

Greetings to all!

It has been an incredibly busy month. I had the opportunity to meet with all of the provincial candidates here in Kingston. As well, I was contacted and met with the majority of the Rector nominees as they campaigned in October. October virtually flew by with the provincial voting on October 6th and here at Queen's the election of our 33rd Rector, Nick Francis-congratulations!

Senate:

This month's senate meeting was informative and as you are all aware, the new draft of the plan has raised some concern within our membership and campus-wide. In particular, the plan focuses primarily on undergraduate students and even recommends more undergraduate TA's and tutors but lacks the discussion of how this will impact graduate and professional students who rely on TA-ships as part of their funding and future employment prospects. There is a lack of attention to graduate and professional education in the plan. The integration of teaching and research should be one of the primary focuses of the plan. The plan itself needs to be broadened to include the needs of SGPS students and not just focus on the education of undergraduate students.

We sent out an email to all SGPS Counselors' at the beginning of October. Here are the links to the plan Visit the Academic Planning Task force here (you can read the draft plan under the "academic plan plus the four supporting pillars" tab: <http://www.queensu.ca/saptf/>

Visit Mark Jones' (one of the members of the academic planning task force)
"Real Academic Planning Blog": <http://realacademicplanning.wordpress.com/>

Mark Jones update from the last Senate meeting: <http://realacademicplanning.wordpress.com/2011/10/25/mark-jones-academic-planning-and-graduate-studies-the-unfinished-project-25-october-2011/>

I encourage you all to take a moment to review this information again as we will have the opportunity to discuss this in detail at our council meeting.

Principal's Commission on Mental Health

We met with the Commission and presented the information and concerns of SGPS members. This is just the beginning of our discussions and I would encourage you to contact me if you or anyone in your department have any concerns or comments that you would like passed along as the Commission prepares its report.

SLC (Student Life Centre) Council

The council met the end of October. There have been some upgrades to the JDUC with the introduction of greenery in the building (and even a tree or two). As well, some of you may have noticed the new PA system being installed, which will allow for events to be held throughout the building. If you have any concerns with the JDUC or the Queen's Centre or room rentals please feel free to contact me. We will be starting to work on policies in the next few weeks. In particular, I would like to focus on creating and implementing a space allocation policy that addresses the groups that are affiliated with both the SGPS and the AMS (ie: the groups in the Grey House).

SGPS/AMS Shared Services Agreement

It has now been over six months since this agreement was to begin (April 1st) but I have yet to get any substantial confirmation from the AMS that they are ready to implement the new signage. I will continue to inquire and hopefully, you will begin to see the SGPS logo popping up within the SLC (Queen's Centre and the JDUC).

Food Committee/University Services

I attended another food committee meeting and am working towards revising the "Graduate Meal Plan" to be more appealing to our members. If you have any suggestions, again please let me know. In particular, I am trying to arrange for SGPS members to be able to take advantage of the \$5 Fridays that Food Services currently provides to staff and faculty. The bottled water ban has also been a focus of discussion and everyone seems to be progressing forward-keep your eyes open for new water dispensers where you can fill your bottles/cups popping up at the food counters. The new restaurant in Mac-Corry is set to open the beginning of November-be sure to check it out! I am still working towards extended hours for services during the spring/summer months when the majority of our members are still on campus. Our athletics coordinator is also discussing this at her committees with athletics and recreation (Queen's Centre).

November is the month for fall convocations. I will be attending the ceremonies where SGPS members graduate and am delighted to congratulate those of you who have completed your degree and possibly even your time at Queen's-good luck in all that you do!

In closing, I welcome any comments or concerns (positive or negative) that you may have. Please feel free to email me or call the SGPS office anytime. I am looking forward to our discussion at council with respect to the Academic Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

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



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

Greetings!

I hope everything is well on your end! Here's what's been happening on my end:

FREE Queen's 2012

A callout has been made in the latest SGPS newsletter (issue 93) for FREE Queen's 2012 volunteer instructors. Please distribute the announcement widely within your respective departments. If you're interested in contributing as a volunteer instructor, please make sure to submit an abstract of your workshop proposal (no more than 250 words) via email to me, by the deadline: Wednesday, November 16, 4 p.m.!

Also, the FREE Queen's 2012 Steering Committee has been formed, and will convene at the end of November to select which workshops to include in our FREE Queen's 2012 programming (February-April 2012). Stay tuned for further information on workshops being offered for FREE Queen's 2012.

Centre for Teaching and Learning

The Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) is currently planning their 20th anniversary celebrations, scheduled for the beginning of the winter 2012 term. Stay tuned for more information!

The CTL's website is currently undergoing a bit of construction. For this reason, some resources may not be presently available online, but will be available within the coming weeks. Also, if you're a TA, TF, or Post Doc, the CTL encourages you to visit their library of teaching resources and borrow anything you need to support your teaching.

Student Advisor Program

The Student Advisors are currently working diligently to bring to SGPS members a second workshop on fostering a positive working relationship with supervisors. The workshop, called *Working Productively With Your Supervisor*, will be taking place on Tuesday, November 15th, from 7:00-8:30 p.m. (Location: Ed Churchill Hall of Friendship, inside QUIC, 2nd floor of the JDUC). Please advertise this workshop widely within your departments. We hope that this workshop will be a similar, if not greater, success to the previous workshop held on October 4th. The aim is to reach a wide number of our members so as to proactively support the development of positive supervisory relationships.

Also, if you are a PhD candidate and are interested in presenting your positive and/or not-so-positive supervisory experiences with others at this workshop, please contact me. We welcome your insights on how to work more productively with supervisors!

Academic Affairs Standing Committee (AASC)

These are repeat announcements from my last council report.

We are currently gathering student feedback with regards to ways that the accessibility and clarity of Fall 2011/Winter 2012 registration information can be improved. I have not yet received your contributions for this initiative, so I ask that you take a moment to contribute at least one item to the list that we are creating. One way to go about this is to ask your departmental Graduate Studies Office what has been the most frequently asked question related to Fall 2011 registration. Once you have obtained the question, please email me at vpg@sgps.ca so that I may add it to the list. We aim to present this list of recommendations to the Office of the University Registrar (OUR) by the end of this month, so that we can work together with the OUR to improve the accessibility and clarity of registration information going forward.

Additionally, I am interested in getting a wide representation on the AASC. We are currently lacking representation from the Faculty of Engineering & Applied Sciences, the Faculty of Law, the School of Business, the School of Policy Studies, and the School of Urban & Regional Planning. If you would like to join the AASC to work on short-term projects on

academically-related issues that have a wide-ranging importance on SGPS members, then we welcome your involvement! Email me for more info at vpg@sgps.ca.

Health, Counselling and Disability Services (HCDS)

This is a repeat announcement from previous council reports.

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

Office of the University Registrar

Recently, I met with Andrew Ness, Associate Registrar, to discuss a few Pre-Authorized Payment Plan (PPL) questions brought up during September's Academic Affairs Standing Committee (AASC). The three main questions that were discussed during the meeting were: 'Where can we find information with regards to which of the 11 installments go towards which term's tuition?' and, 'If a graduate student on the PPL defends in January, will he/she be expected to pay more tuition fees, beyond the tuition linked to the fall term?' and, 'What is the cut-off date for 100% tuition refund in the event that a thesis/dissertation defense happens a few weeks into the next term?' Answers to these questions and others will be share in the next newsletter, so please stay tuned, and make sure to circulate them within your respective departments.

Also, if you or anyone from your respective department has any other questions associated with the PPL, please forward them to me so that Andrew can address them, and so that the answers will be included in our next SGPS newsletter.

This concludes my report to council.

Respectfully submitted,

Irene Karagiorgakis

VP Graduate

vpg@sgps.ca



Salutations!

I hope everyone is having a great term so far. As I didn't submit a report for October's council meeting, this report will cover what I have been doing since starting in this position in mid-September.

Bylaws & Policies

The Bs & Ps committee worked to create a new bylaw about leaves of absences that you will recall was passed at the last council meeting.

Alumni

Along with the President, I am serving as a rep with the Alumni association. This has been a busy time of year for alumni events, with the QUAA's Alumni Volunteer Summit Oct 14-15. I also attended the Alumni Association Gala to see our lovely president Jillian receive an award for Outstanding Student, something I'm sure we all agree is greatly deserved.

I have since met with folks from the QSAA and they are very excited to work with the SGPS to try to build future alumni relations with Queen's graduate and professional students. They will be sending out a survey of graduate and professional students sometime early in the new year to get a better idea of graduate and professional students and they are holding some events to try and get folks out.

Grad Club Board

The grad club is continuing to have shows and trivia night and I strongly encourage everyone planning an event in their faculty to make use of this space – they are always happy to host graduate and professional student events and socials.

Co-Curricular Record

The University is in the process of trying to implement a Co-Curricular Record (CCR), which is a way for students to get their extra-curricular activities "verified" through a centralized system. The exec had several concerns about the CCR and so Jillian and I met with Ann Tierney, Dean of Student Affairs, to discuss the proposed plan. She was very receptive to all of our concerns and has assured us that there will be an SGPS rep throughout the implementation process and on the permanent committee.

HR Matters

We just interviewed for a new Sustainability Coordinator and I am in the process of hiring RAs for various projects the SGPS is working on. The HR committee will be meeting soon to review HR practices generally and decide on work for the year.

If anyone is interested in more details about any of the above, feel free to chat to me or e-mail me.

Respectfully submitted,

Cody Yorke
Interim VP Professional, SGPS
vpp@sgps.ca

Principal's Commission on Mental Health

Jillian, Andrea and I met with the Principal's new Commission on Mental Health on October 12th. Chaired by Dr. David Walker (Medicine, Policy Studies), the Commission is made up of four other members: Ann Tierney (Associate Vice-Principal, Student Affairs) Dr. Lynann Clapham (Associate Dean (Academic), Engineering & Applied Science), Dr. Jennifer Medves (Vice-Dean, Health Sciences & Director, School of Nursing), and Roy Jahchan (student, Law). The members of the Commission invited the SGPS to suggest which 'best practices' might be best suited to address the mental health needs of graduate and professional students. My colleagues and I aimed to add to the discussion by extending individualized and acute frameworks for understanding mental health (its causes and solutions) to broader, more systemic, perhaps more chronic, factors related to mental wellbeing. Specifically, we drew on Student Advisor reports to discuss the impact of negative supervisor-student relationships on mental wellness; we discussed the need to institute better practices for students on medical/stress leaves of absence (e.g. allowing these students to continue going to the gym, to have access to Queen's medical clinic and related services, to retain employment); and we underlined that students who look to faculty and administrators to champion their interests (as opposed to, say, profit incentives) often experience quite a bit of alienation. Overall, the Commissioners seemed highly receptive to our suggestions, and invited us back to the table at any point, should we want to discuss the matter further.

CFS-Ontario Executive Meeting

By way of ensuring continuity between the different levels of the CFS, the SGPS Executive voted that I replace Andrea Phillipson on the CFS-Ontario Executive. I attended my first provincial Executive meeting of the year on October 15th and 16th, and began planning the 2012 National Day of Action with other Executive members from across the province. The Day of Action, re-dubbed the 'Drop Fees' campaign, will take place February 1st, 2012. The campaign will entail lobbying the provincial government for a true tuition reduction, across the board. As you will recall, the McGuinty government promised a 30% tuition reduction if re-elected. This promise was misleading, as the proposed "reduction" will, in reality, take the form of an up-front grant for certain domestic undergraduate students only, and there is no guarantee that tuition fees won't rise at the same time. This is particularly problematic, seeing as the national student debt is set to reach \$15 billion by January 2013 – the legislated ceiling for granting student loans. Ontario member locals agreed to organize several actions in the lead up to the Day of Action. The SGPS partook in the first of these on November 1, by faxing Minister of Training, Colleges, and Universities Glen Murray a tuition fee "invoice" for a tuition fee reduction in line with Mr. McGuinty's (deceptive, or perhaps mistaken – who's to say?) promise of a "30% reduction of tuition fees for all students".

Open Access Week

The SGPS helped to coordinate Open Access Week on October 24-28, which featured two sets of live webinars held in Stauffer Library, and three visual exhibits in Stauffer, Bracken and Douglas libraries. Unfortunately, O.A. Week comes at a very busy time in the semester, and to the organizers' disappointment, no one attended either live broadcast. To save time and resources, the organizers recommended against future live broadcasts – students will instead be encouraged to register for the broadcasts from personal accounts, and to view them on their own time. More encouragingly, the Feminist Legal Studies Workshop featuring Dr. Carys Craig on "What's feminist about Open Access? A relational approach to Copyright in the Academy" was well attended on October 17th.

National Lobby Week

While I was at the CFS-Ontario Executive meeting, I was invited to attend National Lobby Week, organized by the National office of the CFS. On October 24th, and along with other students from across the country, I traveled to Ottawa to meet several MPs on Parliament Hill, including our own Mr. Ted Tsu. During each meeting, we presented Members of Parliament with our lobby document, "Public education for the public good," and discussed our 5 main recommendations: 1) the implementation of a Post-Secondary Education Act, or national vision for PSE encouraging the restoration of per capita funding through specified cash transfers to the provinces; 2) redirecting funds currently allocated to education tax credits and savings schemes to the Canada Student Grants Program to help decrease student

debt, and allowing graduate students to benefit from this program; 3) increasing the number of Canada Graduate Scholarships to reflect growing graduate student enrolment; 4) removing the funding cap on the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (capped at 2% since 1996) to ensure access to PSE for Aboriginal and Inuit students; and 5) allotting Statistics Canada \$10 million for the collection and analysis of PSE statistics, and re-introducing the mandatory long-form census. Most of the MPs I met with were intrigued by the second recommendation and thought it worthwhile to investigate. Recommendations 3 to 5 were generally very well received. Only the first recommendation was met with further resistance from all parties.

Canadian Association of Graduate Studies (CAGS)

As I write my report, I am preparing my suitcase yet again, this time for the 49th Annual Conference of the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies in Vancouver. I will have more to report on this upon my return on Sunday, and again at Council on Tuesday. Those attending the Council Prep Session on Monday next week will undoubtedly be meeting with a very jet-lagged VP Campaigns & Community Affairs – my sincere apologies in advance! Until then!

Respectfully submitted,

Anne-Marie Grondin
VP Campaigns & Community Affairs



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

As SGPS councillors reported in September and October, this has been a challenging Fall term, with the new University student management software (PeopleSoft and SOLUS) causing many problems for student registration and status changes. In terms of SGPS services, these difficulties have extended to activity fees, but the Executive Director has been hard at work ensuring that SGPS members' accounts are all in order, and I'm confident that the worst of the problems have already been handled. Please contact the SGPS office if you have any lingering difficulties, and we will do our best to help you.

The Student Life Centre (SLC) Council met last week. The council will be striking a committee, or possibly a few committees, to write policy to aid with the governance of the SLC. A big issue for the SGPS is ensuring that there is clear policy about the areas that are designated as "shared spaces" and are under the joint jurisdiction of both student societies, such as The Grey House, 51 Bader Lane. Jillian and I will ensure strong SGPS representation on the applicable committee(s).

I was one of three SGPS executive members who met with the Principal's Commission on Mental Health last month. We expressed our concerns about the need for a holistic approach to mental wellness on campus, e.g, that faculty and staff (including TAs) be included in the plan not only as resources for undergraduate students, but also as people whose own mental wellness is integral to the health of the community. We focused on concrete and local proposals, such as the institution of an occupational stress policy, as well as larger suggestions regarding the unprecedented amount of pressure on graduate students to professionalize early in their degrees. The commission is currently collecting feedback from groups and individuals, which you can direct to cmh@queensu.ca. Please consider sending the suggestions you share with the commission to the SGPS via president@sgps.ca or vpfs@sgps.ca so we are able to help realize the needs of SGPS members.

Several clubs have registered with the SGPS in the past few weeks, and I have realized that we should provide more online resources for clubs to help with start up and operation. One addition we will be making to the webpage is a section including sample club constitutions. If you have a constitution you wish to share, please submit it to the Communications Commissioner at info@sgps.ca

At last month's Ban Righ Foundation Board meeting, I shared SGPS concerns about the new tuition fee payment system that has primarily affected the professional students in our membership. The Board members were shocked and disappointed about this new development. Because so many mature women study on a part-time basis, and thus are not eligible for OSAP, the Board is particularly attuned to the deleterious effects of this requirement on personal finances, on accessibility, and on equity. The SGPS will continue to monitor members' concerns about tuition fee deadlines and discuss this issue with groups on and off campus.

Finally, the Senate Committee on Scholarships and Student Aid is recommending at least a few new awards for graduate students to Senate. Since such a vast majority of the awards are for undergraduate students, it's always exciting to see some funds earmarked for SGPS members.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Phillipson
VP Finance and Services



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

I would like to begin by offering my apologies for not being able to attend this meeting. I am away at a conference presenting my work at the IBM CASCON in Markham, but I have left you in the trusty hands of my Deputy Speaker, James. Treat him well, I will hear about it.

Rector Election

After lots of work went into preparing the policy and logistics for this first jointly run rector election, it went off smoothly and I thoroughly enjoyed working with the AMS on this venture. There will likely be some policy refinements in the near future, but they are simply results of actually running the election and seeing what worked.

As for the results: In the third round of preferential balloting, Nick Francis was declared Queen's University's 33rd Rector, having obtained 51.73% of the ballots cast in that round.

Tied for second place, having all been eliminated with Francis' win were: Mike Cannon, Asad Chishti and Robyn Laing. In third place, having been eliminated in the second round was David Myers. Eliminated in the first round was Laura Stairs.

All candidates are congratulated on their well-run campaigns. For any questions on the Rector Election, please feel free to contact me.

Committee Assignments

As mentioned at the last meeting, I was going to be doing committee assignments at the end of October, and as promised they are complete. See the attached appendix for the list of committees, and the Council members on them. Your emails have been circulated via the internal committees list, so the Chairs of these Committees will contact you when it is time to convene.

The only thing left in terms of Committees is to appoint the Chair for the Special Awards Standing Committee. The Chair of the Committee is to be a Council member (non-executive), and there are a number of Council members that have been appointed to that Committee, so we will be looking for someone who is interested, and this will be taken care of at the meeting. The job of the Chair will be mainly to organize meetings, and deal with the applications for the awards as well as other administrative duties, with assistance from the SGPS staff as needed.

Have a great month everyone, and see you in December!

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Rapos
Speaker

Senate (for the October agenda, see <http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/agendasminutes/102411.html>)

The main items on Senate's agenda last month were two notices of motion for November regarding the Academic Plan. These two motions are mutually exclusive, so if one passes the other will fail automatically.

The first notice of motion, submitted by the Academic Planning Task Force, asks Senators to approve the Plan for the University, disseminate it, "encourage the academic leadership" at Queen's "to be guided by the principles of the Plan in planning decisions," and pursue a "continuous cycle of Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring under the leadership of the Provost" (http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/agendasminutes/102411/Oct24_11AppGa.pdf).

A second motion, submitted by Senator Morelli (Physics), asks Senate "to reject the draft currently proposed" by the Task Force and "consider separately, and approve where it deems appropriate, those draft sections (most of which were included in the September draft) that were completed earlier in the year and that make documented reference to the consultative basis (unit responses, APTF consultations, and other expressions of the will of the community)" (http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/agendasminutes/102411/Oct24_11AppGa.pdf). Like the first motion, Sen. Morelli's also requests that Senate establish a ongoing planning process for the University.

These are very important motions, so I am eager to hear any thoughts, concerns, and suggestions of Council.

At the meeting, I requested that the Chair allow Senate to vote on both motions with a secret ballot. I thought that this was a reasonable request given the significance of both motions and given (in some places) the contentiousness of the motions. The Chair asked that it be put to a motion, and unfortunately it failed.

I believe that the current Plan has much to recommend it, but there are still some significant changes the Task Force hopes to make before submitting it to Senate in late November. At the October meeting, the Task Force promised Senate that before seeking Senate's approval in November it will remove all references to virtualized and "blended learning" and to supplementing graduate TAs with undergraduate tutors/TAs. The Task Force cited a lack of consensus and, at times, significant disagreement among the University community on these matters as the rationale for removing them from the Plan. Unfortunately, the changes have not been made available yet, making it somewhat premature to wholeheartedly endorse the Plan. I hope to give Council a better sense of my own thoughts in person next Tuesday – by which time the changes will hopefully be made available.

The full text of the Plan is 53 pages, so I understand this makes onerous reading material so late in the term. For this reason I'm citing two excerpts that I believe Councilors should consider particularly. The first are the 8 core principles for the University that the Plan contains, and the second is the Plan's comment on graduate studies:

- 1. Queen's must preserve the University as a balanced academy that offers an outstanding undergraduate experience enriched by high-quality graduate and professional programs within a research-intensive environment.*
- 2. Queen's must recognize that our core activities, teaching and learning, derive their nature and their meaning from our strength as a research community.*
- 3. In teaching, in research, and in its administrative operations, Queen's must both preserve genuine strengths and be open to innovation.*
- 4. Queen's must provide all students, regardless of their chosen program or discipline, with core competencies and skills.*
- 5. Queen's must both foster disciplinary learning and research and look beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries to bring methods and perspectives across the University together.*
- 6. In admissions, hiring, education, research, and service, Queen's must promote diversity, inclusivity, and equity.*

7. *Queen's must interact with local and regional intellectual culture, but also look beyond its location in Kingston and Canada to find its place in the world. In education, research, and service, Queen's must foster a global citizenship that includes local and regional citizenship.*

8. *Queen's must consider all students, whether undergraduate, graduate, or professional, first and foremost as students, putting their individual learning needs ahead of their potential contributions to the University as TAs, teachers, or researcher. (p 2)*

The graduate program

In developing many of our general principles around student learning we have generally had the undergraduate program in mind, but most of these principles apply, often in a modified form, to the graduate program. For example, academic literacy is certainly fundamental to the graduate program. Most of our students have good mastery of some of its components, such as inquiry and critical thinking, but others, such as effective writing, might be lacking and need attention.

Our graduate students have a wide range of career aspirations and goals and it is the responsibility of departments to know what these might be and to tailor their program accordingly. The small size of most of our programs and the strength of our faculty should allow us to do this well. Some of our students go on to careers as intellectuals, academics, and professors and we currently prepare them well. Others will not spend their career in a research university, and may not work in academia at all. Thus their program requirements should allow and even encourage a wider, more interdisciplinary experience and a broader array of capacities and skills more suited to the needs of different working environments.

It is likely true that most of our PhD students will be engaged in some form of teaching in their careers, either in universities and colleges or in an industrial or business context, and so it is important that we give them some serious training and experience with different forms of teaching. In particular, if we imbue our graduate students with advanced versions of the fundamental academic skills and combine these with a strong emphasis on teaching and learning education, we gain both a significant number of new and engaged educators who can benefit our undergraduate students, but also produce a rather valuable graduate. Think what it could do for our recruitment of students and the image attached to our graduate degrees if we became the university that leads in teaching our graduate students to teach, while still providing a very strong base from which to innovate and contribute through research.

Finally, our graduate students provide an essential service in terms of marking and tutoring. The other side of this coin is that the TA work typically provides a significant component of their funding. However, we must take care to pay attention to the balance of their work, between TA duties and research, and at the same time try whenever possible to give them more-creative work in the direction of undergraduate teaching.

It is critical that this teaching work be properly supervised (p 20-21)

Also at Senate, the motion requesting that percentile marks be included again in the University' marking system (along with letter grades) failed. I did not support the motion but sympathized with it, with the AMS president also did. The motivation for the motion seemed to concern the transition period/process, which indeed have been rocky in places, but it still seems a little early to change a decision that had much consultation and research invested in it.

SORC

The Senate Operations Review Committee continued meeting last month to discuss the composition of Senate. I will update Council when the committee begins to have a clearer sense about what it will recommend to Senate. I hope to give a more substantial update next month.

Respectfully submitted,
Daniel Moore



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Finance and Services Standing Committee
November 2011

This report about the committee's activities is written and submitted by the Chair of the committee, VP Finance and Services.

The committee has a great composition of general members this year, with two longtime members, one member who joined late last year, and four new members.

We had our first meeting last month, and we had a chance to review the Terms of Reference as well as other duties that are outlined in the SGPS Bylaws and Policies. As a result of this review, we may be recommending a few changes to the group's responsibilities, one of which is included in a motion with this council package. These amendments will reflect transformations the SGPS has undergone since some of these policies were written.

Our next meeting is scheduled for mid-November, when we will meet to discuss the SGPS budget.

We have been quite busy adjudicating funding applications this term. There have been several grant requests for on-campus initiatives that will occur during the 2011-12 academic year, and these have been great to see. SGPS members are deeply involved in contributing to the vitality of Queen's in creative and intellectually stimulating ways.

We have also seen the establishment of several clubs this year, and they also have events planned for the upcoming months.

On a more troubling note, we have seen a sharp increase in the number of Emergency Student Aid applications this year. This could mean that more members are aware of this service, which is a good thing. However, the kinds of applications we've seen indicate that students are facing extreme financial constraints very early in the year because any unforeseen expenses they incur are exacerbated by chronic funding shortages. As the SGPS remains committed to advocating for affordable education, this committee has begun to talk about what its contributions to that advocacy work might be.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Phillipson
Chair, Finance and Services Standing Committee

SGPS Computer Network

- I continue to work on the server-side code of our calendar server. I have corrected some of the original issues but in doing so have noticed other issues that require fixes.
- Discussion will continue with the Exec regarding off-site backups. I hope to conclude the job by the end of the year.
- I am re-writing some server code for the wiki server to prepare for automated off-site backups.
- I am looking at a significant server software upgrade (new OS version). I will take my time to verify the new software will suit our needs and fit into our existing infrastructure.
- I have completed the necessary work to allow all computers to keep differential backups on the main server. I am very pleased to report that all computers in the office now keep automatic differential backups. In case of any computer failing, we will lose very little (or more likely) no data.

SGPS Website

- I continue working on the Council and Get Involved sections of our website to make them more informative and welcoming.
- I ran into a few issues with UHIP information (incorrect original data was received). I am working to correct the errors so it can be posted on our website.
- I added a Rector Election section to our website.
- I have patched the webserver with software updates.
- I continue to weigh the benefits of creating a mobile version of our website. If you have any comments, I would love to hear them. It is looking as though only Blackberry devices would benefit, as the website code is already compliant for iOS and Android devices.

Communications

- All credits now appear on Solus accounts (for those that completed optional fee or health/dental opt-outs during the opt-out period).
- I continue to work with Queen's IT to work out kinks with mailing list services.
- A lot of work went into the Rector election: Ensuring SGPS and AMS were synchronized with respect to messaging and voting, working out major/minor details (as this was the first round of Rector Elections under the new policy as passed by SGPS Council) and working with Queen's IT to prepare the voting space for our membership.
- I am working with the OUR and SGS to update messaging that goes to members who change study status (both during September and during the rest of the academic year).
- I have started work on the 2012-2013 version of the SGPS Handbook (dayplanner). Please send any comments or suggestions.
- The 100th version of the E-Newsletter approaches. I am looking to do something special for the release of version 100. I would love to hear any ideas you have.

Respectfully submitted,
Sean Richards - info@sgps.ca

Hello SGPS Members,

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

- The Senate Educational Equity Committee (SEEC) met in October and they are extremely interested in continuing with the Equity Climate Survey that was started last year.
- The Accent Discrimination project is continuing with the printing of a brochure that will be made available publicly in the near future. An RA has been hired to assist with the resubmission of a GREB application and hopefully data collection can begin in the near future. Work is also starting on a web page to be a depository of information.
- The Equity Team's work on Disability Awareness Month last year is being reviewed and a formal document is being compiled.
- Aliya has represented our team on the Positive Space Committee. Aliya has been attending and leading workshops on Positive Space as well as in assisting with organizing as well as attending the Gay Genius Reading Tour.
- Aliya also sits on the Adhoc Sociology Equity Committee and is working with them to compile a database of equity resources.

We are continuing to work on the following;

- Aliya will link her work on with the Sociology Equity Committee with the creation of an Equity booklet for SGPS.
- Elizabeth is meeting with Health Counseling and Disability (HCDS) to discuss initiatives that could see SGPS providing assistance for graduate students with accessibility needs.
- Aliya continues to work with the committee for graduate students with disabilities.
- Equity Standing Committee will meet in the next two weeks to discuss issues around equity at Queen's

We look forward to continuing to serve you,

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Amirault

Equity Commissioner (equity@sgps.ca)

Aliya Kassam

Equity Coordinator (equityco@sgps.ca)



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the International Team
November 2011

Dear SGPS Council Members,

I hope that this report finds everyone well. Here is what the International Team got up to last month.

Things we are working on include:

- ASUS has hired an International Representative (within the last two weeks ago) and I have been in contact with the President to organize a meeting with this individual;
- We continue to communicate upcoming events to international students via the SGPS Newsletter, SGPS Facebook Page and SGS Newsletter;
- We are working to ratify the Cultural Engagement Group as a SGPS Club (Mondays from 530-630pm at QUIC);
- I have requested to change the name of the International Students' Standing Committee to the International Affairs Committee, to be more inclusive of both international and domestic students who would like to participate given the University's move to internationalize;
- I spoke with Joy Mighty, Director at the Centre for Teaching and Learning, about observing at next term's voluntary Faculty training program entitled *Focus on Diversity*. This program is run once a year to encourage faculty to take-up diverse teaching practices in the classroom;
- Sundae Sunday was held on November 6 from 1-3pm in the An Clachan outdoor courtyard. Despite the cold, the event was quite a success;
- Member of QUIC's advisory committee;
- Participating in the Equity Team's Accent Discrimination Campaign.

We're looking forward to:

- The City's Student Engagement Communications Committee meeting in late November;
- Developing the International Affairs Committee (we are still looking for members);
- Continuing to compile information about UHIP.

Please feel free to get in touch if you have any questions or concerns about the above, if you have any ideas that you would like to share. I urge you to become involved, if not with the international committee, than with other graduate and professional initiatives within SGPS or beyond.

Warm Regards,

The SGPS International Team

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

After two years of reporting as the sustainability coordinator for the SGPS, it is time to pass the torch to the new incoming coordinator, Samantha Tavenor. It has been my pleasure and honor to represent the SGPS and be a member of this fine organization. Sustainability-related future at Queen's is looking bright and green!

Re-Cycle Bike Shop

Things are moving forward on the shop front – the Yellow Bike Action is still interested in helping out and meetings have taken place last Friday with the new AMS incoming commissioners. We hope to have the first workshop organized shortly.

AMS Sustainability Forums

The first AMS roundtable forum was also organized this past month, and the next one is tonight November 1st. The Queen's Sustainability Office will make a presentation on projects done in the past. Both myself and the incoming coordinator will attend and look forward to touching base with the organizations and groups on campus to network and link up for future projects.