



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the President
October 2008

Graduate Funding

An Advisory Committee on Graduate Student Funding, consisting of two Associate Deans from the SGSR, faculty representatives from the five Divisions, and myself, has been struck with the purpose of formulating recommended guidelines on Graduate Student funding by December. The motivation is the perception of increased competitiveness from graduate programs at other universities. Options being discussed include prioritizing PhD students over Master's students, and removing QGA funding from all Master's programs other than the MA and MSc (e.g., MPA, MIR, OT, PT, SURP, LLM, etc.). Feedback from students is sought.

Graduate Residence

The Queen's Centre Management Committee has recommended that the existing Graduate Residence tower above the JDUC be retained and renovated rather than demolished. This is likely to be approved by the Board of Trustees.

SGPS Space

The Queen's Centre Management Committee has also recommended that the space allocated to the SGPS in the new Queen's Centre be increased to over 5,000 sq. ft. This would provide enough space for office and workspace expansion, as well as social or programming space. Any suggestions are welcome.

Child Care

A report outlining the inadequate provision of child care on campus is being distributed to senior administrators by Student Affairs. Discussions on ways to partner the University, the SGPS, and the AMS on better child care provision will be forthcoming. This may include the possibility of an optional student fee to help contribute.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Welsh
President

Student Advisor Program

In September, the Student Advisor Hiring Committee hired Lisa Binkley as the third Student Advisor. Welcome Lisa! Thank you to Stephanie Simpson, Harry Smith, and Helen Luu for all of their hard work on the hiring committee.

In October or November, the Student Advisor Steering Committee will meet to review the Student Advisor Program as required by the MOA between the SGPS and SGSR.

TA Consultative Committee

The TA Consultative Committee met on October 7th. The committee discussed three issues:

- 1) Parameters of operation of the Committee during the current TA/TF union drive
- 2) SGPS TA/TF survey
- 3) An agenda for 2008/09:
 - a. A common undergraduate and graduate TA rate with an honorarium for graduate students.
 - b. Enforcement of the Senate TA training policy
 - c. Discussion and analysis of responses to the Committee's TA questionnaire and actions arising from it.

David Rappaport has set an ambitious agenda for this year's committee. I agreed with other members that the committee take a 'business as usual' approach during the current TA/TF union drive. However, I also expressed concern about the possibility that Queen's human resources may exaggerate the role and effectiveness of the TA Committee in any direct employer communications with TAs during the union drive. In particular, the committee could be used as a pawn in employer communications, and such communications could amount to undue influence, which is contrary to the Ontario Labour Relations Act. Here also I proposed that the committee maintain confidentiality regarding its activities during the union drive. Some members felt that confidentiality wasn't feasible given that the committee's meeting minutes and agendas were in the public domain. Thereafter, I tabled a motion to the effect that the committee recommends that Queen's HR not refer to any of the committee's current activities in employer communications to TAs during the union drive. Members thought that this recommendation should also extend to TAFA. After much discussion no motion was adopted.

Janice Deakin revisited an earlier proposal to set a common hourly wage for graduate and undergraduate TAs with a non-taxable honorarium for graduate TAs. I expressed concern that graduate student parents would likely be negatively affected by this change if, and when, they apply for EI and other parental leave benefits because their net income, on which these benefits are calculated, would be significantly lower. Janice will look into the legality of the change.

The committee agreed to meet five times in 2008/09.

Resignation

I have decided to resign as VPIG effective October 15. I regret having to do this, however the time commitment required for this position is more than I can manage at this time. In the future I will be spending more time with my daughter and on my dissertation research. When Council elects a new VPIG in November, I will gladly train this person.

Sean Tucker
October 7, 2008



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the VP Internal Professional
October 2008

This month I have attended the Grad Club Board of Directors monthly meeting, as well as another meeting regarding the long term planning of the Grad Club. There are plans underway to place a bike rack at the Grad Club to avoid having bikes chained to the wheelchair ramp and to promote accessibility. There was a also a first aid incident which highlighted some changes in first aid policy that had to be made in order to effectively manage first aid concerns in future. In response to complaints, comments and questions about the Grad Club, I am planning to launch a customer service survey in order to highlight areas of appreciation and concern so that the Grad Club can work with the SGPS to better serve the membership.

The Professional Students Standing Committee had its first meeting in September. The committee met briefly to discuss issues of concern, revolving mainly around 1) service, 2) communication, and 3) residence concerns. Currently, the membership is comprised only of law students so I would ask that any other professional students who are interested in the committee contact me or the Committee Coordinator. The next meeting will be taking place on October 21, 2008.

In the coming months I will be working on several internal policy changes, and would like to strike an Internal Affairs Committee. This committee would be well-served by members who have experience working in or with the SGPS. It is my goal that we adapt the current positions and policies that the SGPS has to become more flexible and to provide better transitions.

I, along with many other SGPS members, attended a conflict resolution training session. This training session is one which has been repeated for several years with the SGPS and I would like to thank the facilitators of this session, I believe it to be a valuable resource for SGPS employees.

As always feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns,

Sincerely,

Jamie Kneen
Vice President Internal Professional
vpip@sgps.ca



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Vice President External
October 2008

November 5th Day of Action

The first meeting of the Campaigns and Community Relations Subcommittee was held (if interested in participating, please contact me). We discussed logistical and advertising plans for the Day of Action amongst other topics. Also, the Senate passed a motion of Academic Amnesty (See attached). I hope to advertise heavily in the coming weeks in order to publicize the goals of the day as well as to garner interest in participating. A petition is circulating regarding the goals of the Day of Action – if you're interested in either signing the petition or distributing it and gathering signatures in your department please see me. The deadline for the submission of petitions to the Provincial Government is October 22nd.

Provincial Activist Assembly

The CFS Activist Assembly was held Sept. 26th and 27th in Toronto with over 400 individuals participating from over 25 different schools from Ontario. Queen's sent several representatives. By all accounts, the Assembly was a success in terms of attendance as well as from the perspective of the participants, in terms of raising awareness of issues in post-secondary education and providing attendees with helpful skills to organize on their campuses.

Ontario Executive Meeting (Toronto, Sept. 28)

There was a one-day special executive meeting of the Ontario Component of CFS. Items discussed were reports back from the Activist Assembly as well as plans for the upcoming day of action. Other items discussed included the faculty strike at the University of Windsor (since ended) as well as the case of Saad Alam, a University of Toronto student who is presently subject to a deportation order.

Academic Integrity

There is presently a review underway with respect to academic integrity procedures at Queen's. I met with Susan Marlin, assistant VP of Research and presented the SGPS's executives set of concerns. Please see attached. I will raise these points at the subcommittee's meeting which will address the draft document. Please contact me if you have any concerns or comments on the process or document attached.

Federal Election

CFS has prepared a 'report card' detailing the parties' different positions on post-secondary education issues. It is attached to this report. They have also developed a website: voteeducation.ca. The SGPS also helped advertise the debate held at Queen's on October 7th, although the debate was primarily organized by the AMS. The debate was well attended.



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Vice President Operations
October 2008

Restructuring of Financial Assistance Programs

The Operations and Finance Standing Committee will begin the restructuring of the current financial assistance programs available through application at the SGPS. These programs are Emergency Student Aid; Grants Funding; Dental Bursary; and we may also possibly implement some new programs. This will occur over the course of this year and any feedback and suggestions are welcome. Please contact me at vpops@sgps.ca if you have any ideas that you would like to see in these programs.

Council's Discretionary Fund

I would like to inform you that the SGPS Council has a \$1000 discretionary fund available for various projects and causes for the benefit of the SGPS membership. It may be obtained by a simple majority vote at regular Council meetings. If you are preparing for a project that is open to the SGPS members and is geared toward benefiting our membership as a whole, please look into this option as well as our Grants Funding program.

Grants Program

Members of the SGPS are launching a few projects that will serve our membership in various aspects. Please continue to check on the SGPS website and SGPS newsletter for news on the SGPS-led events and initiatives.

Respectfully submitted,
Victoria Bae
Vice President Operations



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Social Commissioner
October 2008

Graduate Student Homecoming Event “Get Acquainted With Queen’s Traditions!”

The SGPS teamed up with the Queen's Alumni Association for a good time of free food and prizes at the Grad Club on September 24th. We invited grad students to come and learn about the traditions that happen at Queen’s every year during homecoming. We had low attendance at this event; nevertheless it was a great start to establishing an annual homecoming event for graduate students. Next year we hope to start planning a few months prior to homecoming weekend in hopes of making it a great success for years to come. We gave out 50 tickets to the homecoming game this year, we hope to give out many more next year. I want to thank Athletics and Recreation for providing us with the game tickets and of course the SGPS executives, especially Jeff for their help and support.

Upcoming Event for the month of October

Oktoberfest

We are planning an Oktoberfest evening event on Wednesday October 29th, 2008. Here are the details

When: Wednesday, Oct. 29th, 5 – 8 pm

Where: Amadeus Schnitzel Haus

Price: \$10.00

Why: To celebrate Oktoberfest in the traditional German style

Please buy your tickets from the front desk at the SGPS office.

Ticket will include one of the following

- Oktoberfest/Bratwurst Sausage (served with herbed potatoes, Saurkraut, and soup or salad)
- Pork Schnitzel (with herbed potatoes, vegetables)
- Chicken Kiev (served with rice or potatoes)
- Veggie Melange (Spatzle, red cabbage, bread, and potatoes)

Specialty German Beers will be served and expect prize giveaways on a first come first serve basis!!! We are looking forward to seeing you there

Respectfully submitted,

Diala Habib
Social Commissioner

Events Calendar

- I have gained access to the Queen's Events Calendar on the main Queen's website. I am now able to post events on behalf of the SGPS. Events are posted on the Events Calendar and are also posted on the info displays throughout campus.

E-Newsletter

- I am floating the idea of putting ads in the E-Newsletter. There would be stipulations for who could place an ad and what percentage of the newsletter would be dedicated to ads. This is a possible source of revenue for the SGPS, which could offset many of our communications expenses. Please let me know your feedback on this.

SGPS Computer Network

- I have all the new Mac Minis installed at the office. I am working to create a few extra workstations so more of our team has a place to do work in the office. I also intend to create a kiosk at the front desk so members that come to our office have access to a computer and the internet.
- The network lacks an overall system for backups and network security. I am currently in the process of putting together a proposal, which will address this issue. Expect more details on this in my November report to Council.
- I am working to upgrade our aging mail server and various other parts of our network backbone. These changes will not impact our general members.

SGPS Website

- I'm working to integrate some of our internal systems with the website to make sure the info on the website is constantly up-to-date. I am also working to add some new web applications, which will hopefully be useful to our membership.

Opt-In / Opt-Out

- The computerized version of the optional fee opt-out worked very well this year from my point of view. It saved a great deal of work processing the paper opt-outs (about 3 or 4 days of saved work). I would like to hear what you thought about the computerized process. Any suggestions you have for the future would be greatly appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,
Sean Richards - info@sgps.ca

Committees:

1. Council on Employment Equity
 - a. Assisted in the search committee for a new chair of the council
 - b. Assisted with the anti-harassment policy of the University
 - c. Attended monthly meetings
2. Positive Space Committee
 - a. Attended meetings, which are currently on hold until September
 - b. Assisted with Pride events
 - c. Attended a social for queer business owners in Kingston
3. Robert Sutherland Visitor ship committee
 - a. Attended meeting to establish what time of year to have the visitor ship and to revamp the requirements and the call for scholars
4. SGPS Accessibility Committee
 - a. This is not yet a committee, but we are seeking to make it a committee, so far, we have met to discuss general accessibility on campus as well as invited the AMS to be a part of the committee. We are seeking to make this an SGPS committee and our initiatives are to make the general population of Queen's aware of issues of accessibility as well as to provide a forum for people to engage with the issues and politics of accessibility while also trying to make Queen's a more accessible campus. Right now, I am working with the city to try and turn the lights at University and Union into beeping lights for those individuals with varied vision.
5. Centre for Teaching and learning Search Committee
 - a. Attended the first meeting and discussed what the job posting would be
6. Accessibility Queen's
 - a. I have just been invited to sit on this committee and we have yet I have a meeting but I have been reading the minutes from the previous meetings to catch myself up.

General:

- I had the first meeting with the equity committee and I am still trying to find other people to sit on the committee
- I have continued to plan for the speaker series as well as started to work on new projects
- Social Issues Commissioner for the AMS as well as QCRED and I are going to write an article to the journal about the racism, homophobia and Islamophobia that has been happening on campus recently



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Committee Coordinator
October 2008

SGPS Appointing Standing Committee

The chair welcomed Mark Hoidas on board. We put together the comments from the chairs of SGPS committees to update the committee description on the SGPS committee web-page. The first update focused on the overall function and general plane/objectives for the year for each of the committee. We now plan to establish regular information flow between the appointing committee and the rest of the committees in order to keep our member informed. Thanks to all the chairs who provided comments, and we look forwards to continuing working with you this year.

Queen's Day Care Board

During September Board meeting, the Board have decided to go ahead with both referendum for optional fees—AMS for the full term and SGPS for the winter term. The amount of the optional fee asked has not been decided; it has been 1 dollar for the AMS opt-out for the past 3 year.

The wait list for the Day Care continues to grow, and in the beginning of the school year, the list reached close to 350 children. The board now recommends the parents to act early—register your child on the wait list as soon as you find out that the mom is pregnant.

Other University Committees

Queen's Accessibility Committee: one student with disability and one graduate student have applied for the Ex. Office sit, The Appointing Standing Committee will meet shortly to nominate the best candidate for the position.

Curriculum Committee of Faculty of Arts and Science: Sayema Rawof accepted the position.

University Council on Athletics: Melissa Pak, SGPS Athletic Coordinator, accepted the position.

Teaching Assessment Committee (of Centre for Teaching and Learning): 1 position successfully filled early October.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joellen Lin
Committee Coordinator

Board of Trustees

The Board met this past weekend and I attended nearly two full days of meetings relating to an incredibly packed agenda. As you know, Queen's is experiencing both a construction boom and a budget crunch, and the two in combination have yielded some interesting discussions and opportunities for future development.

Among the motions passed at the meeting:

Finance Related (non-Queen's Centre)

- The audited financial statements of Queen's were presented for approval by the Audit and Risk Management Committee. Amongst the items that continue to provide some concern is the increasing disparity between revenues and expenses at Queen's. With the majority of revenue tied to tuition fees and (often restricted) provincial grants, Queen's has little wiggle room on this side of the balance sheet, and will be looking to strategically cut expenses to maintain a balanced budget.
- Advancement Funding Model – the Office of Advancement has been funded in the past by a 'gift tax' of 5% on all donations. This policy has been unpopular and many donors have refused to pay. For the next year, the 'tax' has been eliminated and an increased portion of investments will be used to fund the office until a permanent funding model can be established.

Queen's Centre Related

- An additional \$7-million of funds for the School of Kinesiology and Health Studies was approved. The initial amount requested was higher but the Board opted to approve a lower amount of money, which will force some cutbacks to the building. The likely savings source will be LEED certification of the building, which costs over \$400 000 in administrative/inspection fees.
- Approval of a liability management policy based on debt capacity and affordability – Although this isn't directly Queen's-Centre-related, the policy was precipitated by the long-term debt that will be borrowed to fund the QC project. The next step in debt policy will be to establish policy relating to principal repayment. Also approved was a short-term loan of funds to begin to solve the cash flow needs of Queen's as construction continues and details relating to the long-term debt are established.

Also of note:

- Statement of Responsible Investing was provided for information, establishing a complaint-based system relating to the university's investing practices

- QUASR Project Update relating to the planned overhaul of the human resources, finance and student systems at Queen's. Funds have yet to be approved for the project, which will be phased over several years.
- Information provided on the Queen's Centre Phase 2/3 Review and the proposed governance model for the Queen's Centre in operation

Please email me with comments, questions, and concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

Leora Jackson (rector@queensu.ca)



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of Biology Department Representatives
Richard Morrow and Tony Silva
May 2008

The past month has brought about a lot of buzz in the Biology Department with respect to both funding and TAFE related issues. Having discussed unionization both within the Biology internal graduate student government and the general graduate population as a whole, there doesn't appear to be a movement for unionization among the students. Many students don't see the need or feel the union is reaching out to their needs as biology students. There have also been concerns about TAFE members visiting lab and office space to sign cards.

I attended the open town hall put on by the SGPS and was happy to get further perspective on the process of unionizing and the collective bargaining agreement. I was surprised at the lack of graduate student turn out for what I felt was a well publicized effort on behalf of the SGPS.

The Biology Department is looking to host several social events before the end of the year but is again completely lacking in funding from our department to do so. The "Welcome Back BBQ", traditionally held with some funding from the department, was put on and was a great success. This however was purely a result of the pooling of funds among the organizers and the good will of upper-year graduate students.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard Morrow
Biology Department Council Representative
2rjm1@queensu.ca