



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the President
May 2011

It has been a busy month but I will attempt to be short and to the point. There are a few issues I wish to address.

Student Life Centre-Constitution and Operations & Management Agreement

This has been an ongoing negotiation since April 2010 but I am delighted to say that these documents will have all been signed by the time of our next council meeting. There were a few last minute revisions that the University and the AMS requested however the interests and needs of the SGPS and it's members have been maintained. As a result of this new structure, there will be new committees forming that assist with the retail and operation of our centre. I will be bringing additional information to all of you once these committees form.

Hiring

Our hiring is almost complete with the exception of a few outstanding positions that have been posted in the newsletter. If you are interested in working with the SGPS, please feel free to check out these postings on our website as well. Finally, we are hiring a few RA's to work on Strategic Planning and provide additional research support for our team. Should you be interested in these, please email myself or Andrea (vpfs@sgps.ca) for additional info.

Referendum and University Council

As you all are aware by now, the University Council met last weekend (May 6-9) and the SGPS provided a recommendation in accordance with the referendum results. I can provide more info orally at the Council meeting as to what transpired over the weekend.

In closing, the Science Graduate School Council is looking for a SGPS rep to sit and provide insight into Graduate student issues and concerns. The committee meets again in September-if you are interested, please email me ASAP for info and details.

Respectfully submitted,

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



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

Greetings!

This past month has been a busy one, allowing me to quickly settle into the position of VP Graduate. Here are some things to note on what to look forward to in the coming months:

Student Advisors

A call for applications for the position of Student Advisor (2 positions in total) will be announced in the next SGPS newsletter in mid-May. Application deadline will be June 6th, 2011, 4:30 p.m. Please check out the next newsletter for more detailed information about the position and how to apply. Please also pass on the information to the members in your respective areas.

Academic Affairs Standing Committee (AASC)

This is a repeat notice from my last report. As you may know, the VP Graduate chairs the Academic Affairs Standing Committee. The outgoing VP Graduate did a great job of reviving this committee during his term. I am committed to continuing on his efforts for the coming academic year. If you are interested in finding out more information about how to get involved with the committee on short-term projects to do with academic issues that face Queen's graduate students, please feel free to contact me.

FREE Queen's Workshops

The FREE Queen's workshops have wrapped up for this academic year. We have had a successful offering of workshops and a positive response from our members. Within the coming months, there will be a call out submission of workshop proposals for the next academic year. More information will be made available through the SGPS newsletter in the coming months.

Discussion Panel on New Grading System

A discussion panel was held on Thursday, April 28, 2011 on the grading system change that has taken effect on May 1, 2011. A number of questions were brought forth, resulting in some interesting discussions by the panellists. An FAQ sheet will be available in the next SGPS newsletter, reflecting the questions that were addressed. In September, another discussion panel is scheduled on the new grading system. Details of September's discussion panel will be made available in the coming months through the SGPS newsletter.

SGS Meeting

On Wednesday, April 27, 2011, the VP Finance and Services, VP Campaigns and Community Affairs, and I met with the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies (SGS), Associate Deans of the SGS, and the Director of the Office of the Dean. The focus of our meeting was to discuss ways to further support graduate and professional students in light of the recent and tragic student deaths. Our discussion was fruitful and shed some light on how to proceed with several of the initiatives that we set forth. We endeavour to continue to discuss these and other initiatives with the SGS, and to inform you when progress on these initiatives is made.

That is all for now. I would like to wish everyone a safe and happy summer and I look forward to seeing you all at our next council meeting in August!

Respectfully submitted,

Irene Karagiorgakis
VP Graduate
vpg@sgps.ca



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Vice President of Professional Students
May 2011

Dear Councilors,

April was a busy month. I have survived first year law exams, a Six (6) hour AGM, numerous emergency executive meetings to discuss various rector related issues, and attempted to absorb the immense knowledge of the outgoing VPP. I am happy to report that it is now May and I have survived with the energy to write my first report.

Grad Club AGM

The Grad Club held its Annual General Meeting on March 31st and a new board of directors was elected. After early worries about whether there would be enough members on hand to form a quorum, the allure of free nachos and a drink ticket ensured we had the required numbers. Transitioning between the outgoing and incoming board have taken place and the first meetings of the new board have taken place. Key issues for the incoming board will be:

- Successful implementation of the new security system and the establishment of a firm policy regarding the use of cameras. Safety of the staff and patrons is of the utmost concern as is respect for privacy.
- Veranda repairs and the financing of said repairs
- Improved marketing including a new logo and updated website
- Improvements to the interior design of the space to address traffic and flow issues
- Addressing concerns with the University regarding quicker access to fees paid by the membership

Jillian and I will both sit on this year's board and are looking forward to a productive year.

Hiring

Interviews for a number of positions including vacancies on the social team, equity team, and international team took place during the week of April 25th. The new team members will be announced shortly and included in the next report.

Orientation Collaboration

I have been working with the social committee regarding efforts to collaborate orientation events for 2012 with the law student's society. This will be an effective way to introduce the 150+ incoming law students to the services offered by the SGPS, promote stronger relations between the SGPS and the law school, and make for some larger and more exciting orientation activities.

Education Student's Society

The executive continues to advocate on behalf of education students with the University on a wide variety of issues including those in the realm of academics and student fees. We will continue to push hard for policies that recognize the unique characteristics of education student's use of university facilities and provide our experience and expertise navigating university policy and procedures. I plan on working closely with representatives from the ESS on ways to promote more efficient interaction and continuity year after year with the SGPS.

Law Student's Society

As a law student promoting strong relations with the LSS is of particular importance to me. I have enjoyed a solid working relationship with the outgoing LSS president and look forward to creating a similarly productive environment with the incoming executive. I plan on addressing the concerns outlined in the recent LSS report and maintaining/improving the current relationship with the SGPS.

Regards,

Mark Noble – VPP



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the VP Campaigns & Community Affairs
May 2011

What a month! I will do my best to extract memories of my life pre-election, way back when I still had nails to bite.

Canadian Federation of Students

On April 9th and 10th, I attended an Executive meeting of the provincial component of the CFS in Toronto, which was very productive. In our discussions about services, we brainstormed how to broaden the scope of our Student Saver Discounts. Upon my return, Jillian and I tasked three research assistants to canvass local businesses for new discounts, and I will report on our gains at Council. Next year, I recommend beginning the canvassing process early, and asking the CFS to come down to our local to provide canvassers with some training prior to sending them out.

Other service-related discussions centered on Via Rail's changed discount packages. I was informed this week that the petition to distribute amongst members will be sent electronically no later than next week, in .pdf format. As soon as I get it, I will send it to each Councilor by email to circulate in your departments. Once you have filled out the petition, I would ask that you drop it off at the SGPS office and address the delivery to me. I will organize a mass drop-off to Via sometime in June, and am considering doing this in partnership with other locals. On this note, several of our members have sent in complaints about Via's recent decision, which I have, with their permission, already transmitted to Via's customer relations department. You will also find a motion and draft letter of objection addressed to Via in this month's Council package.

In other news, the CFS is currently trying to negotiate an exclusive discount for members with Shoppers Drug Mart. The discount is likely going to take one of two forms: either a cheque which would go back to locals, for redistribution to all health plan members, or discounts on 'dispensing fees' (i.e. prescription refills).

On the campaigns side, CFS-Ontario is working on materials which will promote the provincial elections. To help us promote the student vote, they will be providing us both with materials which are politically neutral (i.e. on voting, on what the provincial government does, etc.), and with materials which will promote pro-education platforms. The CFS-Ontario has also launched a new campaign called 'Students for Better Child Care,' to ask that money not only be budgeted for child care by region, but also be put towards more affordable, flexible child care for students with dependents. Look for these new campaign materials over the next few months (and onwards) – once I receive them, I will be dropping them off at various offices, departments, and faculties all around campus.

Finally, the CFS-Ontario Executive discussed several government relations documents, including budget provisions for education, as well as a report put together by the CFS titled 'Funding not Fees,' which was presented to an all-party Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. The submission was generally well-received, particularly by delegates of the Liberal Party. I have kept a copy of this report, and welcome you to contact me if you would like to review and share it.

Copyright

The Copyright Working Group has been disbanded, as copyright considerations are currently on the table in negotiations between the University and QUFA. However, I have received word that

a position was created to hire a Copyright Specialist, and that interviews for the position have been scheduled for several dates in May. The role of the Copyright Specialist will be to help students and faculty navigate 'fair dealing' and other copyright clauses as we transition out of the Access Copyright (AC) license. Acting in response to many Canadian universities' decision to opt out of the license model, AC has asked all universities and colleges to provide them with detailed responses to often invasive questions, for instance on our annual budgets and copying equipment – including printers. These new requirements will undoubtedly be counted as new risks associated with taking leave from AC, and may impact the university's final decision. In the interim, Queen's Legal Counsel will be asking the Copyright Board's Audit Committee to consider drafting a policy that is more inclusive than the AUCC's Fair Dealing provisions (which I have reported on at several times in past months), that is based on Supreme Court criteria, and that will provide information and support relating to copy rights.

Health, Wellness, and Safety

The tragic losses of a number of Queen's students over the past year have sparked several discussions around campus about mental as well as physical health and safety. As a new member of the Student Affairs-led Health and Wellness Steering Committee, and the Campus Safety Working Group, I will update you as the discussions continue to unfold. So far, our discussions have alerted me to the possible need to begin a new campaign to have occupational stress included in Queen's definition of 'health,' written in our policy on occupational health and safety. So far, I have pitched this idea to the School of Graduate Studies, who seem amenable to further discussions, and to the newly elected Executive of PSAC Local 901, who are currently looking for an Occupational Health and Safety Officer to add to their team. Over the summer, I will be working with the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) to further research this issue, and to begin thinking about what resources might help our members better cope with occupational stress, all in an effort to continue taking steps towards preventing mental and physical unwellness.

Equity

The Senate team that works on Academic Planning has recently submitted a first draft of its reflections on 'Global Citizenship,' which includes many of the insights provided by the Senate Educational Equity Committee (SEEC) on 'internationalization'. You can review and comment on the document at the following web address: http://www.queensu.ca/saptf/?page_id=378

Also, the School of Graduate Studies has established a task force to examine the issues concerning the accommodation of graduate students with disabilities, and has asked that one member of the SGPS Executive act as representative for the group. While we have not yet decided who is to sit in on the discussions, we know that the task force will concern itself with identifying guiding principles and procedures to accommodate graduate students with disabilities.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne-Marie Grondin
VP Campaigns & Community Affairs



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the VP Finance & Services
May 2011

Finance & Services Standing Committee

I still need one more SGPS member to serve on this committee. Come join us or convince someone you know!

CFS Ontario Executive

I have been nominated as the representative of our member local, and will attend the Ontario Executive meeting May 6-8. Update to follow at the Council meeting.

Grants and Bursaries

In my short time as VPFS, I've had a chance to see what great programs our Society has in place to help students financially. In reviewing the budget, I notice that the Grants Program has not had the draw that the Emergency Student Aid and the Dental Assistance Bursary have had. Please remind your department members that if they are planning an event that will enhance academic life, that is open to the SGPS community, and that has significant graduate/professional student involvement, then they may be eligible for some funding. More details are available on the SGPS website: <http://www.sgps.ca/services/awards.html>

Have a nice summer and see you in August!

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Phillipson
VP Finance & Services
vpfs@sgps.ca



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

Hello Council,

This is my first meeting as speaker, so please bear with me and everything will go fine. I am very excited to begin my term as speaker, and look forward to a great year.

Changing of Councilors

Since it is about the time that many of our councilors will be changing hands, we ask that you please keep the SGPS informed of who your representatives are, so we can keep an up to date list and make sure everyone is in the loop. To make sure of this, please send an email to Sean (info@sgps.ca) or myself (speaker@sgps.ca) and we will take care of all of that for you. Some of you will be staying on with Council, and some will be leaving and having a successor replace them, so the next couple Council meetings will be transitional ones for sure.

Deputy Speaker

Next thing I want to cover: Deputy Speaker. I am looking for a Deputy Speaker for my term as Speaker. The job mainly consists of taking the minutes of the Council Meetings, preparing the tent cards, maintaining the list of Council Members, and acting as speaker in my absence (should you desire to do so, this is not entirely necessary as you are able to pass your speaking rights). So if you are interested, or know someone who may be, please contact me via my email (speaker@sgps.ca) and we can get the ball rolling on that.

I am glad to be the new speaker, and I look forward to a great year.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Rapos
SGPS Speaker

- April Senate highlights
 - Senate passed the much-discussed “Functions of Senate” document, submitted by SORC.
 - Two proposals to replace two undergraduate Specialized Plans (Spanish Latin American Studies and Medieval Studies) with reduced minor/general plans were passed after many questions were asked (some by me) about the rationale for both changes as well as the impacts thereof.
- Graduate Studies Executive Council highlights/announcements
 - The Graduate Arts Council has been expressing concern over the last few months about the scarcity of courses on hand for grad students who need to fulfill language requirements. The Council Chair will bring this up with the Faculty of Arts and Science and request some options for creating more offerings tailored to language requirements.
- Graduate Studies Forum highlights/announcements
 - A report on Graduate Student Financial Support (2009-10) by the Office of Research Services (not yet released) indicates about a 2% gross rise in graduate funding due to a slight increase in new internal scholarships (not QGAs). The report’s findings would suggest a stabilization of funding in all other areas.
 - A new committee has been struck to explore accommodation needs of graduate students and propose policy or best-practice recommendations to the School of Graduate Studies. They will plan to submit a report to the SGS in the Fall term.
 - The Expanding Horizons program for graduate students will be remodeled over the summer so as to offer more targeted workshops for professional development. The initial idea behind the change came from a recent publication by Canadian Association of Graduate Studies.¹ The new program will probably offer workshops in 6 skill areas, and a “Certification in Professional Development” will be available to those who complete at least 12 workshops and one in each area.
 - The Department of Environmental Health and Safety presented a case for recognizing that graduate students are at greater health and safety risk than many other groups in the Queen’s community. While lab safety is a well-known

¹ “Professional Skills Development for Graduate Students.” CAGS, November 2008.
<<http://www.cags.ca/pages/en/publications/cags-publications.php>>.

concern, the presentation explained that off-campus (social and professional) safety is just as relevant, i.e.

- The Ontario Health and Safety Act's definition of 'supervisor' applies in some instances to graduate students (for instance, those who lead field work with undergraduates); however, many graduate students may not be aware of this nor about the associated responsibilities.

For more info about the Off-Campus Activity Safety Policy, visit http://www.safety.queensu.ca/gj_ocasp.htm.

- Academic Planning Task Force

At Senate, the Academic Planning Task Force gave a summary of their consultation activities to date and directed Senators to preliminary drafts of the "Four Pillars," which will comprise the body of the academic plan. Two of the "Four Pillars" have completed drafts, and they're available for comment by anyone in the Queen's community (http://www.queensu.ca/saptf/?page_id=357). The Task Force stressed that they continue to welcome feedback even as they now turn their efforts from consultation to writing. Their goal is to present a final draft to Senate in September and seek Senate's approval at the October 2011 meeting.

One reason that the TF cited for not submitting a final draft in April was the sizeable body of prior documentation related to the academic plan, notably the 40-odd unit responses to *Where Next?* The TF indicated that these responses have been particularly helpful, but they were not all made available to the TF. The Principal explained that units wrote responses under the assumption that they would not be public documents. He added that, in retrospect, they probably should have been open submissions.

Strangely, the TF did not receive the SGPS's response to *Where Next?* even though we submitted an open response to the Principal. I'll look into remedying this with the Executive.

Most of the questions the Task Force received at Senate had to do with the timeline, but one Senator suggested that they explore more scholarly resources surrounding academic planning.

I asked if the TF had plans to expand the "Global Citizenship" pillar beyond just internationalization—for instance, as a place to articulate Queen's commitment to sustainability—and whether "enhanc[ing]" international student "integration" really captures everything we want to say about the value of and need for cross-cultural exchange. They responded "absolutely" to the first and said, to the second, that they only just received the International Centre's response to *Where Next?*, which will help them better discuss issues about internationalization and cultural plurality in later drafts.

Respectfully submitted,
Daniel Moore



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Social Commissioner
May 2011

Hello All,

The SGPS would like to extend a warm welcome to our new social coordinators Chris Groten, Cassandra Kuyvenhoven and Meaghan Frauts. They will be filling the roles of the Logistics, Planning and Athletic coordinator respectively. Moreover, we are excited to inform you of the great events that we're going to be holding this month. Our events range from a variety of purely social, athletic and healthy living events. We hope to see everyone come out and interact with the diverse community that is our SGPS members.

SGPS Tir nan Og Karaoke Mixer Night

The SGPS is teaming up with the Tier nan Og to bring you an entertaining night of Karaoke. The Tier nan Og is one of Kingston's oldest pubs, located in the heart downtown. The venue is famous for it's Thursday Karaoke nights. Thus, this event is guaranteed to be a hit whether you're an aspiring singer that wants to be discovered, or haven't realized your singing should be confined to the shower. For those of us who are feint of heart this event will provide a great opportunity to hear unique renditions of our favorite songs, mingle and meet other SGPS members. There will be prizes for those of us that are brave enough to go up there and ravish some old classics, and some FREE appetizers.

Date: Thursday, May 26th

Place: Tir nan Og (200 Ontario St.)

Time: 9:30 pm

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, May 9th).

Date: Saturday, May 28th

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

Time: 4:30-8:00 pm

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

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)

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

- I have completed the office computer network diagram.
- I have terminated access to our mail/wiki/computer system for last year's Staff and I have given access to the new Staff.
- I am working with our VP Finance on the proposal for off-site backup. We should have something to report to Council on this matter in August.
- I have added some extra security measures to our server that protect against virus attacks and e-mail spam attacks.
- All users of SGPS e-mail should now be seeing considerably less junk mail.

SGPS Website

- I have updated the people section of our site to reflect the new Staff.
- I have started work to further customize our wiki system so it better adheres to our workflows at the office.
- I am working to update our server so there is better wiki, calendar and e-mail access for users of portable devices.

Communications

- The 2011-2012 Dayplanner/Agenda has been submitted to the printers and will be delivered to the office in August.
- The optional fee opt-out process for September 2011 is finalized. More details will be released to the membership via newsletter, website and the orientation week survival guide.
- I continue to work to finalize details for mailing lists for sub-societies of the SGPS. The process is delayed (I assume because of the SOLUS system and the pressing issues that need to be dealt with).
- The recipients of the SGPS awards have been selected. We are waiting on confirmation from the recipients before releasing their names.
- Tickets for the SGPS trip to the Boiler Room (rock climbing) are available at:
<http://www.sgps.ca/events/social.html>

Respectfully submitted,
Sean Richards - info@sgps.ca



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the International Students Affairs Commissioner
May 2011

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Becky Pero and I have been selected for the role of International Student Affairs Commissioner for the 2011-2012 academic year. Among other related experiences, I come into the role having acted as one of last year's International Students' Coordinators. I look forward to serving as Commissioner and continuing to advocate of behalf of international graduate and professional students on Queen's campus.

Some overarching projects that I would like to tackle this year include the current situation with UHIP. I will also continue to communicate with international students through the International Students' Standing Committee and other mediums in an effort to better understand their needs. This year hopes to institutionalize the role of Commissioner within the SGPS in order to create a level of historical continuity for the position and ultimately, to ensure that the needs of international students are being consistently addressed and met. I look forward to working with the new International Students' Coordinator Holly McIndoe, with whom I will meet with in the next couple of weeks to plan strategically for the upcoming year.

Respectfully,

Becky Pero
ISAC



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Sustainability Coordinator
May 2011

Earth Day Festivities

The SGPS Sustainability Committee took part in Earth Day festivities organized by the Sustainability Office at the end of April. This included flower-bed planting, mulching, clean-up and a ceremonial tree planting at the Agnes Benedickson Field.

Re-Cycle Bike Shop involvement

SGPS Sustainability Committee is taking part in establishment of a student run bike shop. The project is spear-headed by the AMS Sustainability but SGPS has secured significant involvement via volunteers as well as financial help through our Sustainability Action Fund grant in the amount of \$700. This funding was essential to purchase necessary tools for the start-up as well as to run the first workshop which took place in mid-April.

We are hoping to get permanent access to the space provided as soon as possible (or as soon as ASUS moves out of the space) to start building the shop and organize more workshops. Anyone interested in getting involved or learning more can contact the sustainability@sgps.ca

Queen's Sustainability Advisory Committee

Meeting which was to take place April 29 will be re-scheduled for sometimes in May. More info to come.



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Chief Returning Officer
May 2011

In the month of April the SGPS membership voted in a referendum to answer “Shall the SGPS membership recommend to the University Council of Queen’s University that Nick Day not continue to hold the office of Rector of Queen’s University at Kingston?” 698 ballots were counted which represents ~ 17% of the SGPS membership. The results were 42% “YES”, 54% “NO”, 4% “no answer”. Therefore, the results indicate that the SGPS membership will not recommend to the University Council of Queen’s that Nick Day be removed from the office of the Rector of Queen’s University.

The referendum was initiated by a petition signed and verified by at least 10% of the SGPS membership as per SGPS P.7.1.3a. There was some mild controversy because the petition question was approved by the Speaker and the Executive Director and signatures started to be collected before I had chance to view the question. I did agree however that the question was different enough from the questions posed at the SGPS AGM to validate the petition.

Voting for the referendum was extended by 1 day due to problems with listerserv in some departments that made it difficult for the Executive Director to communicate the voting instructions to the membership. There is no evidence to suggest that this altered the voting turn out or results in anyway.

There were official “YES” and “NO” campaigns parties and no SGPS resources were allocated to either campaign as per SGPS P.7.1.6 e. To my knowledge the campaigns were run clean and fair. There were some unfounded accusations from on member in favour of the “YES” vote that her posters were being removed. When I followed up with her asking which buildings she put the posters and if she sought departmental permission from those buildings to put up posters, she did not respond.

My recommendation is that the SGPS accept and ratify the outcome of this referendum.

Regards,
Mikhail Kellawan
SGSP Chief Returning Officer