

In my coming into the current capacity as the President, I aimed at realizing a single broad idea: to make the SGPS a stronger and a more effective Society. I endeavoured to achieve this goal by breaking it down largely into internal and external components, although many of the tasks cross this line at various points. I monitored the operation of current services; sought ideas for new services that our members may benefit from; strengthened the ties between various constituencies within the SGPS; reviewed the infrastructure of the SGPS and revamped the governance where needed; built bridges with various bodies within the University; wrapped up the projects initiated by my predecessors; and worked on branding the SGPS better within and outside of Queen's. Before I report on the progress and outcomes on these initiatives, I must begin by thanking the Executive as well as the Council for the tremendous work you have done in serving the SGPS this year.

SGPS SPECIFIC

Executive

Despite the fact that two of five members joined the Executive late, this year's Executive has been a great team. We have accomplished many projects that we aimed at achieving this year in addition to handling issues that came up unexpectedly along the way. It is also important to note that the Executive did not always conform to a single opinion, yet we were able to work on resolving our differences in respectful and constructive manner. Perhaps this had been the very key to the successful functioning of the Executive this year.

Council

This year's Council has been the best of my past 3 years with the SGPS. Not only were we strong in numbers, but also the diversity of issues the Council has undertaken and the support it has given to the Executive and the SGPS as a whole have simply been phenomenal. I would like to thank all Councillors for your participation this year and wish to ask all to continue your excellent work.

Infrastructure

In this meeting, we will be passing (or turning down) the second reading of Bylaws. Revision included some detail changes, but the main issue was to do with personnel and staffing. More information on the rationale behind the contracts and on the actual contracts are to follow. It is my understanding that VP Finance and Services Amir Nosrat, along with the Finance Standing Committee, has submitted recommendations for compensation schemes. I have reviewed these myself, and I feel that these are adequate changes that are much needed for the SGPS to recruit top candidates for all positions and to appropriately compensate those who serve the SGPS. I am hopeful that I will be able to submit changes and additions to our HR policies by the April Council meeting.

Archiving

Thanks to Sean Richards (who wore many hats this year – Executive Director, Invigilator, Communications Commissioner, IT Guru, loving father two times, institutional memory and more – and successfully served all these roles), archiving of crucial documents have become effective. I hope the incoming Executive finds the web archiving method as useful as the current Executive did and will continue to make a good use of it going forward.

Elections and Referendum

This year was exceptional in yet another respect – all positions have been run for and elected by the annual general election. The review of questions for referendum has also been one of most effective I have seen over the years – props to the wonderful Finance Standing Committee!

The participation rate for election and referendum has been higher than usual this year. There has been insufficient communication and the election was held in the usual time, which was late February and resulted in our newest members, the Education Student Society, being unable to vote. I am hopeful that by next year, the SGPS will employ online voting which will make the voting process easier and accessible to all.

Putting the ‘P’ back into the SGPS

The participation by professional students this year has been outstanding. Students from professional graduate programs, law and education were active at Council, in events, in committees and various other levels. It was also great to hear from such a diversity of members throughout the year on issues that traditionally did not reach the SGPS as well. I look forward to the continued effort by the SGPS and professional students for better links within the Society.

Graduate and Professional Student Space

Upper floor of John Deutsch University Centre will now be converted back to graduate residence. This is the outcome of years of endeavours by our predecessors and a significant step forward for us graduate and professional kind. I also found over the last few years, the University started to pay more attention to the graduate and professional student housing needs. Along with housing authority, I hope these changes will result in increased housing options and more convenient housing processes for our membership.

Spearheaded by Graduate Senator Andrew Stevens, the SGPS has been requesting information on the usage of the Reaching Higher Capital Fund. Once this information becomes available to us, we will be able to determine how best we can approach the Administration in order to maximize graduate and professional student space on campus. A promising side to this issue is that many members of the Administration are tuned to our space needs and quite a few actually strongly believe in establishing the graduate and professional college/hub, a la Green College of UBC or Massey College of U of T. This is an exciting prospect for all of us and one we must practice perseverance on.

Queen's Centre capital fee

For the first time, the request for Queen's Centre capital contribution has reached the SGPS members at the annual referendum. After the heated debates and information dissemination, I am confident that the outcome of this referendum reflects informed decisions by our members. All related documents must be carefully archived and actively utilized when a similar situation arises in the future.

UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS & EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Administration

Starting with the Principal, Queen's has seen a big turnaround in the administration. This is a positive change for the SGPS in the sense that many players on both the SGPS and Administration sides are not subjected to the biases or prejudices from historical events.

The cordiality and professionalism the current Executive have employed in working with the Administration and that the Council showed the Principal Woolf, Vice Principal (Finance and Administration) Caroline Davis and Dean (School of Graduate Studies) Janice Deakin in the February Council meeting have been deeply appreciated by the Administration across the Board. The current Executive is leaving the SGPS in a good shape in terms of its relationship with the University.

It is crucial that the SGPS stand its grounds. At the same time, it is equally crucial that the SGPS maintains a positive working relationship with the University and Administration in order to advocate for our members. The best way to achieve this goal is for both parties to retain professional and respectful manner. I therefore strongly recommend the incoming Executive to begin your terms by allying with the Administration in pursuing the universal goals while addressing disagreements in ways that are not disagreeable themselves.

Senate

The Senate Operational Review Committee (SORC) continues to review the composition of Senate. Thanks to the diligent work put in by previous President Welsh and our current Graduate Senator Stevens, we have a significant increase in graduate seats at the Senate. The issue of Education Student Senator is an ongoing discussion mainly between the Education Student Society of the SGPS and the Concurrent Education Student Society of the AMS. Hopefully a resolution will be reached soon and appropriate changes will be submitted to Senate via SORC.

Board of Trustees

Similar to the composition review of Senate, there is an ongoing discussion regarding the composition of the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is where all financial decisions are finalized. The review of Board of Trustees composition is therefore an important issue to all students at Queen's. I ask all Executive and Council to keep a sharp eye on this project and advocate for graduate and professional student input via the SGPS Trustee.

University Planning Committee

This is a steering committee proposed by the Principal to serve as the bridge between Senate and the Board of Trustees, the ultimate powerhouses of the University. In short, it is mandated to serve as an advisory body, but given the composition, it is inevitable that it will have a significant voice. Throughout the year, the proposal has been reviewed and revised between the two bodies. What I found alarming was that this Committee was shaping up to be a group of 20 or more members, which in effect defeats its primary goal of serving as a steering and advisory committee. The second issue was that even given the vast size of this group, student input was quite minimal. I objected to the Senate and Board of Trustees reasoning that they must minimize the expansion of this body and that sacrifice was not coming from anywhere except from student body. In the most recent meeting of the Board of Trustees, I voiced these concerns and went on further to suggest that it either increase further in size by including many student representatives, or downsize it to a group of 6-8 people by making a cut in numbers across the board including administration and faculty. I recently heard back that the Principal and other personnel have decided to take my second suggestion and forward it to appropriate meetings. This body is expected to be established and be running by fall 2010. I ask that the SGPS Trustee and Senators report back on the progress of this Committee.

Coke Exclusivity

The 10-year exclusivity contract with Coca Cola has now ended. However, there will be the two-year grace period for Coca Cola to reach the profit mark as it has been negotiated with the University in the original agreement. This means that we must keep vigilant and monitor the issue closely two years from now, given that both the SGPS Council and AMS Assembly passed motions opposing further business transaction with Coca Cola in recent years. It will be the financially attractive choice for the University to resign with Coca Cola, but doing so will be directly dishonouring the students' decision. It is therefore crucial that students as a whole stand by our decision and encourage the University to make a wise one.

Childcare

This is one issue that I wished to work on when I was elected, but was not able to. I must admit that the apathy from the University has been disappointing. Among other things, the Queen's Daycare Board met very infrequently and with the new legislation to be implemented by fall, no one was pursuing the issue doggedly. The importance of childcare cannot be emphasized enough for all members of the community and I ask that this issue be pursued again shortly after the implementation of this new legislation.

This report summarizes the major tasks/issues I have wrestled with as the Vice President Graduate since I undertook the position in October 2009. It also takes into consideration the work of my predecessor, Joellin Lin, from April 2009 until October.

Student Advisors Program:

VP Graduate Joellin Lin conducted annual performance evaluations of the student advisors in April/May 2009. All three student advisors, Paul Quick, Patrick Egbunonu and Lisa Binkley, received positive reviews from the student clients and Queen's staff who had worked with them for the past year. Lisa Binkley successfully completed the re-hiring interview. Paul Quick and Patrick Egbunonu stepped down in the Summer of 2009. In August, VP Graduate Joellin Lin struck a Student Advisor Hiring Committee which received 16 applications and conducted 8 interviews. Two outstanding candidates, Usman Mushtaq and Sylvia Bawa were hired to join the SA program. In November 2009 both Mushtaq and Bawa successfully completed Conflict Resolution Training. The incoming VP Graduate will need to begin the annual performance evaluations next month.

Student Advisor Website

In November a student advisor website was created (<http://www.sgps.ca/advisors/>) which included pertinent university policies, advisor policies and documents. The website also hosts old student advisor term and year end reports, scrubbed of all personal data.

Recommendations:

1. On several occasions the Equity Office and the Student Advisors met to ensure that their bodies worked more closely together. There is still significant work to bring these two important offices in alignment.
2. SA Usman Mushtaq diligently combed past SA reports dating back as far as 2004 to identify some of the reoccurring issues/recommendations of previous SAs including increased support for international students, increased TA/TF/RA protection, access to funding beyond eligibility years, suggestions regarding the academic appeal process, intellectual property, training on supervision for faculty and extending eligibility of the Dean's award. Mushtaq's report can be found in the December 2009 Appendix to council. Mushtaq also produced an internal report recommending ways that the SA program can be strengthened within the SGPS. The internal report will be made available to the incoming VP Graduate Daniel Moore.
3. Work is still necessary to more broadly advertise and promote the Student Advisor program to our membership. One suggestion would be to have Student Advisors play a larger role alongside the Centre for Teaching of Learning in providing an information session during TA/TF training for graduates.

4. In consultation with the Student Advisors it has been recommended that future Student Advisors hired divide duties that go beyond their advisory capacity. For example, one student advisor could be in charge of advertisement and promotion. Another could be charged with attending and speaking to council each month. Another could be the official liaison with SGPS organizations and other student bodies that deal with issues of equity and accessibility.

TA Consultative Committee:

For almost 8 months in 2009 the TA Consultative Committee was inactive. As the body charged with ensuring (but not enforcing) that the Senate policy on TAs is followed within departments, this inactivity has not bode well for improving the significant problems TAs face at Queens. While certain members of the committee, especially the AMS/SGPS, Dispute Resolution and Centre of Teaching and Learning representatives are concerned about the inadequate TA/TF contracts in many departments, the important but haphazard training of TAs/TFs and the many grievances of graduate student workers, this committee as former chair Janice Deacon admitted is "ill equipped to assure adherence to the [TA] Policy." TA Consultative Committee recommendations to the departments are a weak substitute for a body that could more effectively enforce the senate policy. In the absence of a union, the future VP Graduate will need to work with allies within the TA Consultative Committee to try to find ways to strengthen this body's ability to deal with TA issues effectively and promptly.

TA/TF Issues:

Teaching Assistants: There is still a lack of standard practices in TA hiring and contracts. Although departments are supposed to have a written contract with all students, some departments still don't do that. Other times, the contracts are non-standardized so a TA might get a year-long contract for a course that the TA only wants to teach for the term. Incredibly, many TA contracts are unclear about key issues such as resignation, overtime, and workload. In cases of ambiguity, TA issues are referred to the department head or graduate coordinator who don't always have the interests of the student in mind. Even if all parties sit down wanting to resolve TA conflicts, there are clear power imbalances between an unsupported student and a faculty/admin member, thus affecting the outcome of the conflict. As it stands, all departments are supposed to submit to the Centre of Teaching and Learning a TA Training and Development Annual Activity report. Unfortunately only a few departments comply with this request. The TA Consultative Committee is amendable to the idea that these reports be submitted to the AMS and the SGPS. That way, student bodies can publicize departments that fail to either submit the report, or provide adequate training to teaching assistants.

Teaching Fellows: There is a Senate policy for Teaching Assistants but there is currently no policy for Teaching Fellows. Without a TF policy, there are no mechanisms to ensure that TFs are allocated fairly, have clearly defined contracts including hours of work and responsibilities and have an effective grievance procedure. In my tenure as VP Graduate I've been compiling TF contracts from UofT, York, McMaster and other universities to present to the VP Academic so a working committee can be struck to develop a TF policy to present to senate. I'll be passing this information on to the incoming VP Graduate. A strong TF policy might enable us to reopen the existing TA policy and address its considerable weaknesses.

Recommendations: Given the inability to enforce the TA Policy and the lack of a TF policy the SGPS should support and push strongly for a TA/TF Union. Only a third party will be able to effectively improve TA/TF contracts and handle disputes. A union would also enable the SGPS to free its resources to advocate for its membership on non-TA/TF issues (including issues more directly related to professional students) and work more cordially alongside the Queen's administration. In the absence of a union, the SGPS should push to have the TA Consultative Committee charged with enforcing the existing TA policy and should work with the VP Academic to create a TF policy.

Workplace Code of Conduct:

While Queens has policies surrounding conduct, discrimination/harassment and inappropriate behavior it would be useful for departments to develop their own policies tailored to their specific needs/issues. Such policies would allow students/faculty to engage in a dialogue surrounding areas that need improvement, enable students to write a code in their own language and would provide for all graduate students in a given department to sign off on a code of conduct so that everyone is aware of a common, open and non-discriminatory culture. Usman Mushtaq recently forwarded to the SGPS a code of conduct created by the Civil Engineering department under consultation with the Human Rights Office. Please look over this policy (Appendix A) and consider encouraging your own department to do the same.

Authorship Policy:

The authorship policy at Queen's is vague and graduate students have often been treated unfairly when it comes to being listed as author on their own publications. Often times, supervisors will list themselves as first author or will impose unjust rules about authorship on students. This is especially worrisome for international students who aren't aware of their rights as far as authorship. The faculty member (as a supervisor and as a member of the field) holds expert knowledge and social power over their students. This makes any discussions on authorship biased towards the faculty member. The SGS needs to create clearer policy around authorship that recognizes that students may not be able to discuss authorship with their supervisor on an equal level. Outgoing VP Academic Patrick Deane has agreed with the need of an independent referee and/or committee to deal with problems/disparities with supervisors/faculty claiming authorship of graduate student work, beyond the current final arbiter of the VP Research. The new SGPS Executive should work closely with Patrick Deane and his successor Rod Morrison to ensure that once the VP Research post is vacated that a new method to deal with contested authorship issues is instituted. I would recommend that the SGPS push to have a committee struck under the VP Research, that includes a faculty member from both the Arts/Humanities and Sciences to adjudicate contested authorship complaints.

International Tuition Awards:

At the 7th December GSEC meeting the changes to the ITAs (International Tuition Awards) was approved and will be implemented in the fall of 2010. As a result, ITAs will not be a mandatory award for all international masters students. The SGPS has been unable to take a definitive position on the issue. I'm concerned about how this change might affect the ability of Queens to accept international graduate students of lower

economic status. The future executive should closely monitor this change and ascertain how it is affecting its membership.

Conference Travel Funding:

This year the SGS offloaded the administration of conference travel funding to the departments. There have been several complaints from students that they have been unable to access conference funding as a result of this shift. The future executive should approach the SGS in the spring to gain statistics on how well, and under what criteria the conference travel funding has been expended in each department for the fiscal year. If complaints continue I would recommend to the future executive and the SGPS membership that they lobby the administration and propose that the SGPS take over and administer these awards.

Qspace:

This past year, a number of graduate students have raised concern over the Qspace publication of Phd. dissertations and Master's theses. Currently students can defer online publication of their work for up to two years so that they might publish their work in a journal(s) or as a monograph. David Rappaport of the SGS has stated that owing to the desire of graduate students to defer online publication, the SGS is considering extending the deferral time from 2 years to 5 years. Faculty members on GSEC are aware that this extension is necessary to protect the intellectual property of graduate students. The new executive will have to keep an eye on this issue and ensure that the extension is enacted.

Accessibility Training:

The government has mandated that all staff and faculty including TAs, TFs and RAs receive mandatory Accessibility Training or face possible institutional fines. The online training (which takes approximately 90 minutes to complete) will be mandatory as of the Fall of 2010 for all graduate students in order to work as TAs/TFs. Janice Deacon, Dean of Graduate Studies, is cognizant that since faculty and staff will complete the training as part of their paid work, graduate workers should also be paid for the Accessibility Training as part of their assigned hours. Approximately 150 of our membership have already accessed and completed the course at <http://www.queensu.ca/equity/content.php?page=CSOnlineTraining>. Since the decision to make the course part of paid TA/TF hours is pending, potential TAs/TFs **should NOT** take the course until September so that they can be paid for the accessibility training.

Grad Life Working Group (GLWG)

This year the Grad Life Working Group inaugurated a website (gradlife.queensu.ca) to consolidate services and supports for graduate students on campus.

Childcare: Despite procrastination from the Student Affairs office, members of the GLWG are interested in working with members of the SGPS to try to find ways to create more childcare options for members with dependents. The SGS is also looking into ways to provide a parental leave program for graduate students to be in line with other progressive universities. There is still a significant need for the SGPS to push for improved childcare services for its membership.

Academic Affairs Standing Committee (AASC):

The Academic Affairs Standing Committee was dormant upon my arrival in October. Despite my best efforts, and frequent callouts to our membership, I only had one member offer to join an AASC. I intend to work with the incoming VP Graduate to ensure that this body is awoken from its slumber to deal with key issues concerning our graduate membership, including the financial restructuring and TATF issues.

Unity Council:

Well before my time in the SGPS there was a Unity Council comprising of members of QUFA (Queens University Faculty Association), QUSA (Queens University Staff Association) and the SGPS. Preliminary discussions with the current QUFA president Cathy Christie suggests that the time is ripe to re-convene this body. At meetings with the senior administration I was often struck by the number of allies and common interests the SGPS has with staff and faculty. It would have been excellent if these allies were able to meet to discuss such issues as the Queen's Centre, the principal's vision statement, childcare and the financial restructuring prior to meeting with the senior administration. I strongly recommend that the future SGPS executive look into resurrecting the Unity Council.

Queen's Centre:

I feel no need to bludgeon this issue any more than it has been over the past several months. However, I feel it imperative to add that the Queen's Centre debacle affects our membership far more than the request that we contribute \$4.5 million. When the Queen's Centre was in its planning stages, Advancement promised to raise over \$100 million from outside donors and pledged that at no time would the debt accrued be passed off on to the Queen's operating budget. Advancement failed to raise any of their promised external money. This year the short-term debt of the Queen's Centre was offloaded on to the operating budget and is the primary culprit of our \$8.5 million deficit and the senior administration's need to cut academic programming on campus, affecting undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff alike, whether they've contributed to the bricks and mortar of the Queen's Centre or not. As more of the long term debt of the Queen's Centre is dumped on our operating budget, our deficits will only grow. I think that it is imperative that the future SGPS executive and council work alongside other constituents affected by the Queen's Centre debt to find practical ways of servicing this debt without diminishing the quality of education at Queen's. While there are many who would resist allowing Queen's credit rating and its endowments to carry the burden of the Queen's Centre debt I think it is high time we stop sheltering the university's financial reserves and protect our academic excellence instead.

Respectfully submitted,
David Thompson
VP Graduate

Will I Ever Graduate?

Well this will be my second to last report so I will attempt to be as brief as I can and save the eloquence (or lack there-of) for next month. Two more weeks of official duties before I can try to scramble a degree out of all this! Arghhhh.....

City of Kingston/Queen's Relations:

Well, that was interesting. The main issue on the agenda was of course the issue of safety for Queen's students who have to walk to and from campus to various parts of the city. We debated long and hard about whether or not this was an issue for City Parks ("...but technically the assaults took place on the streets bordering City Park and therefore it's not a City Parks issue."), and although each of the members of the Committee who had either gone to Queen's in the past or have lived in the city could all remember a "pervert park", none wanted to admit that this constituted an actual problem. As my successor has pointed out, putting up lights and throwing police at this issue will not address the real core of safety in this city, but I tried my best to direct our conversations and proposed a three stage plan for the City and the University to implement: a) investigate the main arteries of pedestrian flow to and from the University (where are people walking and what issues are present-lighting, safety, side-walks, snow removal, etc.); b) develop and propose immediate and long-term solutions (Blue Lights, street lights, policing, communication between Campus Security and City Police, etc.); and c) implement solutions.

Resistance came from the City which cited the need for a report from City Council (Stephanie Nairn and her local city councilor are working on this) to proceed and the danger of digging up the park to install more lights as it is a Heritage Park. And here I thought they put down a 24 inch pipe from one end to the other last year. Pipe dream indeed.

SGPS Campaigns:

As some of you may have seen, the AMS Sustainability Office was out to promote Bottled Water Free Day and members of the Water Access Group monitored the booth answering questions and distributing materials. The best material they could not distribute as it was CFS produced. Because petty politics is waaaaay more important than access to safe, public water. And the environment. And our health. Silly me.

Anyway, on a positive note, the *Blue Gold* movie screening was well attended as was the discussion led by Richard Girrard of the Polaris Institute the following evening. Our work now is to maintain the issue on the University's radar and get Principal Woolf to

sign something of value and hopefully work toward increasing accessibility and banning the sale before the new Beverage Exclusivity contract is agreed to in August.

CFS National General Meeting:

The AGM is coming up this May and I will attend with a few of the incoming Executive to familiarize them with the various committees and elements of CFS we are involved with. We will also introduce our motion to try and reverse the change to disassociation requirements.

Internal Affairs:

The office is lonely without our Executive Director and it turns out his parental leave isn't very "leave-ish" after all. Far too much work is still being put Sean's way which just furthers our desperate need for an Assistant Executive Director. I will speak to this at the AGM but will simply say here it is a long, long overdue requirement for the SGPS to move forward.

Transition is moving along smoothly and I would like to introduce you all to Anne-Marie Grondin who will represent you all with dignity and fierceness I am sure. She is not required to report until May but will join us at the AGM.

Respectfully, submitted,
Steve Osterberg

Critical Review of SGPS Finance and Services

I would like to ask that the membership accept my submitted report in March Council meeting as my yearlong review. Please note that I have made edits to the Grad Club portion of the report.

Housing Authority

The incorporation of the new Service Corporation that entails the Housing Authority is underway and will be finalized within the next few weeks. However, Council and the Membership are still deliberating on giving this new service corporation any teeth by loaning \$90,000. I would like to be very clear: the Housing Authority cannot live without this money. This motion is one of the four critical points of contact that Council controls over the project. The first two, which involved the incorporation of the Housing Authority and the ratification of the bylaws have been finalized. However, the 2 readings of the \$90,000 remain and must be deliberated on by Council and the membership as prudently as it has in the past year.

Council chose to table this motion until the AGM to clarify certain issues. I have identified four major concerns about the proposed motion from Councilors and have attempted to address them in this report:

1. *The term 'loan'*: There have been some concerns over the term 'loan'. We are currently being advised by our legal consultant, Nathaniel Erskine-Smith on the exact legal definition and will hopefully have him present his findings at the AGM. But in an attempt to clarify the intent behind this term, 'loan' was crafted into the motion in response to a recommendation by our accountants to have that 'attached string' to the money that the SGPS is giving to the Housing Authority. The term was left without any specified conditions in order to allow the Executive to work out the details of this money transfer. It is intended to build mechanisms such that the Housing Authority could slowly pay back the SGPS the \$90,000 assuming that the project provides additional revenue. But to be very straightforward, the term may very well be replaced with 'give', as Council will be separated by one degree over controlling this money. This is crucial in order to protect ourselves from any liabilities that may arise from such a venture.
2. *Council-Housing Authority Power Relations*: Council does not have any legal 'final say' over operational issues of the new corporation, yet it will have strong and effective oversight on the Corporation's decisions and actions. The Board reviews and ratifies policies, expenditures, and operations of the new Services Corporation. However, the Board cannot make any expenditures until the corporation's annual budget is ratified, alongside with any amendments, by Council and cannot make any changes to the budget exceeding \$1000 without Council's consent. This means that the Board cannot purchase any property unless such time that Council approves its budget. Furthermore, the Board is consisted of four SGPS Executive, the Equity Commissioner, and six members as appointed by Council. Therefore the Board can a) prevent unwanted

expenditures by blocking budget approval and b) change Board composition to reflect Council's stance on certain issues. As outlined in the Service Corporation bylaws, the role of the Board is to:

- a. Act as the Directors of the Corporation;
- b. Recognize and respond to the concerns of and take direction from Council and membership where reasonable;
- c. Promote the interests of the SGPS and its members;
- d. Represent the Corporation in dealing with external organizations, groups, and individuals;
- e. Uphold the policies of the Corporation;
- f. Generally oversee the operational budget and major expenditures budget of the Corporation;
- g. Generally oversee and evaluate all hired officers and staff of the Corporation;
- h. Serve as the deciding body on the purchase or sale of property;
- i. Develop and ratify policy as reasonably necessary for the businesses and services of the Corporation;
- j. Train the successors to their positions with the assistance of the CEO; and
- k. Provide direction to and oversight of all Committees established within the businesses and services of the Corporation.

Let us also not forget that Corporation's mission statement is to:

- Provide services to the SGPS and manage the associated financial affairs of the SGPS;
- To ensure the financial viability of the SGPS; and
- To assist the SGPS in carrying out its objects.

3. *For-profit vs. Not-for-profit*: Related to the above discussion, there seemed to be general confusion about for-profit vs. not-for-profit. This is legal jargon to deal with the Corporate Act of Ontario and does not take away from the fact that the new service corporation is to augment and build SGPS finance and services. Council has decided to go with not-for-profit in May. This model, under the law, is more suited to our purposes as it will be subject to far less tax regulations than a for-profit. Council could have had more control towards a for-profit corporation, but would have been subject to onerous and draining tax codes.
4. *The '\$90,000'*: A number of remarks were made about how the proponents of the Housing Authority had falsely presented a reserve of \$250,000 to initiate the project. However, I personally find it a bit unfair to be accused of falsely promoting this in order to garner support. I don't believe anybody ever made the claim that all of our \$250,000 of reserves would have been spent towards this project. There were concerns expressed by many, myself included, that we would be placing ourselves in a dangerously vulnerable position if we decided to spend all of this money towards the project. The \$90,000 proposition has been devised based on the recommendation of our Executive Director, Sean Richards, on a safe and reasonable amount that will not harm the financial security of the SGPS. This number is in fact a direct response to the criticisms posed towards the Housing Authority and a continuation of the pragmatism that has propelled this project forward. If there are concerns that this number is too low, I would recommend that we move to increase this amount to the full \$250,000 of our

reserves. However, lowering this amount would reduce the project's profitability and viability. As such, there should be a clear distinction between opposing the project altogether, which can be expressed in nay votes, and addressing the actual amount that the SGPS should invest in the project.

\$33.00 Fee Increase in SGPS Mandatory Fees

As I have mentioned in a number of reports over the past year, and as highlighted in the critical review of SGPS finance and services I made last month, we need to enhance our financial and operational capabilities. As such, I have decided after months of reflection and with the recommendation of the Finance and Services Standing Committee and the Executive that the following fees be altered as follows:

- Class C Mandatory Society Fee increased by \$30.00
- Class C Optional Dental Fee increased by \$3.00

Under the powers that Council has vested in the VP Finance and Services in P.1.2.5b, it states that:

1. Class "C" optional fees and class "C" mandatory fees can be increased by the VP Finance and Services by up to a cumulative maximum of 50% in any 3 year period without the requirement for a referendum.
2. Any increase in a class "C" optional fee or a class "C" mandatory fee must be reported to Council at Council meetings prior to and following the meeting of the Board of Trustees where student activity fees are approved

I am hereby upholding Council's policies and notifying Council prior to the Board of Trustee's next meeting in late April or May where said fees will be ratified. It is my understanding, and I stand to be corrected, that the last Society fee increase took place in 2003. The Society Fee increase was originally mentioned in response to the proposed compensation scheme and new Executive Assistant by the Finance and Services Standing Committee and Human Resources Special Committee. While these proposals are yet to be ratified, I have decided to take the initiative regardless as the SGPS needs to strengthen its finance and services and an increase is directly linked to enhancing our services in the future.

Finally, the \$3.00 dollar fee increase in the Dental plan is in response to the Dental Bursary's dwindling reserve. I have been unsuccessful in lobbying the administration in securing funding for this vital service and generally like to avoid remaining dependent on the administration for such crucial bursaries.

Final Thoughts and Goodbyes (I will not report in April as some may expect... I have a life to get on with)

I would like to mention my appreciation for everyone that I have come across during my time as VP Finance and Services. I recognize many familiar faces that I have shared many long hours of discussion and debate with, and who have made my experience as your Executive fulfilling and challenging at the same time. I apologize if I have not had the opportunity to know you personally as we humans are only capable of maintaining roughly 150 relationships at the same time, and I would hate to forget my rather large family. But rest be assured, I would have loved (and still do) to have a chance to speak with you as a human and an individual and not as 'another' Councillor. There have been many issues, many of them contentious, that we have all collectively tried to resolve and

have always listened to each other and worked together. I want you to know that I took none of these issues without thinking about all of the concerns that have been communicated to me, made no recommendation that I did not think would help the SGPS, and certainly did not take any decision lightly. I owe a great deal of thanks to the Finance and Services Committee who have been the true proponents and decision-makers of many initiatives coming from the Office of the Finance and Services, as well as the Executive who have spent unknown hours serving Council and the membership. Finally, I am indebted to the Councilors and department representatives who have directed the SGPS in the right direction and scrutinized my performance to make sure I didn't screw up and to Mark, our ever valiant speaker, who has facilitated these discussions.

I wish the next generations of Councilors and Executive the best of luck.

Respectfully submitted,
Amir Hossein Nosrat
VP Finance and Services

Budget Comparison - January 2010

	Budgeted	Spent	%
Schedule 1 - Communications			
Welcome Week Guide	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 0.00	0.00%
SGPS Handbook	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 0.00	0.00%
Advertising	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 2,604.79	65.12%
Schedule 2 - Council/Committees			
Council	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 1,032.40	41.30%
Charity	\$ 500.00	\$ 0.00	0.00%
Committees	\$ 500.00	\$ 31.81	6.36%
Schedule 3 - Internal Affairs			
Campaigns	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 631.96	12.64%
Elections	\$ 2,750.00	\$ 0.00	0.00%
Conferences	\$ 10,500.00	\$ 2,342.70	22.31%
Social	\$ 23,000.00	\$ 9,351.35	40.66%
Executive Internal	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 330.45	33.05%
Transition & Planning	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 0.00	0.00%
Promotional	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 449.55	22.48%
Equity	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 1,324.29	37.84%
Conflict Resolution Training	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	33.33%
Accounting	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 0.00	0.00%
Schedule 4 - Office & Other			
Copier	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 2,721.81	49.49%
Insurance	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 0.00	0.00%
Telephone	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 941.23	31.37%
General	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 5,275.23	75.36%
Professional Development	\$ 500.00	\$ 0.00	0.00%
Banking	\$ 300.00	\$ 113.07	37.69%
Schedule 5 - Stipends			
Executive	\$ 36,265.32	\$ 15,186.71	41.88%
Staff	\$ 19,290.00	\$ 6,666.80	34.56%
Honoraria	\$ 15,400.00	\$ 1,500.00	9.74%

Budget Comparison - January 2010

	Budgeted	Spent	%
Schedule 6 - Wages & Benefits			
Regular Employee	\$ 56,326.00	\$ 20,568.05	36.52%
Part-Time Employee	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 7,254.00	36.27%
EI & CPP	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,584.64	52.82%
Schedule 7 - Grants & Bursaries			
Club Funding	\$ 500.00	\$ 0.00	0.00%
Awards	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 0.00	0.00%
Emergency Student Fund	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 4,200.00	84.00%
Grants Program	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 6,361.00	79.51%
Dental Bursary		\$ 4,256.96	
Sports Fund		\$ 0.00	
Non-Schedule Items			
Contingency	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 2,671.85	66.80%
Total	\$ 264,331.32	\$ 98,400.65	37.23%
Percent of Total	100.00%	37.23%	

As part of a comprehensive succession plan, the Finance and Services Standing Committee, with the Human Resources Special Committee have revised the current SGPS compensation scheme to better meet both organizational and membership needs. The central features of the proposal include:

1. Salary Increases
 - a. The last salary increase was 2008/2009 (minor increase).
 - b. Qualified students may seek out other job opportunities because of the higher salary offered through a Teacher Assistantship, Research Assistantship, or other position with Queen's University
2. Removal of the *Honoraria*
 - a. Many graduate students rely on a monthly revenue stream in order to pay monthly bills, tuition, and other costs of living. Providing a student with a lump-sum payment at the end of the school year, in the form of an honorarium, does not assist in financing the student's monthly costs.
 - b. The current honorarium and salary, along with the salary increase, will be combined into an annual stipend paid to the student on a monthly basis.
3. New full-time position: *Executive Assistant*
 - a. The budgeted amount for the positions of Executive Director (ED) and Executive Assistant (EA) is \$94,000
 - b. The suggested break-down includes:
 - i. ED: \$63,000 EA: \$31,000
 - ii. ED: \$60,000 EA: \$34,000
 - c. Room for growth is necessary in that the position of *Executive Assistant* would develop over time. The Executive Assistant would take on a portion of the duties and responsibilities currently assigned to and performed by the Executive Director. This would allow the Executive Director time for other tasks.
 - d. In order to recruit and retain a qualified Executive Assistant, adequate compensation is necessary.
4. Student Fee Increase
 - a. The current student fee is \$60 and will be increased by 50% (\$30).
 - b. The new student fee will be **\$90.00**
 - c. 75% of the student fee increase will fund the new compensation scheme
 - d. 25% of the student fee increase will fund SGPS services
5. Other considerations:
 - a. Contract
 - b. Probationary Period
 - c. Mandatory training of new job incumbent

2010-2011 Wage Structure

	Current Salary	Current Honorarium	Proposed Annual Salary	Net Difference	Cost per Student
President	\$8,179.50	\$2,000.00	\$15,500.00	\$5,320.50	\$1.47
VP Graduate	\$6,672.75	\$1,600.00	\$12,000.00	\$3,727.25	\$1.03
VP Professional	\$6,672.75	\$1,600.00	\$12,000.00	\$3,727.25	\$1.03
VP CCA	\$6,672.75	\$1,600.00	\$12,000.00	\$3,727.25	\$1.03
VP FS	\$6,672.75	\$1,600.00	\$12,000.00	\$3,727.25	\$1.03
Executive Director & Executive Assistant (New Position)	\$45,000.00	\$0.00	\$94,000.00	\$49,000.00	\$13.52
Executive Assistant (New Position)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Communications Comm.	\$3,000.00	\$500.00	\$6,000.00	\$2,500.00	\$0.69
Social Comm.	\$3,000.00	\$500.00	\$6,000.00	\$2,500.00	\$0.69
Equity Comm.	\$3,000.00	\$500.00	\$6,000.00	\$2,500.00	\$0.69
Committee Coordinator	\$1,537.50	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$1,537.50)	(\$0.42)
Planning Coordinator	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.28
Logistics Coordinator	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.28
Athletics Coordinator	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.28
Equity Coordinator	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$500.00	\$0.14
Sustainability Coordinator	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$500.00	\$0.14
International Coordinator	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$500.00	\$0.14
B. Ed. Coordinator	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$500.00	\$0.14
Layout Manager	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Webmaster	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Speaker	\$1,025.00	\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00	(\$25.00)	(\$0.01)
Deputy Speaker	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Chief Returning Officer	\$0.00	\$600.00	\$500.00	(\$100.00)	(\$0.03)
Senators (Law, Grad, Education)	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$600.00	\$400.00	\$0.11
SGPS Trustee	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total	\$100,433.00	\$15,400.00	\$196,300.00	\$80,467.00	\$22.20

Salary without honorarium
Comparison to TA salary
\$6/student advisor fee

Current Salary + Honorarium 2009-2010
\$115,833.00

AMS: Staff to Student ratio 13800 students, 500 staff 1:28
SGPS: Staff to Student ratio 4000 students, 33 staff 1:121

\$30/student fee increase from \$60 to \$90

$(\$30 \times 3250 \text{ students}) + ((\$30/2) \times 750 \text{ students}) = \$108,750$			
\$22.20 fee increase goes to salary scheme restructuring	\$80,475.00	$((\$22.20 \times 3250) + ((\$22.20/2) \times 750))$	74% of fee increase: salary/compensation
\$7.80 fee increase goes to funding SGPS services	\$28,275.00	$((\$7.80 \times 3250) + ((\$7.80/2) \times 750))$	26% of fee increase: other services
Total		\$108,750.00	

\$40/student fee increase from \$60 to \$100 (need student referendum)

$(\$40 \times 3250 \text{ students}) + ((\$40/2) \times 750 \text{ students}) = \$145,000$			
\$22.20 fee increase goes to salary scheme restructuring	\$80,475.00	$((\$22.20 \times 3250) + ((\$22.20/2) \times 750))$	57% of fee increase: salary/compensation
\$17.80 fee increase goes to funding SGPS services	\$64,525.00	$((\$17.80 \times 3250) + ((\$17.80/2) \times 750))$	43% of fee increase: other services
Total		\$145,000.00	

Role of the Speaker

I've enjoyed my time as SGPS speaker. While there were a number of irregular events this year – the transition of the ESS; the resignation and election of new executive mid-term; an extra general meeting; the creation of a housing authority; numerous different deputy speakers; etc. – I feel that the position is in good order and that my tenure has been on the whole successful.

My main aim as speaker was to try as best I could to render council meetings more engaged and relevant to the life of the SGPS. I hoped to do this by helping councilors engage in more of the deliberations that affect the direction and structure of the SGPS. The implementation of this goal has not been entirely successful – much more needs to be done to properly engage councilors as departmental and faculty representatives – and has had some negative consequences (meetings have repeatedly gone on for too long). However, I do think some of the groundwork has been laid in order to help make council and its meetings the place of deliberation and representation that it ought to be.

Some recommendations for how this aim could be further realized:

- 1) Participation has been excellent from councilors this year, bringing issues from their departments and faculties to council's attention. Continuing to bring issues of concern to council's attention should be encouraged, and one way to facilitate this would be to have a more structured format for individual departments and faculties to report to council and to initiate discussion and motions. Further, ensuring that councilors continue to bring back to their departments and faculties what was discussed as well as the result of council's activities would be of great use. Finally, ensuring that any resolution of a difficulty be publicly indicated as having been resolved could help reinforce the important role council plays.
- 2) The orientation of councilors at the start of the year ought to be expanded, as well as the addition of a refresher in January. At times, the structure and rules of our meetings hinder rather than help facilitate participation from members of council. This could also help shorten the length of some of our meetings.
- 3) More regular and adequate reporting and attendance from the SGPS exec, officers and appointees. One way that this could be encouraged would be to view reports not only as a duty to inform councilors regarding the past months work and to seek feedback (although it is that) but also as a means to canvass ideas, gather volunteers and disseminate word regarding both policy proposals and specific activities. Council must be seen to be a central hub for grad and professional students, and we should endeavor to have all of the employees and elected officials of the SGPS view it in such a manner. In terms of attendance, I take it none of the above can be successfully accomplished if people do not consistently attend and participate in council meetings.

Bylaw and Policy Revisions Committee

The committee was ineffective this year. The revision and review of the bylaws and policies by members of the SGPS often sidestepped the committee, at times

undermining its ability to function effectively. More coordination on the part of the speaker and a more active role in seeking members of the committee from the ordinary or council membership is required. In addition, I think that the committee must take a more assertive stance in making itself the primary locus for the review and revision of the Bylaws and Policies.

For future years I would suggest that the Speaker in concert with the VP Professional identify a number of areas of the Bylaws and Policies at the start of the summer and examine them and see if they require any updating or changes. This could be an ongoing process, alternating Bylaw and Policy areas each year, which might provide some continuity to the committee, and could potentially catch errors or unclarities in the B and P.

As well, I would suggest the formulation of some guidelines or rules of thumb in terms of what is required and what is not required to enter into either the Bylaws and/or Policies. This could help streamline the process for the addition of new items to the B and P and could help guide the committee in its work.

Thanks

I would like to thank everyone at the SGPS for an enjoyable and rewarding year. In particular, I would like to thank Sean, our executive director, for his patience, help and sound counsel this year. I believe strongly in the SPGS and the work that it does. I also respect and value the time and effort put in by the executive, officers, appointees, senator, trustee, staff and volunteers who make the SGPS run every day. Our work matters to Queen's students and I would like to think that our combined efforts have helped improve the educational, social and political experience of graduate and professional students at Queen's.



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Trustee
March AGM 2010

SGPS Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

Board of Trustees Report

The minutes of the March 6/7 Board of Trustees meeting are now available online at:

http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/trustees/minutes/Mar06_09.pdf

Please feel free to contact me at alfonso.nocilla@gmail.com should you have any questions/issues. I would be pleased to hear from other students about matters relevant to the Board.

The following are some events to watch for the next Board meeting on April 30 (note that University Council will also meet on the weekend):

Budget Approval

The Board of Trustees will review the University's completed budget at its next meeting. In January and February of this year, budget meetings were held with all Faculties/Departments where they were required to submit 3-year budgets. These will be collated and reviewed at the Board meeting.

The major change from the past budget model is that individual departments and faculties will now be responsible for funding salary and benefit increases as opposed to having these increases centrally funded. This was done to reduce costs and balance the university's budget, which is still in the red by several million dollars. I have heard from faculty in some departments that because they do not have much flexibility in their budgets, the end result of this policy will be a disproportionate decrease in TA funding, which could negatively affect research at the university. However, we will not see the final numbers and hear from the administration on this until the April 30 meeting.

University Planning Committee

As mentioned at the last few meetings, the Board continues to review Principal Woolf's proposal for a joint committee of the Board and Senate to handle academic planning and resource management. The precise composition and mandate of the committee remains an open question and I encourage you to follow the discussions at Senate and Board as this may be one important piece in a much larger, long-term review of the university's governance structure.

Negotiations regarding Queen's Centre Fee

As I was asked about this at the last meeting, I have included a reference to it in my report. The SGPS membership rejected a proposed fee to pay for some of the costs of the Queen's Centre in its last referendum. This provoked some negative response from the AMS and some members of the Queen's community at the last Board meeting and in some local media. To my knowledge, no one from the university administration has commented yet on the referendum results.

At the meeting, I expressed my opinion that the rejection of the referendum question was unsurprising given that graduate/professional students probably saw no reason to pay for something that they were already getting for free. I also thanked the concerned parties, including the President of the SGPS and Principal Woolf, for showing good faith so far in

their negotiations and encouraged them to continue to work on this issue in a spirit of good will.

While I have heard nothing further regarding this issue, I expect that the university will seek to negotiate with the SGPS again at some point soon in order to obtain some contribution to the Queen's Centre.

Orientation Week Survival Guide

- The mix of information and advertisement pages was good this past year. The money raised through advertisements was enough to cover printing and binding costs. It was noted by many people that the fee information guide was very useful. I have been working with various groups across campus to improve the O-Week guide.

Council Orientation Guide

- This guide didn't change very much this year. I worked with the Speaker to clean up some of the information and shift the information around the booklet. I continue to attempt to make this guide easier to read and more useful for Council members. Council feedback is very important in making this guide better.

SGPS Agenda/Dayplanner

- The printers of the dayplanner for the 2009/2010 academic year made some errors, one of note being the lack of colour in the local section. As a result, there will be a discount on the 2010/2011 dayplanner cost. I am always working to evolve the content of the information presented in the dayplanner. This year, I am paying specific attention to the ordering of information in an attempt to make important information more obvious and easy to find.

E-Newsletter

- This year we consistently saw more than 2000 downloads of the E-Newsletter. On a few occasions, there was more than 4000 downloads of the E-Newsletter. I think this continues to be the most valuable method of disseminating information to our membership. The length of the E-Newsletter has grown, which is an indicator that more people are submitting information for our membership.

SGPS Website

- I have completed a lot of work on the back-end code for our main website www.sgps.ca. The changes have improved the reliability and availability of the website. When under heavy load, the website now balances client requests across multiple servers. This also means there is always an up-to-date backup of our website in case of server failure.

Communications

- Having our own colour laserjet computer continues to benefit the SGPS. The printing costs are considerably lower as compared to a copy centre. Having our own printer also means that we can print whenever we need to, not being at the mercy of the availability of third party printers.
- The lease on our black and white photocopier is almost up. I will be looking into the best option for replacement for the office.
- I continue to work on the informational booklets available via the SGPS Front Desk. The information in the booklets is always kept up-to-date. I have also started working with various groups and departments across campus to have our information available in multiple locations.
- This was the first year I attempted online social event registration through the SGPS website. Online registration and payment was very well received by the membership. I would like to thank Jordan (of our Social Team) for her dedication and support in helping with this initiative.

Computer Network

- This year we were able to purchase a new server computer. This server handles e-mail (with a webmail component), calendar system, resource bookings, wikis, blogs, mailing lists, network authentication and single sign-on services.
- The new wiki and blog server are already showing signs of how useful and important they will be. Executive and Staff members post information from meetings and initiatives they undertake. This gives us a record of all the things that happen. The wiki/blog server will also be a huge advantage during transition times. Not only will past data be available, I have also added specific sections (including video tutorials) for transition.
- The backup systems have continued to evolve at the SGPS. We now have tiered backups that happen as often as every 5 minutes on computers with critical data. I continue to work on the backup system for our server computers. I am attempting to find the right balance between backup frequency and load on the server.

October 2009

My application for the Sustainability Coordinator is accepted and I was briefed by then President Jeff Welsh about the sustainability position, my duties, structure of the Queen's administration and possible projects/ events for the Committee.

At this time I also recruited members for the Sustainability Committee and we held our first meetings. I also attended the AMS roundtable forums which became a monthly tradition and was well worth it as it allowed for networking and staying in-tune what is happening on campus.

I also represented the SGPS during the Food Sustainability with Chef Michael Smith organized by the Queen's Hospitality Services. This full day even was held October 26th and included an early morning visit and a tour of MyFarm – a farm of our Queen's Chef in a joint partnership between Queen's University, Sodexo and Kingston's communities.
Solar PV Initiative – SGPS Sustainability Committee Study

November 2009

I was invited to sit on a newly formed Queen's Sustainability Advisory Committee – QSAC and represent the SGPS body. This is another great networking opportunity to meet the staff and other student representative that are working on making Queen's more sustainable. I would like to think our advice during these meetings as well as the persistence of the QBAC group led to Principal Woolf's signing of the COU (Council of Ontario Universities) as well as the more important commitment by the signing of University and College Presidents' Climate Change Statement of Action for Canada.

In November 2009 the SGPS Sustainability Standing Committee also got involved with the Solar PV Initiative to look into the opportunity to bring PV solar arrays to Queen's and take advantage of the Ontario feed-in-tariff program. We requested from the SGPS Council that the SGPS Sustainability Committee look into the study and report in a timely manner. Request was granted.

In collaboration with the MECH Queen's Applied Sustainability we also established a facebook group which currently has 1,985 members and counting!

December 2009

We continued our involvement Solar PV Initiative working with Dr. Pearce, MECH Applied Sustainability Research Group and I wrote an opinion piece for The Gazette on the matter which was published! We heard other student groups are also getting involved such as the AMS, Main Campus Residence Council an QBAC – Queen's Backing Action on Climate Change. The initiative reached the Principal's attention as well as Queen's Sustainability Advisory Committee. The funds were gathered with help of Physical Plant services and the Faculty of Education and a 3rd party viability study was initiated.

This is also the time when at the advice of our VP Finances, Mr. Nosrat the SGPS Sustainability Standing Committee entered the process of developing a platform and a proposal to introduce an optional sustainability fee (SAF- Sustainability Action Fund). The AMS had established a similar fee just earlier and we thought it would be a great way to provide the necessary funds for project development, collaboration and general promotion of SGPS sustainability initiatives at Queen's University and in the community.

January 2010

At January's council meeting the SGPS Sustainability Standing Committee submitted the proposal to introduce an optional sustainability fee. The proposal was also provided including a detailed draft of the policy (again many thanks to VP Finances and the Speaker on valuable feedback).

We also started to plan the Movie/Documentary Night as well as a Trash to Art project. I continued attending the AMS Roundtable discussions and learned that Main Campus Residences would be doing a trash project as well and we kept that in mind in case there was a need to collaborate.

Also, seeing there were no mention of the SGPS Sustainability on the Queen's Sustainability Office website I got in touch with the Management Rep. Aaron Ball and Waste Coordinator Llynwen Osborne to put a promo/ info link about the SGPS Sustainability Committee to describe and promote our ventures.

February 2010

Our proposed optional SAF (Sustainability Action Fund) fee passed on February's referendum/ elections. This will allow us to fund and entice campus sustainability SGPS initiatives. We plan on advertising the SAF furiously come September!

In February I also joined the Kingston SWITCH sustainable networking cluster on behalf of the SGPS Sustainability Committee. The SWITCH group meets once a month to rehash news, ideas and events in the community on all things green and is held at the Innovation Park. Some meetings can feature over a hundred attendees so this will be a great platform to use and advertise events on campus and to simply network.

On February 18th we held a very successful documentary night featuring the award winning PBS documentary series e2 – the economies of being environmentally conscious. The event ran for 2 hours and we also had a special guest speaker – Ted Hsu the executive director of SWITCH make a small intro to our first documentary on California's energy policies. Refreshments were provided and funded by the SGPS.

During the reading break, the SGPS Sustainability Committee and the Masters of Environmental Studies students got together to work on our planned Trash to Art project. It was made using lightweight trash from around campus and encased in chicken-wire to spell out R-E-D-U-C-E and was set up in the BioSciences Atrium stage the night of February 28th to welcome the students come Monday March 1st. Learning that the Main Campus Residence Council was also working on some Eco Art project and that they were unable to book a space for the exhibit we volunteered to share the stage.

The event drew quite an attention and was advertised on the School of Graduate Studies webpage, was featured on The Gazette website, and we also had a reporter from the Kingston's Whigstandard come take a few photos! There is also a possible radio interview in the works.

March 2010

The Solar Initiative is picking up steam: Several groups on campus including the SGPS Sustainability Committee are drafting an official proposal to the Principal to release the Physical Plant Services solar study, and set up a concrete time-line to address the feed-in-tariff opportunities by either purchasing the panels or renting out the roof-space. A general meeting for all professors and student groups involved is being set for March 22nd at 7pm.

SGPS Sustainability is also taking part in the bottle-water free week and making plans for the Earth Hour and Earth Day.