

1. **SGPS staffing:** Although we employ an executive director, executive assistant and front desk staff, we are seriously understaffed in terms of administrative support for the Executive. This affects our ability to produce reports, memos, letters, emails, position papers, media posts. The list is endless as well as hampers our ability to grow and effectively advocate in all areas of the University. This creates a challenge for the SGPS in regards to our ability to set clear priorities within Queen's. Our priorities, although effectively communicated to the Administration and to the AMS, are often left unsettled due to the lack of personnel to follow through. The SGPS executive effectively engages in a multitude of arenas, and we could be more effective with additional full time staff support, specifically more internal support directly related to the priorities of the executive and the long-term goals of the SGPS.
2. **University relations and Advancement:** Following through from last year, we have strengthened our relationships with the university, the board of trustees and the team in advancement. These are relationships that should be nurtured and strengthened as we move ahead. One concern here is in relation to what historically have been one on one meetings with the Principal. Previously, we had separate meetings with the Principal and with the Provost. These meetings have been combined into one monthly meeting. I have concerns that in the future there may be a move towards the elimination of any meetings with the Principal. There seems to be a shift going on; the Principal is assuming a role as a figurehead for the university opposed to fully engaging within. The next few executive teams should pay close attention to this potential shift.
3. **Funding opportunities:** Principal Woolf has re-established the Principal's fund for assisting international PhD students here at Queen's. We are very happy to see this because assistance for International students is something we have been fighting for.

The advancement team has worked tirelessly over the past year and we are hoping to be able to announce some new funding for our members. We have teamed up for the Spring Mini-U and have planned an exciting event at the Grad Club for alumni and students to engage. More information on this event is forthcoming. In the meantime, I look forward to seeing you all at the Grad Club on Friday, May 25, 2012 from 9p to close. Hope everyone can come interact with those who were here before us!

4. **Student Life Centre (SLC-being JDUC and the Queen's Centre):** Following last year's AGM, the new Constitution and Operations & Management agreement was signed. The transition year has been challenging at times, especially since we also had to adapt to the new accounting/computer programs that the University implemented. This partnership between the us, the AMS and the University has definitely had a few bumps along the way but we have been able to work through most of the hurdles. Next year will be a year to definitely pay attention to this front. Specifically, the next executive should try to make is to that the SGPS receives all of the programming information and is regularly informed of what is transpiring with respect to the SLC.
5. **The Grad Club:** The Grad Club is an essential service to SGPS members. They provide a discount to all members and the Club is an excellent venue for board meetings (two boardrooms on the third floor), 'open mic' night every Wednesday and Trivia on Thursdays. I encourage everyone to fully utilize the Club and be sure to check out the fantastic concerts that are ongoing throughout the year.

In closing, there are a number of additional things on the go that I am hoping to be able to announce prior to the end of my term. Please be sure to join us at all of our regular council meetings to be kept up to date about my and the rest of the SGPS' activities. Council meetings are always open to members to attend and dates, times, and locations are posted on the SGPS website.

Respectfully submitted,

Jillian Burford-Grinnell

President

I am honoured to have had the opportunity to serve as your 2011/2012 VP Graduate. Thank you for all your support over the past many months during my term in office. As VP Graduate, I was dedicated to representing graduate student issues on various committees (i.e., SCAD, SARC, GSEC-as of January 2012) which usually met on a monthly basis. My role as VP Graduate has also allowed me to become involved in various initiatives that I would like to highlight for you here:

Academic Affairs Standing Committee

As Chair of the Academic Affairs Standing Committee (AASC), I am happy to report that the AASC has had a productive academic year so far. For a complete report on the AASC, please see my separate report on the AASC, attached to this package.

Centre for Teaching and Learning

Over the past year, I have had the opportunity to meet with the Director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) on a monthly basis. For the first few months of my term as VP Graduate, I met with Dr. Denise Stockley (who at the time was the Acting Director of the CTL); beginning in September 2011, I began meeting with Dr. Joy Mighty. These meetings have been very fruitful in keeping abreast of the issues that are impacting the CTL, as well as the initiatives that the CTL was undertaking. One of the most recent initiatives was the CTL's 20th anniversary celebration event, which took place on Monday, January 16, 2012. The SGPS worked with CTL to advertise the CTL's anniversary celebration. A future initiative is to spearhead the production of a short documentary (in conjunction with students from the Film and Media department) highlighting the teaching practices of successful and/or award-winning Queen's professors, and their students' thoughts on their teaching practices. We hope to have this short documentary completed sometime by the start of the next academic year.

FREE Queen's 2012

Upon commencing my term as VP Graduate with the SGPS (i.e., April 1, 2011), I had the privilege of witnessing the unparalleled dedication of Queen's graduate and professional students giving back to the Kingston community through FREE Queen's 2011. FREE Queen's is a free workshop series facilitated by Queen's graduate and professional students and delivered within the Kingston community for Kingston community members of various ages. In October 2011 a call was put out to SGPS members via the SGPS newsletter for workshop proposals. These workshop proposals were reviewed by the FREE Queen's 2012 Steering Committee and the workshop offerings for FREE Queen's 2012 was decided upon, the first of which is being offered on Wednesday, February 9, 2012, 6-8 p.m. This year, FREE Queen's 2012 offers a selection of thought-provoking and informative workshops at our venue, Pathways to Education. We hope that our partnership with Pathways to Education will be very fruitful so that we may offer FREE Queen's workshops to Kingston community members for many more years to come. For a complete list of FREE Queen's 2012 workshops, please feel free to visit <http://www.sgps.ca/events/freequeens.html>.

Graduate Councils and Committees

This past academic year, I encountered great difficulty filling the student representative positions on the Graduate Councils and Committees (for a complete list of Graduate Councils and Committees, see here: <http://www.queensu.ca/sgs/facultystaff/governance/council.html>). While various calls out were made in August, and September 2011 (via the SGPS newsletter) to locate student representatives to sit on these Councils and Committees, by October 2011, various student representative positions remained unfilled (and as a result, during those meetings, the graduate student voice was not heard). I encourage the next VP Graduate to work with the Chairs of the Graduate Councils and Committees to find a suitable and effective way to locate student representatives to sit on these Councils and Committees. I also encourage the next VP Graduate to put out calls to fill the student representative positions sometime in May 2012, so that student representatives may be able to join and contribute to their respective Councils and Committees come September 2012. Moreover, I would encourage the next VP Graduate to maintaining regular communication between the AASC and student

representatives on the Graduate Councils and Committees. This is important so as to increase the communication among SGPS members and the impact of academic-related initiatives undertaken by the AASC.

Peer Support Centre

During August and September 2011, the Peer Support Centre conducted training for new and returning volunteer Peer Support Councillors. I was involved in this training to some capacity, relaying to Peer Support Councillors academic and non-academic challenges facing graduate students. New this year, Sau-Ling Hum (Director, Peer Support Centre) worked hard to set up a Graduate Student Support Group (facilitated by Queen's graduate or professional students) aimed at catering to the academic and non-academic challenges facing graduate and professional. In previous years, Peer Support Centre support groups have been open to both undergraduate and graduate students; however, the need for this group arose as a result of recognizing the different stressful experiences that graduate students face. I hope that the Graduate Student Support Group continues to be offered to graduate and professional students for many years to come. I would suggest to the net VP Graduate to connect with Sau-Ling Hum to ensure that the SGPS does its part to support the existence of this Group in which ever capacity possible.

School of Graduate Studies

Over the course of the past many months since I began my term as VP Graduate with the SGPS, I have had the opportunity to meet with the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) on a monthly basis. Those present during these meetings included Dean Brouwer, Associate Dean Rappaport, Associate Dean den Otter, and, at times, Dean McKeown (Director, Office of the Dean). During our monthly SGS-SGPS meetings, we would discuss various academic and non-academic issues that have impacted, are currently impacting, or will impact graduate students. As a result of these SGS-SGPS meeting, the SGPS has requested the SGS's support on a few initiatives to address these academic and non-academic issues that we have brought forward. On a number of occasions, other SGPS Executive have also been present during SGS-SGPS meetings to relay their own concerns.

As the previous VP Graduate has indicated in his 2011 AGM report, it is essential that we maintain these meetings and positive relations with the SGS, as the SGS is our ally in advocating for the best interests of graduate students within various governing bodies on campus. In a recent meeting with the SGS, however, it was indicated that if more SGPS Executive members (minus the VP Professional) were not regularly present during SGS-SGPS monthly meetings, that the SGS would have to consider how to proceed with monthly meetings. I have brought this concern to the SGPS Executive and I suspect what is going on is that the SGS is looking to downsize the number of individuals from the SGS who are usually present at the SGS-SGPS meetings. At our next SGS-SGPA meeting, I intend to follow-up on this and relay to those present at the meeting that, historically, the SGPS Executive has never met regularly with the SGS during its monthly meetings. Moreover, monthly SGS-SGPS meetings are part of the VP Graduate's portfolio. While I invite SGPS Executives to attend each monthly SGS-SGPS meeting (and have actively sought agenda items from SGPS Executive members to bring forward to the SGS during our monthly meetings, in their absence), it has never been mandatory for SGPS Executive members to attend these meetings. Even so, on several occasions various members of this year's SGPS Executive (minus the VP Professional) have attended several monthly SGS-SGPS meetings. I encourage the next VP Graduate to continue holding these monthly meetings with the SGS and continue inviting SGPS Executive members to attend these meetings; it is imperative that we address effectively any concerns that the SGS may have so that these monthly meetings may continue to occur well into the future, for the benefit of the SGPS membership.

Student Advisor Program

In mid-May 2011, the call out for individuals interested in joining the Student Advisor team was made through the SGPS newsletter. There were two Student Advisor positions available; after a successful year-end performance review, *Shaun Shiels* was invited to rejoin the Student Advisor team. To fill in the two positions that were available, the Student Advisor Steering Committee reviewed each application and selected ten applicants to come in for an interview. By the end of June, two more individuals joined the Student Advisor team: *Lauren McNicol* and *Victoria Millious*. Overall, the hiring process went well, but the process was lengthy (it took a total of 6 weeks from advertising the two positions to selecting the two successful applicants to join the Student

Advisor team). When transitioning the next VP Graduate, I will ensure to relay my experiences with the hiring process so that the hiring process can continue to be successful in locating qualified individuals for the Student Advisor positions.

In June 2011, the Equity Office provided its feedback on how to revise the SGPS Bylaws and Policies pertaining to the hiring of Student Advisors (i.e., P.2.11), with the goal of making the hiring process more equitable for our membership. This feedback was recently provided to the Bylaw & Policy Revisions Standing Committee which will be modifying the section of the Policies accordingly, and will be bringing forward those revisions to the March 2012 SGPS Council Meeting.

The Student Advisor team has undertaken the task of developing and offering workshops to our membership on how to create and maintain positive supervisory relationships. The first workshop was held on Tuesday, October 4, 2011; the second workshop was held on Tuesday, November 15, 2011; and the third workshop was held on Tuesday, January 24, 2011. Each workshop differed from each other with regards to its content, the last of which focused on email and writing etiquette with one's supervisor. I am happy to report that these workshops have been very well attended, and that many SGPS members have been happy to have such a resource available to them. A couple more workshops are in the works, and we hope that this initiative continues on into the next academic year, headed by the next set of Student Advisors.

Every year, the issue of training new Student Advisors is prominent. The bulk of the training that this year's new Student Advisors undertook was during the month of August. The success of this year's training of Student Advisors can be attributed to having *Shauna Shiels*, an experienced Student Advisor, to deliver much of the on-the-job training that the new Student Advisors undertook during the first couple of months of their position. Indeed, *Shauna's* experience and wealth of information with the Student Advisor program helped to maintain its institutional memory, helping to prepare new Student Advisors with their case loads which began in September 2011. This issue of maintaining the institutional memory is far more prominent when all three experienced Student Advisors exit the program in a given year. For this reason, in September 2011 I put forward a short-term solution to the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) which involved the SGS providing funding to the program for on-the-job training (directed by an experienced Student Advisor) for new Student Advisors. In December 2011, I presented to the SGS a funding proposal for Student Advisor training that would not exceed \$400. The funding proposal was presented to the SGS in the form of a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA); however, the SGS indicated that it was not interested in moving forward with the MoA, and that other avenues needed to be considered, such as staggered hiring in conjunction with electronic resources. The Student Advisors are currently looking at the viability of this suggestion, and will be presenting other ideas on how we can address the issue of training and maintaining institutional memory in the instance that all three experienced Student Advisors exit the program in a given year.

One of last year's Student Advisors, *Srishti Hukku*, developed a proposal to have the Policy Pro Bono placement offered to students in the School of Policy Studies (SPS). Recognizing the need and value for such a placement, the SPS—as well as the SGS—accepted the proposal and offered to its graduate students the option to conduct a Policy Pro Bono placement within the Student Advisor program. In January 2012 we welcomed *Alisha Kassam* to the Student Advisor team, who is conducting the Student Advisor program's first Policy Pro Bono placement until the end of March 2012. While the Pro Bono Placement within the Student Advisor program is still in its infancy, we have high hopes that this placement will do much to benefit both the Student Advisor program (i.e., with the expertise brought to the program by the Policy Pro Bono student), and the Policy Pro Bono student (i.e., with the experience that the Policy Pro Bono student will gain as a result of working with the Student Advisor program). We hope that the Policy Pro Bono placement is one that continues to be offered to SPS graduate students for years to come.

Even though this year has been a productive one, there are a number of initiatives that were brought to my attention that I was unable to undertake fully and/or see them to the end. For this reason, I encourage the next VP Graduate to consider undertaking these initiatives during his/her term as 2012/2013 VP Graduate:

- The Graduate Life Working Group has not called a meeting since early fall 2010; it would be fruitful for the next VP Graduate to revive this body by addressing this concern with the Dean of Student Affairs to see what it would take to get this Working Group up and running again
- One of last year's Student Advisors indicated the need for establishing an SGPS and or award/bursary/fund for mature students; currently, no such award/bursary/fund exists; a Research Assistant should be hired to conduct the necessary research to make a compelling case to the Dean of Student Affairs, as well as other bodies on campus, to help create the seed funds required to see this initiative come to fruition
- Drawing from the previous VP Graduate's AGM 2011 report, I echo that the SGPS should create a special committee made up of student representatives from the various Graduate Councils and Committees, which would help these student representatives to respond to any graduate student issues brought forward by the SGS at Graduate Councils and Committees

This concludes my report to Council. It is my sincerest hope that the next VP Graduate continues to build ties with the SGPS membership and governing bodies across campus. Only by working together towards a common goal can we truly accomplish much for the benefit of graduate students at Queen's.

Respectfully submitted,

Irene Karagiorgakis
VP Graduate



As you may know, I started this position mid-September when the previous VPP went on a leave of absence for health reasons. I was new to the SGPS, to Queen's, to law school, and to Kingston. I had to catch on quickly to figure out how things work around here! In December I was advised that the VPP on leave was not returning and I agreed to stay on for the remainder of the term.

Because I only started partway through, and because the previous VPP had to take a leave quite suddenly, I am unable to report on much of what happened prior to September.

Alumni relations

In the fall, president Jillian and I put in some hours improving the SGPS relationship with alumni. We hope to remind alumni that Queen's is not just an undergraduate university when they are considering making donations to the school or setting up grants and awards. The Alumni association is on board with creating better relations between themselves and SGPS members and have hosted several events to this end throughout the year. I encourage you to actually look at your e-mails from alumni relations to keep a lookout for these events.

ESS elections

For the second year in a row, it has been reported to me that there were serious concerns with the ESS (Education Students' Society) election: the main concern was that EGSS (Education Graduate Students' Society) held the weight of recruiting candidates and running the election. This is not the fault of the ESS, the EGSS, or the SGPS. The reason for this is that ESS members are only in their program for 8 months, so each year brings a fresh group of students, so there is no returning person to run elections, as happens in most other societies. It has seemed a natural solution to have a student continuing from the ESS to the EGSS to run the elections. However, there are several reasons why this is not appropriate: (1) it infringes on both the ESS' and the EGSS' autonomy – no society should have any effect over another's elections; (2) some EGSS members are TAs for ESS members, so this leads to professional conflicts.

The SGPS takes this problem very seriously. I strongly recommend that the next VPP, president, and CRO meet early to plan how they will address these concerns. I suggest approaching ESS students very early in the year to inform them about the SGPS, about ESS elections, and for the next CRO to run the ESS elections. The SGPS CRO should be available to any of our member groups to help facilitate elections if they desire it.

Professional student relations

Admittedly, SGPS relations with professional students has not been my top focus. It is extremely difficult to balance the HR duties associated with this position and to keep professional interests in mind. It is also worth noting that many of the liaising duties that the VP Graduate and the president do with the school of graduate studies are performed within professional programs because there is no overarching school of professional studies. That means that the issues for professional students in different programs are very different.

I am trying to implement some changes that will allow the VPP to focus more on the part of their job that relates to professional students (see below). With these changes in place, I strongly recommend that the next VPP undertake a project to find out how the SGPS can be more amenable to professional students' needs.

HR policy changes and Report & transitions process

My main focus this year has been on HR policy and on the reports and transitions process. These changes are currently in progress in the HR committee. Please see the HR committee report for more information.

Grad Club

The Grad Club is run by a board of elected members and non-voting members. As VPP, I am a non-voting member on the Grad Club Board, there to represent the SGPS's interests. The Grad Club is an important part of life for many SGPS

members. It is where we meet, socialize, and answer oh-so-important trivia questions. The Grad Club is known as a concert venue and many fantastic bands play there. If you have never been to the Grad Club, I encourage you to check it out. You can book a room (including 2 board rooms, or a larger room for a social event), go to a show, or just stop in for a beer and some food. Grad Club members (which you are if you paid your Grad Club fee) get a discount of food.

SGPS Functioning

A common theme you might see in Executive reports is that it is very difficult to accomplish our tasks with the amount of staff we have. Although we have a full time Executive Director and a full time Executive Assistant along with part-time front desk staff, the majority of their time is taken up by the tasks of managing the daily operations of the SGPS, including managing the website, creating the newsletter, keeping track of who sits on committees, managing all out internal bookkeeping, paying employees and accounts, etc. This work is obviously essential. However, with a lack of support staff, it is very difficult for the Executive to accomplish the things we want to accomplish because we have to take care of every task ourselves. If we had more support staff, we would be better able to fully use our own abilities.

I am optimistic that we will be able to create a new position before this executive term is over. I encourage the next executive to take advantage of this increased support if it goes through!

Non-Academic Discipline review

I have representing the SGPS on both the senate committee on non-academic discipline (SONAD) and another ad-hoc committee struck to review the University's non-academic policy. I am very concerned about potential changes that the review committee is recommending, which includes a proposal that would see both the AMS and the SGPS non-academic discipline systems eliminated. Even a proposal that reduces student involvement in this process is concerning because it is part of a pattern of elimination of student power at Queen's. These concerns are shared by the AMS representative on the committee and the University Rector. We are hoping to work together on this front to oppose any changes that would threaten our autonomy in regards to non-academic discipline.

In closing, I would like to thank my fellow executives, our fantastic staff, and all the appointees and officers of council and council members. You have all made this experience truly rewarding.

Respectfully submitted,

Cody Yorke
VP Professional

Given that it is only February, that there we are still two months away from completing our terms, and that my final report is likely to be as lamentably long to read as it will be to write, I decided to split my annual report into two parts, and to submit only the first at this juncture. This first part to my report consists of a year-to-date summary of the work I undertook as your VP CCA. The second part to my report, which I will submit before the end of my term, will encompass my broader observations on organizational/structural SGPS matters as these relate to my position.

'Brand Idea'

The SGPS was invited to partake in a workshop and presentation of Queen's new 'brand idea' –a new marketing strategy aimed at modernizing Queen's image, while keeping with its trademark of tradition. The former Equity Commissioner and I were both in attendance, and had quite a lot to say about the image Queen's was attempting to portray in contrast to graduate and professional students' experiences and top reasons for attending Queen's. This workshop provided us with a great opportunity to 'plug' the specificities of our membership and how these need to be better reflected in Queen's marketing (as with most other spaces).

Federal Elections

Federal elections were difficult to advertise last year, seeing as they took place at the same time as the end of the winter term, and thus at the same time as the end of exams and the student move-out. Nonetheless, the SGPS was able to coordinate with the AMS to promote new advanced polls as well as voting stations on campus.

Via Rail

Via Rail very quietly decided to change its discount packages last March to eliminate the ISIC discount. The rationale behind this decision was that most students could benefit from the 'youth' discount, and as such, that there was no need to have two student-specific savings packages. SGPS Council subsequently endorsed a letter decrying Via Rail's decision, and asking for its reversal on the basis that most graduate and second-entry professional students were aged 21 years and over. Individual members were also encouraged to write or call in their dissatisfaction. I received word in early September that the ISIC discount would be extended by one year (until December 2012), thus granting us a temporary victory. I followed up by calling on Kingston & the Islands MP, Mr. Ted Hsu, to help us secure the ISIC discount for good. Mr. Hsu valiantly wrote an excellent letter of support to Via Rail on our behalf. We have yet to learn the final outcome, but were assured by Via Rail that discount packages are frequently reassessed based on customer (dis)satisfaction.

Orientation

Like my colleagues, I participated in several orientation events and departmental talks in September so as to promote visibility of the work we do at the SGPS, and to get to know new members. Along with the VP Finances & Services, the Executive Director, and the Council Speaker, I was also involved in putting together new materials to orient Council, which was a new feature offered for Council this year. Similarly, I organized 3 Council preparatory sessions in the Fall in the hopes of stimulating discussion about the issues discussed at Council, and as a way of providing Councilors with the tools to better navigate the rules and structures of Council. I haven't been quite as good about organizing these since we have returned from the holidays – I simply ran out of time. Nonetheless, I strongly recommend this practice to future Executive members.

Provincial Elections

Since post-secondary education falls mainly under the purview of the provincial government, I felt it worthwhile to invest a significant amount of resources in organizing for the provincial elections. I wanted specifically for the campaign to be aimed towards increasing awareness of the education-related responsibilities of the provincial government, to push to increase voter turnout, and to lobby provincial candidates to respond to students' demands for better funding, lowered tuition, and new faculty hires. To these ends, I hired a provincial election organizer to coordinate several tasks. For one, the elections were promoted through several means, including by advertising in the Queen's Journal and on

Facebook, tabling at several different events, and by disseminating SGPS-specific materials developed for this campaign (SGPS Votes!) and other electoral information. Furthermore, the elections organizer arranged for the SGPS Executive to meet with almost all local electoral candidates individually, and coordinated with the AMS to organize and promote the all-candidates' debate. As with federal elections, Queen's once again offered advance polls and e-day voting stations, and worked with Elections-Ontario to advertise new ways and even more days to vote. According to Elections-Ontario, advance polls voting was significantly increased, despite a rather abysmal voter turnout overall.

National Lobby Week

I participated in a full-week lobby session in October with several other students from across the country. Organized by the Canadian Federation of Students, Lobby Week is a great opportunity for students to discuss post-secondary education as it relates to federal politics with MPs across party lines. With this aim in mind, I traveled to Ottawa to present 5 main recommendations: 1) the implementation of a Post-Secondary Education Act, or national vision for PSE encouraging the restoration of per capita funding through specified cash transfers to the provinces; 2) redirecting funds currently allocated to education tax credits and savings schemes to the Canada Student Grants Program to help decrease student debt, and allowing graduate students to benefit from this program; 3) increasing the number of Canada Graduate Scholarships to reflect growing graduate student enrolment; 4) removing the funding cap on the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (capped at 2% since 1996) to ensure access to PSE for Aboriginal and Inuit students; and 5) allotting Statistics Canada \$10 million for the collection and analysis of PSE statistics, and re-introducing the mandatory long-form census.

Open Access Week

I was invited to join the Open Access Week organizing committee this year, and helped to coordinate and advertise Open Access Week events held October 24-28. Featured this year were two sets of live webinars held in Stauffer Library's Speaker's Corner, as well as three visual exhibits held consecutively in Stauffer, Bracken, and Douglas libraries.

Canadian Association of Graduate Studies

I attended the 49th Annual Conference and General Meeting of the CAGS in November, where I witnessed the elimination of the only voting student seat on the Association's administrative board. Without regard for students from across the country who demonstrated interest and participated in the meeting, the Association felt that students did not belong in the governance process of an association dedicated to graduate studies. Students were told that 'true' participation lies instead in consultative roundtables – never mind that consultation can only work to our advantage if the Board votes in accordance with what students discuss informally (and thus that this is a flawed characterization of representation/participation). When I pointed this out to the Deans of Queen's School of Graduate Studies –who, it should be noted, seconded the motion to remove the student seat at the CAGS AGM— I was told that students would nonetheless be responsible for continued participation in the process (herein understood as participation in ad hoc consultative bodies), and that failure to participate would indicate bad faith on students' parts to have their perspectives on graduate studies heard. The irony was as unbearable then as it is now.

Labour Action

What with the discussion about possible labour action over the summer, the SGPS was made privy to Queen's expectations towards graduate students in the case of an eventual strike or lockout. Specifically, grads would have been expected to resume 'business as usual,' irrespective of their personal views on crossing picket lines, or, for that matter, of unequal power divides between supervisors and students which might render crossing picket lines difficult, both at the time of labour action, and, foreseeably, in the future as well. In fact, we were told that students who chose not to cross picket lines would face unspecified consequences. In the end, QUFA and Queen's administration reached a compromise which averted further labour action at Queen's. However, when the Brandon University (Manitoba) Faculty Association went on strike later in the year, and graduate students were directed to resume their usual business, the SGPS Executive resolved to write a letter of solidarity to Brandon University's President, asking that the Brandon administrative team revise their stance in one such way as to recognize students' position under the circumstances, and to refrain from using students' continued research/labour as a divisive pressure tactic against Faculty.

Save Library & Archives Canada

At the November NGM of the Canadian Federation of Students, I sat in on a presentation by two delegates from the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) and learned all about the 'Save LAC' campaign. For members who aren't familiar with it, Library & Archives is currently facing serious acquisition losses due to fiscal cuts and changes to the LAC's mandate. These losses are endangering the LAC's ability to act as a comprehensive and free repository for heritage materials, and thus should concern all researchers, be they students, faculty, or other. In December, Council voted to endorse the 'Save LAC' campaign. For more information, please visit the website:

<http://www.savelibraryarchives.ca/>

Queen's Bicameral Governance and the BFA

Due to resource constraints, Queen's Arts & Science faculty administration suspended admissions for the Bachelor of Fine Arts program. The suspension of what might be considered a 'vulnerable' program (i.e. vulnerable in this cost-reduction climate because program outputs are not necessarily or easily marketable) itself generated quite a stir within the Queen's community. Even greater opposition came from students and faculty who opposed the unilateral decision of the faculty administration, which effectively bypassed Queen's bicameral governance structure, equally split for very deliberate reasons between the Board of Trustees (which deals with matters of finance) and the Senate (which deals with matters of policy and broader community vision). In December, SGPS Council endorsed a letter to Senate and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Science opposing the prioritization of financial over other concerns, and the circumvention of Senate in the process.

Political/Community Consultations

The SGPS was provided with two opportunities to submit their recommendations on post-secondary education this year: first, in the OPSEU Commission on Quality Public Services & Tax Fairness (and why post-secondary education should not suffer further cuts); and second, the Ontario New Democratic Party's Pre-Budget Consultations. Both offered session in Kingston, and provided us with a rather rare opportunity to insert ourselves in two political parties' decision-making process.

Occupational Health & Safety

Using continued campus discussions on mental health as my reason to introduce my concerns, I worked with PSAC 901 (TA/TF Union) and the rest of the SGPS Executive to draw further attention to the importance of strong occupational health & safety policy and practices. Following the one-year anniversary of Senate's implementation of the Safe Disclosure (whistleblower) policy, I met with Queen's Safe Disclosure Officer and PSAC 901's President to discuss how this important protective mechanism could be further advertised. This discussion is ongoing, and I will be reporting about it again in my February regular Council report. With colleagues on the Executive and I also met with the Principal's Mental Health Commission, and used this opportunity to advocate for the inclusion of 'occupational stress' within Queen's OHS policy. More recently, I also met with PSAC 901's Health & Safety Officer to discuss how this issue can be further advanced.

Fundraising

SGPS members are accessing the Emergency (financial) Aid bursary like never before. But there isn't enough money in these bursaries to cover all costs (there isn't even enough money in the budget to cover all demands for these bursaries). In fact, over the holidays, things were so tight financially that some of our members had to write to the Executive to ask whether we could help them with their family and food expenses. Similarly, the Food Centre is in such great demand this year that it has already surpassed its allotted budget for fresh food items. Meanwhile, the Community Housing Board, which has increased rents by 10% over two years, has seen twelve tenants vacate their apartments over the last year, without notice or rent payment, mid-semester, compared to few to no unexpected vacancies in years past. One has to wonder: could students be sending Queen's a message about the (un)affordability of education? Thankfully, our VP Finance & Services has our members' interests at heart, and she has proven herself incredibly resourceful on a relatively tight budget. But as much as the SGPS wants to help –we have, for instance, organized a holiday food & toy drive, and have helped the Food Centre organize its own fundraiser (**happening now, Feb.6-10 – please donate if you can**) –donations and small bursaries can only go so far, and it feels at times that our limited funds do more to keep Andrea up at night than to alleviate the problem of financial barriers. With these things in mind, I would encourage future Executive and Council members to continue advocating for structural change on the issue of mandatory fees of all

kinds. The sum of these can be likened to a flat tax required by all, irrespective of class position, to attempt to earn one's degree.

.... which brings me to

Drop Fees Day of Action

WE OCCUPIED THE ARC/STUDENT LIFE CENTRE! What more needs to be said?

Granted, several other things deserve to be noted: Queen's was one of several Canadian campuses to organize mini-occupations to call on the government to increase funding and to decrease tuition. Our campaign was officially endorsed by PSAC 901, the Kingston District Labour Council, two AMS clubs, OPIRG Kingston, CUPW Kingston, and Queen's TriCouncil at the local level, and by a much longer list at the provincial and federal levels, including the Elementary and Secondary Teachers' Federations. Our morning-day-and-evening-long event attracted quite a bit of social and other media attention, and was featured in interviews with CKWS Kingston, CFRC Radio, Queen's Journal, MyFM 88.7 Greater Napanee, as well as the St. Lawrence and King's College/Belleville campus news. Most importantly, the educational event drew together Queen's undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty members to initiate discussion of what we envision for Queen's, and for post-secondary education more broadly.

Committee Representation

Throughout the year, I ensured representation on the following committees: the Campus Safety Working Group; the Senate Residence Committee; the School of Graduate Studies; the Community Housing Board; and the CCA Standing Committee (see subsequent report). The SGPS was also present at 3 Executive meetings of the provincial component of CFS (and 1 meeting of a CFS-Ontario Executive subcommittee on Affirmative Action Speakers' Lists); 1 Semi-Annual CFS-Ontario General Meeting; 2 National Semi-Annual General Meetings of the CFS; the National Graduate Caucus stand-alone meeting; and the CFS/Steelworkers Skills Symposium.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne-Marie Grondin
VP Campaigns & Community Affairs



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the VP Finance and Services
February 2012 - AGM

Over the past week, I have dealt with two significant personal traumas. While my colleagues are always supportive and helpful whenever and however possible, there are some jobs only I can do. Reporting is one of those jobs. With my apologies, I will not be submitting a full year-end report at this general meeting. As the President will also be calling a General Meeting at the end of March, I will take that opportunity to reflect and report on my term as VPFS.

During the AGM next week, I will present the most current version of the SGPS budget reconciliation (please see appendix).

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Phillipson
VP Finance and Services



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Finance & Services Standing Committee
February 2012 - AGM

The Finance and Services Standing Committee remains busy throughout the entire calendar year. Since I began my term in April 2011, the committee has reviewed over 80 applications for funding—more than one per week. While the dental bursary is able to have a very clear formula for adjudication, all other types of funding requests (Emergency Student Aid, Grants Program, Club Funding, Sports Fund) must be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, with the individual circumstances and resources carefully considered. This takes a great deal of time and effort on the part of all committee members, and the collective decision-making is an integral part of remaining equitable with, and accountable for, all funds administered. The committee members have done a fantastic job reviewing budgets, catching funding gaps, suggesting alternate sources, and working in the best interests of SGPS members.

This concern for members has certainly extended to advocacy at various levels of the University, and a concerted effort to find workable solutions to the shortfalls faced by international students receiving the International Tuition Award. This committee has not been complacent, happy to dole out bursaries as short-term, stop-gap measures for systemic problems. Committee members' vigilance resulted in many discussions between SGPS executive members and various University administrators about the chronic financial issues graduate and professional students face.

One ongoing challenge in the bursary work has been the lack of policy to guide the decision making for several of the funding programs, an issue the committee has addressed with a list of recommendations. The final drafts are underway and I will bring them forward to the Council meeting in March for Council approval.

The committee will continue to review the budget over the next month to make allocation recommendations. Several executive and staff members have contacted me with proposals, particularly for creating new positions within SGPS to facilitate the growing amount of work that the society faces each year. These requests will be central to the budget conversations, as will the final audit report, expected to be released this month.

Please join me in thanking all of the Finance & Services committee members from 2011-2012 for their dedication and hard work. As the SGPS moves forward with strategic planning to consider expanding services, I would recommend that this committee not be charged with additional responsibilities. The members already volunteer a considerable amount of time, and we could not ask them for much more. One consideration may be to establish a separate Finance Committee and Services Committee. I make this recommendation with the caveat that the VP Finance & Services have the adequate help and resources in place to chair two vibrant and busy committees.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Phillipson, Finance & Services Committee Chair



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Campaigns & Community Affairs Standing Committee
February 2012 - AGM

For the first time in two years, the Campaigns and Community Affairs (CCA) Standing Committee was made open to Council members and any other interested volunteer. Last year, the CCA Standing Committee only grouped together the Equity team, along with the Sustainability Coordinator and VP CCA. The goal for CCA members was to get together every now and again to discuss what projects/campaigns they were organizing, to identify any parallels or overlap in their work, and to seek ways of coordinating their efforts. In other words, it was hoped that the CCA Standing Committee would be used as a venue for all 'campaigns' positions to both offer and find support for their projects.

As with all other SGPS positions, however, CCA members became increasingly committed to various other committee responsibilities, and as such, their ability to commit their time to campaigns was greatly reduced. While CCA meetings were seen, on the one hand, as an opportunity to let one another know about what projects we were undertaking, they were also increasingly 'just another committee meeting' to coordinate and attend, especially since reporting mechanisms (for instance reports submitted to Council) and the existence of various other committees (such as the Equity Committee) already reached the same ends. At the same time, it was increasingly apparent to me, as our recognition by various groups on campus increased, and with it, our already long list of responsibilities, that we (CCA members) were all severely lacking one thing: people-power. Campaigns and other coordinated projects (such as the Accent Discrimination Campaign, or International Women's Week events in the Equity Team's case) take up a lot of time, and are very difficult to coordinate alone. Breadth (and thereby visibility) in this kind of work cannot be achieved without the help of human resources, be they volunteers, paid work-study research assistants, or other.

As it stands, however, finding 'human resources' willing to take on campaigns work –that is to say, to devote several hours, often lumped together at inopportune moments, to the minute details which go into organizing events– and to ask this kind of commitment of graduate and professional students who already face a number of time constraints and other pressures, is difficult, to say the least. I hoped that opening the CCA Standing Committee to regular Council members might help in this regard, but, for reasons that have nothing to do with the members themselves, this 'solution' proved not to be one after all. More specifically, the majority of CCA members were simply added on to the Committee list (i.e. not through preferential choice), and as such, we can understand why some felt that attending meetings was a low priority. Others who were willing to take part in campaigns work had limited amounts of time to devote to the committee for the very valid reasons already stated above.

The take away message is as follows: the nature of campaigns organizing requires that already very busy people devote quite a bit of time to issues which they value and find worthwhile to advocate for publicly. Moreover, campaigns often develop organically via the collaborative work of involved campus community members, and not by virtue of monthly meetings with a large group of people whose schedules vary significantly, and are thus difficult to synchronize. My recommendation would be to continue recruiting regular Council members as volunteers for campaigns work, but to do away with the CCA Standing Committee as an avenue devoted either to grouping together volunteers and non-volunteer members, or as a monthly, standardized mechanism to organize campaigns. In my experience, neither can be efficiently fulfilled within the parameters of this type of Committee, and as such, the continued use of the Committee should be premised on a review of its structure and aims, and modified accordingly.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne-Marie Grondin
Chair of the CCA Standing Committee
VP Campaigns & Community Affairs



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Bylaw and Policy Revisions Standing Committee
February 2012 - AGM

Greetings SGPS Members,

It has been a fairly busy year for the B&P Committee, with a number of changes coming through.

1. Leaves of Absence Bylaw

The first task for B&P was the creation of policy for leaves of absence, which took some time to properly form and ensure that all bases were covered and that appropriate timelines were chosen. This proposed bylaw passed its first reading with minimal amendments, and is up for the second reading at this meeting.

2. Major overhaul of B&P

The next project we undertook was a large restructuring of the bylaws and policies, including many moves from bylaw to policy, in order to better allow maintenance of these items without having to have a general meeting to approve the second readings.

In addition to this, time was spent cleaning up and making sure references were still intact, as well as removing nonexistent positions and committees, and adding those that were missing.

3. Looking Forward

The B&P Committee still has some work left this year, relating to motions passed in the fall term, as several committees were tasked with working with the B&P Committee to come up with policy, whether it be terms of reference, or an overhaul of a policy. So we look forward to those things in the coming months.

Other than that, not too much else for the Committee this year, but as always, if there is ever anything you notice that needs changing, or something you would like to change, contact the Bylaw and Policy Revisions Standing Committee, and we will gladly help you out with that.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Rapos

SGPS Speaker and Chair of the Bylaw and Policy Revisions Standing Committee

speaker@sgps.ca



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Annual Report of the Professional Students Standing Committee
February 2012 – AGM

The professional students standing committee has not met since I have been in office. The reason for this is that I have had to make a decision whether to focus on the professional students aspect of this position or on the HR aspect. Given the pressing need for revision of the SGPS HR policies, I chose to focus my energy on that this year.

I hope that the next VPP will be enabled to dedicate more energy to professional students that I have.

Respectfully submitted,

Cody Yorke,
VP Professional,
Chair, Professional Students Standing Committee



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Social Events Standing Committee
February 2012 - AGM

Hello All,

The SESC was formed at the end of October. The committee only met two times since. The initial meeting was centered on getting the new council members acquainted with the social portfolio and the aims of the social team and SGPS. The second meeting consisted of sharing ideas and planning the social activities. Additionally, we've managed to enhance the focus of the social portfolio on hosting a variety of events to better suit the diverse needs of our SGPS members. The agenda for our next meeting includes looking at necessary steps to help facilitate the spring transition process. Our primary aim will be to personally integrate the new social team and leave comprehensive information to ensure they hit the ground running.

Respectfully Submitted,

Abdullahi Abunafeesa
Social Commissioner
(social@sgps.ca)



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the International Students Affairs Standing Committee
February 2012 - AGM

Dear SGPS Council Members and Members-At-Large,

Welcome to the 2012 AGM; you will find that SGPS have been up to some very exciting things this year!

This report outlines some of what the International Affairs Committee has worked on during the academic year.

The International Affairs Committee has met 3 times this past year to discuss, most particularly, UHIP and the development of a plan to bring awareness to the issue and lobby the provincial government with a request to extend provincial health insurance to international students in Ontario

Warm Regards,

Becky Pero
International Student Affairs Commissioner
Chair of the International Students Affairs Standing Committee
international@sgps.ca



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Judicial Committee
February 2012 – AGM

Greetings SGPS Members,

I am pleased to report that the Judicial Committee has received no cases this year.

That's it. Short reports are good reports.

That being said, do be aware that the Judicial Committee is available to address issues covered in our mandate, and we are in place to ensure that appropriate conduct of SGPS members is promoted and maintained. In a time when the future of student run non-academic discipline is in question, it is of utmost importance that all issues be reported to and addressed by the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Rapos

SGPS Speaker and Chair of the Judicial Committee

speaker@sgps.ca



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Annual Report of the HR committee
February 2012 – AGM

Up front, I would like to thank the members of this committee who have volunteered their time. You have made this work a true pleasure.

Policy revisions

The HR committee is in the process of writing proposed revisions to the HR policy. As it currently stands, we do not have a complete HR policy. We have several goals with these policy revisions: (1) to have a complete guide to all aspects of HR; (2) to alleviate the time that the VPP has to spend working on HR issues; (3) to alleviate the burden that has been placed on the Executive Director to deal with HR issues that are not properly his responsibility or his jurisdiction (4) to create clear and accessible policy that will benefit executive, staff, and appointees and officers of council. For example, we are amending the policy to include a clear process for review, discipline, and removal. Having clear policies will allow the VPP to know how to proceed in any event and will allow a disciplined staff or appointee to know what rights they have in the process and to ensure they are fairly treated.

Another change we are proposing is to change the hiring date for commissioners and coordinators to the early fall. We hope that this will alleviate some of the pressure of transition while simultaneously opening these positions to members who are only at the school for one year.

Reports and transition process

In December the committee sent out a survey asking for your feedback on the report writing process. Thank you to those of you who responded. We are now reviewing these responses and collecting information about what other student organizations are doing so that we can present you with proposed templates for reports and transition documents.

Our goal with this project is to make report writing easier, to create stronger transition documents, and to increase transparency within our organization – reports are how we keep everyone, from the president to the commissioners to the executive director, accountable.

We will be bringing these proposals to council soon. If you have any feedback or suggestions in the meantime, please send them to our committee chair, vpp@sgps.ca

Respectfully submitted,
Cody Yorke,
VP professional,
Chair, HR committee

As Chair of the 2011/2012 Academic Affairs Standing Committee (AASC), I would like to begin by thanking the members of the 2011/2012 AASC for their time:

- *Hazem Ahmed* – Computing
- *Raynold Alorse* – Policy Studies
- *Victoria Hoskin* – Pathology and Molecular Medicine
- *Alvine Kamaha* – Physics
- *Nathalie Ouellette* – Physics
- *Joanna Plant* – Art History
- *Roxanne Razavi* – Biology

I would like to especially thank *Hazem Ahmed* and *Nathalie Ouellette* who—during the Fall 2011 term when the AASC experienced difficulties bringing together all of its members for its monthly meetings—committed much of their time to attend each AASC monthly meeting, effectively contributing to the discussions and initiatives undertaken by the AASC during this time period. Members of the 2011/2012 AASC began meeting in August 2011, and will continue to meet until April 2012. I intend to be present during the April 2012 AASC meeting to help transition the next VP Graduate into his/her role as Chair of the Committee.

During the summer months of 2011, various calls were put out to SGPS members via the SGPS newsletter to locate interested individuals to join the AASC. While a few individuals showed interest in joining the AASC, this year's Committee membership was not as extensive as last year's, particularly during the Fall 2011 term when half of the Committee members had prior academic commitments that inhibited their full participation with the AASC. To address this, in part, for next year, I encourage the next VP Graduate to begin putting out calls to SGPS members (via the newsletter and via SGPS council members) a few months earlier than last year (i.e., May 2012), so as to locate interested individuals to join the AASC prior to the first AASC meeting of the 2012/2013 academic year. Doing so will help to start the Committee on the right foot, allowing Committee members to immediately address and bring light to any academic issues facing graduate students.

Since assuming the role of Chair, there have been a few initiatives that the AASC has undertaken. I would like to highlight these here:

- (1) Upon commencing my term as VP Graduate with the SGPS (i.e., April 1, 2011), the AASC was tasked with continuing the organization of the discussion panel on the new grading system which was to take effect on May 1, 2011. The discussion panel took place on Thursday, April 28, 2011. The panel of discussants included:

- *Kalanthe Khaiat* – MA candidate, Cultural Studies
- *Andrew Ness* – Associate Registrar, Office of the University Registrar
- *Dr. David Rappaport* – Associate Dean, School of Graduate Studies
- *Lauren Sampson* – 3rd Year undergraduate student, Faculty of Arts & Sciences
- *Dr. Denise Stockley* – Acting Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning
- *Dr. Virginia Walker* – Professor, Department of Biology & Microbiology

As a result of the questions brought forward and discussed at the discussion panel on the new grading system, a FAQ was created and published in Issue 83 of the SGPS newsletter (see pages 3-4):

<http://www.sgps.ca/events/newsletter/00083-may2011.pdf>

- (2) A FAQ pertaining to the T4 vs. T4A issue facing those undertaking a Research Assistantship was put together by the previous AASC members, under the direction of the previous VP Graduate. A final version of the FAQ was published in Issue 89 of the SGPS newsletter (see pages 17-23): <http://www.sgps.ca/events/newsletter/00089-aug2011.pdf>
- (3) Registration issues/concerns facing graduate students during the Fall 2011 term stemming from the new SOLUS system were compiled by the AASC and presented to the Office of the University Registrar (OUR). As a result, the OUR sent out an email to all Queen's University graduate students in early October indicating that it would not be assessing any service charges on outstanding amounts for the month of October.
- (4) Questions about the new Pre-authorized Payment Plan (PPL) were gathered by AASC members from their respective departments. After a meeting with Andrew Ness (Associate Registrar for the Office of the University Registrar), these questions were answered and compiled in a FAQ which was published in Issue 96 of the SGPS newsletter (see pages 7-9): <http://www.sgps.ca/events/newsletter/00096-dec2011.pdf>
- (5) The AASC is currently working on refining the Progress Report Motion that was put together by the 2010/2011 AASC members under the guidance of the previous VP Graduate. This motion will be brought forward to the March 2012 SGPS Council Meeting.
- (6) In the December 2011 SGPS council meeting, the AASC was tasked with developing the Committee's Terms of Reference (TOR). While this initiative is still in the works, the Committee intends to bring forward its proposed TOR to the March 2012 SGPS Council Meeting. A few items that were discussed at length included the number of Committee members, the responsibilities of the Committee and its members, the attendance minimum, the Committee's deliverables, and quorum. These elements will be present in the TOR that will be presented to Council at the March 2012 SGPS Council Meeting. Another item that was discussed by AASC members was the composition of the Committee's membership. More particularly, the AASC members discussed if the Committee's membership should only include SGPS Council Representatives and/or student representatives of the various Graduate Councils and Committees (for a complete list of Graduate Councils and Committees, see here: <http://www.queensu.ca/sgs/facultystaff/governance/council.html>). The reasoning behind this is to increase the communication between the AASC and the SGPS members pertaining to any academic-related issues that the AASC is working to address. The Committee, however, felt that it would be in the best interest of the SGPS membership to keep the AASC open to all SGPS members so that those interested in volunteering their time to serving on the Committee would have the opportunity to do so. In order to address the lack of communication between the AASC and SGPS members, the Committee suggested that a better reporting mechanism was required so that the initiatives of the AASC were being communicated effectively with those serving on the SGPS Council as well as the Graduate Councils and Committees. Doing so would help to increase the impact and influence of the AASC among decision-making bodies at Queen's. The Committee aims to address this in the TOR that will be presented to the March 2012 SGPS Council Meeting

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the AASC members, the Committee has seen some successes on all of the above-mentioned initiatives that were undertaken during the past many months. Some future initiatives of the AASC could include:

- Investigating and reporting to the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) and to Tri-Council the number of Queen's graduate students (particularly upper-year doctoral students conducting health-related research in the Social Sciences and Humanities) who have been affected by the change in eligibility requirements for the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) award and the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR) award
- Researching the extent of impact of the General Research Ethics Board's (GREC) strict ethics approval process on the research conducted by graduate students
- Keeping a close eye on how departmental progress reports are shaped as a result of the SGS's suggestions to departments (stemming from the Progress Report motion that the AASC developed during 2010/2011 and

brought to the SGS's attention. Working together with the SGS as much as possible on this initiative will be imperative to its success.

- Researching and reporting on the issues pertaining to supervisory relationships; currently, few policies exist that govern this relationship and it would be beneficial for the AASC to report on this issue and bring it to the attention of the SGPS Council Members and student representatives of the Graduate Councils and Committees

This concludes my report to Council. It is my sincerest hope that the Committee continues to work cohesively with SGPS Council Members to bring forward any academic issues facing graduate students to the appropriate decision-making bodies at Queen's.

Respectfully submitted,

Irene Karagiorgakis
VP Graduate, AASC Chair



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Sustainability Standing Committee
February 2012 – AGM

SGPS Sustainability Standing Committee

Two meetings have occurred since November. During the meetings events and environmental issues on campus are discussed during meetings. Terms of reference is also being worked on for this committee.



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Graduate Senator
February 2012 – AGM

Thanks for participating in this year's annual general meeting. I'll report on a couple major highlights from Senate and the subcommittees I attend.

Senate

Anyone may access the Senate agenda and minutes. The January agenda can be found here:
<http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/agendasminutes/012412.html>

Last month there were two motions regarding the BFA suspension of enrollment. The first asks a Senate subcommittee to create policies for suspending enrollment, and the second asks Senate to acquire independent legal advice regarding the authority of deans (as managers) and Senate (the University body responsible for all academic issues) on suspending program enrollments. The first motion passed with an amendment that the committee should report back by March, and the second motion will come up at the end of February. If you would like to share your thoughts about the second motion, please contact me (senator@sgps.ca).

Senate Operations Review Committee

Since September this body has been looking at Senate's committee structure and membership and considering ways to make Senate more efficient. It's very possible that Senate will follow the downsizing of the Board of Trustees, but nothing has been decided yet. There are many policies and historical guidelines surrounding the composition of Senate that make changes very difficult – and in some cases undesirable, I would argue. There are minimum percentages for faculty (at least 55%), students (25%), and staff (5%) while ex-officio, largely administration, cannot exceed 17%. It was pointed out earlier this year that ex-officio membership has already surpassed this guideline, so Senate is very eager to see whether SORC will recommend maintaining/resuming the historical status quo, or recommend changes.

The numbers of Senators could be changed while staying true to the percentage guidelines, but the committee is very conscious of the pushback that may come from removing Senate seats. I am of the mind that Senate needs to remain as open and consultative as space possible for academic matters, especially for those directly involved in academic pursuits at Queen's: students and faculty.

Student Senate Caucus

Our relationships with undergraduate student senators have been improving since the Fall when we started participating with this group after a bit of a hiatus. The chair, Doug Johnson, has been very conscientious in inviting us to the monthly meetings that take place a day or so before Senate. I am hopeful that we can continue to strengthen this relationship and find more common interests with student colleagues on Senate.

If you are interested in running for Graduate Senator, I would be happy to talk with you (senator@sgps.ca).

Respectfully submitted,
Daniel Moore



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Speaker
February 2012 - AGM

Greetings SGPS Members,

The Annual General Meeting is upon us once again, slightly earlier this year, but still signaling the nearing of the end of the year.

It has been a fairly busy year in the Office of the Speaker, my time being split over a variety of tasks that I will cover here and within other reports from the Committees that I chair.

Bylaws and Policies

There has been a significant amount of work done in the area of bylaws and policies, and this has been a big area of focus for me this year, as policy seems to be a hobby of mine.

For more details on what has happened in terms of SGPS bylaws and policies, see the report of the Bylaw and Policy Revisions Standing Committee.

Rector Policy

Another big area for me, more so at the beginning of the year, was the collaboration with the AMS to draft and approve policy regarding the Queen's University Rector, pertaining the election, and removal of the Rector. A lot of effort went into this policy from myself, Jillian and Sean, as well as the AMS President Morgan Campbell, the AMS VP University Affairs Keiran Slobodin, and the AMS Commissioner of Internal Affairs Mark Preston. The six of us spent quite a bit of time working out the details to ensure that everything was covered, and that both Societies interests were protected. All in all, it was a very effective exercise in cross-society relations, and a well formed policy was developed.

Rector Election

The above policy was of course needed for the Rector Election that was held last fall, which marked the first time a joint election has been held between the two societies. Both the AMS and the SGPS voted using their own systems, and both societies had representatives on the joint Rector Elections Team. The SGPS was well represented throughout the whole process, and were visible as contributors to the election, including half of the Rector Debate being moderated by me, the SGPS Speaker. A lot of team work went into this by the Elections team, and this was one of the smoothest elections in recent history in my opinion.

Additionally, due to both societies voting with their own online system, the results would have been completely separate, and quite difficult to tabulate, especially for preferential balloting. But luckily, as a Computing Grad Student, I was able to create software that would merge SGPS and AMS results, and perform the preferential balloting, in order to receive much faster than possible if the ballots were counted by hand. This process worked so well the AMS even asked me if I was willing to adapt the software for their Executive elections that took place on January 31 and February 1, and I happily agreed to help them.

Judicial Committee

Been a fairly slow year for this Committee, but read all about it in the Judicial Committee Report.

Student Life Center (SLC) Council Bylaws Committee

Due to my passion for policy that I expressed earlier, I was asked to be an external consultant to the SLC Council Bylaws Committee this year. The committee was formed to draft the bylaws that will govern the SLC Council, including how meetings will function, quorum and much more.

This process is still ongoing at the time of writing this report, but having first been discussed at the January meeting, it seems that the Committee is on the right track with the Council's vision of the bylaws, and they should be ready for approval later this month at the February meeting of SLC Council.

Term Coming to an End

My term as speaker will be coming to an end at the end of April, and we will be electing a new Speaker at the April Council Meeting. If you are interested in the position, please feel free to contact me, and I will gladly answer any questions you may have. The position is open to any SGPS member.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Rapos

SGPS Speaker

speaker@sgps.ca



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Student Trustee
February 2012 – AGM

Hello SGPS Councillors and Members,

As Principal Woolf is fond of saying, we unfortunately live in interesting times.

The most pervasive theme this year at the Board of Trustees was austerity. In March 2011, the Board instructed the administration to balance its budget by the following year. The new provost of Queen's, Allan Harrison, set himself immediately upon this task. The result was a direction to the units that there would be no increase in their budgets for the following year, in other words, a "freeze". This is a temporary measure while Provost Harrison and his team develop a new budgeting model. Provost Harrison is particularly concerned with the incentives that a budget model will provide university units.

The Board also instructed the administration to look for efficiencies in its real estate portfolio.

Another significant area of Board activity was labour relations. The Board's Human Resources Committee worked closely with the administration in negotiating a number of agreements, most significant of which was the agreement with the Faculty Association. Thanks to the professionalism of both sides, a labour disruption was avoided.

In the year ahead, SGPS members can expect to continue to see significant change in the university. The abrupt suspension of BFA admissions is an example of the type of budget-driven decisions that are likely to happen again in the coming year.

In this report you will find highlights of the monthly activities that have taken place in the past year in my role as Executive Assistant. These are in addition to my daily/weekly tasks of answering emails, assisting the Front Desk staff during busy times, administratively supporting the Executive Director, helping to administer the health and dental plan and performing general office tasks. The first four months of this year were still new to me in the sense that I was still in my first year here and there were a lot of new things that I still had to learn. August 2, 2011 marked my first year anniversary and I can honestly say that at that point, it was nice to encounter familiar activities that I had done in the previous year.

April

- Sold advertising spots for the 2011-2012 SGPS Agenda
 - I believe that the agenda is a great opportunity for local businesses, on campus and within the greater Kingston community to let our members know of what services are available to them. I would really like to see more businesses seize this opportunity this coming spring.
- Organized information table volunteers for the Ban Righ Centre's Spring Mini-U
- Started working on the details of the Executive transition weekend
- Scheduled Commissioner and Coordinator interviews
- Scheduled meetings between the Executive Director and our new Commissioners and Coordinators
- Developed a list of contact information for University Senior Administration and Deans

May

- Scheduled interviews for the Equity Coordinator position
- Contacted Graduate Coordinators and Assistants asking them for their updated contact information
- Conducted research on the cost and capabilities of various brands of wide format printers
- Organized the ordering of SGPS T-shirts for our Executive, Commissioners and Coordinators
- Took over the task of preparing all cheques for payroll, bursary payouts, and bill payments
- Scheduled interviews for a Research Assistant position
- Started coordinating a "Meet & Greet" between the SGPS and the QUIC staff
- Updated and maintained SGPS committee membership lists

June

- Continued coordinating and organizing the "Meet & Greet" from above
- Went through the SGPS Policies and proposed changes and additions to the Executive Director pertaining to places that could be referenced and linked
- Contacted former SGPS Clubs for re-ratification
- Continued research on wide format printers and asked various companies for quotes
- Sold advertising spots for the 2011-2012 SGPS Orientation Guide
- Helped to organize a "Meet & Greet" between the SGPS and the AMS Executive and AMS staff
- Started working on entering detailed tasks into the wiki system for transition purposes

July

- Conducted some research on the different benefits of being a registered club with other graduate student societies in Canada
- Continued organizing the advertisements for the SGPS Orientation Guide
- Organized a portion of the administrative aspects of three different SGPS summer social events

August

- Helped to organize campus tours for the Graduate Studies Welcome & Orientation event
- Arranged and organized orientation talks between the Executive and different departments and faculties at Queen's in order to introduce new SGPS members to the SGPS
- Organized a portion of the administrative tasks for SGPS Orientation Week events
- Started processing health and dental opt-ins for the 2011-2012 benefit year
- Gathered all SGPS Club President's emails
- Organized information table volunteers for the Teaching of Centre & Learning's Teaching Development Day
- Attended the SGPS Council meeting

September

- Begun fielding inquiries from members regarding different SGPS committees
- Updated and maintained committee membership lists
- Gave orientation talks to a few departments on behalf of the Executive
- Organized Orientation Week event ticket sales and payment
- Attended the Corn Maze social event with my husband and kids
- Helped the Front Desk staff out during peak times (which for September, is pretty much all day, every day)
- Represented the SGPS at the LSS Clubs Day
- Continued processing health and dental opt-ins

October

- Scheduled and organized Conflict Resolution Training for all SGPS staff
- Received resumes and scheduled interviews for the Sustainability Coordinator position
- Sent the first batch of manual opt-ins to Green Shield
- Continued fielding inquiries and adding members to internal SGPS committees
- Compiled information regarding SGPS membership on various University wide committees

November

- Prepared food for Conflict Resolution training
- Attended Executive transition meeting
- Continued work on compiling University wide committee information
- Ratified a number of new SGPS clubs
- Continued to organize Conflict Resolution Training
- Updated and maintained committee membership lists
- Researched swag for the SGPS – purchase costs, printing costs, etc.

December

- Worked on initiatives to increase SGPS Club visibility
- Conducted research on updating the telephones in the SGPS office
- Prepared for the holiday closure
- Received and reviewed Front Desk applications

January

- Prepared the necessary documents to send to our insurance broker to update the health and dental plan
- Started processing January health and dental opt-ins
- Scheduled and conducted interviews for Front Desk position
- Organized SGPS ski trip ticket sales and payments
- During peak periods, helped out with Front Desk
- Attended SLC Executive meeting on behalf of the Executive Director
- Attended SLC Council meeting on behalf of the Executive Director



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Social Commissioner
February 2012 - AGM

Hello All,

It's been another year and the social team has worked diligently to improve the social lives of our SGPS members. We have maintained our tradition of having a strong orientation week, promoted athletic events and put an emphasis on hosting a wide variety of events. We've tried to build on our repertoire of successful events by using this multifaceted approach.

Our orientation week was quite successful in both the attendance and the quality of events we organized. We've managed to stick with events that were consistently popular throughout the years, such as the boat cruise, corn maze and haunted walk. However, we also worked hard to improve on old events such as Queen's Amazing Race of 2010. In particular, we shifted the focus from the campus, by including some off campus locations that would be advantageous for new students to be acquainted with.

Additionally, we felt it was important to continue the emphasis on the Healthy Living Initiative. This initiative was proposed last year with the aim of reinforcing healthy living by having graduate students engage in active events. To this end we've made sure that every month included one or two sporting events. The athletic events range across a wide variety of events such as run/walk club, rock climbing, skating, yoga, frisbee golf and co-ed touch football. Furthermore, we've also managed to subsidize the fees for marathon and charitable athletic events such as the CDC/HDH walk.

Lastly, throughout the months we have hosted a wide variety of events ranging from purely social to athletic events. We managed to vary our events by reaching out to the student base and asking our members for ideas they would like see to come to fruition. This provided us with a broad starting point from which we worked out the logistics and appeal of the events on an individual basis. An example of how well this method panned out can be seen in our PHD Movie Screening. We've received a great deal of requests to screen the PHD Movie at Queens, just days after the release of the trailer. The overwhelming popularity for the film led us to liaison with the PHD Comics, and take all the necessary steps to get the rights to view the movie at Queens. It took a couple of months of hard work, but eventually we were able to screen the film. Consequently, this led to our most attended event with more than 7% of our membership attending (310).

Overall we've had a pretty successful year and intend on having a comprehensive transition process. It's our hope that the future social team will build on our work and further improve the social experience at Queens for our SGPS members.

Respectfully Submitted,

Abdullahi Abunafeesa
Social Commissioner
(social@sgps.ca)

SGPS Computer Network

- I have mapped all of the hardware in our office. This allows me to have a conceptual map of our network so it is easier to complete upgrades. It will also allow me to better manage updates and software installations.
- I have completed significant upgrades to our mail and wiki server, which allow such things as faster searches, potential for backup, better handling of mail and easier access to the wikis (etc).
- I have added and updated filters on the mail server to remove as much junk mail as possible. It's a fine balance between filtering junk and accidentally filtering useful messages. To date, no useful messages have been filtered as junk (but some junk still gets through as a result).
- I completed necessary updates to the network infrastructure for access points in our new upstairs offices.
- I updated the main SGPS network access points to be compliant with changes in the Queen's network.
- I updated mail protocols so our staff is able to easily access their mail from mobile devices.
- I am working to integrate workstation updates into server process. This would allow me to ensure all workstations have up-to-date software from a central location (the server). This would make it considerably easier to make sure all computers have what they need.
- I made significant upgrades (code and protocols) to our calendar server, which was aimed at making web-based access to the calendar system easier.
- I refurbished some older (aging) computers so we could get some more use out of them before they need to be recycled.
- I have added the ability for each office computer to keep differential backups on the main server. This means each computer is backed-up. The differential process means backups are faster and consume less bandwidth.
- I updated wireless access protocols in the office to ensure security and speedy access.

SGPS Website

- I have rewritten FAQs for our website.
- I have optimized the images on our website so our site is quicker to load and consumes less bandwidth.
- I have updated most sections of our website with more pertinent and up-to-date information.
- I completed hardware fixes to the webserver after it failed. The server was only down for a short time. This is the first time the webserver has been down because of anything other than loss of power at Queen's. The webserver maintains better than 99% uptime.
- I have re-written website code so it is compliant with mobile operating systems. The website is compliant with all iOS versions 2.1 and greater and Android devices running Honeycomb or later.
- I added some code to allow more recent versions of Blackberry devices to better access our website.
- Patching of the webserver happens constantly to protect it against attacks.
- I completed an overhaul to the orientation section of our website so incoming students have easy access to the information they need.
- I prepared the SGPS website for the ability to complete automatic off-site backups (in case of significant office damage or catastrophic events). The SGPS Exec continues to consider how

they want to implement the strategy. The website is ready when the Exec decided what to do.

- I completed an overhaul of the Clubs section of our website so clubs have an easier time finding everything they need.

Communications

- I completed work on the dayplanner/agenda.
- I completed work on the Orientation Week Survival Guide.
- I updated the opt-in form for the health and dental plan to make the form easier to complete.
- I updated all bursary application forms.
- I worked with the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) and the Office of the University Registrar (OUR) to ensure consistent messaging is sent with respect to study status changes, fees, etc.
- I worked with the Speaker and the Exec to complete a massive update to the Rector election policies. The new policies align the SGPS and the AMS and allow for the SGPS to facilitate the voting for SGPS members.
- We installed a new printer at the office, which allows full colour printing and several finished options including staples, hole punches and booklet making.
- I facilitated the move to online election/referendum for the SGPS.
- Our tri-fold was updated to be consistent with new information and practices. The tri-fold is used when we do such things as the BioSci orientation event, etc.
- I worked with sub-societies to allow online voting for their specific purposes.
- I have finished compiling e-mail lists for alternate messaging (alternate to the main SGPS mailing list).
- I am working to complete updates to communications policies for the SGPS.
- I completed a massive update to the Council Orientation package (with the SGPS Speaker).
- I now create a slideshow for each Council meeting, which we can project with the new SGPS projector. This aims to make Councillors more engaged at Council. It also allows us to help Councillors keep better track of motions and amendments as they happen at Council meetings.
- We are only 2 issues away from the 100th edition of the SGPS E-Newsletter. I still welcome any ideas to make this a special issue.
- I worked with many people and groups to update the SGPS Bylaws and Policies.
- I am working with members of the Education Students' Society to better facilitate their elections and to help with their yearly transition.
- I am working towards sub-society mailing lists for specific purposes.
- I updated the optional fee opt-out process so it is easier for students. It is also easier to maintain on a year-to-year basis for SGPS staff.
- We have finalized the integration of PayPal for social events, making it easier for members to purchase tickets and attend SGPS social events.

My goal for this report was to summarize the work that has been done this year. I tried to keep items brief and to the point so the report wasn't overly onerous to read. As a result, small details were left out. Please also note that I omitted smaller items and other simple tasks. I would be happy to expand on any item or offer explanation of any item's difficulty during the reports section at Council. Please also feel free to e-mail me with any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Sean Richards - info@sgps.ca



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the International Students Affairs Commissioner
February 2012 - AGM

Dear SGPS Council Members and Members-At-Large,

Welcome to the 2012 AGM; you will find that SGPS have been up to some very exciting things this year!

This report outlines some of what I have worked on during the academic year along with the International Students Affairs Coordinator.

The International Team:

- Working on an SGPS webpage for international students
- Collected ice skates over the winter break that are now available for borrow at the SGPS main office
- Wrote an article for QUFA voices on the importance of diversity in the classroom
- Will participate in the upcoming Focus on Diversity training program on a student panel
- Helped create the Cultural Engagement Group, a now active group that meets regularly at QUIC
- Regularly meet with staff at QUIC to better communicate information to international students
- Communicate relevant information on the SGPS Facebook page, and through the SGS and SGPS newsletters
- Attended the graduate student orientation receptions and orientations in the fall and winter terms
- Devised a plan to help students understand the distribution of the International Tuition Award and who to contact at SGS and the Registrar's Office to ameliorate discrepancies
- Invite the SGPS Commissioners and Coordinators to a meet monthly to discuss and share about their projects
- Participate in the Equity Team's Accent Discrimination Campaign
- Work closely with corresponding roles held by students in undergraduate student societies, i.e. the International Rep with ASUS
- Helped reconstruct the SGPS bylaws and policies
- Sit on the FREE Queen's Committee, QUIC Standing Committee, the City's Student Relations Communications Subcommittee, and the Campaigns and Community Affairs Committee
- Ran a successful second annual Sunday Sundae event at An Clachan

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.

Warm Regards,

Becky Pero
International Student Affairs Commissioner
international@sgps.ca



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the International Students Affairs Coordinator
February 2012 - AGM

Dear SGPS Council Members,

The international commissioner and coordinator have worked together very closely this year; in fact, all my work has been in conjunction with Becky – so there may be some repetition here. This is also why I've chosen to use the pronoun 'we'. Below is some information on what the International Team has been up to this year.

Things we've been working on:

- Orientation week and the International Student Graduate Orientation event are important first points of contact between incoming international students and the SGPS' international team. The International Student Graduate Orientation Event took place on the evening of Wednesday September 14 and was quite successful (it would be useful to further support QUIC in preparing this initiative). SGPS had representation from the International Team, the Student Advisors, the VP Graduate, and the President. In addition to this, the SGPS International Team also held three drop-in sessions at QUIC during the first two weeks of term. These sessions provided a space for international graduate and professional students to come and ask questions. The sessions worked well as a method of directing international graduate and professional students to something/someone specific, and bridging the gap between QUIC's services and those of SGPS.
- Participating in the Equity Team's Anti-accent Discrimination Campaign.
- Developing the International Students' Standing Committee.
- Sitting on the QUIC Council – this is a valuable position which gives regular and direct access to the Director of QUIC and the Vice-Provost International. Issues we've raised at the council this year include UHIP and the distribution of the ITA
- Establishing fairly regular meetings with all of the Commissioners and Coordinators to better understand what everyone is working on and where there might be overlap.
- We're also currently working on a campaign to educate the campus community about UHIP and garner support to lobby Principal Woolf about reinstating international students onto OHIP. The preparation for this included doing research about healthcare for international students historically and across Canada, and establishing contact with student representatives with experience in this area (in Manitoba and within the CFS, for example). At the moment we're working on a response to an op ed piece Principal Woolf wrote in the Whig, establishing a list of bodies and groups whom we plan to lobby for support, drafting a letter of endorsement to for the attn of Principal Woolf, and planning a day to raise awareness – which should happen in early March.
- Other works in progress are information for International Students on the SGPS web-page. We plan to have a document explaining the differences between UHIP, OHIP, and Greenshield as this has proved to be completely opaque to every Intl student we've spoken to on the subject. Other information will include the issues with ITA disbursement that occurred this past year and how this were addressed, should People Soft be equally troublesome next year, and a document explaining the structure of the university and what the different bodies do (i.e. – your department vs the SGS vs the Registrar etc).

Warm Regards,

Holly McIndoe, International Student Affairs Coordinator, isc@sgps.ca

(working in close conjunction with Becky Pero, International Student Affairs Commissioner, international@sgps.ca)

Equity Coordinator SGPS – Aliya Kassam

1) Accommodating Graduate Students With Disabilities Task Force (Head: Audrey Kobayashi)

Beginning last summer A group of professors, Queen’s administrators and myself sat down to review current practices with regards to accessibility and accommodation surrounding graduate students. Though the university did have general guidelines with regards to discrimination based on (dis)abilities, this taskforce set out to define specific guiding principles and policy recommendations which would hopefully serve to improve the overall experience of Queen’s students. (For full report see Index 1)

2) Positive Space Steering Committee (Head: Jean Pfliederer)

This committee has met several times over the year and is determined to the continued existence of place/spaces that are inclusive at Queen’s. There have at times been excessive requests for positive space workshops and I have stepped in occasionally to help Jean with this role.

→ Gay Genius Reading Tour which was as a comics, “anthology conceived and edited by Annie Murphy, Gay Genius is a showcase of contemporary Queer visioners-to-watch-out-for”. This event took place at the Artel on October 14, drew a large crowd and received encouraging feedback.

→ Drafted a letter as a group to Save the Grey House (See Index 2 a)

→ With the help of Positive Space, ThinkQ was established with Beck Ronaghan heading this initiative. (What is ThinQ? See Index 2b)

→ This committee has redrawn the parameters and found judges for the OPIRG Positive Space Award. For more information on this award or if you know a worthy participant, see below for nomination form. (For nomination for see Index 2c)

3) Accent Discrimination Campaign

Summary:

‘Understanding Each Other’ is a research initiative undertaken by the Queen’s Society for Graduate and Professional Students in collaboration with Queen’s Human Rights Office and PSAC Local 901. The goal of the initiative is to carry out credible research on issues with accented communication on Queen’s campus and produce a comprehensive list of recommendations for Queen’s administration and equity-concerned bodies dealing with respectful communication at Queens that recognizes the diversity of spoken Englishes.

→ Usman Mushtaq has been hired as an RA to work with updating the website and revamping the GREB application required to complete this process. (For full goals of campaign, see Index 3)

4) Sociology Ad Hoc Equity Committee

→ Social Justice Equity Essay Prize – created a monetary incentive to encourage undergraduate students to write in the areas of social justice/equity to foster greater understanding of structural inequities.

→ Equity Coalition

*There has already been a preliminary meeting to discuss this. The hope was to partner with other and possibly all equity groups on campus to collectively promote equity issues at Queen’s, particularly the dissemination of information. The ultimate goal of this coalition is to create an online allied directory of all the social justice and equity groups at Queen’s and in the broader Kingston community. This tool would be a vital resource for individual students, collaboration between groups and a better sense of community for all students. The mandate and specific goals are in the process of being written by myself and Sylvia Bawa. Several host sites are being discussed including potentially the SGPS and the CTL.

5) National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

→Took place on Tuesday December 6, 2011 in the BioSciences complex. Though the initial goal of this day was to remember the women murdered at the polytechnique institute in 1989, the day has now stretched its definition to include violence against all types of femininity including racialized, sexualized, domestic and trans focused violence. This event took several months of planning and included collaboration between many community groups including; HIV/AIDS Regional Services, Kingston Interval House, Sexual Assault Centre Kingston, SGPS and Women in Science and Engineering. Speakers included Ursula Thornley, Shauna Shiels, Margaret Little and Elizabeth MacDonald. The speaker session was followed by an outdoor candlelight vigil. The event was well received by all in attendance.

6) Anti-Oppression Workshop for Teaching Assistant Day

→The goal of the workshop was to engage TAs and TFs in a critical analysis of pedagogical practices in today's university. During this session, TAs and TFs were shown Anti-Oppressive techniques for creating a safe environment in their classrooms. By engaging in dynamic scenarios and group activities, TAs and TFs were given examples of how to negotiate racist, classist, sexist, homophobic, patriarchal, ableist and other oppressive hierarchies in classroom settings in order to successfully dismantle them, resulting in more effective university teachers.

Upcoming Events/Initiatives

a) Disability Awareness Month (Note: We are in the process of hiring an Accessibility Initiatives Coordinator to help with events for the month of March)

→ The Red Apple Gala (<http://redapplegala.com/>, also hosted by AQ). The Red Apple Gala is raising money to establish an endowment fund for the Adaptive Technology Centre at Queen's University. It is set to take place Saturday, March 31st, 2012 at 5:00pm at the Kingston Banquet & Conference Centre on 33 Benson Street.

→The Information Fair (hosted by Accessibility Queen's)

→Launch of ABLE (volume 1 & 2), a Queen's Publications

→Steve Cutway Award

→Speaker's Corners, one every week day TBA

→ Panel on The Importance of Mentors

→ Panel I on Disability and Relationships

b) International Women's Week

Several key community groups have met to discuss potential events for the week which celebrates solidarity of women without necessarily constructing 'womenhood' as a homogenized group. Tentative events include; story-telling, self-defense classes, craft fair displaying and showcasing women's work, a film screening and more.

Summary:

Throughout the year, this position included anonymous consultations with equity seeking groups and SGPS members on and off campus, writing nomination letters, running positive space workshops, helping groups attain group member status, attending meetings when and if the commissioner was not available and being an SGPS representative at events when asked. There are a few events coming up in the next few months that promise to be very exciting and informative – here is hoping for a good end of year and a smooth transition.

Cheers!

Please See Appendix 4 for Additions to this Report

Sustainability Meetings – AMS, MCRC, Sustainability Office and AMS Roundtable Forum

As a sustainability coordinator for SGPS I attend meetings with the sustainability office, AMS and Main Campus Residence Council (MCRC) to discuss all things green on campus. These meetings are perfect opportunities to talk about projects we are working on or would like to see happen. Some of the events/ projects discussed in the works are the waste audit, recyclemania, energy conservation challenge, water access, and etc.

Recyclemania

Background:

Recyclemania is an eight-week long environmental awareness campaign to reduce campus waste. Queen's joins hundreds of other schools in Canada, United States, Mexico, the United Kingdom and Qatar who will also be recording waste and recycling data for the eight-weeks. The data collected is then ranked to show which school collected the most recyclables, generated the least amount of trash per capita, and has the highest recycling rate.

Update:

For the second year in a row, Queen's will be participating in Recyclemania. To promote the campaign, a video is being created with the help of Queen's TV and students will be `Caught Green Handed` when they are seen recycling, given a `green handed` sticker and have the chance to win prizes.

Sustainable Kingston Community Forum

On Saturday January 28th 2012 I attended the first annual Sustainable Kingston Community Forum. The forum included an **interactive symposium on the Four Sustainability Pillars: cultural vitality, economic health, environmental responsibility and social equity that the city of Kingston has selected to reach its sustainability goals**. The forum was informative and a good opportunity for networking and exchanging ideas.



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Athletics Coordinator
February 2012 - AGM

Hi Everyone,

This year prove to have a lot of ups with a few downs mixed in for good measure. I set out with some pretty ambitious goals for this position and admittedly hit a steep learning curve. Here are some athletic highlights of the year:

Goodlife Fitness

Goodlife Fitness was going through corporate restructuring in their Corporate Membership Office in Toronto and we certainly felt the effects throughout the Fall. Their lack of organization and management often left us scrambling and frustrated on the proper procedures to ensure our members received their gym passes on time. However, due to the incredible SGPS staff in the office we managed to pull through. This year we have sold 110 (+/- 4) memberships and stand to have several more by the end of the term. This year students were able to access the SGPS/ Goodlife membership information on the SGPS website. This has lightened the email traffic.

Intramurals

This year's intramural teams were put together in the Fall during the ARC Open House. The SGPS was able to put together three teams and according to ARC statistics there are over 800 students (including AMS) waiting to be placed in the league. The ARC hopes to alleviate the capacity problem but renting out gym space in the local high school for next year. In addition, Sports Fund applications were also approved by Andrea Phillipson (VP Finance) and myself, and I encourage any SGPS member intramural teams to apply to the Sports Fund.

Committees

I sit on the University Council on Athletics and Recreation (UCAR) to discuss the operations at the ARC. Currently in its third year of operation, the ARC will begin its new strategic planning cycle to determine the goals, visions and philosophy of athletics and recreation at Queen's. Some highlights to come this year include the Carr Harris Cup at the K-Rock Centre, hosting the CIS Volleyball championships, the opening of Nixon Field (July 2012), hosting an International Rugby Game (USA v. Canada, Summer 2012) and hosting the Ontario Special Olympics Spring Games.

Along with UCAR, I also sit on the UCAR Budget Committee. We are still working on drafting the budget for next year (to be submitted in April) however, the ARC is currently running at a surplus in its contingency account (savings). Next year Graduate Student fees will only rise by Cost of Living (2.3%). This means our fees to the ARC will rise from **\$156.90 to \$160.51 next year.**

Varsity Athletics

The SGPS community boasts a very strong group of Varsity athletes. I attended the All-Star ceremony, which honored 35 SGPS members with Academic All-Star Awards for their excellence in the classroom and on the field of play. It was a fantastic afternoon that highlighted the contribution that our SGPS members make to the Queen's Varsity Athletics Community.

New Initiatives

This Fall I began the Athletics News Update in order to reach a wider student population on athletic related news. This news update is sent out to Councilors via email and is also featured in the SGPS newsletter. This newsletter highlights Goodlife information as well as SGPS, Queen's and Kingston community athletics related events. It also features a section on our SGPS members who are also varsity athletes. I was able to also reach the student population through social media networking including Twitter and Facebook.

The Social Team

The SGPS Social Team was committed to providing athletics and fitness based programming as part of our Healthy Lifestyles Initiative. Each month we featured athletic or athletic related programming including events such as frisbee golf, run club, yoga, skiing, rock climbing, field sports, skating and white water rafting. In March we plan to run the 2012 CDC 5/10km Run. We will be subsidizing race entry fees and SGPS members are encouraged to participate.

Overall, I think I was able to accomplish a significant portion of the goals I set out for myself when entering this position. Thanks for everyone's participation and support for myself and The Social Team.

Respectfully Submitted,
Meaghan Frauts
Athletics Coordinator



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Logistics Coordinator
February 2012 - AGM

My position as the Logistics Coordinator for the SGPS social team has seen me and my teammates conduct a myriad of tasks throughout 2011/2012. These tasks primarily consisted of the conceptualization, planning, and execution of social events for Queen's University graduate students each month. My employment began in the spring of 2011, following my interview with the SGPS executives. Our first event was rock climbing at the Boiler Room in which I shadowed and assisted Abdullah Abunafeesa to learn how to interact with SGPS members and the businesses with which we were partnered. During the summer months we planned several water and beach themed events, including white water rafting, kayaking and canoeing on Lake Ontario, and journeying to Sand Banks National Park for a beach day.

Our biggest time commitment by far was the planning and execution of the SGPS Orientation Week. This period of time took a great deal of foresight, as we endeavored to create events to satisfy students from diverse backgrounds, as well highlight important locations and venues in Kingston for those new to the city. Each member of the Social Team was responsible for contacting and negotiating venues. For example, my primary responsibilities were to plan and run logistics for the boat cruise, rock climbing, and the Wolfe Island corn maze. All of the members of the Social Team (Cassandra, Meaghan and the social head, Abdullah) did an outstanding job in managing the large degree of events and graduate student needs during this time.

Following orientation week, we have held several events for graduate students. This month, in response to popular demand, another rock climbing event was held at the Boiler Room, and a mixer took place at Fanatics Sports Lounge. For February, we have planned another big logistical event (ski trip to Calabogie Peaks Resort). I have also arranged a skating session on the outdoor rink at Kingston City Hall. As the February version of the SGPS newsletter states, the social team has procured extra pairs of skates for those who do not have access to any, and will be providing refreshments for participants.

Chris Groten
Logistics Coordinator, Social Team
Society for Graduate and Professional Students



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Planning Coordinator
February 2012 - AGM

Since my installation at the beginning of May, my duties as Planning Coordinator have included: organizing summer events like white-water rafting, running club, and family day; scheduling orientation week events for graduate and professional students (including larger events like speed meeting, BBQs, Wolfe Island Corn Maze, etc.); and planning other monthly events which have included pub nights, athletic events, and trips (like the upcoming February ski trip).

Reporting to the Social Commissioner, I have been responsible for liaising with the other members of the social team, including the Logistics Coordinator and the Athletics Coordinator. Together we have planned many successful events over the past few months and will continue our momentum in the coming months.



OFFICE OF THE RECTOR QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY AT KINGSTON

Report to the SGPS AGM – February 2012

January 31st, 2012

Dear Council,

The last few months have been a ride entering the sphere of student leadership. Since taking office, I have found myself working to absorb and learn as much as possible. Thus, I have spent a considerable amount of time meeting with different members of our community, students, and alumni. With that said, it is my hope to be a balanced rector, by that I mean to keep my office open to both graduate/professional and undergraduate bodies. Rather than seeking to be understood, my intent is in seeking to understand. I encourage you to contact me with events, discussions, and advice for how I can be more supportive in graduate and professional issues.

Agnes Benidickson Tricolour Awards

The Agnes Benidickson Tricolour Award and induction in the Tricolour Society is the highest tribute that can be paid to a student for valuable and distinguished service to the University in non-athletic, extra-curricular activities. Such service may have been confined to a single field, or it may have taken the form of a significant contribution over a wide range of activities.

The award is named after Dr. Agnes Benidickson who was Chancellor of Queens University from 1980 until 1996. I will elaborate on the Tricolour Selection committee and its composition in my oral report.

Non-Academic Discipline

It is my hope to work closely with the SGPS in preserving their peer run non-academic discipline system that is under review by members of the administration. As a member of SONAD (Senate Committee on Non-Academic Discipline) I will be another student voice as the issue moves forward. If we actively work together and communicate regularly with the Alma Mater Society about this issue, we will be a stronger force.

Briefly:

- Student initiatives that my office has supported:
 - Project Chickpea
 - A group of students got together in Fall semester during finals to provide students with healthy and inexpensive food options. My office connected them with Advancement and the Principal's office to promote their initiative, as well as, provide them with the channels to donate their earnings to mental health resources at Queen's.
 - Women's Worth Week
 - Led by a passionate individual who approached my office recently for support, Women's Worth Week seeks to raise awareness about violence against women and issues of self-esteem women face. Specifically, the project aims to provide a positive space on campus for students to engage in dialogue on these issues.

- My office has played a smaller role in advising and promoting other student initiatives as well. Please do not hesitate to contact me for support with your own initiative or if you would to get involved in an existing one!
- Winter semester office hours: 12PM – 1:30PM Monday - Tuesday, and Thursday.
 - I encourage you to book an appointment with me if these times do not fit into your schedule.

Princeps Servusque Es,

Nick Francis

Web: www.queensu.ca/rector

rector@queensu.ca (613)-533-2733

Twitter: @nfranchise

Facebook: facebook.com/queensrector



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Chief Returning Officer
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In September ESS positions were acclaimed within accordance with the ESS constitution. EGSS nominating representative CJ Dalton and Career and Recruitment Advisor and TORF Registrar, Elspeth Morgan were extremely helpful in the process. There is always difficulty with the nomination period and transition to elections caused by short time period that the ESS students are actually on campus, the timeline for elections outlined in the ESS constitution, and the poor transitional set-up from the outgoing ESS to the in-coming ESS. My recommendations are as follow to ease the transition from year to year for the ESS elections.

1. Could the ESS out-going ensure that yearly reports, suggestions for the next council etc... are left with Elspeth Morgan for next year's incoming council
2. Advertising of the ESS council, descriptions of the positions on the ESS council, and the ESS constitution should be included into all incoming ESS students orientation package before they arrive on campus
3. Amendments need to be made to the ESS constitution if all positions are to be filled before ESS students leave for placement ~ 30th of September of each year. The reality is there is never a nomination for all positions on the council. You will receive a few nominations for more of the "popular" positions, however, most of those students just want to be on the council and will want to take another position that would be acclaimed to them rather than having to be elected to that position. So most of the time is spent receiving nominations, contacting all the students who have submitted nominations on time and seeing if they would like another position on council, then acclaiming all the positions that have nominees that have submitted full nomination packages on time, then extending nominations for an extra week to fill positions not already acclaimed.

Therefore, my main recommendation is for the ESS council to streamline this process. Maybe allowing for nominees to select a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choice on their nomination form and stating that they would rather be acclaimed an open position rather than being elected to the position they wish.

SGPS general elections & referenda are scheduled to be held on March 1-2, 2012. Nominations are due to open February 1st and close February 13th. This will be an extended nomination period in when compared to those in the past, in hopes that all positions will have nominees and campaigning can begin before Reading week of 2012. If needed, nominations can be extended an extra week thereby pushing the election dates to March 6-7th in accordance with SGPS bylaw 10.1f. I would recommend in that in the future this bylaw is amended to "The annual SGPS elections and referenda shall occur not later than the second week of March". It is my opinion that this bylaw is too rigid. Because of the hard deadline of the first week of March and the fact that nomination periods frequently need to be extended, this causes the majority of the "campaign period" to fall during the reading week. This issue should be addressed by future councillors and executive of the SGPS.

Respectfully Submitted,

J. Mikhail Kellawan
SGPS Chief Returning Officer