

Dear Councilors,

As this will be my last report, I would like to provide a brief overview of recent accomplishments, important works in progress, and challenges to be considered – a “State of the Society”, if you will. What I hope readers will take from this is that the Society serves to protect the interests of the members in numerous ways, and that a handful of people working on behalf of the Society can achieve a great deal in a short time. Graduate and Professional students, always self-absorbed within a narrowly-focused program, must constantly be reminded that they must learn to be good colleagues and good citizens, as well as good students. It will be expected of them after they graduate.

Some Accomplishments

First, let me list some of the accomplishments, both big and small, that have been achieved over the past year and a half in whole or in part through the efforts of the SGPS. This list is by no means exhaustive:

1. Expanding Horizons: in collaboration with the School of Graduate Studies, Student Affairs, and several other units in 2008, a series of academic support seminars and workshops was developed for our membership (including writing workshops, research seminars, etc.), scheduled so as not to conflict, and advertized under the label “Expanding Horizons”. They have been well received, and continue this year.
2. Grad Life Working Group: Also in collaboration with Student Affairs and the School of Graduate Studies, a committee has explored various non-academic issues and supports for graduate and professional students, including health and wellness, housing, child care, etc.
3. Orientation: More and better events have been developed over the past two summers for Orientation Week, including the general Orientation Info-Fair and lunch in BioSci (held for the second time last month), and several others organized by our Social Committee.
4. Social Events: Our Social Committee inaugurated what have already become popular annual events, such as a summer rafting trip, a winter ski trip, an Oktoberfest dinner, Speed Meeting, etc.
5. Queen’s Centre space: The SGPS was able to secure more work space, a lounge, and a kitchen in the plans for the next phase of the Queen’s Centre.
6. Grad Res: Plans to demolish Graduate Residence above the JDUC were not only reversed, but another floor of rooms below it will be added for next Fall.
7. International students: the Chair of the International Students’ Committee has become a Coordinator, and is active in working with the International Centre and other offices on behalf of our members.
8. Reps on SGS Exec: The School of Graduate Studies was prevailed upon to include 2 voting students and 5 non-voting students on the new SGS Executive Committee, rather than the sole student rep proposed.
9. Robert Sutherland Hall: After much lobbying in conjunction with the AMS and Rector, the university named the Policy Studies Bldg after Robert Sutherland, an

- 1852 Queen's graduate who was the first university graduate and lawyer of colour in Canada, and the first major benefactor of the university.
10. Henry Report: The VP Academic will now provide annual updates to Senate each October on progress towards meeting the recommendations from the "Henry Report" on racism faced by faculty.
 11. Ethical investing policy: The Board of Trustees established a process for hearing complaints regarding unethical practices by companies in which Queen's is a shareholder.
 12. Teaching Fellows: The University recognized the SGPS as representatives for Teaching Fellows, and the VP (Academic) is working with the SGPS to clarify and codify applicable policies.
 13. CDRM for TAs, harassment: The Coordinator of Dispute Resolution Mechanisms at Queen's agreed to hear and mediate cases involving conflicts between TAs and instructors, and involving non-discriminatory harassment.
 14. QUFA collective agreement applies to students: The Faculty Association agreed that the section of their collective agreement with Queen's regarding workplace harassment applies to faculty harassment of students as well as harassment of faculty by students.
 15. TAs are employees: Queen's acknowledged that the university is the employer of TAs, not individual instructors.
 16. Safe disclosure: The university established a committee to draft a safe disclosure ("whistleblowers' protection") policy, which is in progress.
 17. John Orr Tower rent: A proposed rent increase of 15% was successfully reduced to 5% for this year.
 18. John Orr Tower Residents' Council: A new Residents' Council was established at John Orr Tower (which is classified as a residence).
 19. Expanded medical coverage, frozen premiums: Our Health Plan coverage increased this year, but the premiums did not.
 20. Successful integration of ESS: The Education Students' Society has been integrated into the SGPS.
 21. Sustainability Committee: The SGPS Sustainability Committee was successfully launched last year.
 22. Queen's Sustainability Advisory Committee: After much lobbying, a new university sustainability committee is in the process of being established, to be chaired by the VP Academic and the VP Finance.
 23. Lower tuition increases: After much lobbying, tuition increases last year were reduced below the maximum allowed, with the greatest savings for international students.
 24. Shared service representation: SGPS seats have been secured on the Journal Board, the Walkhome committee, and the Accessibility Queen's Committee.
 25. Better food: Through the Food Committee, Sodexo has been pushed to expand their offerings on campus, and Gord's has been opened.
 26. Two General Meetings: This will be the first year that the SGPS holds a General Meeting in each term, to allow for greater input from members.
 27. New Senators: The university Senate will vote next month to add two new graduate student seats to Senate.
 28. New Executive Director: Sean Richards was hired as the new SGPS Executive Director, which now includes the Communications portfolio, in 2008. He has done an amazing job.

Work in progress

1. Teaching Fellow policies: These must still be worked out with the VP Academic.
2. TA issues: Work remains to be done to get every Department to comply with Senate policies regarding TAs.
3. Graduate equity study: The School of Graduate Studies is working with the SGPS Equity Commissioner to gather and analyze data on graduate students to ensure there are no significant discrepancies in the treatment of graduate students.
4. Student fee protocol: A general protocol on non-tuition student fees must be worked out with the AMS and the VP Academic this year.
5. Housing: The SGPS committee investigating possibilities for the provision of housing for our members is still working in conjunction with local lawyers and consultants from QSB. The university must also be prevailed upon to increase its provision of housing for our members.
6. Work space: The \$43 million Queen's is receiving from the province for graduate student space needs has yet to be allocated.
7. Grad College: Principal Woolf, VP Academic Patrick Deane, and Dean of Graduate Studies Janice Deakin will be investigating the possibility of a new residential Graduate College, with offices, teaching spaces, meeting rooms, and accommodations for SGPS members on or near campus.
8. Expanded office space: The SGPS will occupy some new office spaces in the JDUC once the Queen's Centre opens (in December?).
9. Child care: After two years of work and an earlier report last year, the Ad Hoc Child Care Working Group will be releasing a report later this month with recommendations for improvements to and expansion of available child care.
10. Safe Disclosure: The Safe Disclosure committee is in the process of drafting a policy for the university.
11. Senate seat allocation: Senate will decide this year whether or not to allocate the Education Student Senate seat to the ESS.
12. UHIP campaign: The campaign to restore OHIP to international students (who already pay taxes) that was begun by a previous SGPS Executive has gone province-wide, and is continuing.
13. Copyright: The SGPS, AMS, Queen's University, and the Faculty Association submitted a joint letter with recommendations on proposed changes to copyright legislation in order to protect academic research and teaching interests. Results are not yet known.
14. IP, publishing guidelines: The School of Graduate Studies and the VP Academic's office have been working to meet the SGPS's request to clarify general guidelines related to intellectual property and the publication of data for faculty and students.
15. Insurance for post-docs: The SGPS continues to make our Dental Plan available to post-docs at Queen's until such time as the university decides if it is going to categorize post-docs as either staff or student-trainees.

Challenges

1. Queen's Centre: The SGPS must remain vigilant to ensure that it receives the space it needs when the JDUC is renovated; that extra costs are not improperly down-loaded onto the SGPS; and the SGPS retains a place in the Queen's Centre governance structure.
2. TAs: Given imminent further budget cuts at Queen's, the SGPS must assess the impact on the availability and terms of TAs going forward.

3. Funding: The allocation of QGA money under the new funding formula must be tracked, and a guaranteed minimum for Master's students and Fifth Year PhD funding should be pursued.
4. University Governance: The SGPS must ensure that the current governance review being undertaken by the Board of Trustees does not exclude students.
5. Academic review: The SGPS must ensure that our members have input into the Principles "strategic review" of programs and curricula being undertaken this year.
6. Bursaries, grants: Keeping up with the ever-rising demand on SGPS bursaries and grants will be a challenge without increased funding.
7. Internal affairs: The Executive and Council must continue to improve communications with and support of the various student associations within each faculty and department.
8. Staff support: More paid staff support is already desperately needed, and must be worked out in the near future. The SGPS is of a size and complexity that one full-time staff person is not able to provide all of the necessary support services. There are some support functions desperately needed, yet our Executive Director is already greatly over-worked. This must be addressed if the Society is to be able to function efficiently in future.

Transition

I will work with our Executive Director, Sean Richards, over the course of the coming days to transition our in-coming Executives.

Thanks

I wish to thank my SGPS colleagues for their hard work and dedication, as well as their patience with my often-demanding persona. The Front Desk staff has handled floods of students with opt-ins, opt-outs, ISIC cards, and various questions and problems with patience and good-will. The Student Advisors have handled dozens of often difficult cases, and in the process helped many of our members through very difficult circumstances. Our Social Committee, Diala, Jordan, Audrey, and Trista, has greatly increased the opportunities for members to interact in non-academic activities. Our International Student Coordinator, Aasma Khan, has increased the role this year. Our Committee Coordinator, Laura Gale, has been pro-active and made excellent suggestions. Vicky Bae, a VP last year, has been an excellent Deputy Speaker and very active on the Finance Committee. Speaker Mark Rosner, also a VP last year, has been extremely diligent and conscientious in his running of Council. Usman Mushtaq, our impressive Equity Commissioner, has greatly exceeded any reasonable expectations, having undertaken an astonishing array of projects and committee work across the university on our behalf. He will be greatly missed in that role.

My fellow VPs will be missed. Joellen Lin, recently resigned as VP Graduate and Committee Coordinator before that, has worked very diligently on numerous committees, always with patience and a positive attitude, despite significant personal upheaval occasioned by the departure of her supervisor to another university. Kate Kahn, our VP Professional, worked hard to stay in touch while away for summer legal work, and has good-naturedly met every request for additional tasks. Steve Osterberg, VP Campaigns and Community Affairs, has been an asset in numerous spheres of activity and a joy to work with. His enthusiasm greatly appreciated. Amir Nosrat, VP Finance and Services, has laboured mightily both to improve the functions of his office and to organize the

research for the proposed Housing Authority. Our constituents will never know the degree of effort he has put in on their behalf.

Finally, I wish to thank Sean Richards, our Executive Director, who keeps the Society afloat. He has vastly improved our IT capabilities and our communications, all the while working inhuman hours to perform the administrative functions of the Society in a timely manner (and enduring my constant interruptions). The Society would be wise to retain his services for as long as it can.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Welsh

Student Advisors (“SA”) Program

Lisa has successfully completed the re-hiring interview and is re-hired to be one of the three SAs this year. I thank Lisa for her hard work this past year, particularly the work on solving various difficulties faced by international female students on campus. She worked closely with our Equity Commissioner Usman and SGPS International Students Committee chair Aasma as well as the Ban Righ Centre in attempt to address the problems. Her observations and recommendations were also brought forward to SGPS and SGS via her Winter and Annual reports. I recommend SGPS maintaining a close contact with Lisa as it develops the proposal of a coordinator position in looking into women and childcare issues.

The SA hiring committee invited 7 candidates (out of 19 applications* in total) for the interviews and hired two outstanding candidates, Usman Mushtaq and Sylvia Bawa, to join our SA program. I am confident that, together with Lisa, Usman and Sylvia will do a fantastic job in not only helping our members in need but also bring forward important issues to the attention of SGPS, SGS, and other appropriate organization in order to solve these problems on the systemic level.

Student advisors can be reached at studentadvisors@sgps.ca.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the hiring committee, Harry Smith (coordinator of dispute resolution mechanisms), Margot Coulter (Human Rights Office), Jeff Welsh (SGPS President), Lara Greisman (SGPS Equity Coordinator) and Patrick Egbunonu (out-going SGPS Student Advisor) for the expertise they brought to the committee in order to assemble the strongest team possible, as well as the patients and supports they had shown that made the hiring process as smooth as possible.

As education students now members of SGPS, I have started toying around the idea of making SA program physically available on West Campus. Any inputs (pro and cons) welcome. Please forward the ideas to VP Graduate.

* in addition to the 16 applications reported last month, two applications submitted in hard copies and one electronic copy were not included at the time when the council report was due.

Grad Life Working Group

A website for graduate students assembled by Student Affairs is almost completed. Please visit the website gradlife.queensu.ca to take a sneak peek of the site and forward any recommendations and/or mistakes spotted to VP Graduate.

The Graduate Student Orientation hosted by SGS was a great success this year; however, the lunch supply fell short yet again due to an even larger turn out. The GLWF credited SGPS for a successful advertisement and the hard work of SGPS social team had put in in making it a fun and enjoyable event for the grad students. A more economical option of hosting the event during breakfast time has been proposed (i.e. 9-11a.m.) for next year. Please forward your comments on the event in general and/or

proposed time change to VP Graduate and/or Social Commissioner Diala (social@sqps.ca).

To further address challenges faced by graduate student with children, particularly newly arrived international students with family, GLWG has added this issue as a regular agenda item to be discussed at everything meeting this year. GLWG supports the SGPS proposal of a coordinator position in looking into issues faced by female graduate students with children.

Due to potentially overwhelming information a newly arrived grad student may receive during the Orientation week, Queen's University International Centre (QUIC) is considering eliminating the International Student Orientation event during the O-Week, instead, it can offer similar information sessions as part of the Expanding Horizon workshop series from SGS at the latter time. Any comments supporting or against the idea is welcome. Please forward them to VP Graduate.

O-Week Departmental Rounds

I have received several thank you letters or oral gratitude from the departments that I had the opportunity to visit during their departmental orientations to introduce SGPS to the new graduate students as well as answer any questions the students have. I think this is a great way to pass on important information to new students who have missed the advertisements or have forgotten the information they had come across before they arrive campus. Please forward any comments on how we can further improve the O-Week Departmental Rounds to Jeff (president@sqps.ca), Sean (info@sqps.ca), or VP Graduate.

Final Remark

It has been an honor serving our members as committee coordinator followed by VP Graduate of SGPS for the past one year and half. It's a wonderful feeling that I could give back to the school where I studied for the past 9 years, and hopefully had make it a little bit better of a study environment for the new people who come after me. It has also been a great pleasure to work with two strong SGPS Executive teams (Jeff Welsh, Mark Rosner, Vickey Bae, Jamie Keen, Steve Osterberg, Amir Nosrat, Kate Kahn and Sean Richards) and the SAs (Paul Quick, Patrick Egbunonu and Lisa Binkley), from whom I have learned so much. With Diala's fun spirit and leadership, I know our members will enjoy many of the social events to come. With Usman leaving the Equity Commissioner position, the next commissioner will have big shoes to fill; Usman still amazed me how much he knows about university polices. Big thanks to Sean Richards and all the front desk staff for setting up such a friendly and welcome tone in the air every time anybody walks into the SGPS office, me included. It really made a difference on a raining day. I would also like to acknowledge Laura Gale for making my life so much easier by doing a wonderful job as our committee coordinator. Finally, thanks to all the council members for your supports.

Respectively Submitted,

Joellen Lin
Out-Going Vice President Graduate
vpq@sqps.ca

Hello SGPS'ers!

I hope everyone is settling well in to the semester. I would like to give a special welcome to the newly elected council of our newest members, the Education Students Society!

Staff Contracts

This past month, I have been working on putting together staff contracts for all SGPS employees. These contracts will hopefully resolve issues surrounding job expectations and conditions.

Health/Dental

A number of our members have expressed a desire to see a concrete comparison between the AMS and SGPS Health and Dental Plans. I am currently undertaking to put together a document would outline these plans side by side, looking at how each plan addresses different services. I am hoping to have the report ready for the next council meeting.

Professional Student Standing Committee

The Professional Student Standing Committee needs your involvement! If you are a student in Law, Education, Theology or Occupation/Physical therapy, please consider joining us. The PSSC is responsible for informing council on any and all issues relevant to professional students. It is our vehicle to be heard! Members of the PSSC will also have the opportunity to help in the planning and organizing of workshops and other educational forums. If you have ideas about any type of event that would be of benefit to professional students, we want to hear it and make it happen. We will be meeting next Wednesday, October 21 at 1:30pm in the Grad Club.

Special Committee – Human Resources Committee

I am planning on striking this special committee at this council meeting. This purpose of this committee is to overview the general organizational structure of the SGPS. This committee will be responsible for drawing up guidelines and more detailed job descriptions for the many positions within the SGPS, and advising on improved communication methods between SGPS employees and appointees. The purpose of this committee is to design a framework for our organization that will aid in transitioning and continuity.

Feel free to contact me with any questions/concerns about the above, or with any other issues!

Kate Kahn
VPP - SGPS

It's Fall: Time for Zombies and Activists

Warmest greetings fellow SGPS members as the season turns cooler once again things have been afoot in the executive and abroad and I have much to report this time around. Before I begin however, I would like to apologize to those members who feel I may have pushed through the 2009-2010 Budget at our last meeting by calling the question. To be sure this forced a very quick acceptance of the budget and, rightly so, upset some council members. Please be assured that was not done in any sort of effort on my part or of the executive to avoid debate or discussion or to underhandedly push through a questionable budget. I support the efforts of our executive and our most capable VP of Finance wholeheartedly. The budget is in my mind both financially responsible and ideologically reflective of what I feel the majority of council supports. At this weekend's Canadian Federation of Students meeting in Toronto I was surprised to find that a handful of student governments do not operate with successful budgets and in fact operate at a loss. It is a testament to the diligence of council and the efforts of the executive that we continue to operate responsibly. If anyone has any questions about my decision to call the question at our last council meeting, I would gladly spend time discussing this matter. Now on too the good stuff.

City of Kingston/Queen's Relations:

Although there was but one meeting of the committee in the interval, there are a few items of note that may interest council. First is the City's web page which continues to be reworked in order to be of greater accessibility and use for students. Of particular note is the introduction of a mapping function that allows one to enter their location and their destination (ie: Queen's and the train station) and generate a map of the route with options for getting there (walking, public transport, etc.). This feature will no doubt be of much help to new students this year. A safety sub-committee is being formed to work further on the issue of student safety within the city. More will follow as we begin discussions. The other item of note, though surprisingly no meeting has of yet addressed this, is the homecoming (faux-coming?) that occurred in late September. All I can comment on this is that the lack of a meeting which had been scheduled for the following week may suggest that both the university and the city were happy with how things played out.

Internal Affairs:

Although the housing authority met with resounding support from council this summer, it appears that some members at our last council meeting had reservations and much of the hard work the sub-committee members put into research and proposals has now been put aside pending further discussions. This disappoints immensely but such is the nature of democracy and I must respect the wishes of council. In the end this may prove beneficial anyway. We will have to wait now and see what sort of a mandate council provides the housing authority on how to proceed.

I have just been in contact with Marie-Therese Large from Elections Canada and we are opening discussion on how best to circumvent the passing of two new laws that are making it harder for students to vote while attending university. This is not anything to panic about as the laws deal primarily with stricter identification protocols, but the end effect is that fewer students will be able to vote without a directed plan to counter-act this development. More to follow in the coming months

The loss of our President will be a monumental blow to the executive and the student body at large and we are working on strategies to combat the massive hole in student representation and advocacy Jeff's departure will bring. In order to maintain the level of work Jeff has performed in his time in office, more specific job allocations and requirements will be needed for the other executive positions in the future. Additionally, there is the possibility of creating new commissioner and/or co-ordinator positions in order to meet the needs of all of our members.

The office re-dux is nearly complete and I didn't spill paint once!

CFS Ontario Executive Committee Meeting:

This year's meeting once again took place in Toronto and council members will be pleased to note that it was attended only by myself (a scary prospect in many respects I know) thereby incurring minimal cost. Much was developed and completed at this meeting but of particular interest was the presence of the Hon. John Milloy, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities and Minister of Research and Innovation. In a 45 minute session with representatives from the Ontario locals of the CFS, Minister Milloy and his side heard issues facing students, both graduate and undergraduate, in Ontario. I specifically raised the issue of underfunding for graduate students and how this has negatively affected the quality of "student experience". Far from a complaint session, the discussion was positive and members offered possible solutions and points of discussion regarding everything from funding to staffing to OHIP for international students. Of note is that both the budget and a new framework for funding and tuition will both be presented in the new year at some time making this meeting quite timely. I would be happy to elaborate during our council meeting for those who may be interested.

Articles in the Toronto and the McGill university newspapers spoke to a growing grassroots plan for 13 locals including Trent, Guelph, Western, and Carleton, to succeed from the CFS. Discussions In Camera (I cannot discuss specifics for obvious reasons) revealed the true nature of the articles and the falsehoods of the reporting. In overall terms this appears to be a battle over the ideological use of student fees: should they be used specifically for services such as bus passes, walk home services, pubs, club spaces, etc., or should they also be used to aid students with disabilities, students of colour, international students, female students, or those whose voice is not easily heard. Please note this is my own interpretation of what few facts were available and not an official position of the CFS. In the end this may simply be the work of a few people who just hate the CFS.

The remainder of the meeting dealt with individual locals reports and with campaign planning and execution. CFS Ontario is primarily focused on the November 5th Day of Action currently, but was also engaged in sustainability, OHIP for international students, and other campaigns. The poster for the 20th Anniversary of the Ecole Polytechnique

Massacre was revealed and I made a proposal for a tree planting campaign to be started on campuses across the province.

SGPS Campaigns:

Our focus for October will be the November 5th Day of Action and the post card signing campaigns. Thus far Ontario locals have collected over 85 000 post card calling on the Premier to increase funding for universities, lower tuition costs, and work towards ridding the province of poverty.

In November our focus will shift to a concentrated campaign to restore OHIP for international students. Additionally, I will endeavour to raise awareness on campus of the importance of collectively remembering the causes and consequences of the December 6th killings in Quebec.

The new year will begin with a focused effort on increasing Queen's sustainability and making ours the first campus to go water bottle free in Ontario...I can actually remember when we all drank from water fountains and we never had H1N1!

Respectfully submitted,
Steve Osterberg

2008-2009 Budget:

The executive director and I are currently working to audit the financial statements for the previous fiscal year, after which I would be able to present our exact revenues and expenditures to the Finance and Services Committee and to Council as per our bylaws and policies.

Housing Committee:

I am happy to report that the Housing Committee has prepared a report for this October Council meeting. The Housing Committee will not proceed with establishing the Housing Authority until we have obtained a professional assessment from Queen's Business Consulting (QBC). A copy of the report and a copy of QBC's proposal has been submitted to the Speaker for this Council meeting. The proposal actually contains 2 feasibility studies, one pertaining to the Housing Authority and one pertaining to the SGPS café. The latter comes from a strategic overview report done by QBC in 2007 that had recommended establishing an SGPS centre offering healthy food options, a café, quiet study space, boardrooms, and quiet study space for graduate and professional students. Seeing that we may not have the resources to implement an SGPS centre, and we are still waiting to see the final plans Phase II and III of the new Queen's Centre, it may not be prudent to move ahead with that recommendation. A smaller SGPS café would still aim towards that goal and be within our capabilities. I would be requesting approval from Council to hire QBC and to allocate \$3500 for this consultation. Finally, I would like to thank all members of the committee for preparing the report.

Stipend and Wage Increases:

As mentioned in my report in August, the Finance and Services committee has been looking at the possibility of increasing the stipend and wages of the elected, appointed, and hired members of the SGPS and have made a recommendation. I have decided to submit this recommendation for Councilors' review ahead of the November General Meeting. As required in our bylaws and policies, any changes in the stipends and honoraria have to be approved at a General Meeting. The newly proposed compensation scheme would incorporate two key elements:

1. Payments will no longer be made in the form of honoraria.
2. Payments will be categorized in different tiers. The proposed tiers are President, Vice-President, Commissioner, Coordinator, and Officer of Council.

The Finance and Services committee have cited the following reasons for this stipend increase:

1. There have been little non-CPI related increases over the past years. As a result, the cost of living has outpaced compensation.
2. The SGPS staff is over-leveraged with respect to the number of members in our Society and compared to other student societies.
3. Paid elected and appointed positions are underpaid with respect to other student societies.
4. Low wages are negatively affecting the level of recruitment and retention for elected and appointed positions.
5. The SGPS organizational assessment report in 2007 had reported that SGPS staff are unsatisfied with their compensation and have recommended for a serious reconsideration of stipends and wages.

The Finance and Services Committee has notified me that they will bring an official recommendation to Council by November's General Meeting. In the meantime, they have forwarded a general overview of expected stipend increases:

	Current Salary	Current Honorarium	Proposed Salary	Net Difference
President	\$8,179.50	\$2,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$3,820.50
VP Graduate	\$6,672.75	\$1,600.00	\$12,000.00	\$3,727.25
VP Professional	\$6,672.75	\$1,600.00	\$12,000.00	\$3,727.25
VP CCA	\$6,672.75	\$1,600.00	\$12,000.00	\$3,727.25
Executive Dir.	\$45,000.00	\$0.00	\$55,000.00	\$10,000.00
Communications Comm.	\$3,000.00	\$500.00	\$6,500.00	\$3,000.00
Committee Coordinator	\$1,537.50	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$462.50
Social Comm.	\$3,000.00	\$500.00	\$6,500.00	\$3,000.00
Planning Coordinator	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00
Logistics Coordinator	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00
Athletics Coordinator	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00
Equity Comm.	\$3,000.00	\$500.00	\$6,500.00	\$3,000.00
Equity Coordinator	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$500.00
Sustainability Coordinator	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$500.00
International Coordinator	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$500.00
B. Ed. Coordinator	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$500.00
Layout Manager	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	\$0.00
Webmaster	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	\$0.00
Speaker	\$1,025.00	\$1,000.00	\$2,500.00	\$475.00
Deputy Speaker	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$2,000.00	\$1,500.00
Graduate Student Senator	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$1,000.00	\$800.00
SGPS Trustee	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$1,000.00	\$800.00
Chief Returning Officer	\$0.00	\$600.00	\$1,000.00	\$400.00
Total	\$100,433.00	\$15,400.00	\$163,000.00	\$47,167.00

I would like to point out these suggestions are not final. In particular, the stipends of Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Graduate Student Senator, SGPS Trustee, and Chief Returning Officer are set as too high under the current proposed structure and may be decreased after proper consultation with the concerned parties.

In a similar vein, members of the committee have expressed concern about shirking of duties for paid positions. As a result, they have suggested establishing working contracts for Appointees and Officers. That concern was conveyed to the Executive over the past month and it was decided that VP Professional Kate Kahn and her committee would complete the necessary work. It has been my understanding that the contracts have been prepared and will be fully implemented within the next year.

Concerns over human resources have spawned some interest amongst students of the industrial relations program and they have approached Committee Coordinator Laura Gale and myself about possible volunteer work related to these issues. It has been suggested that a standing committee be established dealing with stipends, benefits, and job descriptions that will be chaired by the VP Professional.

Dental Bursary:

After meeting with Principal Woolf in September, he has agreed to the principle of replenishing our Dental Bursary. I have recommended that the administration and the SGPS contribute a fixed equal amount every year and suggested to establish a joint working group to draft a memorandum of understanding. I am still waiting to hear back on the issue and will be meeting with him next Wednesday.

Sports Bursary and Club Funding:

The Athletics Coordinator has recommended that we establish guidelines and protocols for dispersing our Sports Funding that reaches close to \$5,000 every year. Also, the Executive has recommended that we produce guidelines for spending our \$500 clubs budget line before we begin dispersing it. The purpose of this line is to promote SGPS clubs. The policy recommendations have been presented to Council for this session.

Accessibility Queen's:

Thanks to the work of Equity Commissioner Usman Mushtaq, we have realized that there is nearly \$250,000 of surpluses in Accessibility Queen's. We contribute 20% to this fund and have met with the AMS on issues pertaining to this surplus, in particular where a \$100,000 expenditure made two years ago towards an AMS Endowment was spent on, what the annual \$5,000 administration fees of the fund is based on, and what measures will be taken to give representation to the SGPS. Equity Commissioner Usman Mushtaq has been the point man on this and will bring updates as they come.

Finance and Services Committee:

Thanks to the spectacular work of Committee Coordinator Laura Gale, the Finance and Services Committee has now been replenished with many talented and interested people. The committee has been divided into four different subcommittees that relate to the different tasks that is of focus for this year:

1. Student Activity Fee, Human Resources, and Bursaries Review
2. Health and Dental Services Review
3. Grad Club Merger
4. SGPS/AMS Service Agreement and SGPS Services Review

The findings of the different subcommittees will be presented to Council in due time.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amir Hossein Nosrat
VP Finance and Services

My apologies for missing a second Council meeting this term. I will return on October 15 and can answer any questions in person at that time or at the next Council meeting in November.

Principal's Ad Hoc Committee to Draft a Safe Disclosure Policy

The work on this committee is progressing smoothly but involves lengthy discussion over each line of the existing draft. At the September 23 meeting we reviewed terminology ("Disclosure"), what constitutes "Improper Acts", and the procedures involved with reporting and investigation. The Coordinator of Dispute Resolution Management is the first part of this process, but there are still details to be worked out. At future meetings the Committee will examine what has already proven to be a contentious issue, and that is the inclusion of a violation of ethical standards as "Improper Act(s)".

Senate

There were several issues of note at the September session of Senate. Principal Wolfe gave a lengthy Chair's Report that addressed issues surrounding coordinating financial and academic planning at Queen's. This will involve a close Board of Trustee-Senate working relationship with the Principal acting as the intermediary between the two considering his seat on both. Administrative restructuring is also set to take place as the University will be moving towards a Provost model, in which the current VP Academic office will be transformed into a more centralized and comprehensive position. This comes with new fiduciary and administrative powers.

H1N1 Academic Planning: The details for this are a bit murky at the moment, but the planning process essentially involves the development of procedures related to a massive infection of the University population, resulting in widespread problems such as exam and assignment rescheduling. Again, still in the planning process.

Numerous Internal Academic Review Reports were presented to Senate. One of the most pressing issues came from the "Equity" section of the Department of Civil Engineering Review. During the past seven years the female percentage in the undergraduate program has decreased from 43.6% to 26.5%, while the percentage of PhD candidates is between 9-21% and most commonly around 17%. The issue was raised by President/Senator Jeff Welsh. Dean Woodhouse responded that this tragic figure was consistent across Canada, the United

States, the UK, and Australia. There was no mention of specific strategies to confront this matter but it is of serious concern to those in the field.

With the changing demographic population at Queen's, the number of Senate positions allotted to the various constituencies (staff, faculty, administrators, undergraduate and graduate students) is shifting. The SGPS is due for an additional 2 senate seats (to a total of 3). However, considering the dramatic rise in the number of graduate students the SGPS should be entitled to greater representation. The Senate Operations Review Committee report will be revisited at the next session of Senate.

President Jeff Welsh and I mutually submitted a list of questions for Senate, which will be answer by VP Academic Patrick Deane in October. The questions are attached as Appendix A.

For the October session of Senate I will be submitting a motion and a question. The drafts are included as Appendix B.

I would be more than happy to provide complete minutes, agenda items, and reports distributed for Senate. Just send me an email (Andrew.j.r.stevens@queensu.ca).

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Stevens
SGPS Graduate Senator

Board of Trustees met over the weekend. No major decisions affecting students were made at the meetings but here are a few highlights:

Provostial Model

On Saturday, former Provost of Western University Dr. Greg Moran gave a presentation on the benefits of introducing a Provost position at Queen's. Principal Woolf supports this idea since Queen's is one of the few universities in Canada without a Provost and creating such a position would allow for more integrated academic and financial planning and relieve the Principal of some operational duties. The Board has not made a decision yet but it seems unlikely that it will veto Principal Woolf's first major initiative. I look forward to hearing more about the Provost position in the coming weeks, particularly with regard to how introducing the position will affect administration's accessibility to students. My general impression so far is that creating the position will free up more time for the Principal to engage in the university community and promote our interests in Ottawa, in Queen's Park, and elsewhere.

Sutherland Renaming

Policy Studies Building was officially renamed Robert Sutherland Hall in a ceremony on Saturday. The ceremony was well attended by students, faculty, alumni and the media. The alumni I spoke to later all remarked that it was a very proud and important moment for Queen's. In his speech, Principal Woolf emphasized that this was a student-led initiative and thanked the students for taking the lead in making this historic event possible.

Dr. Williams and Dr. Hitchcock Honoured

Former Principal Tom Williams was named a Principal Emeritus of Queen's University, while Karen Hitchcock was named Principal Emerita. It has been common practice to extend this honour to all former Queen's Principals for many years now. Dr. Williams was also specially honoured at the Grant Hall Society Dinner on Saturday.

Executive Summary

The SGPS Executive had concluded in May that the SGPS financial reserves of about \$250,000 were underutilized and could be leveraged to provide a sizeable and stable source of revenue other than the SGPS Student Activity Fees. It was also of interest to provide a service that is required and utilizable by SGPS members.

In conjunction with limited housing services offered to Graduate and Professional Students by the Queen's Administration and the poor quality of housing available in the Student Ghetto, a housing service offered by the SGPS seemed to be the most reasonable compromise between serviceability and profitability for a new SGPS service. This proposition seemed more attractive as land value prices had bottomed out due to the most recent economic recession. VP Finance and Services Amir Nosrat sent a letter to Councillors in late May informing of the inception of a new Housing Authority Task Force that will better explore this idea.

The Housing Authority Task Force completed preliminary research on the legal, financial, and operational aspects of a new housing service and presented its findings to Council in August. After meeting broad support from Councillors, a new Council Housing Committee was established with an overwhelming majority. The Housing Committee had put forward a motion in Council's September authorizing the SGPS Executive and the Housing Committee to register a new Housing Authority in line with Ontario laws and regulations. While this was intended to be a practical move to prepare the grounds for a new Housing Authority, it was perceived by a number of Councillors and SGPS members as a hasty move towards uncharted waters. While this perception is understandable, the Housing Authority would not have had any powers unless Council willingly released money from its reserves for the Housing Authority to begin operations.

The motion put forward in September was never discussed and was tabled for the October meeting. In the meantime discussions between the Housing Committee and various parties, as well as the recommendations of a strategic report by Queen's Business Consulting made two years ago for the SGPS, revealed a lack of confidence in the Housing Committee's approach to the issue.

Accordingly, the Housing Committee recommends that Council authorize the hiring of Queen's Business Consulting to offer a professional feasibility and risk analysis of the Housing Authority and offer recommendations on how to proceed. This consultation will take approximately 4 to 6 weeks to complete and is expected to cost close to \$3,000. The recommendations of this report will be used to determine whether or not Council should proceed with establishing a Housing Authority and investing our financial reserves into this venture.

Furthermore, VP Finance and Services Amir Nosrat would like to recommend that a similar feasibility analysis be conducted on a possible SGPS café that will compare to the Housing Authority's risks and benefits. The study will be done in conjunction with the

Housing Authority's report and should not exceed the \$3,000 budget by much and will build upon the strategic recommendations made two years ago by Queen's Business Consulting.

The Housing Committee will not be making any further progress or effort unless such a report has been prepared.

Introduction

The possibility of a long-term SGPS housing project emerged from two concerns. One was concern over the lack of returns to our investments. The second was concern arising from various sources over the systemic lack of provision for the specific and growing housing needs of our membership. A gradual, long-term investment into housing appeared to have the potential to address both, as well as offering the possibility of greater resources to direct into services and bursaries in the future. The reserve funds of the SGPS are the accumulated unspent portions of various budget lines from previous budgets over the years. Having a reserve fund approximately the same size as the annual budget provides a degree of security for the society in the event of unforeseen circumstances. Investment returns from the reserve funds provide a small portion of the operating budget. With returns down to approximately 0.7%, the budget has taken a hit.

The Society has also been interested in doing more to help membership with housing. Housing has emerged as an issue for the Society from a number of sources including surveys, anecdotal evidence, and a high rent-to-property price ratio in Kingston. Queen's has had a growing student population, and especially a rapidly increasing graduate and professional student population. This is problematic given the limited housing available within relatively close proximity of the university, resulting in students moving ever farther from the university.

The housing stock within close proximity to campus is particularly problematic due to the difference in preferences and demographics between undergraduates and SGPS members. While housing surrounding both Main and West Campuses consists largely of shared housing, surveys suggest that SGPS members on average have a much greater preference for individual apartments. This preference is strengthened by the fact that a much larger percentage of SGPS members have partners and/or dependents. Despite the tremendous increase in our membership in recent years, the university has not provided any new housing for our members in the form of either residences or apartments since the 1970s. The result is that it is primarily our members who are now living in large numbers either north of Princess St. or west of Sir John A. MacDonald Blvd.

The lack of residence spaces is problematic for students in Law, most of whom are away during the summers, students in one year Masters or BEd programs, and international students. However, with the university's soaring debt load due to the construction of the Queen's Centre, the university is loathe to invest in a new residence project. Therefore, the Society decided to investigate the feasibility of gradual, long-term investment in housing as both a long-term investment option, as well as a service to help meet the needs of our membership. This would meet both our members' interests in housing, as well as fit the Society's long-term investment horizon.

Accordingly, the Housing Committee has decided that a new Housing Authority should exist for four purposes:

1. To provide affordable, high-quality rental housing to Queen's graduate and professional students, their partners and families at or below market rates;
2. To endeavour to have a positive impact on the community and avoid displacing low income residents; and
3. To balance the need to increase housing stock with the programming and service needs of the SGPS by making revenue streams available to the SGPS.
4. To enhance and augment the services available to the SGPS membership.

Legal

After initial discussions of the Housing Committee, it was decided that a Housing Authority, if created, needs to be an independent non-profit corporation while remaining subservient to the will of SGPS and its Council. This is particularly important as it would remove any legal liabilities the Housing Authority may bring for the SGPS. A separate shell corporation will defer any possible legal claims away from the SGPS arising from potential lawsuits. A shell corporation subservient to the SGPS would also ensure financial institutions to lend money for property purchase.

This tactic is typically employed by many governments and non-profit organizations. The most familiar and applicable model is the Alma Mater Society of Queen's University. While the AMS exists as a not-for-profit corporation by itself subject to annual elections of its executive, it provides services through its shell corporation known as AMS Incorporated. AMS Incorporated has its own board of directors and has separate accounts subject to regular audits. At the same time, AMS Incorporated takes direction from the Alma Mater Society's Assembly and Executive.

In a similar tone, the Bylaws and Policies subcommittee proposed that the Housing Authority be structured under the supervision of a Board of Directors. This decision making body would comprise of 15 voting members, 5 of which would include the President, VP Finance and Services, VP Professional, VP Campaigns and Community Affairs, the Equity Commissioner and seven appointees of Council. In the event that the Housing Authority is established with the financial assistance of the Kingston branch of the Ontario Public Interests Research Group, the three remaining voting directors will be chosen at their discretion. The potential prospect of a financial partnership with OPIRG is fraught with challenges and is discussed in detail under the OPIRG section of this report.

The Board of Directors would be the body in charge of determining policy and operational guidelines for the Housing Authority. While their actions would be subject to review by Council, it is intended to keep minutia away from Council proceedings and bogging down Councillors with tedious tasks. Aside from regular oversight, there are two major items that Council will have to ratify before being implemented:

1. The annual operational budget

2. Major expenditures such as property acquisition and renovations

After preparing a first draft of the bylaws, the Bylaws and Policies subcommittee consulted Mary-Anne Higgins, a lawyer specializing in not for profit corporations in the Kingston area. Initial discussions with Ms. Higgins suggested that the legal issues of the Housing Authority are nothing exceptional and can be resolved without onerous amounts of effort. Ms. Higgins said she would review the Housing Authority structure and by-laws on a pro-bono basis, but would discuss compensation fees if the Housing Authority would be seeking her assistance on a regular basis.

In short, establishing a separate corporation would not be problematic and can remain obedient to the SGPS. The biggest legal impediment to the establishment of a Housing Authority, in her opinion, is the dissolution procedures especially in lieu of a joint venture with OPIRG.

Finance and Operations

The Finance and Operations subcommittee of the Housing Committee met several times to explore the financial options and operational requirements for the Housing Authority. These discussions were focused on how the needs of graduate and professional students would be best served by the proposition. These discussions also considered various ways in which the plan might be sustainable, both financially and environmentally. Geographic limits within which the Authority would purchase housing were investigated as well as how the Authority, in its purchasing decisions, could avoid making a negative impact on the larger Kingston community.

The subcommittee agreed that it would be important to establish housing quality standards to guide the Housing Authority in upgrading newly purchased properties such that student-tenants would have decent living quarters. These quality standards could be based, at the minimum, on regular house inspections that analyze various aspects of the building, such as structure, exterior, heating, plumbing, electrical and so on. It would also be proactive to have an annual check of each building owned by the Authority as a preventive measure to major problems and maintenance issues. It is well known that building an addition onto an existing house is a more cost-effective way of increasing living space than acquiring new property. Accordingly, the Authority should keep this in mind as an optional way to increase rental space and revenue from property it owns. In a similar note, the subcommittee agreed that the Authority should take measures not to contribute to urban sprawl in the growth of its housing stock.

Beyond basic housing quality, the subcommittee agreed that the Housing Authority should establish an environmentally conscious approach to energy conservation and, where feasible physically and financially, even energy generation. To begin with, each newly purchased building should undergo an energy audit to discover any shortcomings in insulation, heat delivery, and correct any deficiencies. Old appliances should be replaced by energy-efficient appliances, and the Authority should explore the idea of installing tank-less water heaters if possible. These measures would reduce heating and electrical expenses for the building. In some cases it might be possible to install solar panels to generate electricity. The strategic planting of shade trees is another option for passively encouraging the cooling of a house in summer and

allowing maximum solar heating in the winter. In short, the subcommittee was in favour of using any methods and technologies that reduce dependence on energy. These modifications should be made on a building by building basis.

Based on the Housing Committee's decision to hire a Housing Commissioner charged with the day to day operations of the Housing Authority, the subcommittee discussed some of the Commissioner's responsibilities with regard to operating the buildings of the Authority. It was agreed that once there is sufficient housing stock available (at an undetermined future date), the units should be filled in such a way that reflects the needs of the membership. That is, if 20% of SGPS membership is families with two children, for example, the Authority should aim to have 20% of its units suitable for such families. Regarding Article 7.3.2., we felt that decisions still need to be made as to how the tenant selection process is to operate, whether the Authority wishes to identify higher-need members, or if it is fairer to keep tenancies on a first come first served basis. It is envisioned that the Commissioner's job would involve the typical landlord duties of advertising upcoming unit vacancies to SGPS members, interviewing applicants and showing units, conducting background reference checks on applicants, signing leases with new tenants, arranging for keys to be handed over and collected, arranging for locks to be changed when necessary, assigning parking spots to tenants, co-ordinating move-ins and move-outs, re-sign existing tenants, collecting post-dated rent cheques, and making a monthly bank deposit of the rent cheques.

With regard to regular maintenance and repairs, the subcommittee felt strongly that being a non-profit corporation, it would be appropriate to hire non-profit trades whenever possible. It was agreed that the Authority should use local businesses and comply with all building permit rules of the city. The subcommittee further detailed the kinds of regular exterior and interior maintenance that would be involved for the Housing Commissioner. Exterior maintenance would consist of arranging and overseeing contract snow clearing in winter if there is a parking lot, and grounds care in the summer. Some Sub-Committee members did not feel that snow clearing was an important item, but others saw it as part of establishing a higher standard of housing quality that would make the Authority's housing superior to what is usually offered to students in the city. Summer grounds care would consist of garbage and recycling, grass cutting and optional gardens. Interior maintenance would cover three categories: heating, cleaning and painting. Furnace maintenance would be necessary yearly and filters would need to be changed regularly during the heating season. End of lease cleaning and the cleaning of common areas would need to be worked out, depending on the type of building. Likewise, the Authority should not allow tenants to paint rooms, as this might result in unreliable results. We agreed that responsibility for painting units, or arranging to have them professionally painted, should rest with the Commissioner or Property Manager.

Apart from the suggestion that the Commissioner have a petty cash to deal with regular maintenance, and that a percentage of rental income should go into an

emergency fund, the Operations Sub-Committee did not work out any details concerning financial processes around renting, or documentation of maintenance. Finally, the subcommittee reviewed three different tactics of property acquisition. The first was a conservative strategy concerned the acquisition of 5 units or less with minimal leverage by financial institutions. The second was a moderate strategy with the acquisition of 10 units and medium leverage by financial institutions. The final was an aggressive strategy with the acquisition of 15 units and maximum leverage by financial institutions.

For the sake of conciseness, the subcommittee would like to recommend adopting the moderate strategy approach where 2 houses or ten units would be initially purchased. The projected revenue and costs of this strategy are based on a fixed 5-year 5.40% interest rate with an amortization of 20 years. A summary of the balance sheets are presented below:

Year:		2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Revenue:	Rent: [*]	\$ 56,160.00	\$ 55,620.00	\$ 55,080.00	\$ 54,540.00	\$ 54,000.00
	OPIRG contribution:	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Expenses:	Mortgage:	\$ (28,269.24)	\$ (28,269.24)	\$ (28,269.24)	\$ (28,269.24)	\$ (28,269.24)
	Insurance:	\$ (4,500.00)	\$ (4,500.00)	\$ (4,500.00)	\$ (4,500.00)	\$ (4,500.00)
	Legal: [†]	\$ (800.00)	\$ (800.00)	\$ (800.00)	\$ (800.00)	\$ (800.00)
	Property tax:	\$ (6,259.74)	\$ (6,259.74)	\$ (6,259.74)	\$ (6,259.74)	\$ (6,259.74)
	Maintenance:	\$ (1,684.80)	\$ (1,668.60)	\$ (1,652.40)	\$ (1,636.20)	\$ (1,620.00)
	Building inspection:	-	-	-	-	\$ (1,458.58)
	Estimated inflation: [‡]	3%	2%	2%	1%	-
Total:	Revenue:	\$ 66,160.00	\$ 65,620.00	\$ 65,080.00	\$ 64,540.00	\$ 64,000.00
	Expenses:	\$ (42,692.77)	\$ (42,468.62)	\$ (42,311.01)	\$ (41,921.30)	\$ (41,448.98)
	Estimated surplus:	\$ 23,467.23	\$ 23,151.38	\$ 22,768.99	\$ 22,618.70	\$ 22,551.02
	5 year surplus w/ interest	\$ 114,744.75				

*: Rent per tenant of \$450.00 with a 1% increase year to year. †: Earmarked legal fee. ‡: Estimated from the Bank of Canada economic report (January, 2009).

Equity

Equity within the Housing Authority bylaws was considered on three fronts: purchasing, renting, and tenant protection.

The Bylaws in Section 7.1 were created to ensure that the SGPS and the Housing Authority do not contribute to the socioeconomic marginalization and housing degradation of Kingston. Student housing, which is too expensive for ordinary residents, is pushing permanent residents out of certain areas in Kingston. Moreover, students renting in student areas are increasingly living in degraded housing as landlords are taking advantage of student turnover to raise prices with little regard for property maintenance. The Housing Authority's objective is to provide graduate students with quality housing while working to maintain the current geographical and socioeconomic boundaries of Kingston neighbourhoods. This goal is fostered by creating collaborative partnerships between the Queen's graduate student community, the Housing Authority, and the surrounding Kingston communities. Not only is this equitable, but healthy relation with the communities around SGPS housing and the city of Kingston will contribute to the continued success of this SGPS initiative.

The second section in the equity bylaws of the Housing Authority is primarily concerned with ensuring that the Authority does not discriminate in the renting, advertising, and maintenance of property based on (among other qualities) race, family status, immigration status, or gender status. The majority of the policies in this section come from "Fair Housing" Acts in Canada and the United States. A grievance process is mentioned in this section but the implementation of this process is left to policy. The bylaws ensure that tenants have the right to a fair and equitable complaint process if they feel discrimination or harassment has taken place against them.

The final and third section of the equity bylaws deals with tenant protection. Most of the rights in this section are reiterated and contextualized for the SGPS from the Ontario Residential Tenancies Act of 2006. This Act laid out all the various rights and protections of tenants in Ontario. An eviction process is detailed in order to ensure tenants are granted all the rights given to them by provincial law but also the rights granted to them as human beings. The eviction process aims to place the "burden of eviction" on the SGPS Housing Authority as it must prove beyond a reasonable doubt why a tenant must be evicted and an appeal process should be in place for that tenant to use. Together with the grievance process, this section ensures that tenants are treated fairly and humanely by the Housing Authority.

Ontario Public Interests Research Group Kingston

The Kingston branch of the Ontario Public Interests Research Group (OPIRG) had approached President Jeff Welsh after learning that the SGPS is looking into establishing housing services for its members. OPIRG claims it is interested in leveraging their reserves for financial security while at the same time addressing the impact of Queen's students on local Kingston communities.

A partnership with OPIRG would have the explicit advantage of providing additional sources of revenue for property acquisition. Its implicit advantage would be to gain access to the relatively broad network OPIRG Kingston has within the community. This local network could be particularly useful in identifying suitable property and in dealing with community affairs should any external issues rise in the future. OPIRG also has access to various investors that may be interested in investing in the Housing Authority.

After a few meetings, it was made clear that OPIRG had two major concerns about a possible partnership with SGPS. Their first concern was the security of their investments. In particular, OPIRG does not want to contribute to a new corporation without being assured that it will not be removed from the corporation within a few years. OPIRG says that particular SGPS administrations may not be sympathetic towards OPIRG's view and would use the Housing Authority as leverage against OPIRG. Their second concern was that the Housing Authority may lose track of responsible property ownership and become an antithesis to OPIRG's mission statements and official policies.

These two concerns were met with the incorporation of permanent OPIRG directors on the Board and the impossibility of removing OPIRG from the Housing Authority without OPIRG's consent. Furthermore, entrenched policies were introduced in order to provide OPIRG's veto on property acquisition taking place outside of the student ghetto.

The disadvantages of such a proposition are admittedly not few and laden with legal and political challenges. There have been a few councillors and SGPS appointees that have expressed opinions in favour of and against a partnership with OPIRG, but given the overlapping concerns and reasons, the opinions of the President, VP Finance and Services, and the Equity Commissioner of the SGPS will be mentioned here:

- President Jeff Welsh: A relationship with OPIRG will bring many tangible and intangible benefits which the Housing Authority and SGPS could benefit from. Their institutional retention is typically better than the transient nature of SGPS administrations and would provide continuity for the Housing Authority. The SGPS should actively strive to establish a strong partnership with OPIRG, but be ready to look for alternatives if the costs outweigh the benefits.
- VP Finance and Services Amir Nosrat: While the benefits of a partnership with OPIRG are clear, offering such leverage and institutional power to a minority investor with no oversight of SGPS Council would be an overall liability for the interests of the SGPS. The proposed structure, as it stands now, may create financial risks that will be very difficult to manage. In short, an entrenched partnership with OPIRG will reduce our flexibility and versatility for meeting our membership's needs. It may be strategically prudent for the SGPS to establish a Housing Authority without the inclusion of OPIRG in the bylaws and to establish an agreement with OPIRG outside of the framework of the Housing Authority bylaws.
- Equity Commissioner Usman Mushtaq: It is of paramount importance that the SGPS partner with OPIRG to ensure that the Housing Authority remains true to its mission statement and equitable policies. Future SGPS administrations may very well choose to be part of the student 'ghettoization' process and that is something the SGPS should adamantly steer clear from.

Law Students' Society

VP Professional Kate Kahn had approached the Housing Committee in September conveying the concerns of the Law Students' Society (LSS) about the Housing Authority. President Jeff Welsh and VP Finance and Services Amir Nosrat met with the LSS

president, Erin Pleet, and LSS Councillors Robert Church and Patrick Welsh. The LSS has been the only Sub-society of the SGPS that has actively expressed opposition to the idea of establishing a new Housing Authority. The most outstanding concerns of the LSS are as follows:

1. There is a lack of an independent professional feasibility analysis or consultation of the proposition.
2. There is a lack of precedence from other student societies in Canada.
3. The Housing Authority may not be in line with SGPS membership or LSS membership needs and interests.
4. The Housing Authority can pose financial risks for future SGPS members.
5. Other alternatives for using the SGPS financial reserves haven't been adequately explored.
6. There are too many structural issues with the proposed bylaws of the Housing Authority.
7. A joint venture with OPIRG is not in the interests of the SGPS.
8. The failure of the AMS in attempting to provide housing services in the past has not been investigated.

At the current moment, the LSS actively opposes the inception of a new Housing Authority and are not assuaged by the findings of the Housing Committee. The Education Students' Society and the Theology Students' Society have also been contacted to solicit their opinions, but no concerns or interest was conveyed to the Housing Committee.

Recommendation

After nearly 3 months of discussions and consultation with Council, the Housing Committee would like to hire Queen's Business Consulting to offer a professional feasibility and risk analysis of the Housing Authority and offering recommendations on how to proceed. This consultation will take approximately 4 to 6 weeks to complete and is expected to cost close to \$3,000. The recommendations of this report will be used to determine whether or not Council should proceed with establishing a Housing Authority and investing our financial reserves into this venture.

It should be mentioned that a strategic overview and organizational assessment conducted by Queen's Business Consulting two years ago had suggested a different use of our financial reserves. These reports are available in the Executive Director's archives and can be uploaded online at the request of Council. The strategic recommendation of the report was to offer a service providing a hub and identity for SGPS members much like how AMS offers services to its members. The concrete suggestion was to establish an 'SGPS Centre' offering healthy food, entertainment, boardrooms, a café, and social

space explicitly for graduate students modelled on McGill University's Thomson House. More details of this recommendation can be found in the report.

This proposition may be a bit too farfetched for our capabilities and resources at the current time, and a more amenable approach would be to set up a SGPS Café for our members, perhaps where the Common Grounds Café is right now. Accordingly, VP Finance and Services Amir Nosrat would like to recommend that a similar feasibility analysis be conducted on a possible SGPS café that will compare to the Housing Authority's risks and benefits. The study will be done in conjunction with the Housing Authority's report and should not exceed the \$3,000 budget by much.

The Housing Committee will not be making any further progress or effort unless such a report has been prepared by Queen's Business Consulting.

Hello Everyone!

I am happy to report that we have an absolutely fabulous orientation week. Thank you to our SGPS executives and staff who came out to support our events and of course to you, our members for a successful week!

We have two events planned for the month of October here are the details!

1) SGPS SPOOKY HALLOWEEN CORN MAZE

Missed the Day Corn Maze activity during orientation week? Don't fret! SGPS has organized a **Spooky Halloween Corn Maze event** that is sure to send shivers up and down your spine.

Date: Thursday, October 29th

Time: 5:45 pm-9:30 pm

Place: Meet at the Wolfe Island Ferry Dock

Price: \$15.00

Ticket price includes meal, corn maze, apple crisp in the maze, bonfire, bus ride from ferry dock to the maze and back to the dock.

Important: wear warm clothing, rubber boots or old shoes and bring a change of shoes and a flashlight! Meet at the Wolfe Island Ferry Dock at 5:45 p.m. sharp.

2) SGPS Celebrates Oktoberfest

Join us at the Amadeus Schnitzel Haus as we celebrate a great German Tradition!
Pick from a selection of traditional Oktoberfest Cuisine!

1)Oktoberfest/Bratwurst Sausage (with potatoes, Saurkraut, and soup or salad)

2)Pork Schnitzel (with vegetables and rice or potatoes)

3)Chicken Kiev (with rice or potatoes)

4)Vegetarian Selection (Bread, potato, Spätzle/German noodles, red cabbage)

Date: Wednesday, Oct 21st

Time: 6:00 pm

Place: Amadeus Schnitzel Haus, 170 Princess St.

Price: \$10 a person (includes one of the selection of food options from the Amadeus Menu)

For both social events please check out our website www.sgps.ca which will direct to our online payment option.

Please feel free to come into the SGPS office and pay at the front desk as well.

We hope to see you all there!

Respectfully Submitted,

Diala Habib
Social Commissioner

SGPS Computer Network

- I have added another workstation to the SGPS Office. I re-worked one of our older computers. It needs to be replaced but it is better than nothing for now.

SGPS Website

- I have started to work on the back-end code necessary to allow us to administer bursary applications via the SGPS website.
- I have incorporated PayPal into the SGPS website. We hope this continues to make event registration more accessible.
- I have added a secondary website server due to heavy traffic to the www.sgps.ca website. The secondary website is in test phase right now. The computer is off-campus. The purpose is to assist the main webserver when under heavy load.
- I have updated the health and dental section of the SGPS website to reflect changes for the 2009/2010 year.

E-Newsletter

- More than 4000 unique visitors downloaded issue 44 of the SGPS E-Newsletter more than 11,000 times.
- I continue to contact people across campus and the community to ensure the newsletter continues to have as much relevant and useful information as possible.

Communications

- The optional fee opt-out server worked without any issue this year. Adding extra workstations for the opt-out period worked well and made the process much smoother than it had been in past years.
- The student activity fee document has been updated for the 2009/2010 academic year and has been posted on the SGPS website: <http://www.sgps.ca/info/fees.html>
- I worked with the Equity Team to help with their "Good To Know" document. This booklet is available at the SGPS Office and will be available online some time later this year.
- I have been working with the Speaker and the Executive to update the Council Orientation package for the 2009/2010 year. You will receive a copy of the guide at the upcoming meeting of Council.
- I am working on a transition document system for the SGPS to help when people start new positions at the SGPS. More details will be discussed in a later report.

Respectfully submitted,
Sean Richards - info@sgps.ca

Islamic History Month

The SGPS has co-sponsored Islamic History Month in Kingston. Check out some of the events:

- On October 6th at 7 p.m. the highly acclaimed film “New Muslim Cool” will be screened, followed by a discussion led by Imam Yasin Dwyer. The event will take place in Room A, Stirling Hall, at Queen’s University.
- On October 13th at 6:30 p.m., Dr. Dana Olwan will moderate a discussion on Islamophobia in conjunction with Queen’s Coalition Against Racial and Ethnic Discrimination, held in Room 236, John Deutsche Centre at Queen’s University.
- On October 14th at 7 p.m., lawyer and activist Khurram Awan will speak on “Restricted Access: The Muslim-Canadian experience with Human Rights and the Maclean’s Case.” The talk will be held in the Bioscience Building, Room 1102, at Queen’s University.
- On October 21st at 7 p.m., Dr. Toby Birch, author of *The Final Crash: Addictive Debt and the Deformation of the World Economy* (2007), which predicted the current crisis, will speak on “Islamic Finance vs. Recent Global Crises,” also in Bioscience 1102 at Queen’s.
- On October 27th, Dr. Adnan Husain will lead a discussion of the award-winning book, *How Does it Feel to be a Problem: Being Young and Arab in America* by Moustafa Bayoumi, who grew up in Kingston. Copies of the book can be bought at Novel Idea; there are also a few copies available for loan through the Islamic Society of Kingston. The discussion will take place 7-8:30 p.m. in the Delahaye Room at the Kingston-Frontenac Public Library at 130 Johnson street.

Abousfian Abdelrazik Talk

The SGPS co-sponsored Abousfian Abdelrazik’s visit to Kingston to talk about his experiences. The talk was well attended and had coverage from both the Journal and CFRC.

OHIP for All campaign

I have met with representatives from SGSR to talk about a CFS campaign to bring international students back on OHIP from which they were removed in 1994. Currently, international students are burdened with high UHIP fees. In many places, UHIP coverage may not even be recognized! Even when it is recognized, UHIP coverage may be substandard or inconsistent. This happens despite the fact that international students pay for both OHIP (through taxes) and UHIP. I will be asking the Graduate School and Queen’s University to take a position to support OHIP for All. A story ran in the Journal about this campaign: <http://www.queensjournal.ca/story/2009-09-29/news/province-wide-campaign-seeks-uhip-review/>.

Equity Caucus

Sam Boyce, AMS SIC, and I have spearheaded the creation of an ‘Equity Caucus’ that would connect together the various student reps from different faculties who work on equity issues. This Equity Caucus will work independently to influence student government bodies like the AMS and EngSoc to do more work regarding equity at

Queen's. The ESS and LSS will both have equity representatives on this caucus as well as the SGPS. Victoria Au will be the LSS Rep while Emily Rankin will be the ESS Rep.

Annual Aboriginal Studies Symposium

The Queen's Native Students Association along with Four Directions Student Centre and the SGPS are planning on hosting the annual Aboriginal Studies Symposium here at Queen's on November 21. The title of the symposium will be: "Keepers of the Land: Indigenous Perspectives on Responsible Land Use and Resource Management". Any graduate students whose research falls under this thematic area are encouraged to contact the Equity Commissioner at equity@sgps.ca. See attached flyer.

Queer Grad Student Group

Several grad students have expressed interest in starting up a queer grad student group. I am currently seeking start up funding for the group. If you are interested in participating in the group, please email the Equity Commissioner at equity@sgps.ca.

Accessibility Queen's Fund

Please see Journal story regarding this issue: <http://www.queensjournal.ca/story/2009-09-25/news/accessibility-queens-finds-funds/>. The fund has been revamped and a SGPS representative will be sitting on the funding committee.

Education Equity Policy

Sam Boyce and I added clauses to the Education Equity policy draft that will be sent to the Senate for approval regarding student equity. The EE draft along with the added clauses is attached to this report.

Respectfully Submitted,
Usman Mushtaq

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Things that are coming up next

Various meetings for the OHIP campaign
 Council Meeting

Meetings

KIP meeting discussed problems faced by immigrants and internationals and how efforts can be made to improve them.
 Met with Susan Anderson about the KIP general assembly meeting.
 Had an interview with Jamie for the OHIP campaign
 Met with Brenda Brouwer and David Rappaport for the SGPS and graduate school meeting to talk about the concerns brought up in Lisa's report regarding international, particularly female students.
 Had a Council meeting with David Rappaport, Bruce Anderson, Jeffrey Sloan and Susan Anderson.