

It was a relatively quiet month given the winter break and closures at the University. The executive had the opportunity to meet with the Provost, Alan Harrison and the Dean of Student Affairs, Ann Tierney to have an informal discussion on how to better address the concerns of SGPS members.

I had the opportunity to meet with Advancement to discuss what fundraising initiatives are being taken specifically for graduate and professional students. There will be more meetings in the near future and I am hoping that new funding opportunities for students will come into fruition.

The month of January looks to be incredibly busy. I will be meeting with the AMS to discuss when the shared services agreement will be honoured.

Student Life Centre

Finally after over two years of working with the University and the AMS, I am delighted to tell you that we will have two new retailers coming into the Queen's Centre. A grocery retailer and a pharmacy will be opening sometime in the Spring of 2012 in the empty retail spaces across from the food court on the main floor. We will be working with these retailers to provide services to our members. If you have any suggestions to bring forward, please feel free to email me. Finally, these two services will be looking to hire students. The SGPS will try to post the information as soon as it is available.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our VP Professional, Mark Noble who unfortunately will be unable to continue in his role and has formally stepped down from the position. Mark's dedication and commitment during his term was commendable and we wish him all the best in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Jillian Burford-Grinnell
President, SGPS
president@sgps.ca



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the VP Graduate
January 2012

Greetings!

I hope that you all have had a wonderful Christmas and New Year's!

FREE Queen's 2012

This is a repeat announcement. In December, the FREE Queen's 2012 Steering Committee met to discuss the workshop proposals that had been submitted by graduate students from various faculties and departments. The Committee is excited for the opportunity to bring the expertise and knowledge of Queen's students to the wider Kingston community. Stay tuned for an announcement within the coming weeks with regards to the exciting and diverse FREE Queen's 2012 workshop offerings!

Pre-Authorized Payment Plan (PPL)

This is a repeat announcement. Over the course of the last few months, questions have been brought forward with regards to the PPL. A couple of meetings with Andrew Ness (Associate Registrar at the Office of the University Registrar) have resulted in a Q & A that was published in the last SGPS newsletter (Issue 96). Please ensure to distribute the FAQ widely within your departments. If you (or anyone within your respective departments/faculties) have any further questions about the PPL, please email them to me at vp@sgps.ca.

Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

On Monday, January 16th, 2012 the CTL will be celebrating proudly its 20th anniversary. The day will be marked with an open house starting at 10:30 a.m., followed by a Brown Bag Conversation with Principal Woolf from 12:00-1:00 p.m. The celebration will conclude by 2:30 p.m. after the cake cutting ceremony, 'Envisioning the Future' activity, and door prize draws. The CTL would like to invite staff and students alike to celebrate this momentous occasion. Please stay tuned for an email with information about the event. When you receive this email, kindly distribute the information widely among your respective faculties/departments. Please do your part to help make this event a huge success!

Student Advisor Program

On November 15th, the Student Advisors brought to SGPS members a workshop titled *Understanding the Student-Supervisor Relationship*. The next Student Advisor workshop on creating and maintaining positive Student-Supervisor relationships is tentatively scheduled for the evening of Tuesday, January 24th. Please stay tuned to the next SGPS newsletter for more information on this workshop. Please also forward the workshop information to SGPS members in your respective faculties/departments!

During the fall 2011 term, the School of Policy Studies (SPS) and the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) approved a Policy Pro Bono placement within the Student Advisor program. During the winter 2012 term, the Student Advisor program welcomes Alisha Kassam to the team, a Policy Pro Bono placement student from the SPS. We are excited to be working with Alisha to review departmental policies that impact SGPS members and to make amendment recommendations to departments for their consideration. The team may require your help with these and related initiatives (i.e., retrieving faculty/departamental policy documents and forwarding them to me), so please stay tuned!

Health, Counselling and Disability Services (HCDS)

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

This concludes my report to council. Wishing you all a wonderful start to the winter 2012 term!

Respectfully submitted,

Irene Karagiorgakis
VP Graduate
vpg@sgps.ca



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the VP Professional
January 2012

Hi All! I hope you are all returning relaxed and ready for another term.

As the office was closed over the holidays, there has not been a lot of activity from me.

Senate committee on non-academic discipline

I am sitting on a committee that is reviewing the non-academic discipline system at the school. We met on Dec. 21st, a meeting at which I found out that one of the proposed changes would see the independent SGPS non-academic system eliminated. I will be raising this issue for discussion at council and would like to hear how councilors feel about this proposal.

Council changes

Andrea (VP finance & services), Eric (Speaker), and I met in December to discuss potential changes to how we conduct council meetings in order to encourage more participation from councilors. Andrea and I will report on this meeting at council. If anyone has any other ideas, please feel free to contact us at anytime: vpp@sgps.ca, vpfs@sgps.ca, speaker@sgps.ca.

Respectfully submitted,

Cody Yorke, VP Professional
vpp@sgps.ca

Happy New Year, everyone.

Not a whole lot to report on at this juncture, seeing as the SGPS office closed shortly after our last Council meeting. Two main things to note:

SGS Meeting

Irene and I met with the Deans of the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) on December 19th. Dean Brouwer, who you will remember from a previous discussion had seconded a motion to eliminate the student seat at the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies (CAGS), asked that we meet to discuss what transpired. While Irene and I did our best to convey to the SGS Deans why it is important for students to have a vote in matters concerning graduate studies, our best efforts fell short of changing the Deans' minds in this matter. Dean Brouwer shared with us her hopes that graduate students will continue providing CAGS with their input by way of consultative roundtables. Though this compromise might work to include some students' voices in the process, the SGPS Executive feels nonetheless that one such process would only work in students' favor insofar as Deans would be willing to advocate students' positions to CAGS, without bias, after consulting with them.

National Day of Action – February 1st, 2012

The CCA Standing Committee was not able to find a suitable time to meet before the holidays to discuss organizing for the National Day of Action. However, I met with a group of students (undergraduate and graduate) and faculty members calling themselves Occupy Queen's to ask for their endorsement of the campaign, and they suggested collaborating to bring the Day of Action to Queen's on February 1st, as a symbolic demonstration of the impacts that the restructuring of universities has had on students and faculty members alike.

The University is Ours!

The edu-factory collective in collaboration with the University of Toronto are organizing a conference titled "The University is Ours! A conference of struggles within and beyond the neoliberal University" to chart the varied struggles against restructuring processes which have directly attacked and drastically affected public education. To pitch a submission, email universityisours@gmail.com by January 16th. Email Anne-Marie (vpcca@sgps.ca) for more information about the conference.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne-Marie Grondin (VP CCA)

Happy New Year!

This will be a slim report. With the holiday closure at the SGPS office, business was quite a bit slower than usual since the last Council meeting. Just the calm before the storm, as our council package indicates!

Hopefully all SGPS members noticed the first item in issue 96 of the SGPS e-newsletter, which is a follow-up to the International Tuition Award and pre-authorized payment plan issue that I brought forward during my oral report at last month's council meeting. You can find a link to the newsletter on the front page of the SGPS website www.sgps.ca. All council representatives should also be sure to forward the instructions to the members of their departments. Several more students have contacted the SGS to adjust their accounts, and it is not too late for international graduate students to do so. Please contact me if you have any questions.

On December 14th and 15th, I participated in the Mental Health First Aid Training course offered at Queen's through the Student Affairs Office. It is a useful course, particularly for guidance about responding to people who are contemplating death by suicide or who are experiencing a psychotic episode, both of which occur rarely enough that they can be unsettling. However, I do have some concerns that the mental health literacy component of the course may actually contribute to stigma rather than reduce it, despite the fact that stigma reduction is both the presenters' intention and one stated purpose of the program:

<http://www.queensu.ca/studentaffairs/events/mentalhealthfirstaid.html>. I will prepare a brief about the course for SGPS executive, staff, and appointees of council to assist in future decisions about the value and viability of this particular training for various SGPS positions.

The Arts & Science Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) is forwarding my recommendation to Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) to recognize that the depressing and poorly maintained conditions of some graduate student offices should be considered a health issue. I will keep you informed about the response from EHS. In the meantime, your office must meet quantifiable standards such as the Building Code, Fire Code, Electrical Code and the Occupational Health and Safety Act – including proper ventilation, temperature above 18 deg C and sufficient lighting. If you suspect your office is in violation of any of the above, please contact me.

Speaker Eric Rapos, Interim VPP Cody Yorke, and I met in late December to discuss how to make SGPS council meetings more accessible and inviting to Departmental Reps and members-at-large alike. In addition to the ideas that we will be implementing, we hope that you will come forward with any recommendations you have for making our meetings work for you. Please contact any or all of us at speaker@sgps.ca, vpp@sgps.ca, and vpfs@sgps.ca.

See you in 2012.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Phillipson, VP Finance and Services
vpfs@sgps.ca



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Speaker
January 2012

Happy New Year Council!

Not too much to report this month, the entirety of my free time, well not all of it, but a lot, has went into preparing the bylaw and policy motions that are on the agenda for this meeting.

Bylaw and Policy Updates

Not too much to add to this section other than that I would like to thank all of those who have contributed to the work that has went into these proposed changes. I could not have done this all on my own.

I hope that we as a Council can move through the changes efficiently and accomplish what we set out to do with not too much difficulty. I do ask that you all bear with me during the changes, as things are bound to get procedurally difficult, so I will make sure that everything progresses correctly, even if it means going into an amendment to an amendment.

Also, as I have stated before, there will be another round of Bylaw and Policy updates occurring in March/April, that will include the updated HR Policy that the HR Committee is drafting, as well as a few other changes that we were unable to include in this round, but it should be nice and simple.

Council Questions

I would just like to remind everyone that if there is ever anything regarding Council that you are unsure of, or would like to know more about, that you can ask me anything. It is part of my job to help Council function, and that includes making sure all members of Council are adequately prepared to serve on Council.

So as always, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via email at speaker@sgps.ca.

Respectfully submitted,
Eric Rapos
SGPS Speaker

I wish everyone back from the winter break. I have only a couple items to report on as neither Senate nor most of the subcommittees I attend met since last Council.

Graduate Students on Arts & Science Faculty Board

Our efforts to support undergraduate and faculty members on the Arts and Science Faculty Board petitioning for the reinstatement of 2013 registration in the Bachelor of Fine Arts program were well received by several members of the board. We may have the chance over the coming months to work with members of the board towards creating seats for graduate student representatives on this body. Currently, graduate students do not sit on most faculty boards since they technically belong to the Faculty of the School of Graduate Studies. However, a large number of graduate students teach and research in units directly connected to the Arts and Science FB (not Facebook). It would make sense to have a voice on this body, continuing to create opportunities for graduate-student participation in formal dialogues on campus where relevant to these members.

Advisory Research Committee

Irene Karagiorgakis and I attended this Senate subcommittee's December meeting and participated in the review process for research centres, groups, and institutions. All research entities reviewed at the meeting were recommended for continued status as either centres, groups, or institutions (a full list of these entities is available online <http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/centres.html>).

Some concerns raised last year were noted again: issues with ambiguous distinctions between the three different kinds of research entities, for instance, and inconsistent reporting practices during the review process. A disappointing theme that emerged from the reports this time around was the uncertainty of public funding for a large number of the research entities, which require funds for assisting research, subsidizing travel expenditures, covering administrative costs, and funding conferences and/or publications. Several reports mentioned that research boards were investigating or already undertaking funding campaigns in attempts to mitigate shrinking support from various levels of government. Some of the plans sounded promising, if not financially so at least in general directions toward broadening public awareness about research going on at the school. However, it was also disheartening to see several groups with commendable records of achievement anticipating uncertain futures.

Respectfully submitted,
Daniel Moore



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Social Commissioner
January 2012

Hello All,

Welcome back everyone! We hope you have all had a great holiday and a happy new year. The social team is very excited to inform our fellow SGPS members of all the great events that we'll be hosting this year, starting with this month. Our events range from a variety of purely social, athletic and healthy living events. We hope to see everyone come out and interact with the diverse community that is our SGPS members.

Boiler Room Climbing Gym (HLI)

As part of our continued commitment to promote healthy and active living (HLI), the SGPS social team would like to invite you to join us for an invigorating evening of indoor rock climbing at the Boiler Room. The Boiler Room has walls of varying difficulty, thus making it very accessible for avid rock climbers and anyone who is looking to try something new and exciting. Climbing is a highly interactive, social and physical activity that gives you a chance to challenge yourself in many ways. Physical strength plays a part, but climbing also improves your flexibility and helps you hone your strategy and problem solving skills. Beginners are always welcomed and basic instruction are provided free of charge. Additionally, the SGPS will be providing transportation from the JDUC to the Boiler Room and back. You can register at the SGPS office (JDUC 021) and the SGPS website <http://www.sgps.ca/events/social.html> (starting from Monday, January 9th).

Date: Saturday, January 21st

Place: Boiler Room (meet at the JDUC Union entrance)

Time: 4:30-7:00 pm

Price: \$ 8 (actual cost is \$15/person, the SGPS is subsidizing the difference & cabs from JDUC)

N.B. Registration is required for this event (registration will be limited to first come first serve basis due to us having to book the venue in advance)

2012 Welcome Back Party!!!

It's 2012, and what a better way to kick the year off than a beginning of the year party. It's mix of a belated 2012 new years and a welcome back party. This event provides an excellent opportunity to get together and catch up, seeing how the holiday season had us go our separate ways for a while. Given we're returning to our research, TAing and numerous other responsibilities, you'd enjoy a great night with friends.

Date: Friday, January 27st

Place: Tentative (Grad Club or Grizzly Grill; check out sgps newsletter on the 16th and the sgps facebook page for more details)

Time: 8:00 pm

SGPS SKI/Snowboarding Trip

The SGPS is excited to inform you about our upcoming trip to the Calabogie Peaks Resort. This event is guaranteed to be a great time whether you're an avid skier/snowboarder or looking to try something exhilarating and fun. The Calabogie Peaks Resort has a wide variety of runs, ranging from advanced black diamonds to novice blue and green runs. So come out and carve some powder with your fellow SGPS members. Additionally, you can rent some equipment for a discounted price (\$22) if your equipment is not readily available. Sign up for this event will begin on the 10th of January. Visit SGPS website (link below) or the office (JDUC 021) to sign up for this great event before we hit capacity. For more information please contact us at logistics@sgps.ca.

Cost: \$60/person

Package includes: Transportation, a day pass to the slopes and lunch.

Time: Saturday February 4th (**note this is a tentative date, due to weather conditions, and will be confirmed approximately 2-3 weeks before the event**)

Bus leaves the JDUC at 8 A.M. and returns at approximately 8 P.M.
Meet outside the JDUC (Union & University)

Lastly, the social team would love to hear your feedback regarding the types of events we're running and ways we can make them more appealing to our SGPS members. If you have any general inquiries or feedback don't hesitate to contact us at social@sgps.ca.

Respectfully Submitted,

Abdullahi Abunafeesa
Social Commissioner
(social@sgps.ca)

SGPS Computer Network

- The computer that serves the SGPS website is showing initial signs of failure. I will need to replace the current system sooner than expected with a newer system. This has the potential of causing some website downtime. I am hopefully to keep any downtime to a minimum.
- Discussion continues with the Exec regarding off-site backups.
 - Automated off-site backups for the wiki server are ready.
 - Automated off-site backups for the mail server are ready.
 - I am finalizing the code for automated off-site backups for the calendar server.
- The SGPS would benefit from a mail/wiki/calendar server operating system upgrade. I will begin the process of calculating costs and discussing with the Exec.
- I completed necessary updates to wireless access points at the office.
- I am working to integrate workstation maintenance into server processes. This would allow me to ensure all workstations have the software and updates they need.

SGPS Website

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

Communications

- I continue to work with Queen's IT to work out kinks with mailing list services. I am making plans to ensure all mailing lists are kept up-to-date.
- I am working with the Office of the University Registrar (OUR) to improve communications between SGPS members and the OUR.
- I continue working on the 2012-2013 version of the SGPS Handbook (dayplanner). Please send any comments or suggestions.
- **The 100th edition of the SGPS E-Newsletter approaches.** I am looking to do something special for the release of version 100. I would love to hear any ideas you have.
- I am working on a social media policy, which is to be submitted to Council for consideration (to be added to SGPS Bylaws and Policies). I hope to have this policy ready in the next couple of months.

Respectfully submitted,
Sean Richards - info@sgps.ca

Hello SGPS Members,

We hope that you had a wonderful break and are refreshed for the new semester.

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

- The Senate Educational Equity Committee (SEEC) met in December and have been working on recommendations for Senate regarding an appeal for an undergraduate student. The recommendations were completed over the break and are ready for Senate in January.
- The Accent Discrimination project is continuing with our RA compiling and preparing to send a new GREB application so data can begin to be collected.
- Aliya continues to represent our team on the Positive Space Committee.
- Aliya was actively involved in the planning and execution of the National Day of Remembrance & Action on Violence against Women held on December 6.
- Elizabeth has been working with the Sustainability Coordinator on the Equitable Purchasing section of the by-laws. A list of recommendations from the meeting of the standing committee and the meeting with Sustainability has been compiled and sent to the By-Law Review committee.
- Elizabeth has also been working with Andrew Stevens to develop an equity statement for SGPS. The work will continue into the new year.

We are continuing to work on the following;

- Elizabeth will continue to meet with Health Counseling and Disability (HCDS) to discuss initiatives that could see SGPS providing assistance for graduate students with accessibility needs.
- Aliya continues to work with the committee for graduate students with disabilities.
- Equity Standing Committee will meet in the near future to discuss issues around equity at Queen's
- Anti-Oppression training is being planned for employees and appointees to council who were unable to attend training in August.
- Aliya will be representing Equity on the Queen's Community of Black Intellectuals Committee.

We look forward to continuing to serve you,

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

Aliya Kassam
Equity Coordinator (equityco@sgps.ca)

Dear SGPS Council Members,

First may I offer you all greetings for a very happy 2012; I look forward to what the year will bring!

This report outlines what the International Team has worked on in last month.

- The International Affairs Committee met once in December to discuss, most particularly, UHIP and the development of a plan to lobby the government for provincial health insurance for international students in Ontario;
- The Commissioner met with Susan Anderson, QUIC's Associate Director, to discuss the graduate orientation event to take place on January 6 as well as whether health care information provided to international students at the beginning of term could be written out in a more specific way. This is indeed something that could be brought up with Steacy Tibbutt at QUIC;
- During the holiday, the International Team purchased many pairs of ice skates which will be available for members to borrow through the SGPS office during the winter season;
- Attended the graduate student reception and orientation on January 6;
- Have been involved in discussions about how the International Tuition Award is currently being distributed via SGS and the Registrar's Office, and have helped devised a plan for change;
- Invited the SGPS Commissioners to a meeting to discuss their projects and to share their successes and challenges;
- The Cultural Engagement Group is now a SGPS Club! Don't forget to attend on Mondays from 530-630pm at QUIC;
- Made contact with the Equity Team to organize a meeting to help devise SGPS' equity-related policies and bylaws;
- Participating in the Equity Team's Accent Discrimination Campaign;
- We continue to communicate upcoming sessions and events to international students via the SGPS Newsletter, SGPS Facebook Page and SGS Newsletter, so stay tuned.

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,

The SGPS International Team

Becky Pero
International Student Affairs Commissioner
international@sgps.ca

Holly McIndoe
International Student Affairs Coordinator
isc@sgps.ca

Happy New Years! There are several things to report:

Recyclemania

Recyclemania is a friendly 8-week long competition starting in the winter term among college and university recycling programs to see what school can collect the largest amount of recyclables. Last year Queen's did not place in the top 5 for any of the recycling categories. I believe as a school, Queen's could have done much better if there was more awareness of Recyclemania. I am proposing that with the help of The Journal we can promote the Recyclemania event to the student body and use it as a vehicle to reduce waste. I have a meeting with Daniel Weinschenker, business manager of The Journal, on Sunday January 8th to discuss promotion possibilities.

Review of Ethical Purchasing Policy

Elizabeth Amirault, SGPS equity commissioner, and I are reviewing *Ethical Purchasing Policies* document and together we are formulating recommendations. The recommendations will be presented to the Sustainability Committee for review and further development at the Sustainability Committee meeting on January 9th 2012.

SGPS Sustainability Committee – Term of Reference

Currently, I am developing Terms of References document for the SGPS Sustainability Committee as requested by the policy review committee. The Terms of Reference document will be presented to the SGPS Sustainability Committee at the January 9th 2012 meeting for recommendations.