



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the President
March 2009

Athletics and Recreation Student Fees

Since the failure of the proposed Athletics and Recreation fee increase at referendum, the SGPS Executive has been negotiating service agreements with Athletics to cover the various possible fee scenarios under a possible by-election.

Teaching Fellows Policy and Representation

At the February 26th Senate meeting, Vice-Principal (Academic) Patrick Deane stated that the SGPS would henceforth provide representation for Teaching Fellows on committees dealing with policies, pay and working conditions for Teaching Fellows. Details will be worked out this month.

Graduate Enrollment Equity

Given that programs to help recruit and retain students from underrepresented populations currently exist for undergraduate and professional students but not for graduate students, the Dean of Graduate Studies has agreed to begin analyzing enrollment trends in order to assess possible needs.

Responsible Investing Policy

The Board of Trustees will vote March 6th on a draft Responsible Investing Policy for Queen's. The policy would enable members of the Queen's community to petition for a committee to investigate accusations of social harm caused by firms in which Queen's has invested to determine whether or not action in the form of shareholder engagement via proxy votes or possible divestment is warranted.

TA Budgets

TA budgets are part of the 30% of the university's operating budget available for cuts, while the remaining 70% consists of faculty salaries and benefits. As a result, current discussions regarding budget cuts within Departments and Schools include potential cuts to TA budgets. Student representatives on Departmental, Faculty and Divisional committees are urged to inform and consult with their colleagues regarding proposed cuts.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Welsh
President



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Vice President Internal (Graduate)
March, 2009

SGPS Election & Referendum

Big thanks to all of the SGPS members who came out and vote; thanks for your support and giving me the opportunity to continue serving our members and Queen's at large. In addition, on behalf of the Queen's Day Care Centre, I would also like to thank our member for supporting the centre.

Student Advisors Program

Student advisors program continue to provide vital services to our members, particularly on helping the students dealing with issues on supervisor conflicts, authorship of papers and ownership of the data. We are currently working together with SGSR to map out more detailed mechanism (formal and informal) for the students and student advisors to follow should problems related to the above mentioned issues arise. Please encourage (and/or refer) the students in need in your department to our service. The office hours of the student advisors are Monday afternoon 2:30-5:30p.m. (or by appointment). The student advisors can be reached at studentadvisors@sgps.ca.

TA Consultative Committee

The focus of February meeting was the advantages of implementing mandatory TA assessment/ evaluation/ feedback policy for all departments. While constructive feedbacks from both the course coordinator and students will improve the teaching quality of the TAs, I have concerns about a few issues, most importantly: 1. who has access to the evaluations? Will it be beneficial for the TAs to see the raw data from the students? 2. Will negative evaluation jeopardize the student's future employment as a TA? Question number 1 will be addressed in future meetings, while I was assured that negative feedback(s) will not jeopardize the TA's future employment.

SGSR Council Meeting (February)

The council has approved a new collaborative program (at both MSc. And Ph.D. levels) in cancer research; the participated students will have the words "with specialization in Cancer Research" added to their transcript upon completion of the program. No official date has been set for the implementation of the program. Currently, there is no policy in place to deal with current students who are in the field of cancer research and wish to transfer into the program once it's implemented (the approved program is for incoming students only).

Senate Nominating Committee

The committee received 122 applications for 72 available positions for the senate committees this year. Of which, 20 graduate students applied for the 10 (+4*) graduate student positions. The nominating committee will meet shortly to discuss the nominations. Graduate students will be well represented in the senate committees this year! * 4 student seats, can be either undergraduate or graduate students

Respectively Submitted,

Joellen Lin
Vice President Internal (Graduate)

1. Employee Evaluations and Files: This month concluded the final employee evaluation process of employees of the SGPS. This involved meetings with brief questions about performance and transition plans. The purpose of this is to increase the quality of materials for transition of position. Also, this process will help serve to create more effective employee files which are more permanent.
2. Health and Dental Plan: This month we were also able to dedicate some time to a proposal from a new health and dental broker. This option will be compared to our current broker's service, and will also be compared with the proposal from an additional broker which will be taking place this coming week. We are looking forward to presenting the results and recommendations at the next meeting.
3. Fee Service Agreement for Athletics and Recreation: we have been working intensely on a fee service agreement with Athletics and Recreation, however it was unable at the time that our reports were required, so we are hoping to present the agreement at the Council meeting.
4. Bylaw and Policies: After a good deal of time and consultation, the bylaws have been changed to some extent. The changes mostly involve formatting changes to make the bylaws more accessible. Also, there have been some clarifications of positions in our bylaws to make responsibilities more clear. This will be presented in more depth at the council meeting, where we are hoping to have a first reading of the bylaws.
5. Transition information: To echo my last report, I would appreciate hearing from representatives from the School of Rehabilitation Therapy, School of Regional and Urban Planning, School of Policy Studies, and the Theological College.

Respectfully submitted,
Jamie Kneen



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the VP External
March 2009

CFS National Graduate Caucus AGM – Fredericton, NB

Attended the annual AGM of the National Graduate Caucus of the CFS. It was a productive meeting. We discussed some of the issues facing grad students at various campuses and the status of the national campaigns of the Caucus. Some of the campaigns discussed were: commercialization of research; whistleblower protection; post-residency fees; student/labour relations; and a response to the Federal budget's allocation of SSHRC monies to 'business-related degrees'. A letter was drafted at the meeting to be sent to the Minister of Finance calling upon him to revoke that clause and to re-invest in Canada's Universities.

CFS Task Force on Campus Racism

By the time Council meets, the Task Force will have held its hearing at Queen's. I will give a verbal run down at the meeting. I do want to note the large amount of excellent work our new Equity Commissioner, Usman Mushtaq, has done in helping organize and publicize the Task Force.

Rally for Quality @ Queen's

This event will also have transpired by the time Council meets. I will give a verbal update on how it went.

Copyright Movie Night

This event will also have transpired by the time Council meets. I will give a verbal update on how it went.

Solidarity Work

I have been participating in the organization of the Anti-Racism rally in Kingston, scheduled for March 4th. Also, the executive drafted a letter sent to the Minister of Finance (attached as appendix) in regards to the proposed changes to the SSHRC rules.

Green Bin

The city has released its plan for rolling out the Green Bin. Please visit this address for details about the program:

<http://www.cityofkingston.ca/residents/waste/greenbin/index.asp>.

Questions or complaints can be directed to me at vpex@sgps.ca.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Rosner
VP External



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Vice President Operations
March 2009

Greetings Councillors,

The Operations and Finance Standing Committee met on the last week of February to finalize restructuring of all SGPS financial programs. After reflecting executive members' input, they will be made available at the Annual General Meeting and all members of the SGPS will be given chance to make any suggestions before they are finalized for next year.

I and the Committee members are also in the process of lobbying university bodies for conference travel expenses funding and continued dental bursary program; negotiating reduced fees for our newest member population, Bachelor of Education students; and finally drafting service agreements with all organizations/bodies that SGPS financially partners in. These include and are not limited to the AMS, the Grad Club and the Athletics and Recreational Services. If time allows, I also hope to look into tightening financial policies regarding the current spring-summer sports league program and recreational athletic services in general.

The Grad Club is now looking for board members. Seeing that SGPS is the only student body who collects a membership fee for the Grad Club and that this amount is a substantial piece of the overall Grad Club operational budget, I strongly recommend that you consider participating in adjudicating of our membership's money by running for a board member.

This is my last report to you as your Vice President Operations. I wish to thank all of you for a good, productive and a rewarding year. Best of luck with all your future endeavours, and I wish a continued success of the Society.

Respectfully submitted,
Victoria J. Bae
Vice President Operations



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the International Student Standing
Committee
March 2009

International Graduate Students Career Workshops

All 5 workshops will have been offered by Career Services and International Centre (QUIC) by March 10th, 2009. We welcome all questions and comments about these workshops in order to help Career Services and QUIC establish a series of more systematic workshops in the future.

The committee itself

We are currently seeking for the chair and members of the committee for the next year (coming into effect the beginning of May, 09), anyone who's interested in working and fighting for a better environment for international graduate students at Queen's are welcome to join us, please email us at international@sgps.ca.

Respectfully submitted,

Miao Li (international@sgps.ca)
Chair, SGPS International Student Standing Committee



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

Hello Everyone,

I do not have too much to discuss however, I would like to update you on two social events in the past month. Firstly, our social mixer with the Law Student Society (LSS) and the medical students was a success. Spread the Love for HIV/Aids Prevention and Awareness raised over \$180.00 for Dignitas International, a humanitarian organization dedicated to providing antiretroviral treatment for HIV/AIDS patients in clinics in Malawi, Africa and other parts of the world. I would like to thank the members of the LSS, medical students and SGPS for their help and support.

Our SGPS ski trip organized through SEPP's took place on March 1st at Calabogie Peaks Resort. We had approximately 17 people attend the event; although we wish we had greater attendance the individuals that did go had a great trip!

The social team and I will be meeting next week to discuss the upcoming social events so please stay tuned for more details.

If you have any ideas of social activities that you would like to see organized though the SGPS, please e-mail me at social@sgps.ca.

Respectfully Submitted,

Diala Habib
Social Commissioner

SGPS Computer Network

- We are currently in the process of finalizing the 2 new servers. The process involves a number of technical issues related to security and testing. I am very pleased to report that the servers are more or less stable and ready to go. We have some final testing to finish before we are complete. It is my intention to ensure that the servers are 100% ready to go before we make the switch from the old hardware to the new hardware. The worst thing that could happen is premature migration, which could cause loss of e-mails and loss of other important data.

SGPS Website

- I have added a Front Desk section to our website, which is accessible by our Front Desk Staff. The purpose of this site is to give our FD staff a place of reference for the more common tasks they perform. This new section of the site will also help when transitioning new staff members to the job.
- I will be working to add the new FAQ section to the main SGPS site in the coming weeks. We will continue to improve this section as time moves on.

E-Newsletter

- I am considering the possibility of providing the E-Newsletter in podcast format. I would generate a radio-style news brief in podcast format. This would allow our members to listen to an E-Newsletter instead of reading it. My intent is to have a 3 – 4 minute podcast that would summarize the written E-Newsletter, which would be released 1 or 2 days after the written newsletter. I would love to hear your comments on this, including whether or not you think it is a good idea.

Communications

- I am in the process of making the dayplanner/agenda for the 2009/2010 academic year. If you would like to be involved in this process, please let me know.
- I will begin creating the Orientation Guide for 2009/2010 in the next while. If you would like to be involved in this process, please let me know.
- I am working with Queen's IT to prepare an online system for optional fee opt-outs. I hope we can work out the necessary details so this can be in place for September, 2009.

Respectfully submitted,
Sean Richards - info@sgps.ca

Introduction

- First year Master's student thrown into the deep end with not much time in the semester but looking forward to continue through next year

Ongoing Efforts

- Efforts within Queen's
 - Worked with Mark Rosner, VP External, on coordinating the Task Force on Campus Racism hearing at Queen's on Tuesday, March 3.
 - Co-sponsoring event with Queen's Native Student Association for Aboriginal Awareness Week (March 9-March 14)
 - Still working on details
 - Raising an Equity committee: there have been some responses so far from the student body but always looking for more
- Coordination with other groups/departments
 - Meeting with various people (in both official and informal roles) who deal with equity issues within Queen's (Human Rights Office, Equity Office, etc)
 - Striking up an Accessibility Focus Group to work with the AMS Accessibilities Group to data/experiences on accessibility on Queen's campus from a student perspective
 - Working with the AMS Social Issues Commissioner on an "Equity" scorecard for the university
- SGPS Equity Overview
 - Creation of an "official" Equity training program as part of the transition process for SGPS Executives
 - Looking into possible difficulties for international students to be hired into Executive positions

Future Efforts

- Always looking for more ideas/concerns
- Look forward to working on several Queen's committees dealing with Equity
- Possible projects:
 - Incident Reporting System
 - Central information clearinghouse on Queen's equity efforts
 - Working with city through "Equity" Working Group to deal with racism in Kingston