queen's University began a pilot Intergroup Dialogue program as part of its ongoing efforts to foster constructive dialogue between students on difficult issues such as race, religion, sexual orientation and ethnicity.

Over the past week, the pilot program has received extensive media coverage and has generated a great deal of feedback from students, alumni, media and the general public.

We regret that the program has been inaccurately characterized as intrusive and in conflict with the right of freedom of expression. It was not intended to be so, nor in the three months of its operation has any student complained that the program has interfered with individual rights or freedom of speech.

However, in the constructive and self-critical spirit of the program, and in light of the importance of the concerns that have been raised, the University has decided to conduct an early assessment of the program.

A review panel, consisting of the Rector, a senior academic and a member of Queen's alumni, will be established immediately and will report to me in early January 2009 on the program as it relates to our existing and planned measures to enhance diversity and inclusiveness on campus.

Patrick Deane

Vice-Principal (Academic)

Society of Graduate and Professional Students (SGPS) Cold Beverage Exclusivity Fund - Request for Funds

Project Description

The SGPS serves graduate and professional students at Queen's. We represent approximately 3500 students across campus. In order to serve our students, our office requires a competent network of computers. Our current e-mail server is showing signs of age and is beginning to break-down. Furthermore, our computer network does not currently have a full backup solution. Should one of our computers fail, we would lose all the data that is on that computer. Finally, our computer network is not fully secure, which means hackers may be able to gain access to some of our sensitive data. We administer a health and dental plan, so it is imperative that we secure the personal data of our members. We intend to address these serious issues, however, we require some financial assistance to achieve our goals.

The SGPS hopes to be able to replace our current e-mail server and add a backup server to our computer network. We also hope to add a hardware-based firewall system to keep our data more secure. We hope to have this work completed by January, 2009.

The entire membership of the SGPS would benefit from our computer systems upgrade. It is important that we be able to reliably send e-mails to and receive e-mails from our membership in order to serve their needs. It is also very important that we be able to communicate among ourselves and various other bodies to achieve our goals. It is equally as important that we have a secure network that provides full backup in case any of our computers fail.

This is a one-time need for financial assistance. Once the 2 new servers and firewall are in place, they would serve our organization and all of our members for many years.

Budget

Item	Cost
Mail Server - basic system (see attached quote)	\$755.89
Network Backup Server - basic system (see attached quote)	\$850.86
Hardware Firewall and Network Switch	\$94.22
Labour (for setup and installation of new hardware)	\$625
	\$2,325.97

The total funding we are requesting is \$2325.97.