

Hello to all. With the winding down of the first term and a well deserved holiday in the near future, I wish to report on a few things I have been working on over the last month.

Co-Curricular Record

The University is looking to implement an option co-curricular record, which essentially keep track of all extracurricular activities a student is involved in. The SGPS and the AMS have been approached by the Dean of Student Affairs and have begun discussions about this record and how it could be utilized at Queen's. If any of you have had co-curricular records (sometimes called transcripts) at previous institutions, I would welcome your input. Please feel free to contact me.

CFS National General Meeting

I attended the Canadian Federation of Students National General meeting the last week of November. This was a fantastic opportunity to get involved and touch base with other student societies across Canada. I was able to meet and speak with a number of student societies that are dealing with some of the same issues we are, specifically, I got feedback on the co-curricular record and brainstormed ideas on how to get students engaged in the "All Out!" National Day of Action set for February 1st which will provide a unified student front standing up for our rights to education.

John Orr Dinner

I attended the John Orr dinner in Toronto. It was a great celebration of alumni, in particular Principal Williams received the John Orr Award. I had the opportunity to meet many alum who are all anxious to hear about what changes are taking place on campus.

Board of Trustees

This month was board of trustees. I attended finance and advancement meetings as well as the board meeting itself. I was delighted to meet many trustees who are interested in getting involved with the SGPS and I hope to have more information for you all in my next report.

Senate

This month's Senate meeting essentially centered around the suspension of the Bachelor of Fine Arts program. Current students enrolled in the program participated in a silent demonstration, which was effective. Unfortunately, as of the date of writing this report, Senate had not reversed the decision. A motion was brought forward and subsequently tabled which addressed the concern students have with the way this situation was handled. Specifically, the motion presented at Senate suggested that any suspension of any program should be approved on at Senate.

Convocations

I had the privilege of attending all four convocation ceremonies. This is truly one of the best events as I am able to share in the joy of seeing all of our members dreams finally realized. It was truly a great event and I was thrilled to have attended.

Alumni Beer Tasting Event

I attended the student alumni association event for SGPS members at the Grad Club. Not only did this give me the opportunity to meet many SGPS members, I was also privileged to sample some of the many kinds of beers available at the Club. I highly recommend this event to all of you in the future.

In closing, it has been a busy month filled with meetings and discussions. I have met many new and returning SGPS members and look forward to getting to know the rest of you in the near future.

Respectfully submitted,

Jillian Burford-Grinnell
president@sgps.ca



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the VP Graduate
December 2011

Greetings!

I hope that the end of term is treating you well! Here's what I have been up to the past month:

FREE Queen's 2012

The FREE Queen's 2012 Steering Committee recently met to discuss the workshop proposals that had been submitted by students from various faculties and departments. The Committee is excited for the opportunity to bring the expertise and knowledge of Queen's community members to the wider Kingston community. Stay tuned for an announcement in January with regards to the exciting and diverse FREE Queen's 2012 workshop offerings!

Pre-Authorized Payment Plan (PPL)

Over the course of the last few months, questions have been brought forward with regards to the PPL. A couple of meetings with Andrew Ness (Associate Registrar at the Office of the University Registrar) have resulted in a Q & A that will be published in the next SGPS newsletter. Please distribute widely within your departments when the Q&A becomes available. If you or anyone within your respective departments/faculties has any further questions about the PPL, they can be emailed to me at vpg@sgps.ca.

Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) National General Meeting (NGM)

A delegation of three SGPS executives (Anne-Marie Grondin, Jillian Burford-Grinnell, and myself) attended the CFS NGM from November 22 to 25. Many of the CFS locals across Canada gathered together to report on their accomplishments and challenges over the past 6 months. Our local in particular brought forward an emergency motion pertaining to the recently announced suspension of the Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) program. We successfully petitioned for the support of the CFS locals across Canada to write letters condemning the program's suspension, as well as for the CFS Executive to write a letter in support of revoking the suspension.

Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

The CTL offers a wide range of programs, resources, and services to staff, faculty, post-doctoral fellows, and students so as to support their goal towards teaching excellence of Queen's University. On Monday, January 16th, 2012 the CTL will proudly be celebrating its 20th anniversary. Mira Dineen (Academic Affairs Commissioner, AMS) and myself are working together with the CTL to find ways to publicise this event amongst our respective members, so as to make this momentous occasion all the more memorable for those involved. Details about the event will soon follow. When the information about the event becomes available, please kindly share with those within your respective departments/faculties. Let's help make this event a huge success!

Student Advisor Program

On November 15th, the Student Advisors brought to SGPS members a workshop titled *Understanding the Student-Supervisor Relationship*. Similar to the workshop that took place in October, the workshop in November was well attended. Thank you for advertising this workshop widely within your departments, which no doubt helped to make this event a success! The next Student Advisor workshop will be held sometime at the beginning of January, so please stay tuned to the coming SGPS newsletter and spread the word amongst your respective departments/faculties when the information becomes available!

Health, Counselling and Disability Services (HCDS)

This is a repeat announcement from previous council reports. The AASC is currently tasked with compiling a list of service gaps (re: HCDS) that our membership has experienced recently. Again, I have not yet received your contributions for this initiative, so I ask that you take a moment to contribute at least one item to the list that we are creating. Our goal is to work together with HCDS to find ways to bridge the identified service gaps to meet the various needs of our membership.

This concludes my report to council. Wishing you all a happy, healthy, and safe coming holiday season! Take care, and see you in January!

Respectfully submitted,

Irene Karagiorgakis
VP Graduate



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Interim VP Professional
December 2011

Grad Club Board

The Grad Club will be closed for holidays from Dec 23rd to January 8th.

Senate Committee on Non-Academic Discipline (SONAD)

SONAD met in November to discuss non-academic discipline issues that occurred in the 2010-2011 academic year. There was only one event involving an SGPS member, and the committee commended the SGPS on the way it was handled.

Significant concerns were raised at the meeting regarding the AMS non-academic discipline system. The AMS system is currently undergoing a review due to a recommendation in the coroner's report that was released following the death of a student earlier in the term. A committee has been struck to preform this review. Unfortunately, the committee meetings have been scheduled for a time when none of the executive are able to attend and have been unwilling to change the meeting times. However, I will be able to attend the meetings in January and February.

HR Committee

The HR committee is working on a few inter-related projects right now: reports, year plans, and transition reports.

Reports

We are working to amend the reports system, as there is an ongoing general lack of report-writing by those who are required to report to council. Reports are an important part of the way SGPS council functions – this is how we know what everyone else is doing as well as how council can hold appointees and elected officers accountable.

The first step in this process is a survey that will be circulate soon to all reporting officers. The survey will be anonymous, but it will be mandatory. I want feed back from those who write reports, those who don't, those who love reports and those who hate them.

Year Plans

We're looking at the idea of instituting self-written year plans for exec, commissioners, and coordinators. This will provide everyone with a document against which to measure performance and help officers make themselves as effective as possible.

Transition Reports

We are looking at a format of reports that will connect to end-of-year transition reports. This way we can diminish the work in making a final report and help with transition, making the next person in each position better able to do their jobs.

If anyone wants to talk about any of the above, feel free to contact me.

Cody Yorke
Interim VP Professional

Big news this month, Councilors. Are you ready for it? I'm on 'The' Twitter! You can follow me (and my occasional quips directed at Principal Woolf, which consistently go unanswered) @sgpsvpcca. Those of you who already follow me will be familiar with some of the items in my report.

CFS National General Meeting

Jillian, Irene and I attended the second national general meeting of the CFS November 22nd to 25th. My apologies for not submitting a more detailed report in appendix as I did last time – I simply ran out of time. Very briefly, delegates from across the country reported back on their work on various provincial elections. Other workshops centered on social media networking, educational strike actions in Quebec, organizing for the National Day of Action, the Save Library & Archives of Canada campaign, and my personal favorite, the marketization and privatization of post-secondary education. This last panel described the shift in post-secondary education from a focus on curiosity-based research and knowledge production to one of skills attainment to serve the global market, and the costs of moving to the latter model. The panelists touched on examples of the new ideological framework, which certainly rang true for Queen's. I have begun doing more research on this timely topic, and hope to bring something more concrete to Council on this matter in the future. Amongst motions under consideration was one that was brought forward by our own delegation, tasking the Executive of the CFS (National) to write a letter asking that the decision to suspend the Bachelor of Fine Arts at Queen's be rescinded and passed at Senate. Other member locals were encouraged via the same motion to write similar letters. Alarming, it would seem that the Arts are particularly vulnerable at the moment, as we learned that the Nova Scotia College of Arts and Design (NSCAD) is also under threat of collapse. This move to undercut the Arts might be understood as one repercussion of the restructuring of universities according to market-based priorities.

Fine Dining at Summerhill

All adorned in our Sunday bests, my fellow Executives and I had the pleasure of dining at Summerhill with the University Provost, the Dean of Student Affairs, and the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies last week. I was pleased to get to know Alan Harrison, Ann Tierney, and Brenda Brouwer outside the typical meeting setting. The dinner provided us with a great opportunity to talk about graduate and professional student issues. We also spoke candidly with Dean Tierney about our concerns regarding the co-curricular proposal.

Campus Safety Working Group

I learned at a meeting of the Campus Safety Working Group that Campus Security responded to close to 500 false triggers of campus Blue Lights in the last year. The Blue Lights can be activated by the push of a button in case of an emergency, but most are only voice-, and not camera-activated. If no one answers, campus security must nonetheless dispatch officers to respond to the call in person, to make sure that the person who activated the light is not unconscious or otherwise in danger. The false incidents which I am referring to are particularly problematic in that, upon arriving on the scene, campus security finds tall cans of Blue Light beer taped to the light poles. Security has determined that this –pressing the trigger, drinking a tall can of beer, and taping it to the pole before security arrives- is a prank which certain students play in order to gain misdemeanor 'points,' earning them patches which they can then sew onto their Queen's jackets for show. These students apparently order the sew-ons online, and have them delivered to our campus bookstore.

Just a few days after my meeting with the Working Group, the Journal reported that Queen's Bands were suspended for disseminating misogynistic materials. Queen's promptly reacted by suspending the Bands, and Queen's News Centre subsequently published an article which headlined "No now really does mean no," to celebrate the "the changes that have made Queen's a more welcoming place for women." I wonder, as I write my report on the eve of the December 6th commemoration of the murders at Ecole Polytechnique, whether we should perhaps hold off on a celebration...

CCA Standing Committee

The Campaigns & Community Affairs Committee met for the first time in November to discuss our first mission, which is to organize the National Day of Action to Drop (tuition) Fees. The CFS Drop Fees campaign has a long history of bringing students together to call for tuition reductions for all students. Two staff members from CFS-Ontario met with the CCA Standing Committee to present research on tuition fees and student debt in Canada, and their presentation prompted a good initial discussion on the types of events we could organize to promote the Day of Action, set to take place on February 1st, 2011 (mark your calendars – we hope you’ll join us join hundreds of other students on Parliament Hill that day).

The Drop Fees campaigns organized by Ontario locals will be focused primarily on the tuition grant which was promised by the Liberal government during provincial elections. As I’ve previously reported, the tuition grant, falsely construed as a tuition reduction, promises 30% off tuition for first entry undergraduate students (including some, but not all professional students. Certain professional programs will not qualify, nor will second-entry students enrolled in those professional programs which do qualify). International students, graduate students, and students who took some time off between high school and college or university will not qualify. Students who are financially autonomous (labeled “independent” students) and part-time students will not qualify either, which means that the grant will not necessarily be given to students who are most in need. Meanwhile, seeing as fees were neither frozen nor reduced, tuition fees are likely to increase over the next four years. Further, since tuition fees have already been applied, and the grant is set to be implemented in January, universities will have to impose complicated bureaucratic hoops onto those students who think they are eligible and who apply, only to cut those students who are actually eligible cheques, which is likely to be a time-consuming and costly endeavor in itself. In the end, it would be much simpler and cost-effective to use the same budgeted amount as that which is planned for this grant’s implementation to reduce tuition fees by 13% for all students. To get this message across, we went around campus and got students to sign a petition, which were dropped off at Queen’s Park with petitions from other Ontario universities (close to 40,000 signatures in total) on November 5th.

As a final note on tuition fees, I think it’s important to draw linkages between the cost of post-secondary education and certain trends at Queen’s. For one, we have received several distressed emails from students asking for help as the holidays are approaching. Since the beginning of our term, we have also seen a sharp increase in demand for SGPS emergency financial aid bursaries, as well as rises in demand for food bank services. What I’m trying to get at is this: the campaign to reduce tuition fees centers on much more than the amount deducted from our pay or awards; it is also tied to quality of life, and to mental wellbeing.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne-Marie Grondin
VP CCA

SGPS Annual Audit

Accountants from Collins & Blay began the annual audit of the SGPS financial statements early last week. The process normally takes a few weeks, and it seems to be going smoothly as expected this year.

Finance and Services Committee

The committee has reviewed an alarming number of Emergency Student Aid (ESA) bursaries this term—already more than half as many as the committee saw for all of last year. In the course of this work, the committee has been mindful of systemic issues that manifest as emergency situations. In response to one such example, I am hoping to work with the University to ensure that automatic monthly payments are equally distributed over the academic year, which does not seem to be happening for international students. If you know of changes to university or other policies that impact negatively on students' finances and that may lead to critical shortfalls, please bring them to my attention. SGPS executive members meet with University representatives regularly to discuss such issues and to advocate for students.

Health and Dental Plan

The SGPS Health and Dental Plan has excellent enrollment for this year. We negotiated new paramedical services including athletic therapy, occupational therapy, counselling and psychology. As the year progresses, we will be able to see how these additions impact the plan, but we don't anticipate any major changes. The SGPS plan is one of the most inclusive of all the student plans, with coverage for dietitians, acupuncture, massage therapy, and physiotherapy, among others. The claims trend indicates that increased use of these services is matched with decreased claims for prescription medications, which will hopefully continue to equalize the plan usage. The SGPS executive is meeting with executive members of PSAC Local 901 this week to continue to discuss how we can help TAs and TFs benefit from the provision in the collective agreement for health and dental benefits.

ISIC

We had another successful visit from staff from the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) Ontario who issued ISIC cards on the spot at the Grad Club last month. Students who still need official identification over the break should come into the SGPS office by December 16th, as this is the last day of operation until reopening January 9th.

Student Life Centre (SLC) Policy Committee

As I mentioned last month, events this summer concerning the Grey House prompted SLC Council to begin developing policies to ensure the smooth operation of collaborative management of the Student Life Centre between the SGPS, the AMS, and the University. I met with Gillian Shields, the Student Life Centre Officer, and Kim Murphy, the Director of the VP Finance Office, to begin to sketch out what we should include in policies about shared space, room and table reservations, and programming. At our next meeting, we will discuss advertising and hiring/employment policies to include SGPS members (who are currently excluded under AMS-exclusive hiring policies).

Graduate Student Health and Safety: Your Office Matters!

Graduate students have a liminal status at the University: if you're not a TA, then you're not quite an employee. Yet graduate students are expected to work long hours each day in offices in University buildings, so from a health and safety perspective, you are treated as an employee. Your office must meet quantifiable standards such as the Building Code, Fire Code, Electrical Code and the Occupational Health and Safety Act – including proper ventilation, temperature above 18 deg C and sufficient lighting. If you suspect your office is in violation of any of the above, please contact me.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Phillipson – VP Finance and Services



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Speaker
December 2011

Hello everyone!

It will be good to be back to Council. After being away last month, it seems like quite some time, and I am ready to get back at it. Here is what I have been up to since my previous report.

Bylaw and Policy Revisions Standing Committee

This committee has met, and has determined a large number of changes to bylaws and policies that need to be made over the coming months. We have determined what needs to be changed, but I will be spending a large portion of the next month formulating that into concrete bylaw and policy amendments to be approved by Council, and as you may be aware of, Bylaw changes must have two readings, one at a regular Council Meeting and one at the Annual General Meeting, which is coming up on February 7, 2012. This means that January's Council Meeting will be the one where all these changes will be proposed. In addition to the changes the committee has made, there are a number of policy updates that relate to specific committees, and you will note that on this month's agenda, we will be discussing tasking these committees with updating those policies, so those will be coming forward for January as well.

Lots of policy going on this month, but boy do I love policy!

Student Life Centre Council Bylaw Committee (SLCCBC)

The recently formed SLCCBC (I decided to go with an acronym since everything around here has one) met earlier this month to discuss the creation of Bylaws for the Student Life Centre Council. For those of you that aren't familiar, the SLC Council is the body that oversees decisions made about the Student Life Centre, which encompasses the JDUC, the Queen's Centre, and Macgilvary-Brown Hall, and is the entity of Student Life at Queen's.

Basically it was the job of the SLCCBC to sift through their existing Constitution and refine, clarify, and fill in any blanks in terms of the operation of the Council, and formalizing existing practices.

The Bylaws are still early on in draft phases, and will eventually go to the SLC Council for approval, so I will keep you updated on this, as I am sure Jillian will as well.

It has certainly been a bylaw and policy filled month, as you can see by the fact that two of the things I am reporting on have to do with drafting and revising lots and lots of policy.

As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, and I will clarify any questions for you.

Respectfully Submitted,
Eric Rapos, SGPS Speaker

You can access the full agenda for last month's Senate meeting here:

<http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/agendasminutes/2011November22Agenda.html>

Academic Plan

First, I want to thank a number of Council members for contributing to the discussion about the representation of graduate studies at Queen's in the academic plan last month. You gave Jillian and I a clear sense of Council's thoughts on the matter, and your input allowed us to coordinate a response to a motion submitted last minute.

Council's predominant concern about how the University will move forward after accepting the Plan was echoed by a number of Senators at the meeting and occupied most of the discussion. Senator Morelli (Physics) and Senator Fachinger (German, English, Cultural Studies) with the Academic Planning Task Force submitted a motion the day before Senate met that revised the direction forward outlined in the original motion submitted by the Task Force. Instead of leaving all future academic planning exercises under the portfolio of the Provost, it advised that the school annually create small task forces from the University community to continually update, rethink, and hone the existing plan with specific issues in mind. The motion suggested that next year's task force attend to faculty renewal and virtual learning, but it ultimately left this decision in the hands of the next task force. The crux of the motion requested a revision to part d) of the Task Force's original motion (additions in red):

The Senate Academic Planning force recommends:

(d) that the Senate endorse a continuous cycle of Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring ~~under the leadership of the Provost~~ **by:**

(i) **striking each fall a task force of students, staff, and faculty who, using the consultation process established by the 2012-2011 APTF, shall consider a new planning issue or set of issues to be recommended by the task force of the previous year. As a starting point for the 2011-2012 academic year the 2010-2011 APTF recommends that consideration be given to the issues of (1) virtualization and online learning, and (2) faculty renewal.**

(ii) **each such task force shall submit its Report, including recommendations and observations concerning the implementation of previous recommendations, to Senate for approval.**

There was a counter motion and comments against this motion, but I spoke in favour of it. After discussing the motion with the Executive and Jillian, it seemed clear that it fortuitously spoke to the question Council drafted asking the Provost how he envisions implementing, monitoring, and continuing to build on the original academic plan. The motion replaced what Council seemed to identify as vaguely defined administrative next steps with a clearly articulated faculty- and student-driven process.

For reasons that still remain unclear, but which I am inquiring into, the Senate Agenda Committee did not place our question to the Provost on the agenda for Senate – traditionally the way that questions in writing are handled at Senate. I hope to clarify why this happened before Council meets. In any case, I asked our question from the floor and highlighted how the motion was sympathetic with SGPS Council's concerns. The motion above passed, and Senator Morelli retracted his original motion requesting Senate to reject the Plan.

Former Senator Jones (English) also presented a petition garnered during the weeks leading up to Senate requesting Senators to reject the Plan. Morelli and Fachinger explained that their new motion was an attempt to reach a compromise rather than a complete rejection, so they no longer supported the original motion endorsed by the petition.

I want to take a moment to extend my gratitude to Mark Jones for continuing to bring the concerns of numerous university (and some non-university) community members to the attention of highest academic deliberative body on campus. His dedication to these voicing concerns – concerns by people who were unable to attend Senate in person – was exceptionally commendable and very encouraging. He also did so, in part, on behalf of our members. One of the main reasons for rejection the plan, he argued, was an absence of concerted attention to graduate studies and students in the academic plan. I regret that I was unable to support such a vocal advocate for our members.

I also want to thank Jones and the rest of the Planning Task Force for all of their hard work in seeing a plan into fruition.

Hopefully, graduate studies will emerge as one of the focus issues in future planning exercises as the University moves towards a comprehensive vision of all of its members. The current plan offers some strong starting points for further discussion: it acknowledges that graduate degrees no longer qualify in and of themselves for academic careers in PSE (a cultural change that many universities and faculties still need to confront); it recognizes that the traditional emphasis on research fits poorly with the traditional career in teaching following a PhD; and it states that “Queen’s must consider all students, whether undergraduate, graduate, or professional, first and foremost as students rather than as sources of revenue for the University. That said, Queen’s needs to acknowledge their multiple roles as students, researchers, teachers, and employees.” These are all observations that challenge the traditional understanding, experience, and relevance of graduate education and advocate for needed self-reflection and re-evaluation.

Respectfully submitted,
Daniel Moore



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Social Commissioner
December, 2011

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 Yoga Classes; Challenge your Inner Yogi (HLI)

As a part of our new Healthy Living Initiative the SGPS social team is providing you with a chance to challenge your inner yogi. Whether you've never tried yoga or you are a seasoned yogi, these workshops are safe and inclusive to all levels of ability and familiarity with the discipline. Grant yourself a break from the grind of being a graduate or professional student and participate in the SGPS's FREE yoga class this month, taught by a certified yoga instructor! Based in the Sanskrit meaning of "union", yoga is a physical discipline that unites the body and the mind in a system of movement. There are many benefits to yoga; such as its wonderful health and fitness benefits, as well as stress reduction. For more information regarding this event please contact Meaghan at athletics@sgps.ca.

Date: Wednesday, December 7th

Time: 7:00

Location: 241 JDUC Center McLaughlin Room

SGPS Council Party

The social team is organizing an end of the year SGPS council party. This event is a small token of the SGPS's appreciation for our council members' hard work and dedication. Moreover, this event will give us a unique opportunity to interact with each other in a less formal atmosphere; that is without having to even think about Robert's Rules. There will be some free appetizers and drink tickets (alcoholic & non-alcoholic). Thus, come out and help us close off a great 2011 with a fun night of socializing.

Date: Tuesday, December 13th

Time: 8:00 PM

Location: The Grad Club

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.

Respectfully Submitted,

Abdullahi Abunafeesa
Social Commissioner
(social@sgps.ca)

SGPS Computer Network

- I have completed work on the wireless access protocols for the office.
- Discussion continues with the Exec regarding off-site backups.
- I have finished writing server code for the wiki server to prepare for automated off-site backups.
- I have almost completed necessary code for the mail server for off-site backups.
- I continue the process of investigating an upgraded OS for our mail/wiki server.
- Verification is complete with respect to all office computers keeping delta backups on the main server.
- Our public website server needed maintenance, which is completed.
- I am looking at new hardware for our public website, as the current hardware is aging.

SGPS Website

- I continue working on the Council and Get Involved sections of our website to make them more informative and welcoming. I should have this section updated in the next month or two.
- I am working with the International Team to generate a section of our website for International students.
- I have patched the webserver with software updates.
- I have updated the framework of our website to work with Blackberry devices. The site is 100% compliant with iOS devices. I believe the website to be fully compatible with Android devices running Honeycomb or later.
- I am working to improve the club section of our website to include more details about clubs and more details about the club ratification process.

Communications

- All credits now appear on Solus accounts (for those that completed optional fee or health/dental opt-outs during the opt-out period).
- I continue to work with Queen's IT to work out kinks with mailing list services.
- I am working with the Office of the University Registrar (OUR) to improve communications between SGPS members and the OUR.
- I continue working on the 2012-2013 version of the SGPS Handbook (dayplanner). Please send any comments or suggestions.
- **The 100th edition of the SGPS E-Newsletter approaches.** I am looking to do something special for the release of version 100. I would love to hear any ideas you have.
- I am updating all bursary application forms. Please send any feedback. I have completed an update to the Emergency Student Aid application form so it is easier for the committee to deliberate on the applications without any personal identification.
- I am working on a social media policy, which is to be submitted to Council for consideration (to be added to SGPS Bylaws and Policies). I hope to have this policy ready in the next couple of months.
- I am working with several internal groups to improve the SGPS Bylaws and Policies.

Wishing everyone a safe and happy holiday season!

Respectfully submitted,
Sean Richards - info@sgps.ca



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Equity Team
December 2011

Hello SGPS Members,

Here are the things that Equity has been working on in the past month.

- An RA has been hired to continue work on the Accent Discrimination project. We will be meeting next week to get him started on his work.
- The Equity Team's work on Disability Awareness Month last year is being reviewed and a formal document is being compiled.
- In my meeting with Jeanette Parsons of Health Counseling and Disability Services (HCDS) we discussed how SGPS could work with HCDS to better provide assistance to our members with disabilities and provide opportunities for better accessibility. Jeanette encourages SGPS to continue our work to ensure awareness issues be addressed.
- The Equity Standing Committee held its first meeting on November 21. Committee members came prepared to review the bylaws around Equitable Purchasing at SGPS.
- Aliya has been involved with planning the National Day of Remembrance & Action on Violence against Women which took place last Tuesday evening at the Biosciences Complex, Lecture Hall 1101 beginning at 6:00.

We are continuing to work on the following;

- Aliya will be working on an Ally Directory the will contain social justice and equity groups at Queen's. This is still in the works so we will bring you updates as we get them.
- Elizabeth will continue to meet with Health Counseling and Disability (HCDS) to discuss initiatives that could see SGPS providing assistance for graduate students with accessibility needs.
- Aliya continues to work with the committee for graduate students with disabilities.
- Equity Standing Committee will meet early in January to provide recommendation to the Policy Review Committee.
- Aliya will represent Equity on a committee of the Queen's Community of Black Intellectuals. This student organization is aimed at creating a much needed, positive and safe space for "blacks" within the Queen's community.
- The Equity Climate Survey campaign will be getting underway in January. Look for updates.

We wish you a wonderful, restful break and hope that you return in January refreshed and ready to face the challenges of a new semester.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Amirault
Equity Commissioner (equity@sgps.ca)

Aliya Kassam
Equity Coordinator (equityco@sgps.ca)



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the International Team
December 2011

Dear SGPS Council Members,

I hope that this report finds everyone well. Here is what the International Team accomplished last month.

Things we are working on include:

- The International Affairs Committee has met twice, and has discussed issues including the International Tuition Award and provincial health insurance for international students;
- An article I wrote on issues relating to teaching in a diverse classroom and the need for instructor training will appear in the next edition of QUFA Voices;
- Have been involved in discussions about how the International Tuition Award is currently being distributed, and how to change this distribution, to benefit international students;
- Plan to discuss UHIP, in relation to developing a plan to lobby for provincial health insurance for international students in Ontario;
- Invited the SGPS Commissioners to a meeting to discuss their projects and to share successes and challenges;
- The Cultural Engagement Group is now a SGPS Club! Don't forget to attend on Mondays from 530-630pm at QUIC;
- Attended an Equity Committee meeting and reviewed (with the hope to revise) SGPS' purchase policy;
- Attended a QUIC advisory committee meeting;
- Participating in the Equity Team's Accent Discrimination Campaign;
- We continue to communicate upcoming sessions and events to international students via the SGPS Newsletter, SGPS Facebook Page and SGS Newsletter.

Please feel free to get in touch if you have any questions or concerns about the above, or if you have any ideas that you would like to share. I urge you to become involved, if not with the international committee, than with other initiatives within SGPS or beyond.

Warm Regards,

The SGPS International Team

Becky Pero
International Student Affairs Commissioner
international@sgps.ca

Holly McIndoe
International Student Affairs Coordinator
isc@sgps.ca

Hello! Here are this past month's sustainability related news and events!

October 2011

My application for the Sustainability Coordinator was accepted and I was briefed by Executive Director Sean Richards about the sustainability position, my duties, structure of the Queen's administration and possible projects/ events for the Committee.

At this time I also recruited members for the Sustainability Committee and we held our first meetings on Thursday November 24th 2011. I've attended the SGPS Coordinator Committee Meetings which appears to becoming a monthly tradition. Also I have attended Cross Campus Sustainability Groups meetings and it has been well worth it as it allowed for networking and staying in-tune what is happening on campus.

Recyclemania

I am working with Llynwen Osborne of the Sustainability Office to plan Recyclemania 2012. Recyclemania is a friendly 8-week long competition starting in the winter term among college and university recycling programs to see what school can collect the largest amount of recyclables. Last year Queen's did not place in the top 5 for any of the recycling categories. I believe as a school, Queen's could have done much better if there was more awareness of Recyclemania on campus. I am proposing that with the help of The Journal we can promote the Recyclemania event to the student body and use it as a vehicle to reduce waste. I have contacted The Journal and am waiting to hear a response from them.

Twitter Account

I started a twitter account for the SGPS Sustainability Coordinator position which is @SGPSamantha, if you have twitter please follow me. The account is used to update followers on events the SGPS Sustainability Committee is hosting, sustainable living tips, vegetarian cooking recipes, sustainability issues at Queen's, and more!

Composting Event

On Wednesday November 16th I volunteered with Committee for the Environment (ACE) in their "From Garbage to Garden" event which signed up students for a free green bins courtesy of the City of Kingston. The event was a success with many students signing up to receive either a small or large green bin which is delivered by the City to their doorstep. Green bins have since been distributed to participants that signed up.



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Athletics Coordinator
December 2011

Hello Everyone,

I had my first University Council on Athletics and Recreation (UCAR) meeting on Nov 29, 2011. Some highlights from the meeting included:

Facilities and Business Development:

Nixon Field (formally Kingston Field) is set to attain their RFP at the Board of Trustees meeting the weekend of Dec 2-3, 2011. This new field will be the third artificial turf field at Queen's and is to open in Sept. 2012.

Recreation and Sport Clubs:

There has been an increase of intramural participation and in light of the extensive waiting list for intramurals (800+ students) the ARC is negotiating time slots at local schools such as KCVI.

The ARC Q-shop is now online and Gael clothing can be purchased through the website.

Inter-University Sport:

Our women's soccer team won its second straight CIS title in Montreal this fall. Also, Queen's will be hosting the CIS Volleyball Championships March 2-4, 2012.

Marketing, Communications and Events:

The marketing team has been working hard to partner up with large corporate sponsors and recently Enterprise Rent-A-Car took a large roll in sponsoring the Academic All-Star Awards and will also be sponsoring the women's basketball team charity event. Connections are also being made to try to ensure that this year's Carr-Harris game will be played at the K-Rock centre.

Budget Report:

As it stands currently, the ARC is running at a surplus, but the next budget meeting (Jan. 2012) will provide a better picture of the projected budget for the new year.

Alumni Relations:

UCAR is working closely with Queen's Alumni Association to secure funding and support for our athletes. The new initiative, "Winning with Alumni", stands to provide varsity teams and clubs with the support they need to succeed on the field of play.

Respectfully Submitted,
Meaghan Frauts
Athletics Coordinator



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Gender Studies Department
December 2011

The Gender Studies Department would like to thank the SGPS Finance and Services Standing Committee and the SGPS for their generous support of the Graduate Program in Gender Studies 2nd Annual Symposium, which took place this past November with much success. The event, which featured the research of six Gender Studies MA candidates and welcomed an audience of over thirty community members, was made possible with the financial support of the SGPS and with the much-appreciated administrative assistance of Andrea Phillipson and Sean Richards. Thank you again from the Department, and we look forward to extending an invitation to the event again next year.

Sincerely,
Kaleigh Alkenbrack
Gender Studies Representative