

Dear Council-members,

Hope you are well and excited about the start of the new term.

August was a busy month for most of the executive and staff, with everything from orientation planning to committee duties to fulfill. From my perspective, there are 3 items of note:

#### Harassment Discussion with Provost:

I spoke with the Provost about the frequency of harassment cases that SGPS Student Advisors have dealt with over the past few years. He expressed both surprise and disappointment at this state of affairs. He has asked whether there is any way that he can help in particular cases, intervening on behalf of the student if that is deemed advisable and if the student so wishes. I ask that you speak to students in your department and suggest this as an avenue to be used in conjunction with the Student Advisors – this would guarantee confidentiality and allow for the problem to be treated at a level higher than the School of Graduate Studies, which has struggled with helping provide effective oversight of problematic supervisors and situations.

#### Orientation and Student Affairs:

After many months of discussion, Student Affairs is realizing that graduate and professional students at Queen's are also students and thus fall within the jurisdiction of their department as well. The new Dean of Student Affairs – who I have invited to speak to SGPS Council in the next few months, has helped this process along considerably. Dean Pierce was instrumental in helping set up Faculty councils where graduate students would have representation and he has been very forthright in committing the department of Student Affairs to engage with Graduate and Professional Students. If some of you would like to join the Social / Equity / Committees for the upcoming year in order to articulate graduate / professional student needs, you would have a receptive audience at Student Affairs. This has not always been the case, so I encourage you to take advantage of Dean Pierce's one-year appointment.

#### Senate:

Senate will start to meet again in September and we still have no candidate for the seat of SGPS Graduate Senator. This is an important position as it allows the person to have input into Queen's Academic Plan and allows the person to ensure that the work done by fellow graduate students at the Faculty-council and committee level is actually followed through at Senate. As this is usually a 2-year position, it also allows for some continuity in policy from the SGPS. It is a paid position, it allows for excellent insight into how Universities are administered and it is one of those positions within student government that is not entirely meaningless. You may not change the world, but you could help other graduate students, which is just as good if you really think about it – please contact either [vpg@sgps.ca](mailto:vpg@sgps.ca) or [president@sgps.ca](mailto:president@sgps.ca) to find out more.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jawad Qureshy  
President – SGPS  
[president@sgps.ca](mailto:president@sgps.ca)

Happy start of the 2010-2011 academic year, and welcome to all new and returning SGPS Councilors! For the sake of brevity, I have simply itemized the matters which I feel are pertinent to our membership in my report. Please know that you can (and should) contact me by email or ask me questions at Council if you would like me to elaborate further on any of these and other matters.

### **Equity**

A final draft of the Equity Climate Survey has finally been approved by the Survey Planning Committee. In a mad rush to the finish line, we are working with the Equity Office to operationalize and implement the survey through Student Voice before outgoing student members' webmail accounts are terminated.

We have three – yes, three! – new additions to our Equity Team. I am very pleased to announce that we have hired Becky Pero and Amir Nosrat to represent international student members. While we had planned on only hiring one International Student Coordinator, Becky and Amir convinced us of the need to expand this portfolio during their interviews, as they each come to the position with very different but crucial projects to undertake this year. You will find more information to this effect in their report to Council. Our third new hire, Kalanthe Khaiat, more recently secured the position of Equity Coordinator. Welcome to all three of you!

### **Senate Committees**

Following a summer recess, Senate Committee meetings will start anew in the fall. I am happy to serve as your voting representative on the Senate Educational Equity Committee (SEEC) as well as the Senate Residence Committee.

### **City Relations**

I met with the town-gown committee several times in the last month to discuss orientation events. Following my request to find new ways of helping SGPS members better integrate to the broader Kingston community, the City donated several pamphlets and other materials pertaining to family and cultural activities in Kingston. This information will be distributed to incoming SGPS members during orientation in tote bags made of recycled materials, which were also donated by the City.

### **Canadian Federation of Students**

I traveled to Markham, Ontario for a four-day General Meeting of the provincial component of the CFS. The newly appointed Minister of Research and Innovation, Glen Murray, met with representatives of the Graduate Caucus (myself included) to exchange on his and our priorities. Amongst other things, Minister Murray flagged the need to invest further resources in the Social Sciences and Humanities, as well as in advances towards sustainability. Graduate representatives highlighted the need for the provincial government to rethink funding priorities, which trends indicate are increasingly assessed on the basis of commercial viability.

Other notable items of discussion during the meeting included: issues of credit transfer across the province; the provincial government's current attempt to impose a two-year wage freeze on public sector employees; trade agreement negotiations between Canada and the European Union (CETA) and their implications; calls for a public inquiry into the violation of the civil rights of G20 participants in Toronto; and the Conservative government's underhanded abolition of the mandatory long-form census.

Two staff members of CFS-Ontario also joined the SGPS Executive in August to discuss how the CFS can help us better serve our membership. Following from this discussion, our VP Professional and I will collaborate to propose the formation of a Professional Student Caucus within the CFS. We hope to invite CFS representatives to give Councilors a presentation at Council in October.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne-Marie Grondin  
VP Campaigns & Community Affairs

Welcome back new and returning Councilors. I am your VP Graduate for this academic year, a broadly defined position that handles academic and non-academic issues pertaining to graduate students on campus. I serve as a bridge between our society and the School of Graduate Studies (SGS), chair our Academic Affairs Standing Committee, oversee the Student Advisor Program (a joint SGPS and SGS program), and sit on the Graduate Student Life Working Group and those Senate Subcommittees responsible for research and academic issues that may affect our graduate-student members.

The VPG is also responsible for keeping pace with TA, TF (Teaching Fellow), and RA issues, although as of last March TAs and TFs voted to become a directly chartered local of the Public Service Alliance of Canada. While I will do my best to answer any questions you may have about the new union, I also encourage you to contact the union directly ([psac901.org](http://psac901.org)). The collective bargaining process has yet to begin, but the union is taking steps to build a working, communicative relationship with university administration.

### **Research Assistants**

As mentioned in the most recent e-newsletter, it seems likely that RAs will be given the option this year of claiming stipendiary rather than employee status on provincial and federal tax returns. This option is completely unique to Canadian universities, so we hope to gain a better sense of all the implications this entails over the coming months. In tandem with its law firm, the SGS has agreed to host a Q&A session this fall in order to address any questions or concerns RAs might have when making this decision. I hope to provide Councilors and our members some concrete information about some potential benefits or implications of claiming either status in the near future. Look for this material on our website, e-newsletter, and Council appendixes.

### **Student Advisor Program and Hiring**

For those who have not heard of the Student Advisor Program, it is a complaint-driven, confidential resource for all members of the SGPS funded jointly with the SGS. Three Advisors are available throughout the year to help students advocate for themselves on a range of issues – from supervisor conflicts to appeals to referrals to other services and bodies on campus. They may be contacted at [studentadvisors@sgps.ca](mailto:studentadvisors@sgps.ca).

The hiring process for the next round of Student Advisors is nearly complete; I hope to be able to report the committee's final decisions at Council. I would like to thank Margot Coulter from the Human Rights Office and Harry Smith, Coordinator Dispute Resolution Mechanisms for the many hours they donated to the Personnel Committee over the last several weeks.

### **Graduate Faculty Councils and Committees**

Last year a process of decentralizing policies and procedures under the School of Graduate Studies began. Whereas in previous years guidelines for academic appeals, thesis examinations, acceptances, and curriculum development were set and overseen by the Graduate Studies Executive Council, this year eight faculty specific councils and committees will administer these matters which will report to the GSEC. For information about these new bodies, visit <http://www.queensu.ca/sgs/forfacultyandstaff/SGSgovernance/council.html> where the manuals are already posted or will be in the coming months. All of these councils and committees ask for at least one graduate student representative and the SGPS has yet to find nominees for every position. If you are interested in sitting on your faculty council, please contact me ([vpq@sgps.ca](mailto:vpq@sgps.ca)). MA students in Arts & Sci are especially welcome.

### **School of Graduate Studies**

Over the summer the Executive and myself continued to meet with the SGS on a regular basis, and we hope we have strengthened our working relationship in the process. We discussed a number of ongoing issues, from

information about UHIP provided online to Research Assistants' employment status at the school to Conference Travel Awards. We also sought the SGS's input last week on a new award we could jointly administer, which would recognize each year a faculty or staff member who provided exceptional support and assistance to our graduate student members.

Respectfully submitted,  
Daniel Moore  
VP Graduate



Society of Graduate and Professional Students  
Report of the VP Professional  
April 2010

### **Reduced Summer Presence**

As is often the case with the VPP, I was unable to fully fill my role this summer as I was working out of the city. To assuage any fears, a corresponding reduction in pay was also arranged.

The response I received to this decision and this reduced presence were, in my opinion, very problematic. As an organization that is perceived as routinely underserving its professional student population, this attitude is one of a list of things that reflects the disconnect between the way our society is structured and the realities of this significant subset of our membership.

One of my goals this term is to improve our relationship with our professional student membership, as well as building relationships with professional student societies outside of our membership. This is a very real issue that our society is facing, and one that I plan on tackling. But I cannot accomplish this on my own. As such, I would respectfully request that we as a society try to be a lot more conscientious of the different needs, infrastructure, services and scholastic realities that our various members face, and attempt to create a society that better serves and reflects the needs of all of our membership. We as an organization grow as our membership feels enfranchised and well-represented by us, and I urge you to seriously consider ways that you can support policy and attitudinal shifts that allow for this to happen.

### **CFS-ON**

Anne-Marie recently brought in representatives from CFS-ON. My current sense is that this organization is noticeably less well-received at the professional student level, and I raised this issue with the representatives. Most noticeably, the organization seems to have little space for professional student concerns to be well-heard. Coming out of this meeting, the onus is very much on us as membership unions if we want to change this. If the membership wishes, I will endeavour to start at least an informal professional student caucusing within both the provincial and national CFS meetings.

### **Grad Club**

The Grad Club Board has been meeting regularly. I missed the earlier summer meetings, but was able to attend the August one. It seems that they are doing quite well, and have a number of great events coming up this year. Of particular note are the events the SGPS is running or co-running in the space, which sound like they will be great times.

### **Human Resources**

We have dealt with a few HR issues over the course of the summer and are routinely working to improve our monitoring and oversight processes. I am in the process of improving our documentation and review processes, and have a number of additional HR initiatives that will likely take up a healthy portion of my time this year. Expect a call for committee members soon.

Respectfully submitted,  
Shaughnessy Hawkins

It is great to have everyone back on campus and I want to take this opportunity to welcome those who are new and those returning to Queen's. I have some brief updates on what has transpired since my last report.

**SPACE-** Finally, we have managed to finalize some of the space needs of the SGPS. We now have a social lounge on the second floor of the JUCD being Room 236. In addition to this space, we have also managed to acquire new office space on the second floor. Renovations are set to begin in the next week or so. We will also have a larger boardroom in this area on construction is complete.

**RETAIL COMMITTEE-**the committee met a few times and have begin the discussions on what retail operations will be in the Queen's Centre.

**SLC BUDGET COMMITTEE-** The budget is in the process of being finalized and we have been looking for ways to lower costs. As per the direction of the SGPS council, we will continue to support the operational side of this new centre. Discussions regarding the governance of the new SLC are still ongoing and it seems as though we are making some progress towards an end result that all parties will be pleased with.

**SGPS FINANCE & SERVICES-**the committee will be meeting in September to begin to review the criteria for the various awards the SGPS offers. We are still looking for volunteers to help with this committee and it looks to be an exciting year ahead of us.

At the last meeting the first reading of the budget was presented and voted on. A second reading is needed and the budget is attached for your review. Please note I have also attached some information detailing/outlining what each Schedule line represents.

**FAMILY EVENTS—**As indicated previously, I have met with the Queen's International Centre along with Student Affairs to begin the planning for new family initiatives to welcome those members who have dependents. The first family orientation event is set for October 3, 2010-more details to follow in the newsletters.

**CHILDCARE-**I met with Queen's Daycare to discuss the possibility of beginning an after hour program for children there. A similar program was run (and terminated) by the AMS but was much more informal structure similar to a drop in centre. Many times there would be staff there but no children. After much discussion, we decided to try to determine the need for this service. I would ask that anyone who would use this service please email me to discuss your childcare needs specifically. Ideally if the need is there, I would like to see this service commence in January 2011.

**WORK\_STUDY-** As many of you have noted, the SGPS now has Work-Study opportunities available. We are looking for RA's to help with various projects. If you qualify for a work-study, please consider one of these jobs.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jillian Burford-Grinnell VP Finance and Services

Over the last month I have been editing the council package in advance of a general introduction to council at both the September and October meetings. I have also helped to train the incoming deputy speaker, Morgan Craig-Broadwith, who is going to be a fantastic addition to our council.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Bravo  
Speaker



Society of Graduate and Professional Students  
Report of the Chief Returning Officer  
August 2010

I was appointed Chief Returning Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> week of August 2010. I have meet with Sean Richards and Jawad Qureshy regarding educational student society (ESS) elections and to activate my SGPS email. In this meeting, elections of the Educational student senator and graduate student senator were also discussed.

I have since developed the timeline for the ESS elections, created their nomination packages in accordance with the ESS constitution. Currently, the objective is to have the ESS elections completed by September 17, 2010 before most educations students leave for placements September 30<sup>th</sup> 2010. The ESS elections will also include the election of the educational student senator.

I have also decided that due to the limited time available, the graduate student senator should appointed by the SGPS council at the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mikhail Kellawan



Society of Graduate and Professional Students  
Report of the Equity Commissioner  
September 2010

Dear Councilors,

This summer has been very busy and fruitful meeting with many of the committed anti-oppression organizers and leaders on campus and charting out a plan for this coming school year. My first task in the role of Equity Coordinator was, in conjunction with Stephanie Simpson and Jean Pfeleiderer of the Human Rights Office, to organize anti-oppression training for paid employees of the SGPS. While not all were able to attend this two-day workshop, we are currently organizing a second session for November where the appropriate hours can be accumulated.

The SGPS has been negotiating for an expansion of our office space. On July 7<sup>th</sup>, the Executive Director and I conducted an Accessibility Audit of the 200-level JDUC to determine whether or not the proposed SGPS expansion space is accessible to all SGPS members and the greater Queen's University and Kingston communities. We have a commitment to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) 2005 to create an accessible Ontario by 2025. As such, the SGPS will not proceed with any initiatives that are unlikely to be deemed accessible by these standards. Our audit determined that many barriers do exist to people with a diversity of mobility abilities. Based on the audit report and subsequent negotiations, Physical Plant Services has agreed to make the space accessible by the time of the move. Thus, we are pleased to announce that the SGPS will be expanding with accessibility sensibilities at the forefront.

This summer the SGPS also produced a response to the Principal's Where Next document. As Equity Coordinator, I drafted some of the equity-related concerns that the SGPS has with this vision statement. We are concerned that the efforts to Internationalize are based on a predominantly market-based approach, and thus serve to exclude and not adequately fund bright and promising minds from all over the globe. Furthermore, Principal Wolf's commitment to maintaining the 'tradition' of Queen's risks reinforcing the privileged culture of whiteness that exists at this university. We believe that diversifying recruitment tactics, and diversifying a very Eurocentric curriculum, are fundamental to fostering the reputation of excellence at Queen's University. Unfortunately, however, the latest version of the Writing Team's Where Next document has only

paid lip service to our equity concerns. In the coming weeks we will be organizing a response to this further marginalization of anti-oppression issues at Queen's.

Another project of central import over the past month has been preparing for Teaching Development Day for all new TAs and TFs. I, along with former Equity Commissioner and former Student Advisor Dana Olwan (Assistant Professor of Gender Studies), organized a one-hour workshop on Tuesday, September 7<sup>th</sup> entitled Anti-Opressive Pedagogies and Liberatory Practices. We utilized discussion and case studies to engage many SGPS members with anti-oppressive pedagogical practices. We are committed to sustaining a dialogue with TAs and TFs to ensure that we all have the tools necessary to foster a challenging learning environment. To this end, the Equity Committee will be organizing a webpage and reading group to foster discussion of equity in the classroom.

After assuming the role of Equity Commissioner in early August, I began preparing for a busy year of committee work. I am currently the Equity Representative on the Hiring Committee for our three new Student Advisors, and am in the process of organizing the first SGPS Equity Committee meeting of the new school year. I extend a warm welcome to all Council members who would like to sit on this committee. We are a non-hierarchical, consensus-based group of anti-oppression student leaders from across the university. Our mandate is to respond to equity-related concerns of SGPS members at Queen's and to facilitate the production of an anti-oppressive environment through campaigns and events. We will advertise upcoming meetings in the SGPS Newsletter and on the Equity Committee website. I look forward to working with those in attendance!  
Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Prouse  
Equity Commissioner



Society of Graduate and Professional Students  
Report of the Sustainability Report  
September 2010

Well, the leaves are rustling, campus is once again crowded, the energy is in the air: another academic year is upon us! Not too many things to report for the month August given the vacation-filled time of the year, but there are a few updates:

### **Queen's Community Garden:**

The Queen's community garden is up and running on West campus with all of the slots sold out but we (AMS, Queen's Sustainability Office) are still working on several things through the month of August:

- a) Opening Ceremony sometimes in the fall with all of the produce ready for harvest on display
- b) Working on the Garden policy – I will most likely add Community Garden involvement in the duties of the sustainability coordinator to ensure continued SGPS representation and involvement
- c) Working on advertising the Garden through AMS and SGPS booths for the sidewalk sale

### **Solar Coalition / Solar Queen's Project**

The Solar Coalition (AMS, SGPS, QBACC, etc) has been formed and I have met for a brainstorming session Sept 3<sup>rd</sup> to discuss future plans. As Queen's is going with the RFI and RFP as planned our main emphasis will be on continuing raising awareness and keeping the pressure on the administration to see a solar campus deployment in due time before the Feed in Tariff expires to obtain maximum economic gain.

We have re-named the facebook group Help Make Queen's University Become Solar Powered into Queen's Solar Coalition (we have over 1,900 members!), there is also a web page in the works: Qsolar.org and QBACC

will have a booth at the sidewalk sale as well with petitions and advertisements to continue to engage Queen's community and grow critical mass.

## Queen's Sidewalk Sale

Sustainability Committee and myself have also been busy preparing materials for the sidewalk sale: I have secured us a table through AMS Sustainability for this Friday Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>. We will be advertising SGPS sustainability involvement (Solar Coalition, Community Garden, Water Access Group, etc) services offered at the SGPS office (battery, cellphone + cartridge recycling), we will also advertise the Sustainability Action Fund Grant as well as recruit new members!



Society of Graduate and Professional Students  
Report of the International Students' Coordinator  
August 2010

Hi, my name is Becky Pero and I am one of the newly hired International Students' Coordinators with the SGPS. I live, work and go to school in Kingston, and this has provided me with a sound knowledge of both the Kingston and Queen's communities. I am a M.A. candidate in the Department of Sociology and am interested in international migration, immigration, diaspora and transnationalism, and citizenship. I have been involved with a number of not-for-profit organizations, in both my paid and volunteer work positions, and municipal committees. I look forward to working with international graduate and professional students in my capacity as an ISC, to foster an environment that both engages and encourages the personal, professional and academic development of these students. Going forward, I look to develop some social, community based activities for international graduate and professional students, including participation in this month's Kingston Multicultural Arts Festival on September 25<sup>th</sup>, organized jointly by Immigrant Services Kingston and Area and Kingston Immigration Partnership. I also intend to plan an apple picking/pie baking activity, a hockey outing to a Frontenacs game, and additional activities that will help international students learn more about the Kingston and Canadian cultures. In addition, I believe that communication to international students is important, and have worked on an international students' resource booklet and will develop a monthly calendar for international students. I have suggested that the SGPS creates a section for international students on their website and in the bi-monthly newsletter. I also hope to engage with stakeholders at Queen's and in Kingston to better understand issues faced by international graduate and professional students and collaborate on initiatives that positively effect this group of students. For example, the SGPS has planned a Sundae Sunday on West Campus, and Student Affairs and QUIC will collaborate of a host program of sorts for the partners and spouses of international students and their families. I have had the opportunity to meet and develop ideas with individuals in the Student Affairs office, QUIC, Career Services, and Immigrant Services Kingston and Area, and look forward to working with these groups and many others to develop the best programs and services for internationals graduate and professional students at Queen's.

Respectfully submitted,  
Becky Pero

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Hello friends,

For those of you who know me from before, I would like to say hi once again and hope you have all enjoyed your summers. For new Councilors, it's an honor to be in the same Council as you and hope to get to know you all with due time. As you may know, there are two individuals hired for this position. While I will leave Becky to explain her goals and objectives for the remainder of her term, my role is to be the 'political wing' of this position. In short, I am tasked to envision a set of policies and institutional structures that are designed to address a lot of the issues facing international students and devising pathways on how to achieve that end. I have requested research to be done on these topics. To be brief, I am investigating introducing changes that will entail the following major elements:

- Introducing better pay scheme and more powerful voice for a new

International Student Rector that is to replace the Coordinators.

- Allocating designated research hours by the SGPS towards issues facing international students.
- Socializing University Health Insurance Premium with the aid of domestic students.

I will report more on these topics in due time.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Amir Nosrat

### SGPS Computer Network

- I am working to improve the internal network of the SGPS. I am working towards a fully closed and secure network. Currently important servers and computers that require sensitive access are secured.
- I have implemented an automated backup service for our website.
- We have received our new copy and scanning machine. This new machine is a significant improvement over our previous copier. We are experiencing the normal growing pains that go along with new technology. This should all be sorted out in the next month or so.
- I completed the work on our web server. The server upgrades allow our website to function quickly and efficiently during this very busy and demanding time of year.

### SGPS Website

- I have continued to create audio-visual tutorials for our wiki.
- I have done a lot of work on a main transition section of our site for new employees, especially the Executive Assistant.
- I continue to transition our site code to be compliant with HTML5. I will ensure browsers that don't support HTML5 still see our site as expected.
- I continue to work to ensure compatibility with mobile devices visiting our website.

### Communications

- I am very excited to announce that optional fee opt-outs will be done online this year. During our opt-out period (September 13 - 24) students will be able to log on to the opt-out system from any computer with internet access. This is something I have been working on (with the University Registrar and Queen's IT) for quite some time. We are all very excited to have this system in place.
- With the International Students' Coordinator, Becky, I have generated a new information brochure for international students. This will be available at the SGPS Office.
- The Orientation Week Survival Guide was completed and snail-mailed to all of our members.
- I have completed my work to update all job description documents on our website.
- I continue to work to update our current bursary application forms and to create new forms for bursaries that will be available in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sean Richards - info@sgps.ca