

## SGPS Points of question and concern

### **1. General Concern**

- There is no mention of intent as a contributing factor in the definitions of misconduct such as plagiarism or financial misconduct. Was this intentional or omitted for a particular reason?

### **2. Jurisdiction**

- We noted that the jurisdiction section of the document does not mention teaching fellows or teaching assistants. It may be prudent to add them.

### **3. Appeals and Committees**

- There was a concern expressed that ‘new evidence’ was not explicitly mentioned as a grounds for appeal (although this may be covered by *Queen’s University Senate Policy on Student Appeals, Rights and Discipline*). We seek clarification as to this point.
- There was also a concern regarding the composition of the investigative committee. If there is a student being investigated, there ought to be some type of student representation (whether it be an elected student representative or student at large) who can speak to their status as students.
- Further, with respect to faculty boards, while there is student representation on most if not all faculty boards, if this policy document were to set a minimum standard for the university as a whole, this would also address concerns about a potential lack of student representation in matters of discipline.
- There was some concern over who constitutes an ‘advisor’ (Part 7, Sec. F). Would a lawyer fall under such a definition?
- With respect to deadlines, we feel 15 days is too short of a time span within which an appeal may be filed. That deadline could fall in the middle of term or during exams and as such has the potential for unnecessarily burdening students in the midst of their studies. A deadline for the filing of an appeal of 60 days or one year from the imposition of a sanction would better respond to students’ schedules. Further to this, we seek clarification as to what the deadline is, if there is one, as stipulated in the collective agreement with faculty.

### **4. Reporting and Retaliation**

- In part 6 it states: “If a member of the Queen’s community has reasonable grounds to suspect misconduct in research or scholarly activity it is *expected* that the member will bring forward an allegation promptly”. We seek clarification as to what constitutes an

expectation and what would transpire were a student not to bring forward such an allegation (due to a number of different possible reasons, notably fear of reprisal)?

- Further, in part 6 it states: “The University will undertake appropriate measures to support individuals who have made allegations in good faith as well as others involved in an inquiry, such as witnesses”. We believe a more explicit statement of the steps the University will take to protect those who bring complaints forward is required here. Graduate students, especially, are vulnerable and require more concrete assurances.
- In section 10, the first sentence of the first paragraph reads “will take reasonable steps”. The first sentence of the third paragraph reads “shall take reasonable steps”. We seek clarification as to whether the change in language indicates any substantive difference. We also think that for consistency’s sake the sentences ought to both read “will take...”.
- In section 10, paragraph three, we feel that the language concerning retaliation ought to be much stronger, in order to provide proper assurance and to properly protect students’ vulnerable positions. For example, rather than “it is expected that...no member, etc”, it may be preferable to write “retaliation, in any form, will not be tolerated by the university, etc.” This section should also list the potential consequences for retaliation against whistleblowers. As it stands, there is no mention in the entire document of what those consequences would be.

Please inform all members of your faculty/school/department that on September 25, 2008, Senate approved the following Motion in support of academic consideration for the November 5, 2008 "Day of Action"

Senate Motion for Academic Consideration - Submitted by Senator J. Welsh, President SGPS

WHEREAS the Society of Graduate and Professional Students has planned activities for the week of November 5th, 2008 to raise public awareness about the role of post-secondary education and to pressure governments to reinvest in affordable, high-quality public education;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Senate encourage academic units and professors to be flexible in making alternate arrangements, including re-scheduling examinations and the deadlines for submission of assignments, and provide reasonable access to materials covered during lectures for students who are absent from classes on November 5th, 2008 so that they may freely participate in the Day of Action with no fear of academic repercussions;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Senate acknowledges the usefulness of a strong student effort to increase financial support for post-secondary education;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Senate endorses lawful activities to increase awareness of the need for Canada and Ontario to reinvest in affordable, high-quality public education at the post-secondary level.

Please note that Senate acknowledged that students are responsible for contacting their instructors BEFORE November 5, 2008 to request accommodation.

Thank you.

Georgina Moore

Secretary of the Senate