

Dear Councillors

Hope you are all well and looking forward to the end of the term. There are 3 issues to discuss this month:

Advancement Submission:

I still have not heard back from many people about whether there are particular ideas they have about student awards that they would like to see us develop in collaboration with the Office of Advancement. Please bring up any suggestions that you may have with me directly - this opportunity is unlikely to last very long if we do not take advantage of it.

Career Help:

Many of our students have expressed some frustration about not being able to get the kind of job interviews and jobs that their advanced degrees should qualify them for. The economy is not doing too well for the kind of high-end jobs that our students should get and there seems to be confusion about whether it is in fact the Career Centre or their departmental / faculty support that should be responsible for this issue. Rather than resolve this particular conundrum, I have asked the Board of Trustees and Alumni Affairs to help create career advice / networking opportunities for our students through the SGPS. While details are still being worked out, this will mean that the near future may result in a situation where students will find support not just from established channels, but from Queens' vast Alumni network through the SGPS.

Elections:

We have to start to think about who wants to run for the positions on the Executive - so I would ask that you all discuss the matter with your departments and faculties and round up some candidates. Please remember that arm-twisting is not considered problematic under our by-laws and policies so please - go nuts. Even though nominations are not for a while yet, do start spreading the word. For my part, I would be happy to speak about my own position quite candidly. Obviously, the fame and fortune involved in being *El-Presidente* is beyond textual description, so I invite interested candidates for a friendly chat.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jawad Qureshy

President@sgps.ca

ESS

We had a first meeting with a number of the administration regarding ESS fees and will be continuing to negotiate with them in this regard. Further talks with the administration as well as the AMS are forthcoming.

I have also met with the Registrar's office to discuss the ESS Senator position. They seem to recognize the legitimacy of our claim, but are unwilling to do anything meaningful about it and seem to suggest at best an attempt at a compromise solution with CESA. I don't find this a particularly helpful suggestion, and am more interested in finding ways to possibly leverage this in some of our other discussions, most notably with regards to fees.

LSS

This month marks the beginning of my work on a response to the LSS Report. Hopefully we will have more information forthcoming on this for you in January or February.

Grad Club

Strategic Planning at the Grad Club is getting under way. They are likely going to purchase a house sound system to reduce some of the cost of renting, etc, that they currently do for shows, trivia, etc.

Human Resources

HR issues seem pretty consistent, but happily they are mostly resolving well. The HRSC will have a number of things to deal with in the new year, and hopefully we can work through a few kinks in our processes as they stand.

Respectfully submitted,
Shaughnessy Hawkins

SPACE- Finally, we have managed to finalize some of the space needs of the SGPS. We now have a social lounge on the second floor of the JDUC being Room 237. Our second floor office space and new boardroom renos are almost complete with the final coat of paint going on as I am writing this report. I am hoping to plan a ribbon cutting for the New Year so hopefully you can all attend.

RETAIL COMMITTEE-the committee met a few times. A RFP has been sent out and we are waiting for potential brokers to respond. Discussions on what retail operations will be in the Queen's Centre are still ongoing but it is anticipated that the New Year will bring more information.

SLC BUDGET COMMITTEE- The budget has been finalized and we have been looking for ways to lower costs. As per the direction of the SGPS council, we will continue to support the operational side of this new centre.

STUDENT LIFE CENTRE NEGOTIATIONS—Discussions are coming to a close with respect to the two contracts that are being devised with respect to the Student Life Centre (being the JDUC, Queen's Centre and other smaller student buildings like the Grey House and Mac-Brown Hall). I will discuss this further in camera at our council meeting where I welcome any questions or concerns with respect to these negotiations/discussions.

SGPS FINANCE & SERVICES-the committee met in October and November to review opt-out appeals. I anticipate the New Year will be busy with fee renewals and we will hopefully be able to complete our review of the criteria for the various awards the SGPS offers.

FAMILY EVENTS—The New Year will bring more events for our student parent members as well as a chance for all of our members to increase community building among the membership.

CHILDCARE-I am still pursuing the need for after hours childcare and am currently the rep on the Queen's Daycare Board. Should you have any ideas or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at any time. Ideally if the need for reliable, consistent childcare is there, I would like to see this service commence as soon as possible.

WORK-STUDY- As many of you have noted, the SGPS now has Work-Study opportunities available. We have hired our RA's from this service but I encourage those of you who are interested, to stay tuned for future employment prospects. I hope this program will continue well beyond my current term.

Respectfully submitted,
Jillian Burford-Grinnell VP Finance and Services

Dear Councilors,

I hate to be the harbinger of foreboding on this holiday season's eve, but alas...

Along with my colleagues, Daniel and Jillian, I recently attended the second National General Meeting of the Canadian Federation of Students, and returned home with not a small sense of growing apprehension. The situation for universities across the country, and particularly for those in Ontario, appears rather grim. Mimicking the University of Guelph, the University of Toronto is currently in the process of cutting down and amalgamating "small" humanities programs, is closing its Centre for Ethics, and has announced that the History and Philosophy of Education program at OISE is also slated to close. These austere measures were decided upon by a small group of individuals (the U of T's Strategic Planning Committee), with little transparency and even less consultation, on the basis that such programs lack commercial viability for the institution. The vision which guides these decisions is that of "greater differentiation": a plan recently highlighted in the HEQCO report as a "way forward" to redesign higher education around efficiency (i.e. specialization) in order to reduce costs. According to this vision, "strong" programs (those with higher enrolment, those which attract more funding, etc.) should be prioritized and "weaker" programs, curtailed.

York University, along with eight other Ontario colleges, contracted private lobby firms to lobby the provincial government on their behalf. The nine institutions spent a total of a little over \$1 million of students' and taxpayers' money to ask the government, ironically, for more funding, and did so covertly.

Carleton University is currently attempting to gain oversight of undergraduate and graduate student fees. Specifically, the Carleton Administration and Board of Governors suspended both student unions' membership fees, which were kept in trust, to leverage concessions while negotiating a governance agreement.

Across the board, tuition for international students is bordering on the absurd, and the Ontario government is nowhere near making concessions on UHIP. Calls to "internationalize" are widespread, rhetorically masquerading as measures to "diversify" university campuses.

At the same time, several student unions have witnessed attempts to shut student representatives out of administrative boards and other governing bodies. Increasingly, decisions which directly affect student life, the quality of their education, and their ability to represent their own interests are implemented from the top-down. For instance, the University of Toronto recently implemented a policy giving the University Provost unfettered discretion to deny campus groups access to space, to introduce or increase costs for their use of space, and to require that police be present at student-organized events. At a time when students in Ontario pay well over the national average in tuition fees and in a growing number of ancillaries, undercutting their freedom to participate democratically in matters of governance amounts to no less than a "double-whammy".

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE? Because Queen's faces a number of these same issues. In a press release dated October 27th, Principal Woolf lauded the HEQCO recommendations as "an excellent starting point for future discussions", one that "resonate[s] with our ongoing academic planning process". The SGPS is, at this time, under threat of being marginalized in governance decisions regarding its own space. Officially setting Queen's sights on the promises of "internationalization", the Board of Trustees just passed a motion to increase tuition fees for undergraduate international students. Student representation on upper-level governance boards is minimal, and risks getting shut out completely through proposed restructuring efforts, on the basis that students are not sufficiently savvy in matters of financial administration – as though this was the primary (read only) concern for an institution concerned with the "business" of education.

Now, more than ever, our connection to other student locals, and our solidarity within the student movement, is crucial. While the CFS has seen its share of problems in past meetings, and while some of our members may not feel that all CFS campaigns are relevant to the SGPS, the idea of "strength in numbers" should perhaps not be so easily dispensed with. At the very least, keeping abreast of issues which affect us as students – and not just as Queen's students – is, I think, of great value.

For fear of leaving you on such a depressing note, a few positive highlights: first, the University recently approved a Safe Disclosure Policy for the protection of whistleblowers. The SGPS played an important role in initiating this important step, two years ago.

Furthermore, several members of the SGPS Executive and staff attended a meet-and-greet put on by myself and Hilary Windrem from the AMS for newly elected City Council members on November 19th. Eight of the 12 new Councilors met with us to discuss our intersecting goals and priorities over the next few months. Already, this event appears to have encouraged the City to open municipal politics to Queen's student leadership. For instance, Hilary and I were invited to the inaugural ceremony taking place the evening of December 7th. Furthermore, our discussions at the meet-and-greet generated several avenues for future discussions and potential partnerships.

That said, Bah! Humbug! to all, and to all, a good night.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne-Marie Grondin
VP Campaigns & Community Affairs

To Counselors: November was a particularly busy with the SGPS and various units on campus. In lieu of going through every item briefly, I would like to offer an in-depth update on a couple matters. Please contact me if you have any concerns about these or other issues. I will let my fellow VPs give an update on the CFS National General Meeting, which was equal parts informative, challenging, and exhausting.

Correction to Journal article on Peoplesoft system

Please refer to the appendix for a correction issued by the Registrar's Office on the Queen's Journal's article about the new Peoplesoft system. These pages in the appendix will also summarize and introduce the new system to newcomers.

In general, the new system sounds like it will facilitate new forms of communication and coordination within departments and between. For instance, a department will can now post information about guest lectures to their graduate students' calendars, and the system will automatically make a calendar for each student out of their course load.

The fee dates still cause concern but for a minority of students. Most graduate students pay tuition via debit memo (70%), and they shouldn't be experience any change whatsoever. International students with funding from home governments (approx. 10%) should also be negligibly affected; they will need to submit a deferral request, like those not on the debit memo plan, but shouldn't encounter any problems doing so.

Our concerns involve the rest of SGS students. The initial 'down payment' on tuition will be due Sept. 1 rather than August 1, which may help some people, but it's still before most internal and external awards arrive. Domestic students not on debit memo will need to request a deferral (a "promissory note"). We have been told that this form will be standardized, which it isn't at present, but have yet to see what this form will look like. If you are successful with a deferral and make the promised payments on time, you won't pay interest on your tuition. You will still pay the \$150 late fee penalty. Moreover, the Registrar may not accept a promissory note that says a student will pay tuition over the course of the year – for instance, as an OGS arrives in Sept., Jan., and May. From what I understand, most students in the remaining 20% who pay in lump sums will request this arrangement, but not all. However, the School of Graduate Studies admitted that the Registrar Office will privilege promissory notes that say the student will pay their annual tuition at the end of September. (Tuition for the year will be due in full in September, no longer on a term-by-term basis.) We have requested that the SGS ask the Registrar to confirm this one way or the other and to petition the Registrar to allow graduate students to pay their tuition over the course of the year, if they request to do so in a promissory note. I hope to update members on the Registrar's response shortly.

Faculty of Science Graduate Council

The Faculty of Arts and Science, Science Graduate Council still requires an M.A. or M.Sc student representative. If you are interested in this position, please contact me (vpq@sgps.ca). The Council Manual, listing the body's responsibilities, should be available very shortly on the School of Graduate Studies website, (<http://www.queensu.ca/sqs/forfacultyandstaff/SGSgovernance/council.html>).

Student Advisors

November saw the long-awaited completion of the 2010-11 round of hiring for the Student Advisor Program. Usman Mushtaq, who was a most outstanding advisor from last year, agreed to the Personnel Committee's recommendation to remain with the Program. This is one of the most desirable outcomes possible from any number of perspectives, and I warmly welcome Usman back as a Student Advisor. For the updated personnel listing of the Program, visit <http://www.sgps.ca/services/advisors.html>.

For those who have not heard about the Advisors, this program offers free and confidential advising services to our members on a range of matters but with special attention to academic concerns, supervisor-supervisee relations, and employment issues. Three Student Advisors are hired from our membership and receive guidance and formal training from peer advisors, the Human Rights Office, the School of Graduate Studies (SGS), and other units on campus like HCDS (Health, Counseling, and Disabilities Services) and QUIC (International Centre). For this round training we solicited the Human Rights Office to host a special session on the formal in-take process, a highly successful addition that we hope to continue in training periods. I would like to thank Margot Coulter and Stephanie Simpson for donating their time.

In October, we approached the SGS about a small, one-time financial contribution to the program to allow us to bolster the internal-structure and services of the program. The SGS kindly agreed last month. We hope to shortly implement all of these additions in the Winter Term.

Student Advisor Support Group

As mentioned in November 15th's e-Newsletter, this week (Thursday, December 9th) the Advisors will host an informal, confidential support group for our graduate-student members working with supervisors. Please let the advisors (studentadvisors@sgps.ca) or myself know (vpq@sgps.ca) if you or colleagues in your department wished to attend this group but were unable to do so. We hope to host this group again next term.

Respectfully submitted,
Daniel Moore

Hello All,

The social team is pleased to inform you that our Movember Campaign was a huge success. We managed to plan entertaining social events while raising awareness and support for a great cause. Additionally, we're looking forward to planning some great events for December and the following months to come.

Home Away from Home

Can't go home for the weekend, No Problem, The SGPS has you covered! We are planning a Home Away from Home event for all of our members that can't go home for the holiday season, or for those members that are leaving later than the rest. Bring your family or friends along for relaxing evening of games, food, drinks (non alcoholic) and prizes. Members are more than welcome to bring their home made cooking to the event. The SGPS will also provide food; including pizza, drinks and snacks. This is guaranteed to be a great evening whether you want to show off your culinary skills or you're looking for a chance to meet your fellow SGPS members. Please contact social@sgps.ca if you are looking to bring food or if you have any inquiries regarding this event.

Date: Monday, December 27

Time: 6:30-9:30 PM

Location: SGPS Social Lounge (JDUC 237)

SGPS Yoga Classes; Challenge your Inner Yogi (HLI)

As a part of our new Healthy Living Initiative the SGPS social team is providing you with a chance to challenge your inner yogi. Whether you've never tried yoga or you are a seasoned yogi, these workshops are safe and inclusive to all levels of ability and familiarity with the discipline. Grant yourself a break from the grind of being a graduate or professional student and participate in the SGPS's FREE yoga class this month, taught by a certified yoga instructor! Based in the Sanskrit meaning of "union", yoga is a physical discipline that unites the body and the mind in a system of movement. There are many benefits to yoga; such as its wonderful health and fitness benefits, as well as stress reduction. There will be two classes offered in November, the exact dates and locations to be announced in the next newsletter and via SGPS facebook group. For more information regarding this event please contact Nikki at planning@sgps.ca.

Date: Monday, December 6th

Time: 7:30-9:00 PM

Location: lululemon (270 Princess st)

SGPS Council Party

The social team is organizing a mid-year SGPS council get together. This event is a small token of the SGPS's appreciation for our council members' hard work and dedication. Moreover, this event will give us a unique opportunity to interact with each other in a more comfortable atmosphere; that is without having to even think about Robert's Rules. There will be free pool and some complementary appetizers at this event. Thus, come out and help us close off a great 2010 with a fun night of pool and socializing.

Date: Tuesday, December 14th

Time: 7:30 PM

Location: Grizzly Grill (395 Princess st)xxx

Lastly, the social team would love to hear your feedback regarding the types of events we are organizing and ways we can make them more appealing to our SGPS members. If you have any general inquiries or feedback don't hesitate to contact us at social@sgps.ca.

Respectfully Submitted,

Abdullahi Abunafeesa
Social Commissioner
(social@sgps.ca)

Note: The SGPS Office will be closed for the winter holiday from December 18th, 2010 to January 9th, 2011 inclusive.

SGPS Computer Network

- I am in the process of purchasing new hardware that is required for our new office space.
- I have implemented a secure remote access mechanism to our computers that allows me to troubleshoot and fix computers when I am away from the office.
- I have migrated some of our web services to secure http access. This will allow me to enable some new functionality, including remote password updates, e-mail vacation messaging and remote e-mail sorting.
- I have completed the system for automated backups of our wiki server. I now look towards automating our mail service backups.
- I am waiting for the Finance & Services Committee to deliberate on the proposed rates for printing and copying, which would be made available to our membership. This new service would not be intended as a printing/copy centre, but would be available for those members requiring large quantity printing or specialized printing. More details, including a breakdown of pricing and printing availability will be released in the new year.
- I continue the necessary work on our computer network to prepare for our new offices. The biggest challenges are in maintaining security and availability across multiple floors of the JDUC.

SGPS Website

- I continue to work with the Equity Team to incorporate equity into the SGPS website. Our intention is to add a couple of new pages and to integrate information into various existing pages of the website.
- I have improved the efficiency of the HTML source code of our website. The end result of this improvement is less data being sent from our servers. While this is good for our web-server, this is of particular interest to those visiting our website from mobile platforms on cellular networks, though it does benefit all that visit the site.
- I believe our website is now fully compliant with all major mobile platforms. If you experience any issues viewing our site on a mobile device, I would love to hear about it.

Communications

- I continue to work with Queen's IT to improve the support and delivery of our online opt-out system.
- I have had great success strengthening the SGPS' communication with ESS. I look forward to working with all other constituent bodies to the same end.
- I continue to work with Queen's IT to the end of online elections. There are many important factors that must be present in an online election platform. Many technical issues and logistic issues are present. This is a long-term goal that I continue to work on.
- I am pleased to report that our new printer/copier/fax machine is working well and allows us improved ability in printing and copying.
- I have completed work on all bursary form updates. All new forms are now on our website, including the new Sustainability Action Fund form.

Wishing all a very safe and happy holiday season!

Respectfully submitted,
Sean Richards - info@sgps.ca

During the month of November I secured 10 free tickets to a Kingston Frontenacs' hockey game at the K-Rock Centre. The December 3rd game was well attended, and the international graduate and professional students enjoyed the opportunity to watch a local hockey game during their study period in Canada. I also attended a session entitled Equity in the Classroom coordinated by the Centre for Teaching and Learning. Stephanie Simpson of the Human Rights Office (HRO) presented this session. In addition, I met with the Equity Team, Stephanie from the HRO and other interested individuals to discuss a campaign to bring awareness to issues of accent discrimination. My initial goal was to liaise with individuals on campus who would be able to provide further insight into areas of accent discrimination. I talked with Susan Anderson from QUIC and Christina Salavantis, who coordinates the TAs for the 100 level Sociology course; both Susan and Christina brought helpful comments and suggestions to the table, and their feedback will be developed at further meetings of the accent discrimination group. In addition, SGPS' CCA Committee met in November and discussed, among other agenda items, the UHIP Compliance Working Group. This administration-led group looks at how compliance with UHIP can be increased University wide. When originally approached by the group, I requested the opportunity to take the information back to members of the SGPS Executive Committee. It was discussed that a representative would be beneficial, and Amir was selected based on his particular interests as an ISC. I worked to secure a meeting with the International Students' Committee, but it appeared that schedules were extremely full, and thus, I look forward to hearing from and meeting with everyone in January. I attended a session organized by Kingston Immigration Partnership, and provided input as to how to prioritize the group's strategies. During the month of December I intend to review my goals and to determine how to most effectively accomplish these goals in the new year.

Respectfully,

Becky Pero

Dear Councilors,

For much of the past month, I have been primarily busy finalizing my thesis and as you can all imagine, this has been engulfing much of my time. My primary attention regarding my portfolio at the SGPS has been to turn the recommendations I've made in my last month's report into real action. I've had a continuing discussion with Anne-Marie on how best to go about implementing the recommendations and have come to a coordinate effort in striving for these short and long term goals. Pertinently, I have been busy gathering members for the UHIP bursary committee but have not been able to convene a meeting as of yet, again due to the nature of course loads at the end of the academic terms. I anticipate that much of the initiative will have renewed steam. For now, I hope you accept my brevity for this report.

Respectfully submitted,
Amir Hossein Nosrat

Dear Councilors,

Council/Committee Meetings:

Committee meetings have, as usual, been keeping me fairly busy. Queen's Accessibility Committee (QAC) is moving forward on creating a Learning Disability working group with the potential outcome of having a resource person in each faculty who will support students who have historically had to negotiate the university system themselves. I have volunteered for both the Awards and Accessibility Plan standing committees as the graduate student representative. It was also brought to QAC's attention that the Federal Government is calling for proposals for its Enabling Accessibility Fund. Universities can submit proposals for capital projects to be funded by \$500,000 to \$3 million for renovations, retrofits and construction of university buildings. The deadline for submissions is January 15th. The Council on Employment Equity (CEE) also met for its monthly meeting. The CEE has started to discuss and revise each point of the Equity Plan 2010. The Committee is also discussing an 'Employment Equity Award' and we are waiting to hear back from Irene Bujara as to the specific criteria and timing of this award. This month I also attended the Senate on Employment Equity Committee (SEEC). The bulk of the meeting was spent discussing international student tuition fees and how SEEC may be able to speak against further fee increases in the future. The sentiments of the committee were that we should commit to researching this in order to make recommendations in time for next year's Board of Trustees decision.

Events and Campaigns

The Accent Discrimination Campaign is in full 'research-gathering' mode as we delegate responsibilities and initiate our online resource-sharing platform. We are currently writing an application to the General Research Ethics Board (GREB) in order to conduct focus groups with Queen's students. We will keep you updated on this process; please watch for future communications soliciting anecdotes and experiences of accent discrimination at Queen's.

SGPS Internal

I would also like to thank Stephanie Simpson and Jean Pfleiderer of the Human Rights Office for leading our second anti-oppression training for paid SGPS employees. The discussions were very informative and productive, and we look forward to working with the HRO in the future. We've also spent significant time liaising with the Law Society's Equity Committee; we hope to increase the presence of law students in our SGPS equity endeavours and we look forward to working on joint initiatives in the coming months. I have also had an initial meeting with Rector Nick Day, AMS Social Issues Commissioner Daniella Davila Aquije and ASUS Equity Officer Wesam Aleyadeh to discuss joint equity-related approaches to the Academic Planning process. We will be working with the Diversity and Equity Taskforce Chair Adnan Husain regarding the most effective methods to ensure equity-related issues are included in the process.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Prouse
Equity Commissioner

Solar RFP and Interviews

In November, as a representative of the SGPS and as the only student on the committee, I was selected to take part in the marking of the Solar RFPs (requests for proposals) from 7 finalist companies with their proposals. After the marking was done we had meetings to go over the scoring and select 3 final companies for the interviews. The interviews took place on November 22nd from 9am till 2pm at the University Club. We met again to go over the financial details and tally the scoring – one company came out on top and it is Jonson Controls. The financial component of whether to lease the roofspace and ground or purchase the system was not easy to decide given the varying numbers and low return on investment if the purchasing funds were to be borrowed from banks. As such we prepared recommendations and Ann Browne presented them at the Board's and Financial meetings. The Campus Planning and Development approved the preferred vendor from the committee to maximize rooftops. The Finance Committee endorsed pursuing the rooftop project (about 1MW system) while raising some questions with reference to the ground-mount system given that the proposed 10MW on the grid may not be achievable because of transmission bottlenecks. Once the original contract with Johnson Controls is in and signed we will be pushing for meeting deadlines and working out financing arrangements of lease and purchase if possible.

Sustainability Meetings – AMS, MCRC, Sustainability Office and AMS Roundtable Forum

As a sustainability coordinator for sgps I attended 2 meetings with the sustainability office, AMS and Main Campus Residence Council (MCRC) to discuss all things green on campus. These meetings are perfect opportunities to talk about projects we are working on or would like to see happen. Some of the events/projects discussed in the works are the waste audit, recyclemania, energy conservation challenge, water access, and etc.

In addition, I also attended the November edition of the AMS Roundtable Forum which serves as a plan by the sustainability-oriented student groups on campus to outline how the University should be moving in regards to sustainability. Every month we discuss different areas (waste, water, energy etc) This month we discussed issues of water conservation and use on campus, bottled water, waterfountains accessibility, awareness, tray-less dining in cafeterias, pool cleaning etc.

City Councilor Event meeting with AMS and SGPS staff

I also took part in the meet and greet of the city councilors with the AMS and SGPS representatives. The meeting was informative and a good opportunity for networking and exchanging some ideas.

Documentary Night – Bike Kitchen

The SGPS Sustainability Committee organized a documentary night on December 1st – we had a great turnout of faculty and students, and most importantly, used the event as an opportunity to touch base with cycling groups in Kingston like Yellow Bike Action and Cycle Kingston. In collaboration with Theresa, the AMS Sustainability Deputy, our plan is to try to lift the Bike Kitchen project off the ground which would involve setting up a bike rental/ repair and education center on campus. More details on this to come in the next report!

Dear Councillors

Highlights of the Principal and Provost's Reports

- The Principal recently returned from a trip to India with 14 other principles to make an attempt to promote Canadian universities to a burgeoning market for Indian international students. He has detailed the trip on his blog.
- The Principal also spoke to the next stage in the academic planning process, stating that he felt that — via the work of the Academic Writing Team and other forums — most of the work had been done, and that the final plan may not look much different than the Academic Writing Team's Report.
- Further to this point, he argued that while the next stage involves significant consultation, it should have a finite end — hopefully by end of next term.
- The Provosts discussed the increase in tuition for international undergrads as well as a variety of professional programs. Regular graduate tuition for international students remained the same. The report on this issue is definitely worth reading and is available here: http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/Nov25_10/IntlTuit.pdf
- Discussion on the role of university rankings and Queen's position on them was raised and will continue to be discussed. The presenter noted that the rankings tend to favour large wealthy universities and obviously have questionable methodology. However, rankings have a huge value for promotion, particularly internationally. For instance, 46% of South Asian applicants use Macleans while 67% of all Queen's applicants used Macleans.

Question Period

- Faculty Senator Christie asked the Principal to explain why his statement on specialization seemed to take for granted that the process was inevitable and that it was a matter of how to engage with the process.
- The Principal responded by saying there is a desire in Ontario for a more diverse institutional assessment that focuses on strengths. He further noted that the academic plan will aim to see how we differentiate ourselves, and whether and to what degree we shall differentiate ourselves, further insisting that senate can lead this discussion. He closed by clarifying that differentiation is currently not government policy, and the current aim is to promote discussion.

Reports of Committees: Senate Committee on Academic Development (SCAD)

- SCAD responded to being tasked with discussing the next step for the academic plan by recommending that Senate create a task force aimed at producing this plan. Discussion around the composition, selection method, and mandate of this task force dominated the majority of the Senate meeting.
- The task force was ultimately created. It will be made up of 2 students (one graduate, one undergraduate), 3 faculty, 1 staff, 1 dean, and a chair.
- Discussion over how to staff the committee was heated. Ultimately, the majority in Senate voted in favour of staffing the committee like any other, by having the Appointment Committee solicit applications and decide based on merit. Many had called for nominees to be put forward and then

be voted upon by their respective Senate groups. This was rejected as needlessly complicated and time consuming.

- The call for nominations is active and the committee will be staffed by the New Year so they can begin their work after the first Senate meeting in January.

Online Learning Report

- The October meeting of the Council of Ontario Universities included the tabling of a discussion paper on online learning. It is an interesting read, especially as it is clear that more institutions, including this one, are considering online learning as a way of addressing capacity and student engagement issues. The report can be found here:
http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/Nov25_10/COURpt.pdf

Respectfully Submitted,

Iain Reeve

Dear Council Members,

Over the course of November, significant progress has been made on all the projects and initiatives the Equity team are collaborating on.

Understanding Each Other: Accented Communication at Queen's

The website component of this campaign is now under development. It's currently a restricted-access Wiki, but as soon as we determine that enough resources and information are made available through it, it will be made public.

We are currently in full research mode, with all the individuals representing the collaborating organizations undertaking specific topics. These include legal precedents for accent discrimination cases and psychological ways in which spoken language is processed, and determining what initiatives are already being undertaken by organizations and individuals at Queen's and in other university and institutional settings.

I am drafting a General Research Ethics Board (GREB) application for the project's two stages – data-gathering from members of the Queen's community and focus groups to be developed based on the accounts we anticipate receiving, of experienced difficulty in communication and/or discrimination on the basis of accent. The process of drafting the application involves streamlining our approach to the project, meaning that once we receive approval (ideally in January), the survey phase of the project can begin.

Sexual Violence Action Network (SVAN)

At our last meeting, we determined that this network will operate in such a way that the individual organizations who make it up will continue their own autonomous projects. The network will serve as a forum for communication among these groups, at which mutual learning and teaching necessarily occur, and at which potential collaborative initiatives can be developed.

On behalf of the SGPS, I drafted a request to the Office of Advancement for the Levanna Gender Advocacy Centre to receive funding to create a full-time position for someone to undertake campaigns against sexual violence year-round. At Queen's, like at all Canadian universities, there is currently no full-time employee whose portfolio is devoted exclusively to dealing with issues of sexual violence. Although there are several groups who organize campaigns at specific times, having these be ongoing recognises that people should always be conscious of sexual violence issues, and feel they have a resource to turn to for information – not necessarily in the context of experiencing a sexual violence-related crisis. The Network's consensus is that the potential for personal safety of members of the Queen's community could be greatly increased by a greater awareness of sexual violence issues maintained on campus throughout the year. Queen's could also establish itself as a leading institution recognising the importance of addressing issues of sexual violence within a university setting.

SGPS Anti-Oppression Training

On November 30th, those employees of the SGPS who did not participate in the summer Anti-Oppression training took part in two sessions, led by Stephanie Simpson and Jean Pfleiderer of the Human Rights Office. Both Stephanie and Jean were very impressed with the group's engagement with the issues, and enthusiasm for developing strategies to resist networks of oppression and ensure that the SGPS represents and works on behalf of its membership with a strong commitment to equity. As a Positive Space facilitator, I would like to add my compliments to the group for being so receptive to a lot of new terminology and potentially unexpected situations. Throughout the day, everyone's

questions, comments, personal accounts and suggestions were at once thoughtful, critical and respectful.

Advocacy

Two opportunities for SGPS advocacy came to my attention.

First, regarding the increase in tuition fees for undergraduate international students, I agree with the International Student Coordinators that although our membership is not directly affected, the SGPS should take a stance on the administration's attitude towards international students, as illustrated in this action. There will be an open discussion about the university's approach to international students at the next Board of Trustees meeting, which (to quote Amir) is an opportunity we need to capitalize on.

Second, a number of the groups who share the Grey House space sent in an application to Accessibility Queen's requesting funding to make the Grey House's upper levels accessible to anyone whose access is barred by stairs. Timing did not permit me to include a letter expressing the SGPS's support for this initiative, but I wanted to inform Council that I plan to voice this very support, on behalf of the SGPS, should any opportunity arise.

Social Committee

A quick note: I am very happy to report that the SGPS Social Team are doing a great job of keeping equity concerns in mind in developing social events for the Winter term.

Respectfully submitted,

Kalanthe Khaiat

Snow!!! It's here!

Hello SGPS Council,

Very short report this month, not too much new going on, but figured I would keep you all in the loop on how things are going.

Queen's Graduate Computing Society Conference (QGCSC)

The planning is well underway for our second annual conference, with the expansion plans included to bump up to the two days we want. The main aim of the expansion was to allow more time for student presentations and speakers, as well as to build up a reputation for ourselves. Myself and our president, Sunny Gupta, have been working with the rest of our committee and are pleased with the results so far. We are all but confirmed for a date of March 11-12, 2011, with the main event taking place in the Biosciences Complex.

If you have any questions about the conference, please feel free to ask me.

Social Activities

As the largest graduate program at Queen's we are very committed to hosting a variety of events for our students, and this venture is always ongoing. Some of our recent events have been a potluck for Eid al-Adha, which was full of great food and socializing, as well as a movie night where we showed Shutter Island. We continue to host events all through the year, with our next tentative event being a Welcome Back Potluck after the break.

If you ever want to know about our events or what is happening with GCS, let us know, and we may even be able to extend an invite.

Happy Holidays everyone, see you soon!

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