



Hello Council,

I hope that everyone had a productive and enjoyable summer. Things have been very busy at the SGPS. A lot of my work over the summer has been in collaboration with the remainder of the Executive, so I will be brief in my report and will fill in any gaps at the Council Meeting.

The Executive has decided to work towards refining the professional face of the SGPS. One of the ways we are achieving this is through the remodeling of the SGPS Executive Offices in the JDUC. The old office had only two work spaces, even though there are five members of the Executive, and, frankly, was not a particularly welcoming space for members who may wish to meet with those who are representing them. Hopefully, the new office space will be ready for this month's council meeting. We are hoping to use these spaces for meeting with both members and external groups throughout the year.

Another project that I have been working on is a review of named positions within the organization, starting with the Executive. As it stands, our Bylaw and Policy do not in all cases accurately reflect the work that is actually completed, and we often have duplication of effort or expertise. With the help of the Executive, I have been trying to better understand how all of the parts of the SGPS work together, so that we can refine the roles of different parts of the organization. As part of this effort, I have been in contact with Career Services to begin cataloguing the types of skills and expertise that are developed through involvement with various aspects of the SGPS. This will help those members who have been hesitant to get involved in the past better appreciate the value of their involvement, and identify how they might want to get involved, based on their interests and professional goals.

Finally, I would like to talk about some of the work that I've done with external groups over the summer. I have continued my work on the Student Services Strategic Planning Exercise, directed by Student Affairs, which has helped to motivate some of my other planning work. We are working together with the AMS on a Shared Services Agreement, which will help ensure that SGPS members continue to provide some oversight on the services that we pay into that are administered by the AMS. The 2014/2015 SGPS Executive signed an agreement with PSAC901 in April, and there are some outstanding obligations that I will bring up at Council to seek your approval.

Thank you to all the members who contributed their time to the SGPS this summer. Many members who have not been involved with the SGPS previously have given much of their time and expertise to the various committees that ran through the summer. Their contributions are greatly appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Cochrane, SGPS President  
[president@sgps.ca](mailto:president@sgps.ca)



Dear Council,

I hope everyone has had a relaxing and enjoyable summer! Despite being busy with tons of lab work, renovations at the cottage and committee work, I've managed to enjoy myself a bit. I'm very excited for orientation to start and a new crop of SGPS members to come into the fold.

### **Student Advisor Program**

Since April 2015, the Advisor Program has had twelve cases. At the beginning of August only six of these cases were still ongoing and six had been resolved and then closed. During this same time period, the program had seventeen inquiries that were referred onto other services. For example, any concerns regarding TA/RA payments were directed to PSAC 901, questions about admissions were directed to the School of Graduate Studies.

The Advisor office has moved to a new, accessible location in JDUC 031. Office hours will begin in September and will remain static throughout the year. Any and all service updates will be posted to our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/studentadvisorprogram>. The Advisor Program also has an awesome new logo! It is based on the new SGPS logo and looks great. You should all swing by the new office in JDUC 031 if you want to check it out. I'll also have some Student Advisor Program magnets at Council that everyone can grab to help spread awareness of the Program.

The Advisor program has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Addiction & Mental Health Services - Kingston Frontenac Lennox & Addington in order to supply on-demand crisis counselling assistance for our Advisors. Our agreement mirrors one made with the AMS Peer Support Centre with the same service organization. This will give Advisors immediate access to mental health experts.

### **Committees**

You know what's better than sitting in a hot, sticky boardroom for 2 hours? Lots of stuff. Luckily, I have had the opportunity to sit there with some very helpful committee members that made it bearable on the Student Advisor Program Review Committee. The Committee's report will be submitted for this meeting of Council and everyone can read our findings. This was not a simple process, as the Committee sought to interview many on-campus partners of the Student Advisor Program. Hundreds of person-hours were contributed by members, many of which were spent discussing differing opinions. While not all of these differences were resolved, our report presents a route forward for the Advisor Program.

Last month, I also had the opportunity to sit on the adjudication committee for the Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Supervision. Two awards are given out each year one in HSS disciplines and one in STEM disciplines. Reading through the nominee packages made me feel so good that some of our SGPS members are receiving top-tier supervisory support. The goal is to get everyone to that level, so keep an eye out for nominations next year if you have a phenomenal supervisor!

## Orientation

GSLAG again revolved around orientation and I'm happy to say that based on discussions that came out of GSLAG, incoming SGPS members will have bus access wristbands available for September 1<sup>st</sup>. I also had the opportunity to pack thousands of swag bags to give out during orientation alongside some amazing volunteers from the SHRC. I hope to see some of you out at SGPS events in a few weeks!

If you have any questions or comments about an issue, please feel free to send me an email at [vpg@sgps.ca](mailto:vpg@sgps.ca). I almost managed to make it an entire half summer without getting hurt in intramural soccer, so I'm super proud of myself. I also now have a gigantic laser to shoot at my explosions in the lab, so that pretty cool. Summer is not over yet! Enjoy the sunshine and keep smiling!

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Kellenberger". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark Kellenberger  
Vice President Graduate  
[vpg@sgps.ca](mailto:vpg@sgps.ca)



Dear SGPS Council Members,

I hope that this report finds you happily preparing for council as the campus prepares for the new semester and new students who will be joining us. It has been an exceedingly busy summer around the SGPS offices, and I have been working extensively on a few projects to benefit the society, as well as fulfilling my duties as VPP.

Following the motion passed at May council I have been hard at work chairing the Human Resources Standing Committee. A call out for membership occurred in June and the committee started its work in earnest the following month. Over the course of several meetings the committee examined official records and emails to review the human resources changes made in the SGPS at the start of 2015, and have created a report that will be delivered in camera at August Council. Any councilors who would like to see this report in the future will have to visit the SGPS offices to sign a confidentiality report in order to see a restricted copy. This report reflects the outstanding professionalism and intelligent insights of several SGPS members who volunteered many hours of their time, and they are a testament to the truly incredible membership that we serve.

Furthermore, in the course of the Human Resources Standing Committee's investigation, there was a great deal of behind the scenes work that was handled the Executive Director, Sean Richards, and the Executive Assistant, Andria Mahon. These individuals combined with the Executive spent upwards of 200 hours pulling relevant internal emails and documents for the committee to review, while ensuring that the confidential information of our membership was protected. This task was far from glamorous, but they exercised the utmost diligence and professionalism in their efforts. They both deserve the appreciation of council, and all of our respect. **Thank you Sean and Andria.**

In addition to my usual committee and representative work, I have volunteered to be the SGPS representative to the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS). I attended the CFS National conference in June to attend informational workshops, the meetings of the Graduate Caucus, and to vote on CFS policy, campaigns, and other motions. These major CFS events present an opportunity for us to share best practices with other university, and to pool our resources in the pursuit of larger nation-wide causes. During my time at the conference I was happy to discover that the SGPS is doing very well as a student society. Compared to some our sister institutions, we are lucky to have strong lines of communication with the Queen's administration and often enter discussions with great mutual respect. In other ways we have much to do, and some of the challenges we face as graduate students in the new millennia are universal across Canada. Hopefully we will be able to resolve these problems together. I will attending the CFS Ontario Conference in the days before August council, and will report on anything noteworthy that comes up.

A part of my campaign for SGPS VP Professional was a promise to deliver increased professional development opportunities for all SGPS students. I am a firm believer that the private professional world offers many opportunities to our talented students, but I believe that we are not taking advantage of this environment. Too many students are unprepared for professional networking, interviews, and career development. To address this I have been working to develop a series of professional development events. The first of these will be a **Professional Makeover Week** set for the week of October the 5<sup>th</sup>. During this week we will be bringing professional wear tailors to campus to do custom business fittings students. This includes men AND women's professional clothing! In addition we will be providing free professional headshots for interested grad students with Studio Q, so that they may update their social media profiles for the coming year of networking. Finally, I have negotiated to have a series of custom business cards made available for SGPS students at the P&CC, so that they will be prepared to share their info at major conferences and networking events in the year. This week is the first of its kind, and I hope to provide more to our membership in the coming months.

Finally, it came to my attention this summer (even before the formation of the Human Resources Standing Committee) that human resources practices in the SGPS are currently below standard. In particular, I have noticed that the SGPS until now has effectively worked on an ad hoc basis, addressing issues as they arise. The management style and procedures of any given year has relied heavily on the previous experience and attitudes of the executive. There are effectively very few policies or clearly outlined procedures. This inconsistent method of leading the society is deeply concerning to me. I believe that we have a duty to provide a consistent, professional, and transparent working environment to all SGPS staff and members at large. As a result I have begun to work on fixing these holes with some new policies and practices. I have completed a draft of a new SGPS Anti-Harassment Policy and Reporting Procedure that I will be submitting to Council in the coming month. As it stands, SGPS permanent staff do not have a clear means for reporting workplace harassment or discrimination as they fall into a grey zone in the university's infrastructure. I hope that this policy will protect our incredibly dedicated team, and also provide a more accessible means for reporting problems within the SGPS as a whole. In addition to this I will reorganizing office record keeping so that we get in the habit of keeping more detailed and regular records of employee feedback, performance, and discipline. These detailed records should help us with making more useful assessments during evaluation periods throughout the year, and also help to clarify disciplinary procedures. The SGPS work environment aims to be both accessible and educational, and I hope that these changes will contribute to those goals.

In short, it has been an exceedingly busy summer. I think that the Executive has done some solid work, and I personally am looking forward to getting back to class, and seeing some more of our members on campus. If you have any questions please let me know.

Cha Gheill,

Mark Asfar

Vice-President Professional

[vpp@sgps.ca](mailto:vpp@sgps.ca)



Dear Council,

It's been a long, hot, and productive summer. I feel that during these sunny months our team has really gotten to know one another and support each other in our efforts, and I can foresee a fruitful year ahead. Here's what's kept me busy these past few months.

**Provost Advisory Committee on Mental Health and the Health & Wellness Steering Committee**

Both of these went quite well as we wrapped up the academic year. Up for discussion were the changes to our advisor program and also the direction that we'd like to take things over the summer. The committees had some helpful suggestions as to what types of training that they felt could really assist our membership vis-a-vis the Student Advisors. Further, I made mention of the role that the university could play in better supporting the mental health and wellness of our membership in the new academic year.

Additionally, and during the last meeting of either, I tried to pour some fuel on getting the **Advisory Committee on Academic Accommodations** to meet sooner as this would essentially be the master document that would alter all of the accommodations for the entire campus - in effect both uniting and empowering the wide array of policies that are currently in place.

**Student Affairs**

Our meetings with Student Affairs were both fruitful and informative. In addition to discussing the traffic patterns of Toronto and soccer (football in Europe), we discussed some of the initiatives that we were planning on working on over the summer, as well as in the new academic year. In addition to fostering a closer working relationship with this body, I further attended Queen's University International Centre training, Positive Space training, and a seminar on mediation in hopes of better advocating for the issues that our membership will face over the next year.

**Sexual Assault Prevention & Response Working Group**

Having produced a draft for campus stakeholders and the administration at the end of last year, this group enjoyed a well-deserved rest. Over the summer, we met a few times primarily as a wrap-up of how things went between the consultations between stakeholders, and some time was spent in session to plan for the fall. I spoke with Arig (Assistant Dean Student Life and Learning) from Student Affairs and made the case that our advisors might benefit from being included in the proposed Bringing in the Bystander, and First Responder training that may be happening in late August and at the start of the new academic year.

Finally, there's a large conference happening in the fall, Campus to Campus - Cultivating Consent Culture, and in order to defray the costs for some of our members and attendees from the SHRC, I have agreed to funding some of their travel costs to this important event. Working in concert with OPIRG, the SHRC will return with information valuable to the development of a more equitable consent culture on our campus, furthering both local initiatives and empowering member research.

**Food Bank**

Closer to the community, I again worked alongside a small but effective team of graduates and professionals who volunteered at the AMS SGPS Food Bank over the summer. Due to their selfless efforts this valuable service was allowed to remain open over the summer months at full operational capacity. Not only a great opportunity, we also made valuable inroads with our friends at the AMS. If you are interested in volunteering, don't hesitate to contact me.

We also successfully lobbied the Principal's office to consider the Food Bank as a point of donation for the Principal's Annual Barbeque. This was successful and we managed to completely a bin in less than three hours! My assessment is that as we were able to get the President to consider us, rather than an off-campus charity as they usually do was nothing less than a coup and we should take great effort to try to ensure that he chooses our Food Bank in the coming years for many reasons, primary of which being that it is a great avenue to make the issue more known to his office.

### **Community Outreach**

This is something that I have continued from last year. I submitted a letter to the entirety of our community partners as a means of gauging where they see us, themselves, and our shared relationship over the coming year. I felt that this outreach was important, as due to various reasons such as federal or provincial cuts, or a lack of staffing opportunities, some partners may have been feeling vulnerable but had little means of addressing such sentiment. While only a few letters have returned thus far, I am confident that by the fall term, we will have a far greater understanding and appreciation for the hard work that all of our allied community partners engage in and a more informed idea how we might foster better relations with them.

### **A Proposed Trans\* Accommodation Bursary**

I have also been working alongside the Social Issues Commissioner Alex of the AMS in investigating a trans\* accessibility bursary for the benefit of students upon this campus who find themselves for various reasons needing to attend larger centres like Toronto or Ottawa to have their needs met. In meetings with Jean Pfleiderer of the Human Rights Office (HRO), we discovered that sadly no student-based initiative like this exists on campus. She did however invite us to attend an informal working group that she chairs on trans\* issues comprised of members of the Queen's and Kingston community that has already done considerable work on this very issue. It is our hope that through this collaboration and their significant experience, we will be able to lend assistance where needed on this issue for the benefit of all of our membership. Investigations are ongoing.

### **SGPS Breastfeeding/Quiet Room**

It struck me that nowhere on this campus is there a safe and quiet place for student-parents to feed and tend to their children. The investigations of this are ongoing but in working closely with the executive director, we have not only chosen a room but also begun renovations and some minor purchasing. There has been the issue of the Day Nurseries Act, which some at Campus Planning have felt that this initiative is beholden to, but these debates should be ironed out by mid-September.

### **Queen's Day Care**

Despite it being old news by now, given that last semester Queen's Day Care officially signed a deal with the university, the Queen's Day Care Board is gearing up for a hard September open. It took a lot of work by a lot of dedicated individuals, but I'm quite pleased to say that childcare on this campus will be returning to full capacity as of the new year.

### **Camp Outlook**

Especially considering their unusual hours we have finally managed to offer SGPS membership to Camp Outlook, the second former AMS club to join us, alongside the SHRC. I extend them warm congratulations, and offer many thanks to all of the hard work of their director Zoe, and our Executive Director Sean.

### **PSAC/SGPS Joint Childcare Bursary**

Unfortunately due to conflicting schedules we were not able to get as much work done on this as I had hoped, but there is no reason to doubt that this joint effort will not materialize. On a positive note, PSAC has already rolled out their own bursary on this matter, and ours has been allocated within our budget. So, I suppose that's a fancy way of saying that my investigation of this bursary is still ongoing.

### **Student Services Strategic Planning Exercise**

I met with key stakeholders from around the campus including Student Affairs, the SGS, and Career Services to have a discussion around the services that students will need in the years ahead of us; topics included enrolment trends, data graphing, educational trends and emergent issues. It went well but Queens' participation in surveys has fallen by half in

the past few years. I suggested to Chris Conway (Director, Institutional Research) that a central repository for surveys be created to offset “question fatigue,” which was one of the leading causes of attrition and he was exceptionally receptive to such an idea. Moreover, I had some brief yet beneficial discussions about gaining the raw data from some key surveys, including the 2013 National College Health Assessment data, for the benefit of our own internal research and ongoing projects.

### **Committees Pertaining to the Student Advisors**

Myself and other members of the executive at the direction of council undertook significant investigative research surrounding the events of early 2015.

If my council report appears a tad shorter than it normally would, that is because I personally spent over 50 hours researching this task and I am under the impression that each of the other executive behaved similarly. To put that into better context, that is roughly one full month of the time I dedicate to my position.

While I am not upset by this and am pleased to carry out the will of council, I am disappointed that after giving the executive such a weighty and serious task, very few councilors and only a handful of members from our community became involved. Folksy idioms let us know that many hands makes for light work. Had more people come out, the executive would have been freer to engage with the positions that we were elected to.



Dear Councilors and Members,

I hope all of you have had a wonderful summer and have had a chance to enjoy the sunshine. I have been working hard over the past few months to get acquainted with the processes of the SGPS especially from a financial perspective. Below is a brief overview of some of the important items I have been working on this summer.

### **Bursaries**

My top priority has been working to understand the bursary program. The Finance and Services Committee and I have been processing bursary applications continuously. Bursaries have been in very high demand, especially the Emergency Student Aid Bursary. As a result we have gone over budget with many of our bursaries.

As a result, I have looked into restructuring our bursary program. First of all, as you will see in the draft budget starting September 2015 I have increased the amount of funding allocated to bursaries to assist with this growing demand. Second, I have created a general bursary budget line item. The idea is that this general bursary will replace our current bursaries: Emergency Student Aid, Club Funding, Grants Program and the Sports fund to combine them into one bursary. Currently, many applications are declined because they do not fit the individual bursary criteria, however, the members that are applying have very good reasons for needing the assistance. As a result, this new bursary will open up the possibilities in which a student can apply. Members can apply for a variety of reasons including club funding, emergency aid, childcare, grants and sports funding, etc. It will be up to the Finance and Services Committee to determine if a student/group is eligible to receive funding with a maximum amount of \$1000 available to an individual or group per fiscal year. I have kept both the Dental Bursary and International Student Bursaries separate from the General Bursary as there are specific criteria that need to be met in order to receive these bursaries. Members will now only have to fill out one standard form for the general bursary, making it easier for members to apply as they will no longer have to figure out which form they need and it will make it easier for the Finance Committee to keep track of who has received funding.

There are more details that need to be worked out for this general bursary including guidelines for the Finance and Services Committee when they are reviewing applications. I will be presenting these guidelines at the September council meeting.

### **Budget**

I have spent many hours over the last few months developing a budget for the September 2015 fiscal year. I found the structure of the 2014 budget was not working as well as it could for the SGPS and as a result the new budget takes on a different shape than the SGPS' current budget. Budget line items are intended to be as clear as possible and I have provided a brief explanation of each item, which is attached to the budget. Further, unlike past years this budget is balanced. Overall, the budget is intended to be clear and easy to use as there should never be any question where the SGPS is spending its money.

The SGPS budget also includes the hiring of a new staff member. Currently, we do not have enough staff at the SGPS to ensure that the financial side of things is taken care of to the best of our ability. It is necessary to have someone who has experience working with finances and who will have a continuous knowledge of the SGPS finances through the transition of executives each year. My hope is to develop a skill set we are looking for in the new staff member and to start recruiting in October. I will present on this further at the September council meeting.

## **Investment**

We have been working with TD Bank Group over the past few months to figure out an appropriate investment for our excess funds. We have found an option that the executive is comfortable with, however, we are currently at a standstill as we are waiting to see what our bank account balance will be at the end of this budget year. I hope to provide further information to you at the September council meeting.

## **Accountant**

My next task over the final weeks of the summer term is to review our work with our current accountant and to see if they are the best option for the SGPS' audits. This will include looking at other accounting firms to see if they can offer the SGPS better service. Thanks to the last executive, we are almost caught up with audits. The SGPS will be undergoing its 2014 audit over the next few weeks.

Unfortunately, I will not be in attendance at the August Council Meeting. However, if you have any questions for me about anything including the budget, please do not hesitate to send me an email. I am more than happy to meet with any of you to discuss any questions or concerns you may have when I am back in Kingston. I look forward to seeing all of you at the September Council Meeting.

Best Regards,

Christina Huber  
VP Finance & Services  
[vpfs@sgps.ca](mailto:vpfs@sgps.ca)



Hello Councilors,

Welcome back to another exciting session of Council! I hope you all enjoyed the two months off!

Through the summer I have been busy preparing for our first Council meeting, revamping the council publications (agendas, name cards, etc.) to fall in line with the new visual identity that comes with the new SGPS Logo. You will have likely noticed the new agenda format, which hopefully makes things a little clearer, and you will see the new name cards when you arrive at Council on Tuesday.

Additionally, I hired a Deputy Speaker during the summer, so I would like to welcome Alan Awez Mohammad to Council. He can be reached at [deputyspeaker@sgps.ca](mailto:deputyspeaker@sgps.ca) if there are ever any issues with the Minutes.

You will also notice on the Agenda there are a couple motions that involve Council, and the Judicial Committee. I just wanted to talk a little bit about them. First, the motion regarding Council time limits – the policies dictate the Speaker must present a motion outlining specific time limits for portions of the agenda. These suggestions are just initial proposals and discussion and amendments are welcome during debate. Furthermore, any of these time limits may be extended on a case by case basis. The second motion has to do with populating the Judicial Committee, which is the committee that serves as the Non-Academic Discipline branch of the SGPS, and it requires 7 members of Council as its members. As these committee members require training, they need to be filled as soon as possible. If you are interested in the committee and want to know more, please let me know.

Finally, as a result of the recent changes to Council composition and seat numbers, I have been working towards updating the list of SGPS Councilors. The most up to date list can be found here (<http://www.sgps.ca/council/downloads/SGPS-Council.pdf>) and I would appreciate it if you could check through, and let me know of any errors or admissions. The list is up to date in terms of which departments get seats on Council, and the number of seats allotted, so if there are blanks, they need to be filled.

As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to let me know.

Cheers,

Eric Rapos  
Council Speaker  
[speaker@sgps.ca](mailto:speaker@sgps.ca)



Hello Councilors,

I hope you all enjoyed your summers and are ready to hit the ground running again!

The most recent meetings of GSEC and Senate occurred in May, so I can get you caught up on those meeting before we get back into the fall term.

### GSEC Meeting – May 7, 2015

- Dean's Report:
  - o Queen's was successful in receiving a Trudeau Fellowship (\$60,000/year award for 3 years, plus workshops that accompany it).
  - o NSERC has put out an invitation to visit Universities – they will be coming in early Fall to talk with students and post-docs about the application process
    - More details to come
  - o Queen's is a long way off of its Masters target currently (~550 of 900 target)
    - Some programs will be admitting, but still a red-flag
- Approvals:
  - o Combined Programs in Neurosciences
  - o Education PME changed nomenclature from concentration to fields
  - o Providing the Dean and SGS Executives power to act on behalf of GSEC during the summer months

### Senate Meeting – May 26, 2016

- Changes to fields in the Classic MA were approved
  - o <https://queensuniversity.civicweb.net/document/61590/SCAD%20deletion%20and%20creation%20of%20fields%20in%20MA%20Classic.pdf?handle=304C430B3FCE4272BD6A607428360B81>
- The name of the Cornell Queen's Executive MBA program was renamed: "Executive MBA Americas – A Partnership with Cornell"
- The Academic Planning Working Group released their interim report
  - o <https://queensuniversity.civicweb.net/document/61614/Interim%20Report%20Academic%20Planning%20Working%20Group%20for.pdf?handle=9A802F24497C42BE9339AB5DF1BB88FE>
- The Governance and Nominating Committee submitted a motion (after many referrals back to the committee) regarding the definition of Faculty with regard to Committee Applications. The motion was finally approved.
- A motion outlining the obligatory leave, and removal of Senators was presented and approved as an addition to the Senate rules of Procedure.
  - o <https://queensuniversity.civicweb.net/document/61553/SGNC%20-%20Rules%20of%20Procedure%20Leave%20Removal.pdf?handle=0B9020D9DDC54215BA1FBEB1A631BDCE>
- Several notices of motion were presented, and will be discussed at the September Senate:
  - o Education Student Senator Term length extension (1 to 2-year)
  - o An exception to the Commerce Student Senator Term length (one time only)
  - o Senate Composition (creation of Faculty at Large Senators)

- Amendments to the Rules of Order regarding Question Period
- The rescinding of the Policy on Non-Academic Discipline at Queen's (2003), and approval of the Senate Policy on the Jurisdiction of Non-Academic Discipline.

And that about wraps up my Senator report. As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Cheers,

Eric Rapos  
Graduate Student Senator  
[senator@sgps.ca](mailto:senator@sgps.ca)



Hello Council,

Welcome back!

The summer has been a busy one with lots of committee work – the reports of which will be available during this meeting.

The Chair of the Board has called 3 special meetings that are fast approaching. The agendas for these meetings are not yet published, so please stay tuned for further updates.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Capital Assets and Finance Committee is on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015, and the Board will be meeting on October 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015.

Should you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

James MacLeod

Trustee  
[trustee@sgps.ca](mailto:trustee@sgps.ca)



Dear SGPS Members,

Over the last 8 months, the Equity and Diversity Commission has been working on realigning itself and developing a long-term strategy that will be championed by future appointees of the Commission for years to come. At the end of October, our term as the current standing Equity and Diversity Commission will come to a close and we will be hiring the next generation of Equity and Diversity leaders from the SGPS membership to carry our vision forward. In preparation of this transition, our team has produced reports on each individual position within the Commission for your consideration and review.

This year we realigned the Commission by changing our name from being the Equity Commission to the Equity and Diversity Commission, which herald the addition of new roles to our team. Marsha Rampersaud came on board as our Anti-racism and Cultural Diversity Researcher, James McNutt joined us as our Accessibility Researcher, and Mathieu Crupi acted as our Gender and Sexual Diversity Researcher and Commission Coordinator. In the coming months, our Commission will be advocating for the creation of three permanent positions within the Commission based upon the portfolios represented by these three individuals. As you read their reports, I hope that you will begin to think about the wide range of issues that our SGPS membership experience and the challenges we face as the SGPS to be able to advocate on behalf of and serve the diverse needs of our whole community. Building out the Equity and Diversity Commission to include several Coordinator roles instead of having only one Coordinator, which is the current mandate, allows us to begin to tackle the wide range of concerns, needs, and policy issues that we see on Queen's campus today.

Thank you for your time and consideration and again, I will be following up in the near future to discuss our long term vision for the Commission, which includes three permanent Coordinator roles that will continue the work of Marsha, James, and Mat. I want to acknowledge and thank them for their hard work and for being trailblazers with me in this journey.

Sincerely,

**Erica Baker**  
Equity & Diversity Commissioner

#### **REPORT OF THE GENDER AND SEXUAL DIVERSITY RESEARCHER & COMMISSION COORDINATOR**

*Mathieu Crupi*

As the Equity & Diversity Coordinator, I have had the privilege of working alongside Erica, James and Marsha on improving many aspects of student life these past few months. Along with other members of our commission, I helped organize an SGPS Mix & Mingle Event at Grad Club for Elections and an SGPS Equity & Diversity Event. Our commission now has a Facebook group to recruit members and plan meetings. As another example of my involvement, I attended the OCSA Conference "Taking Action: Sexual Violence on Campus" at York University and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Working Group Town Hall Meetings. I also proposed the idea to change our commission name from 'Equity Commission' to 'Equity & Diversity Commission'. We were happy that this idea was approved at Council. As a commission, we wanted to extend beyond our original area of focus, while also adopting a similar title as other groups on campus (i.e. ASUS Equity & Diversity, University Relations Equity & Diversity, etc.). Before the school year ended, I attended two events by the Queen's Tamil Student Association and visited the Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre.

I have now been focusing my attention to Sexual & Gender Diversity issues with the goal of engaging students to participate in activities that make them feel included and comfortable. I also want to improve the accessibility and funding for mental health services on campus for LGBTQ+ students. In addition to SGPS training (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Training, Anti-Oppression Training, etc.), I have completed Positive Space Program Training (instructed by Jean Pfleiderer) and joined the Positive Space Steering Committee. I attended the last meeting of the school year to provide some suggestions for the upcoming year. With Jean's help, I have updated the LGBTQ+ section of the 'Good to Know' document which will eventually serve as a resource for all SGPS students. I am currently working on designing an 'Equity & Diversity' logo with partners and hope to then create a Facebook page for SGPS students to notify students of upcoming 'Equity & Diversity' events throughout campus and other resources. Our commission is also looking forward to organizing another event in the fall for students.

Sincerely,

**Mathieu Crupi**

Gender and Sexual Diversity Researcher  
Equity & Diversity Coordinator

## **REPORT OF THE ACCESSABILITY RESEARCHER**

*JAMES MCNUTT*

Since March 2015, it has been my honour to serve as Accessibility Research for the Society of Graduate and Professional Students (SGPS). Under this capacity, I have understood my role as improving accessibility needs on the Queen's University campus. Individuals with accessibility needs are an integral part of the campus community and their integration within this setting is a vital aspect to the foundation of an equitable learning environment. With this understanding, I have attempted to initiate some initiatives as well as supporting existing projects around campus.

Over the past five (5) months, I have initiated two (2) main initiatives. Due to the limited time-frame, these initiatives are at various stages of completion.

1. In association with Campus Planning, I conducted an accessibility video audit of select campus buildings. In selecting these buildings, I attempted to choose buildings with a high volume of student traffic. Although the video is currently in the editing process, I am warranted in suggesting that the main areas of concern are the size of elevators, the reliability of lifts (I was stuck in a lift for several minutes on the video!), and the assurance of unobstructed library aisles.
2. Another initiative that I have begun during this time-frame is the future inclusion of the Kingston Access Services (wheelchair accessible bus) through the Bus-It! Fee. Currently, passengers of Kingston Access Services are required to register with the organization and pay \$2.75 per trip. However, all students, including those with disabilities, are required to pay the Bus-It! Fee which covers Kingston Transit fares only.

Regarding this initiative, I have discussed this difficulty with both the Alma Mater Society (AMS), who negotiated the terms of the Bus-It! Fee Agreement with the City of Kingston, and Kingston Access Services. I have yet to report to Kingston Access Services regarding their concerns as to the terms of the Kingston Transit Agreement.

Along with these two projects, I have been involved with the Campus Mobility Project under the direction of Campus Planning. The goal of this project is to create and operate an assistive mobility device rental service on the Queen's campus, for temporarily disabled students, former students, faculty, staff and visitors. This initiative will insure that Queen's events are fully accessible to all individuals. At this moment, this project is in the planning stage. We are seeking funding for 4 scooters and 4 wheelchairs through the AMS Accessibility Fund.

I would strongly encourage the SGPS to adopt the position of Accessibility Commissioner on the Equity Commission. With the acknowledgement that each one of us is, or could become, limited in some capacity and, considering the state of accessibility around the Queen's community as will be demonstrated by my video audit, we all have a vested interest in improving accessibility around Queen's University. Furthermore, with the passage of The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act in 2005 and the commitment that Ontario becomes fully accessible by 2025, accessibility is not only

an equity issue but also a legal obligation. When individuals with accessibility needs are included (a process by which the Built Environment as well as psychological and social aspects are considered), the campus becomes a more equitable community.

Sincerely,

**James McNutt**

Accessibility Researcher

## **REPORT OF THE ANTI-RACISM AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY RESEARCHER**

*Marsha Rampersaud*

### **Antiracism and Cultural Diversity Researcher**

As part of the Equity Team, my primary task as the Anti-racism and Cultural Diversity Researcher is to assist the Equity Commissioner and Equity Coordinator in overseeing SGPS activities, and ensuring that equitable principles pertaining to antiracism are being upheld. My focus in this position is to both evaluate and foster an environment of cultural sensitivity on the Queen's University campus. By liaising with groups who share a similar focus, my task is to work toward creating a culturally competent campus via events and campaigns.

### **Objectives**

*(See Appendix A for elaborate details of each objective)*

#### **1. Evaluating Cultural Sensitivity on Campus**

One of my objectives is to gauge the current cultural climate on campus. During the summer months I have spent time reading about Queen's history with respect to cultural issues and familiarizing myself with existing antiracism frameworks. During Frosh Week I plan on posting blank poster boards around campus that simply say the word RACE on them, with markers attached. The poster boards will stay up for the week, with no hints or prompts of what to write, but an obvious suggestion to share your thoughts (as markers are attached). Once the week is complete I will take the posters down to see what (if anything) has been written. Combining what I've learned about Queen's in the past, what I've learned from the antiracism literature I've read, and the thoughts of students currently on campus as reflected on the poster boards, I hope to start the school year with an indication of the current cultural climate. This is an ideal starting point from which to meet my other objectives.

#### **2. Advocacy and Support to Students on Campus With Respect to Issues of Anti-racism and Cultural Diversity**

Having a designated Anti-racism and Cultural Diversity Researcher provides a first point of contact within SGPS to students who may have concerns or challenges in these areas they would like to raise. My role is to be sensitive to their needs and willing to find the appropriate advocacy network if required.

#### **3. Creating a Culturally Competent Campus**

In collaboration with groups on campus who share similar goals, I plan to work toward creating a culturally competent campus: a campus comprised of individuals who are inclusive, culturally aware and sensitive. This will be achieved through collaborative event planning and campaigning. This is in line with making Queen's the best university it can be.

### **Action Plan**

*(See Appendix A for complete monthly summary)*

As mentioned above, I have spent the summer months learning about the university's recent cultural history and researching antiracist theory. Essentially, I am building my knowledge base around these issues before the school year begins. I also plan to conduct my "thoughts on RACE" experiment during Frosh Week. These contribute to my objective of evaluating cultural sensitivity on campus.

In partnership with my colleagues on the Equity Team, I have assisted in updating the SGPS' "Good to Know" document. This will be available to members starting in September.

While I had hoped to begin connecting with other similarly oriented groups on campus prior to the start of the fall term, the summer has proved difficult to reach other student. Instead, I plan to reach out to other groups in September (and to continue to do so through the course of the school year) to build meaningful partnerships across campus. My goal is to collaborate with these groups on cultural events and antiracist initiatives that will increase awareness and contribute to the overall cultural competency of the Queen's community. I plan to make myself available to assist other groups with their events throughout the year, and intend to plan an SGPS antiracism event with their assistance in March 2016.

Another motivation for connecting with other student groups is to increase the visibility of my position among the membership. By making myself visible to other students, they will come to recognize me as a support and a resource within SGPS related to antiracist and cultural matters.

A final initiative I would like to undertake within this position is to create a platform from which to recognize and celebrate the multitude of cultural and religious holidays throughout the year. This platform could also be used to draw attention to cultural events occurring on campus and in the Kingston community. It would be ideal if the monthly emails to the SGPS listserv could devote a portion to cultural awareness. This would contribute to the cultural competency of our campus.

## Conclusion

Although the contract for this position officially closes in October 2015, you will note in my report and in the attached year plan (*Appendix A*) that I have listed events and projects that take place throughout the school year, leading up to a bigger antiracist initiative in March 2016. I have done this because I feel that the SGPS should have an active and ongoing role in the cultural climate of our campus. Members will benefit from having someone devoted to this specific issue: the symbolic power of creating a position for this issue lets our membership know that we believe this issue is important and requires attention. Antiracism and awareness of cultural diversity are important components of equitable practice, and as such serve an integral role within the SGPS' Equity Team. Rather than ceasing this position in October, I strongly encourage the SGPS to renew this position and to establish a permanent vacancy within the organization's structure for an Antiracism and Cultural Diversity Researcher.

Sincerely,

**Marsha Rampersaud**

Anti-racism and Cultural Diversity Researcher

## Appendix A – Year Plan "OBJECTIVES"

<b>Objective 1</b>	<b>Measuring Cultural Competency (Awareness and Sensitivity)</b>
Description	What is the current level of cultural competency among Queen's students?
Benefits	I would like to gage the cultural needs of our campus. This objective is in line with my portfolio: I need to understand where we stand before I can to understand how (and to what degree) we must increase our cultural competency.
Difficulties	Cultural competency is difficult to measure because it requires tapping into the personal attitudes of individuals. I will have to be creative with measurement instruments.

Long-term	Evaluating cultural competency is an ongoing task. With an influx of new students each year, campus dynamics shift regularly over time. These measures are appropriate in the long-term.
How	I'll begin by reviewing existing literature on the university's cultural climate and also research antiracist theory. I will couple this theoretical research with an experiment during Frosh Week in September. I plan to post blank posters around campus that simply say RACE on them, with markers attached. There will be no prompting of what to write, but there is the obvious suggestion that you <i>should</i> add your thoughts (having attached markers). After one week I will take the posters down and see what (if anything) has been written. This will <i>hopefully</i> illustrate some of the dominant perspectives regarding race among our student body.
Partners	Equity Team

<b>Objective 2</b>	<b>Advocacy and Support to Students on Campus</b>
Description	How might I be a voice for students with cultural concerns on campus? How can I address and raise these concerns? Who will listen?
Benefits	<p>There is a wide net of individuals that are affected by cultural and racial issues. Having a designated Antiracism and Cultural Diversity Researcher provides a first point of contact within SGPS to these members; someone who is sensitive to their needs and willing to find the appropriate advocacy network if required.</p> <p>Members will also benefit from having someone devoted to this specific issue. The symbolic power of creating a position for this issue lets our membership know that we believe this issue is important and requires attention.</p> <p>Being a voice for those who have feelings similar to my own is directly in line with my goals as Antiracism and Cultural Diversity Researcher.</p>
Difficulties	<p>In an advocacy role, the possibility exists that I will need to assist a member in gathering evidence if they decide to bring a claim of discrimination forward. This prospect is intimidating, and raises a number of questions: what happens if an allegation cannot be proven? if it comes down to the word of one individual against the word of another? how can we adequately support our members in these instances?</p> <p>I would like to support the member by listening to their concerns, and helping them to find appropriate coping strategies and resources on campus. Additionally I can assist with documenting the details of their complaint and forwarding these to the appropriate personnel to take this complaint further.</p>
Long-term	The need for someone in an advocacy role is ongoing.
How	Establishing my presence on campus is integral in this respect. Through the course of the school year I would like to collaborate with groups on campus who share similar goals so they are aware of my role and can help to spread the word. I will attend events and participate in initiatives on campus that raise cultural awareness to reinforce my presence.
Partners	<p>Equity Team</p> <p>Some groups I would like to connect with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Queen's Coalition against Racial and Ethnic Discrimination (QCRED)</li> <li>• Cross-Cultural Counsellors at QUIC</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coalition against Accent Discrimination</li> <li>• African and Caribbean Students' Association</li> <li>• Queen's Black Academic Society</li> </ul>
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<b>Objective 3</b>	<b>Combatting the "3:00 in the morning" Mentality – Creating a Culturally Competent Campus</b>
Description	How can the '3 in the morning' mentality be challenged? How can we combat cultural insensitivity and create cultural competency?
Benefits	Creating an inclusive, culturally aware and sensitive student body is important for all involved – SGPS, members and myself. This is in line with making Queen's the best university it can be.
Difficulties	Racism is a sensitive issue, and being called a racist is something individuals have emotional responses to. <sup>1</sup> Such a claim can also have serious social consequences. I do not believe the word should be used carelessly, but I do feel that there are times when it is accurate and necessary. Illuminating racist action/policy/practice is important to combat it as it raises awareness.
Long-term	Cultural competency requires consistent and ongoing attention when different cultural groups come together, live, and work in the same space.
How	Education is important in building our knowledge of each other, and fostering an environment of inclusivity. To this end, I would like to devote a portion of the monthly emails distributed to SGPS members to cultural awareness, drawing attention to religious and cultural observances occurring each month. I can also use this platform to draw attention to cultural events occurring on campus and in the Kingston community. I also plan to host an SGPS antiracism event in March 2016 in collaboration with other student groups on campus.
Partners	Equity Team Some groups I would like to connect with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Queen's Coalition against Racial and Ethnic Discrimination (QCRED)</li> <li>• Cross-Cultural Counsellors at QUIC</li> <li>• Coalition against Accent Discrimination</li> <li>• African and Caribbean Students' Association</li> <li>• Queen's Black Academic Society</li> </ul>

## MONTHLY SUMMARY

April 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research, research, research!</li> <li>- Build my knowledge of antiracist theory</li> <li>- Learn about the university's recent cultural history</li> </ul>
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<sup>1</sup> Srivastava, Sarita. 2005. "You're calling me a racist?" The Moral and Emotional Regulation of Antiracism and Feminism. *University of Chicago Press* 31(1):29-62.

May 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research, research, research!</li> <li>- Build my knowledge of antiracist theory</li> <li>- Learn about the university's recent cultural history</li> </ul>
June 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research, research, research!</li> <li>- Build my knowledge of antiracist theory</li> <li>- Learn about the university's recent cultural history</li> </ul>
July 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Good-to-Know" document</li> </ul>
August 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prepare Council Report for August council meeting</li> <li>- Identify and start to connect with other organizations and committees on campus. Start to put together a calendar of cultural events happening on campus and in the Kingston community throughout the school year.</li> </ul>
September 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify and start to connect with other organizations and committees on campus. Start to put together a calendar of cultural events happening on campus and in the Kingston community throughout the school year.</li> <li>- Attend meetings/clubs/events on campus to network, make myself visible</li> <li>- Attend council meeting</li> </ul>
October 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attend meetings/clubs/events on campus to network, make myself visible</li> </ul>
November 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attend meetings/clubs/events on campus to network, make myself visible</li> </ul>
December 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Holidays!</li> <li>- Recap and wind down of semester with SGPS</li> </ul>
January 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attend meetings/clubs/events on campus to network, make myself visible</li> <li>- Planning of "Racism. STOP IT" event (SGPS antiracism event)</li> <li>- Planning for Black History Month</li> </ul>
February 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attend meetings/clubs/events on campus to network, make myself visible</li> <li>- Planning and promotion of "Racism. STOP IT" event (SGPS antiracism event)</li> <li>- Black History Month</li> </ul>
March 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Racism. STOP IT" event (SGPS antiracism event)</li> </ul>



Society of Graduate and Professional Students  
Report of the Social Commissioner  
August 2015

Dear SGPS Council,

The social team are happy to have completed all preparations for Orientation Week 2015 and we have had many new and returning students sign up for events already! Please circulate the Orientation Week guide widely to ensure that all new and returning students are aware of the events during our SGPS welcome week as it is not only for new students but all members of our community.

We have hosted a number of successful events this summer, including beach volleyball, beer tastings at the Grad Club, mixers, and sports hours.

That's all for now as the team is getting ready and resting up to provide the best Orientation Week yet but as always, please do not hesitate to contact us with any events ideas for the fall, any questions about events, etc.

Hope you've all had a wonderful summer and are looking forward to the new school year.

Best,  
Ciara, and Jamie, Margaux, and Prashant  
The Social Team  
[social@sgps.ca](mailto:social@sgps.ca)



Recommendations on Human Resources Policies and Procedures  
August 18, 2015

The following list of recommendations has been compiled by the Human Resources Standing Committee while investigating the Student Advisor Program personnel changes made at the start of 2015. These recommendations are intended to improve the work environment for all SGPS staff and members, and the committee strongly suggests that the SGPS Council and Executive consider the items below and work to implement them in the future.

1. Implement a Discipline & Confidentiality Policy: There needs to be clear and well known policies around harassment, and confidentiality within the SA program. Problematic actions or behaviours should be flagged and dealt with according to these policies as they arise.
2. Clear supervisory direction needs to be established and consistency maintained. It was specifically due to poor management and ill-defined direction that the program experienced some of the conflict that it did. Council should seek to establish policy that clearly establishes the roles and expectations of each party in clear, unspecialized language.
3. A clear and easily accessible SGPS Anti-Harassment Policy needs to be created, or the current harassment reporting procedures need to be clarified and communicated to all SGPS personnel. Much ill will was to be found due to a lack of harassment or disciplinary policies within the program. Rather than allowing tension to build, problematic behaviour and action need to be remedied as they occur. As many of the problems that happened were caused by inexperienced individuals operating within a perfect storm of misinformation and mistrust, this committee urges council to make a clear, well-defined, and easy to follow policy regarding harassment and discipline available immediately.
4. The SGPS currently lacks a formal human resources record keeping system, and currently employee performance is not adequately tracked. Recording positive feedback or areas for improvement can make employee evaluations more beneficial, or assist in identifying solutions to problems. Furthermore a formal process for discussing employee performance is essential to a positive work environment and establishing clear expectations. While an individual's employment may be terminated without cause following repeated disciplinary or performance issues, that individual should still have a clear understanding of the reasons behind this decision.
5. Much of the disagreement that the committee experienced in its work came from differing assessments of the risk to the SGPS (as corporation) inherent in the motion's request for transparency about the human resource changes at issue. This indicates a need to reconcile the SGPS's dual role as both a corporate and democratic organization, that balances confidentiality with transparency:
  - Under consultation from the general membership, develop a constitution to articulate the democratic values that the SGPS wants embodied in its policies and practices.
  - Develop a risk assessment and management policy guided by both the constitution, and the body of corporate law to which the SGPS is bound by. This risk assessment and management policy would then help determine when other policies or practices of the SGPS qua corporation carry an (un)acceptable level of risk in the pursuit of policies and practices of the SGPS qua democracy.
  - Update contracts and bylaws and policies accordingly based on the above recommendations.

6. Develop a healthy working relationship with the Ombuds office. The Executive should set out and present to Council the terms under which their assistance would be requested in future cases of internal conflict.
7. Make it clear to all SGPS employees that they are free to communicate with Councillors and the general membership, within the bounds of confidentiality.
8. Remove all clauses in employee contracts that restrict non-confidential communication with Councillors and the general membership.
9. Make it clear to all SGPS employees that although the SGPS is their employer in contract and law, and this makes the Executive their supervisors, the democratic structure of the SGPS means that it is the general membership, and their representatives on Council, that have final authority in all SGPS matters.
10. Treat termination as a human resources policy of last resort, especially for Student Advisors. This would recognize that the Student Advisor and client transition process takes time and effort, especially to build the trusting relationship upon which client confidentiality is based. Termination does not allow sufficient time for client transition, and is heavily disruptive to the quality of service provided by the Student Advisor Program.
11. A formalized and procedural record keeping system should be introduced, and should include the following:
  - Recorded tracking of employee evaluations, feedback, and discipline.
  - A formal procedure for meeting with employees who are exhibiting problematic behaviour or failing to meet objectives, in order to identify the problems and suggest productive solutions.
  - A procedure with formal records for terminating employment, and exit interviews to give employees feedback and allow for constructive conversation
12. The SGPS Executive should receive formalized mediation training, management workshops, and training on human resources policy and practises. All members of the Executive are regularly in contact with SGPS staff, councillors, and the members at large. While working with these individuals the Executive act as managers and often oversee sensitive issues, and even employee conflicts. When dealing with these issues it is important that the Executive exercise discretion, and show care and sensitivity to the parties involved. This can be challenging for a new Executive member who does not have sufficient experience in human resources practises, or conflict resolution. Training will be an invaluable tool to Executive who are faced with the delicate situations, and challenging conversations. The SGPS should speak to its counterparts in the AMS and other student societies to identify beneficial training opportunities.
13. The SGPS should introduce an “Up and Out Policy” where individuals cannot fill positions that report directly to an individual in a position that they previously held. To illustrate: a former VPG should not be able to serve as a Student Advisor because they will be reporting to the current VPG. This policy is held by the Alma Mater Society in section 17.05 of the AMS Hiring and Appointment Policy and Procedures Manual. This policy exists in order to prevent the compromise of a manager’s authority by an employee who has previously held their position or one of higher authority. It can be difficult for a manager to oversee staff who have previously held their position, particularly where that individual has exercised directional control over their duties or worked towards a particular set of goals. In such a case, if the current manager pursues different objectives, or identifies old policies or procedures to be revised, the previous manager (now the Student Advisor) may challenge this, or attempt to exert authority counter to the current individual.



## **Final Report**

### **Purpose**

The objective of the Student Advisor Program Review Committee (SAPRC) is to review and research recent Student Advisor Program changes, and propose additional changes to lead to improvement of the Student Advisor Program. The committee was struck by SGPS Council at the April 2015 meeting.

*BIRT the SGPS Council strike an Advisor Program Review Committee, composed of SGPS Councillors and members to carefully consider and thoughtfully research the proposed Program changes and possible Program improvements; in consultation with current and former advisors from the SGPS program, and members of the Queen's community, including those from the SGS, support offices on campus and the Advisor Personnel Committee.*

*BIFRT the Vice-President Graduate chair this Committee;*

*BIFRT the Advisor Program Review Committee report back to SGPS Council by August 2015.*

### **Membership**

The Committee was composed of:

- Mark Kellenberger, SGPS Vice-President Graduate (Chair)
- Travis Skippon, SGPS member
- Jared Houston, SGPS Councillor - Philosophy
- Victoria Millious, SGPS member
- James MacLeod, SGPS Board of Trustees Representative
- Graham Buitenhuis, SGPS member
- Lorne Beswick, SGPS Vice-President Campaigns and Community Affairs
- Chris Cochrane, SGPS President

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The committee shall:

- Review and research the recent Student Advisor Program changes, and
- Propose possible future changes for improvement of the Student Advisor Program

In achieving these goals, members of the committee shall consult with Program stakeholders, including, but not limited to:

- The School of Graduate Studies,
- The Advisor Personnel Committee, and
- Support offices on campus
- Current and former Student Advisors

A thorough review of Student Advisor reports was undertaken to determine how the program has developed since its inception.

### **Scope**

This committee is intended to provide information to SGPS Council on the reasons for Program changes implemented in April 2015 and if these are valid, and also to give suggestions on how the SGPS Student Advisor Program could function within this framework. This information provided by this committee may be used by the VP Graduate and the Student Advisor Program Administrator as well as SGPS Executive and Staff to build the Student Advisor program.

### **Meetings**

- All meetings will be chaired by Mark Kellenberger, SGPS VP Graduate.
- The meeting quorum will be 50% of the voting members of the committee.
- The committee will strive to achieve consensus on all decisions, majority vote will decide path forward if consensus cannot be reached (ties shall be broken by committee chair)
  - A minority report will be included if consensus is not reached
- Due to the requirement of this committee for external consultations, meeting times for these consultations will be arranged at times convenient for those members who elect to be involved in the consultations.

### **Process**

Past Student Advisor reports from 2004-2015 were reviewed in an ad hoc manner by the Committee and main themes in these reports were identified. In addition, a consultation list was created to aid the Committee in gathering information. Keeping in mind recent Program changes and identified themes from Advisor reports, a list of questions was created to prompt interviewees. This list is available in Appendix A. Based on these interviews, committee members put forth recommendations which were thoroughly discussed in an attempt to achieve consensus. In situations where a minority of the committee had a dissenting option, a minority report was included with the recommendation.

### **Consultation List**

As decided by the committee (on the recommendation of the motion passed by council), the following persons/on-campus groups were contacted for an in-person interview with the committee, or invited to answer the list of questions via email.

Human Rights Office (HRO) – Stephanie Simpson (email)  
Ombudsman’s Office – Harry Smith and Gail MacAllister  
AMS Peer Support – Charlotte Johnson  
School of Graduate Studies (SGS) – Associate Dean Kim McAuley  
Health, Counseling & Disability Services (HCDS) – Arunima Khanna  
Queen’s University International Centre (QUIC) – Nilani Loganathan  
Equity Office – Heidi Penning  
Former VPG and SA – Becky Pero  
Former SA – Victoria Millious (email)

In addition, SGPS councillors were contacted via email specifically for their feedback on the implementation process for future program changes.

## **Identified Themes**

Based on the Committee's prior knowledge of the SGPS Student Advisor program (including the recent program changes) and the reading of past Advisor reports, themes for lines of questioning were identified. The following themes were decided on by the committee and used to focus information gathering efforts.

Program Management  
Staff Hiring and Training  
Clientele  
External Groups  
Program Changes

Questions from these categories were formulated by the Committee and presented to persons on the consultation list prior to their interview. Interviewees (and email respondents) were asked to answer questions based on either the policies/procedures of their on-campus group or on their experience with the Student Advisor program in the past.

## **Interview Process**

Persons on the consultation list were contacted and scheduled for a one hour interview with Committee members. Due to scheduling difficulties, not all Committee were able to be present at interviews, so audio recordings were made available. Three committee members were able to attend all interviews. The question list (see Appendix A) was used to guide the discussion and the interviewees were also able to speak freely about other topics related to the Student Advisor program.

## **Results**

As dictated by SGPS Council, the Student Advisor Program Review Committee had two tasks:

1. Review Program changes
2. Research Program improvements

## **Recent Program Changes**

The changes the April 2015 motion refer to are the Student Advisor program changes implemented by the SGPS Executive (and subsequently approved by Council). These changes were:

1. A filing system for tracking client cases and aid in compiling Program statistics
2. The implementation of Program Administrator to oversee the day-to-day operation of the Program
3. A formal confidentiality form requiring a signature from clients, indicating how their information will be used

Based on information gathered by the Committee,

The Student Advisor Program Review Committee unanimously agrees that filing and tracking is necessary to be able to recommend policy changes based on evidence.

The Student Advisor Program Review Committee unanimously agrees that the use of a Program Administrator as a support person can benefit the Program.

The Student Advisor Program Review Committee unanimously agrees that a confidentiality agreement of some form is necessary to protect client information.

The Committee finds the Program changes implemented in April 2015 to be moving towards best practices for the Student Advisor Program going forward, with some exceptions. A minority of Committee members oppose a signed

confidentiality form (see recommendation 6 below). With respect to the use of a Program Administrator, the committee recommends access to client files be limited (see recommendation 16 below). The majority of the committee has found evidence (see Appendix B) for the changes comes from Advisors themselves as indicated in past Advisor reports, while a minority disputes this interpretation. All Advisor reports are publicly available at <http://www.sgps.ca/advisors/reports.html>.

## **Program Improvements/Recommendations**

### **Filing and Tracking**

1. Any data collection done by the Student Advisor program should adhere to data collection policies, including the secure storage and timely destruction of client data. It should be ensured that the SGPS has correct Policies in place for this. In addition, the Student Advisor program must be transparent with regards to the type or data collected and its use with clients through the use of a client confidentiality agreement. Any documents that contain client information should be digitized and stored on a secure server with written documents destroyed within 24 hours.
2. The tracking of Advisor report recommendations is suggested. In recognition of information obtained from past advisor reports, recommendations often were not followed through on. Potential Policy improvements for the Executive to pursue within the SGPS as well as advocating for greater, University-wide policy change in response to trends emerging from Advisor cases should be followed up on. It is important that Advisor reports contain actionable short-term and long-term recommendations.
3. The compilation of Advisor report statistics should be done in such a way to be able to accurately track service trends. This should be communicated to Advisors and along with the Program Administrator, they should determine how to best do that. This should include a list of categories to classify cases to provide consistency across individual Advisor reports.
4. Internal and external reports should be distinct documents in order to protect client confidentiality. More detailed program statistics and anonymized case details should be available in internal reports (within the Student Advisor Program and SGPS Executive) for analytics and training purposes and will not be released publicly. In recognition that Program funding comes from a partnership with the School of Graduate Studies, more generalized statistics will be presented for the purposes of initiating discussions around policy changes to address emerging issues.

### **Confidentiality**

5. It is not feasible to include a confidentiality agreement without identifying information. This makes the proper management of client information of great importance. It is recognized since that collecting identifying information both manages and introduces risk, this information must be carefully stored.
6. A formal signed confidentiality agreement should be implemented. On the confidentiality agreement, there should be an opt-in for certain types of information disclosure (non-mission critical information). This is a guarantee to clients that their information will be safe and a protection to Advisors as clients are made explicitly aware of how their information will be used. This means the Student Advisor Program is making a commitment to clients to ensure the confidentiality of their information. We believe the SGPS has more reasons to be risk averse as we are not part of Queen's. The SGPS is put at risk due to lawsuit as a relative legal lightweight compared to the University.

A minority of committee disagree with the risk assessment and wish to have no signed confidentiality agreement. They have authored the following statement:

There are two competing issues here. First- If a formal confidentiality agreement is implemented, there is the potential for negative impacts in quality of SA service delivery, in terms of clients being refused service due to apprehensions in disclosing identifying information. This concern motivates some on-campus services to not have a formal confidentiality agreement. Second - if a formal confidentiality agreement is not implemented,

there is the potential for negative impacts to the financial and reputational standing of the SGPS, in terms of litigation on the grounds that the SGPS breached (informal) client confidentiality. This concern motivates the AMS Peer Support Centre to require a formal confidentiality agreement. (The HCDS's use of a formal confidentiality agreement is a requirement by law, as they are a professional service.)

We disagree with the assessment that the risk of litigation to the SGPS that comes from an informal confidentiality agreement is above the acceptable level of risk the organization should endorse. To be sure, it is best to make these kinds of risk assessments based on 1) evidence regarding the probability of such litigation, 2) evidence regarding the financial damage it may incur and 3) evidence of the financial risks already taken on by the organization in its other operations - as to provide a benchmark against which to compare, and to assess overall operating risk. That said, our intuition is that the risk of litigation is below the acceptable level.

Furthermore, we do not agree that the SGPS should choose to mitigate the risk of litigation by implementing a formal confidentiality agreement. In doing so, we choose as an organization to take on (what we take to be) a much greater risk: the refusal of Student Advising service to some of the most marginalized among our own members. This is a categorically different kind of risk than a financial risk. It is a value-identity risk that threatens to offend against our shared understanding of what the SGPS stands for. We do not believe we are alone among the general membership in claiming that we should be prepared to take on the marginal financial risk that accompanies an informal confidentiality agreement if it means we can continue to understand the SGPS as a community of graduate and professional students who are dedicated to helping each other.

7. Contingency should be in place for students who do not wish to sign the confidentiality agreement. This should include the ability to provide the student a list of services outside the Student Advisor Program that are available. The investigation of the feasibility of an anonymous email service should also be investigated.

#### Training and Hiring

8. There is a need for overlap between outgoing and incoming advisors in recognition that on-the-job training and shadowing is extremely valuable to new Advisors. Collaboration between experienced and inexperienced Advisors is important and case information and experiences should be passed on in a 1 month transition period.
9. Case transfers outside of an employee transition period are sometimes necessary, so guidelines must be in place for this. It is recommended that Advisors talk about a case transfer, set up a meeting with client and both advisors, and that permission must be received from the client.
10. The job description that goes out when hiring Advisors should be written to highlight soft skills and cast a wider net to capture people who might otherwise not apply. This will help ensure diversity and equity within the Program that will be able to connect with a larger cast of SGPS members.
11. Training described as "mandatory" should not be a barrier in Advisors taking on cases when program demands require it. Training requirements must be weighed against the realities of Advisors being hired at different times of the year, which results in differing access to training sessions. Training needs to be more flexible so Advisors can assist in casework if a need arises. It is recognized that the Advisors will still be required complete all mandatory training in as short a time frame as possible.
12. To ensure the quality of service delivery, termination should be an HR policy of last resort. Termination creates difficulties in client transitions, as it does not allow for sufficient time for these transitions.
13. In recognition that the Student Advisors hired in May 2015 did not receive a transition period from experienced Advisors, it is recommended that the VPG speak to the new advisors and see if a meeting with a previous advisor would be useful.

#### Role of Program Administrator

14. The confidentiality form should be explicit in saying that the Program Administrator is an employee of the SGPS (not of Queen's). We believe this will ensure the client of confidentiality as many come to the program having had bad experiences with University administration and will assist clients in understanding nature of the program's confidentiality.
15. To serve administrative needs of the program, the Program Administrator should have access to client confidentiality forms. This will ensure the Advisor has made the scope of confidentiality clear to the client and that the client understands this.
16. When required, information may be shared between Advisors and the Program Administrator to ensure the delivery of quality service as required. The Program Administrator should not have access to detailed Advisor case files unless client permission is granted.

### Program Changes

17. Program changes should be driven by a Program review process.
18. SGPS Bylaws and Policies should be in agreement with the MoA with respect to program reviews. The details of any program reviews should also be covered in B&P, including who is consulted for the review and who undertakes it.
19. Results of any review should be presented by the VPG to the Executive, and if necessary to council.

### Conclusions

The majority of the Committee feel that the changes to the Student Advisor program implemented in April 2015 are in line with best practices of a peer-to-peer helping service. The details of the implementation of these changes are important to thoughtfully consider as they have far reaching consequences in the Student Advisor Program's ability to help SGPS members. The Committee believes that the recommendations presented in this report will allow the Advisor program to continue to have a high-standing reputation within the Queen's community.

### Appendix A

#### Interview Questions

The objective of the Student Advisor Program Review Committee (SAPRC) is to review and research recent Student Advisor Program changes, and propose additional changes to lead to improvement of the Student Advisor Program. The committee was struck by SGPS Council at the April 2015 meeting.

*BIRT the SGPS Council strike an Advisor Program Review Committee, composed of SGPS Councillors and members to carefully consider and thoughtfully research the proposed Program changes and possible Program improvements; in consultation with current and former advisors from the SGPS program, and members of the Queen's community, including those from the SGS, support offices on campus and the Advisor Personnel Committee.*

The following questions are intended to aid the committee in evaluating the current state of the SGPS SA Program. Please use the questions a guide, but feel free to give any feedback you may have. All feedback will be anonymized in the committee's report to SGPS council.

## Program Management

1. How is the use of your service tracked?
2. Can you explain your services current practice for handling client confidentiality and the rationale behind it?
3. What role does reporting play in your organization and how do you approach it?
4. Based on your experiences, how do you see a program coordinator benefiting the SA program?
5. How does supervision work in your on-campus help service?
6. How do you manage work-load between staff members?
7. How are clients/cases handled during employee turnover?

## Staff Training and Hiring

1. What types of training do your service providers receive, and why?
2. What types of prior training, experience and disposition do you look for in potential candidates during hiring?
3. How do you approach the hiring process?

## Clientele

1. Who are your clientele and how/why do they use your service?
2. What is a client's typical pathway through your service?
3. How do you match client with service provider employee?
4. How is client confidentiality ensured, and communicated to the client?

## External Groups

1. How do you see the SA program complementing the wider student helping network on campus, and what are its unique features within that network?
2. How does your service interact with other support services both on- and off-campus?
3. What could the SAP do to assist you in promoting and benefiting from our services?

## Program Changes

1. How do you decide when to undergo changes within your organization/service?

## **Appendix B**

### **Findings of the Collected Student Advisor Reports**

By Lorne Beswick

These findings refer to the Winter 2015 changes to the Student Advisor Program in their most general sense, not the details of their implementation. All Advisor reports are publicly available at <http://www.sgps.ca/advisors/reports.html>.

As the SAPRC has been tasked by SGPS council to investigate the merit of the changes undertaken within the Student Advisor Program (SAP) during the Winter of 2015, the following is a multi-year dig of primary documents related to the program beginning over a decade ago, and referencing as early as 2001. The three structural changes to the program being confidentiality, a full-time staff coordinator, and an internal tracking system will each be contrasted against historical evidence unearthed from the program's fifteen year run in this evaluation. Despite our inability to speak with the past fifteen years' worth of advisors, these primary documents are in a sense representative of their collective voice and establish the range of their thoughts and feelings on the program. I was happy to find that their helpful perspectives and recommendations are still relevant over a decade later. Evidence suggests that the changes implemented were in fact a resounding solution to the challenges that have been raised time and time again since the first formation of the SAP in 2001.

## Self-advocacy and Confidentiality

A strong component of the confidentiality of the SAP is self-advocacy, as Student Advisors (SA) are neither trained nor legally equipped, and simply do not have the time to personally advocate on behalf of the students they represent in all situations. Desiring more clarity in the scope of the program and the role that it should play an SA was unequivocal in their 2006 annual report. They urged that the SGPS "establish firmer policies in particular reference to data-collection, use, storage, and clarity regarding confidentiality."<sup>2</sup> Another term report dated 6 October 2006 remarked that while some of the SA time was taken up with simple questions dealt with primarily "by referring the inquiring student to the appropriate department office or campus or community service," the majority was taken up by larger cases requiring significantly more time and effort.<sup>3</sup> While this same report recognized that some students did require significantly more time and energy than others - and were more than willing to advocate on behalf of such clients - it maintained that it was the "policy of the Student Advisor Program to promote self-advocacy." This was to be done primarily by the engine of student empowerment and the sharing of relevant resources with those least burdened, so that SA time could be dedicated to those in more pressing circumstances.<sup>4</sup>

A later report in 2007 underscored that in addition to a sophisticated understanding of university policy and emotional support, the SAP always strove to "provide students with the resources they need to help find solutions to their problems, rather than to become directly involved." Operating on the "most informal" level possible, as a peer was their watchword.<sup>5</sup> This report also laid bare that the most precarious students with the least supports, often international students, feared reprisal "if any action is taken to confront the professor, report the abuse, or otherwise address the problem." The fear of being labeled a "trouble maker" was and still remains a deterrent to the SAP.<sup>6</sup> That a confidentiality document would help quell worries and assure the student that under no circumstances would their interactions with the SAP be shared or become public knowledge was a forgone conclusion.

More to the point, it went without saying that breaking the trust of the membership in the confidentiality of the program was to be avoided at all costs. A term report underscored that any work done on behalf of a student was only to be "directed and initiated by the student in question," and the SAs recognized that as was stated in their policy, they were "not to take any action on a file unless directed to do so by the student."<sup>7</sup> It becomes obvious how student empowerment and confidentiality are one and the same; acting against the student's wishes, or even without their knowledge not only is a breach of trust, but also breaks the confidentiality between the SAs and their clients.

## Statistics and Internal Tracking

Statistics were and continue to be an important facet of the program, allowing the SAP and the SGPS more generally to effectively advocate on behalf of its membership. Beginning in 2004 internal statistics revealed that "navigation of graduate/law guidelines and policies" and supervisory relationships were roughly one-half of the total effort of SAP, whereas academic appeals represented less than 15% work undertaken by SAs. This report speaks of continuing trends that began a few years prior in 2001, and it may be safely inferred that these statistics represent this span of time accurately. Even a cursory glance at the first formative years of the SAP reveal that it was primarily our members in social sciences and the professional schools who took up the lion's share of SA time.<sup>8</sup> This should more than underscore the need for quantitative data and internal program tracking to not only ensure that the SA program is meeting the demands of our membership and to also help steer the possible future directions the program may take.<sup>9</sup>

Two years later and the request for better data retention was still a prominent fixture in the desires of the SAP.<sup>10</sup> There was a clear and present theme of the need for quantitative data and internal tracking; as one SA remarked in their

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<sup>2</sup> "SGPS Student Advisor Annual Report," *Student Advisor Program, SGPS, 2006*, 7. Web. Accessed 10 June 2015.

<sup>3</sup> "Student Advisor Annual Report 6 October 2006," *Student Advisor Program, SGPS, 2006*, 1. Web. Accessed 10 June 2015.

<sup>4</sup> "Student Advisor Annual Report 6 October 2006," *Student Advisor Program, SGPS, 2006*, 2. Web. Accessed 10 June 2015.

<sup>5</sup> "Student Advisor Annual Report, 28 September 2007," *Student Advisor Program, SGPS, 2007*, 4. Web. Accessed 10 June 2015.

<sup>6</sup> "Student Advisor Annual Report, 28 September 2007," *Student Advisor Program, SGPS, 2007*, 5. Web. Accessed 10 June 2015.

<sup>7</sup> "Student Advisor Annual Report 6 October 2006," *Student Advisor Program, SGPS, 2006*, 3. Web. Accessed 10 June 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Roughly 20.5% of cases involved either of these areas while a further 20.5% declined to remark which department they were from. The humanities, and engineering and applied sciences for example, demonstrably used the SAP the least, with advisors barely seeing ten percent of cases from either. See "Report on the SGPS Student Advisor program, June 2004," *Student Advisor Program, SGPS, 2004*, 1. Web. Accessed 10 June 2015.

<sup>9</sup> "Report on the SGPS Student Advisor program, June 2004," *Student Advisor Program, SGPS, 2004*, 1. Web. Accessed 10 June 2015.

<sup>10</sup> "SGPS Student Advisor Annual Report," *Student Advisor Program, SGPS, 2006*, 7. Web. Accessed 10 June 2015.

2006 SAP annual report that the program is overwhelmingly approached by "international, visible minority, and accented students."<sup>11</sup> Yet without the quantitative data to back this up, any new or corrective directions the program may take, such as additional funding from the School of Graduate Studies and Research (SGSR), or appeals to program stakeholders around campus may be ignored or dismissed as anecdotal evidence.

Still, significant enough effort was placed into the increasing professionalization of the program that by 2006, one particularly pleased SA noted that they had "developed a number of documents and systems" for the benefit of the program. This list included "standardized intake forms and follow-up forms, advisor evaluation forms, and student surveys," in addition to a host of similarly administrative documents designed to internally track clients, data, and feedback for the benefit of the program.<sup>12</sup> A more fulsome version of the 2005-06 year dated 30 September 2006 touched upon the theme of internal consistency. This veteran advisor underscored the need for an archive of sorts, a "feedback system," that once built would "help the program grow more healthily and provide better services for students." This advisor had meetings with the VP Graduate and it was felt that not only would such a repository of information benefit the SAP long term, but also so that internal changes could be tracked so as to provide a better experience for student-clients.<sup>13</sup> This SA made reference to several of their suggestions that future VP Graduates could take along this route, and there may be further record of these changes somewhere for 2006 and 2007.

Despite the enthusiasm and collective urging of previous SAs, an annual report dated 28 September 2007 complained that an effective internal tracking still hadn't been properly implemented to follow the statistics of the "various types of inquiries we receive and respond to."<sup>14</sup> This SA also remarked that despite a "general level of cooperation and coordination," efforts could still be directed toward a greater emphasis upon sharing and the dissemination of knowledge, suggestive of a central repository or some benefit being drawn from an archival holding of sorts.<sup>15</sup> Later on, the annual report for the 2007 and 2008 year was proud to announce, despite some initial wrangling from the SGSR, the full introduction of a regime of statistical analysis to the program. The SAP was happy to announce that the new systems would be in place, and the "proper annual statistics will be available at the conclusion of the academic year 2008-2009, and thereafter."<sup>16</sup> Interestingly, as the SGSR required statistical data to be pulled from the program as part of their renewal of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA, it would be interesting to note when and how these mandatory statistics were removed, considering the significant and forceful difficulties the SGSR initially presented in ensuring its implementation, to say nothing about the significant risk of losing the SGS' SAP funding due to the apparent abandonment of one of the cornerstones of the MOA.

### **Full Time Staff/Coordinator**

Even from the earliest dates available, it was apparent that the SAP was inherently not designed to function autonomously as the SAs requested a better supervisory relationship with whichever party oversaw the program. Underscoring an early weakness of the program was the "transient nature of the executive positions with respect to the Student Advisor positions," which lead to confusion and disarray in the overall direction of the program. One of the causes, being staggered executive and SA hiring dates, has been corrected but it is telling that even at this early date that the desire for a more permanent fixture to serve as the intellectual bedrock for the SAP.<sup>17</sup> "Given the increasing client load," one SA wrote in their Summer 2004 term-end report, "the SGPS should move to take over the administrative and promotional side of the advisor program leaving the advisors with more time to devote to cases."<sup>18</sup> This is doubly significant as in 2004 the SAP was considered to be something of a related but separate entity to the SGPS proper, and indicates the real need for central coordination by the latter on behalf of the former.

These sentiments were echoed a few years later. Within a 2006 report it was mentioned that due to the transient nature of graduate school and the requisite loss of expertise and institutional memory that this brought, a more permanent fixture be considered. "For the program to achieve its full potential," the SA began, "I would

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<sup>11</sup> "SGPS Student Advisor Annual Report," *Student Advisor Program, SGPS, 2006*, 1, 3. Web. Accessed 10 June 2015.

<sup>12</sup> "Student Advisor Annual Report 6 October 2006," *Student Advisor Program, SGPS, 2006*, 6. Web. Accessed 10 June 2015.

<sup>13</sup> "Student Advisor Annual Report 2005-2006, 30 September 2006," *Student Advisor Program, SGPS, 2006*, 5. Web. Accessed 10 June 2015.

<sup>14</sup> "Student Advisor Annual Report, 28 September 2007," *Student Advisor Program, SGPS, 2007*, 1. Web. Accessed 10 June 2015.

<sup>15</sup> "Student Advisor Annual Report, 28 September 2007," *Student Advisor Program, SGPS, 2007*, 2, 3. Web. Accessed 10 June 2015.

<sup>16</sup> "Student Advisor Annual Report - 2007/2008," *Student Advisor Program, SGPS, 2008*, 1. Web. Accessed 10 June 2015.

<sup>17</sup> "Report on the SGPS Student Advisor program, June 2004," *Student Advisor Program, SGPS, 2004*, 3, 4. Web. Accessed 10 June 2015.

<sup>18</sup> "Student Advisor Term End Report Summer 2004, II - Recommendations for the student advisor program," *Student Advisor Program, SGPS, 2004*, 7. Web. Accessed 10 June 2015.

recommend the creation of at least one permanent Advisor position." This individual could also engage in either a "basic supervisory or facilitative role." The benefits of this were obvious; in addition to the retention of expertise, they could likewise foster "positive working relationships" all across the campus community and as time went on become the contact point for the SAP. Ideally, this report entertained the creation of a permanent staff member to govern the program but remarked that this was unlikely "due to current funding structure," suggesting that the reason it had yet to be created had more to do with finances than any resistance to the idea.<sup>19</sup>

The desire for permanent staff has been a common feature of many reports. The 30 May 2007 SA Winter Term Report firmly underscores the need for institutional memory in the form of a full-time staff member. They came out strongly against "any policy that is designed to undermine our institutional memory and thereby our institutional competence," in protest of the possibility of term limits. Alongside this conversation they also urged for the "creation of a permanent Student Advisor position," both for the benefit the program and to unburden the other SAs.<sup>20</sup> Contained within the Student Advisor Winter Term/Annual Report for 2008-2009 was a fulsome desire to create a permanent means of ensuring institutional memory. Remarking that it took several years for a Student Advisor to become furnished with a thorough understanding of their position, rather than relying on the transience of a student, it would be the better option to simply employ a candidate for 35 hours per week, which could also avoid the term limits as set out by the SGSR. The benefits were many, as this staff person would allow the "program to dramatically increase its institutional memory and achieve a higher level of internal organization with respect to such matters as training, outreach and file management." Although ideal, a staff member would be more expensive than the SGPS could afford so one proposed solution was to offload the position onto an existing commissioner, and empower them with a dual mandate; here, we may infer that were financial constraints *not* an issue, *also* acceptable would be migrating the position onto a permanent staff member, either one specifically created for the position or any other party that may handle the responsibility.<sup>21</sup>

Should neither route be acceptable, the SA suggested that a central repository of information be made, wherein SAP could "record pieces of information, approaches, ideas, or experiences "for the benefit of future generations. Such a system would prevent the program from being leaden with having to "reinvent the wheel every time one of these common situations arose." The added benefit of this central repository of knowledge would be that they might also "be used as a basis for workshops or for a regular column in the SGPS newsletter."<sup>22</sup>

This was further echoed within a Winter term report made during 2010 when discussing the complexity that SAs were encountering in their cases. It was a sad truth that "this position is short term and experiences high turnover," remarked one veteran SA, who was only able to work so effectively due to their experience. They concluded their thoughts that "a permanent advisor position would be ideal."<sup>23</sup> This point was again raised not one year later when in a 2011 Winter Term report an SA recommended that the SGPS create "an additional part-time student advisor position," tasked with easing the academic and policy-based decisions that the other SAs simply didn't have time for. In addition to easing the burden on the rest of the SAs, this position might also address the more systemic issues and ford ahead on the policies that the SAP's new internal statistics would unearth.<sup>24</sup>

## Conclusions

The changes to the SAP undertaken in Winter 2015 in fact address a history of structural, financial, and policy-based problems that have plagued the program since its creation and for various reasons simply could not be solved in times past. Recognizing that they had neither the certification, nor ability to individually undertake every case that presented itself, it was recognized that this was a program that was primarily designed to empower students for self-help and the majority of cases resolved themselves with SA guidance and encouragement. Further, where possible it seemed that most reports urged there to be some manner of internal and consistent tracking of client files, and finances permitting, all urged that there be a full-time staff member to oversee the daily administration of the program.

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<sup>19</sup> "Student Advisor Annual Report 6 October 2006," *Student Advisor Program, SGPS, 2006*, 7. Web. Accessed 10 June 2015.

<sup>20</sup> "Student Advisor Winter Term Report, 30 May 2007," *Student Advisor Program, SGPS, 2007*, 5. Web. Accessed 10 June 2015.

<sup>21</sup> "Student Advisor Winter Term/Annual Report – 2008/2009," *Student Advisor Program, SGPS, 2008*, 5. Web. Accessed 10 June 2015.

<sup>22</sup> "Student Advisor Winter Term/Annual Report – 2008/2009," *Student Advisor Program, SGPS, 2008*, 5. Web. Accessed 10 June 2015.

<sup>23</sup> "Student Advisor Winter Term Report – 2010," *Student Advisor Program, SGPS, 2010*, 3. Web. Accessed 10 June 2015.

<sup>24</sup> "Student Advisor Winter Term Report – 2011," *Student Advisor Program, SGPS, 2011*, 3. Web. Accessed 10 June 2015.

Moreover, it appears that beginning in 2012 and until very recently, the SAP had decided to chart its own path and abandoned the demands for confidentiality, a full-time staff coordinator, and an internal tracking system that the previous twelve years of SAs had so vocally made. Too, some of these changes, such as the paring down of the internal statistics of the program were made in poor faith of the MOA with the SGS and may have posed a financial risk to the program.

In conclusion, and in light of the findings of this report - which should be released in our final report to council in August - although sudden, the changes were necessary and I have found there to be a robust, historical precedent to the changes made to the SAP in Winter of 2015.