

Dear Members:

There are less than 50 days left in our terms, and while there's still more to do, your SGPS Executive has been able to accomplish a lot in the last ten months. Here are some of the major projects we've completed and that we're still working on.

Academic Harassment

Dealing with non-Code harassment was my main lobbying goal when I was elected. While the university's *Harassment/Discrimination Complaint Policy and Procedure* deals with some types of harassment, it does not cover harassment that is not based on a protected *Human Rights Code* ground (like race, sex or disability). Graduate students are particularly vulnerable to this form of harassment because of the innate power imbalance that exists in the student/supervisor relationship. Early on in my term I started engaging with the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Provost and the Principal about how this form of harassment is not covered by any university policies. The administration was very receptive during our conversations, and I'm glad to say that we're well on our way to putting in place university-wide policy changes to tackle this issue. A working group, chaired by the Director of the Human Rights Office, is already starting work on tackling non-Code harassment. Chris Cochrane, my successor as President, is currently sitting on the working group as the SGPS delegate and will continue to do so once he takes office. Hopefully the working group will be able to present its recommendations for policy changes in the fall semester.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

Our Executive has been highly engaged with the university's efforts to better prevent and respond to sexual assault on campus. If there is one thing that the consultation process has made clear, it's that Queen's needs to do more to protect and accommodate survivors of sexual assault. Our current practices are inadequate. While the administration has made a laudable commitment to improve things and while the Interim Protocol is a good first step, we need to change and harmonize the way we respond to sexual assault so that survivors do not have to constantly re-live their trauma in order to get appropriate accommodations.

At one of the open houses hosted by the working group I called for two major changes that I have heard often requested by groups and individuals who work most closely with sexual assault survivors. First, faculties need to set up robust processes for requesting non-disability academic accommodations. If someone is granted accommodations by the Disabilities Services Office, their instructor must grant the accommodation and is not made aware of the details of their disability. But in many faculties, requests for short-term accommodations (including accommodations in the wake of a sexual assault) must be arranged individually with each professor. We should not force sexual assault survivors to provide evidence of their sexual assault to each professor and try and negotiate appropriate accommodations. And any accommodation procedure for sexual assault must be amalgamated with other procedures for short-term accommodations, so that survivors of sexual assault do not need to face stigma for seeking accommodations.

Second, the university needs to set up an appropriate non-academic discipline (NAD) process for students who commit sexual assault or other major criminal acts. Currently, minor crimes and provincial offences are subject to sanction under the NAD processes of the SGPS or AMS. For major crimes (like a sexual assault), the authority to prosecute a breach of the Student Code of Conduct rests with the Provost. Unfortunately, this power has never been used and there is no publicly-available information or process on how to file a complaint for major criminal acts. Studies show that many campus rapists will not stop at one sexual assault or one victim. We need to get serious about removing rapists from campus quickly, permanently and through a fair process, even where survivors are not willing to go through the trauma of a public criminal trial. We cannot maintain our current double-standard where there are greater university sanctions for getting belligerent in a campus bar than for raping a classmate.

Expanded Office Hours

The new lunchtime office hours have proven to be well-used by the SGPS membership. Over the past few months, the Executive has been engaged in contract renegotiations with some of our permanent staff in order to expand our office hours and provide more staff time to work on larger projects. Based on the results of those negotiations, I expect that we will be able to offer an even larger expansion of office hours, which should include the SGPS office remaining open 5 days a week during the summer term. We may also be able to start opening the office earlier in the mornings. Once the new contracts are finalized, I expect to be able to announce our revised office hours.

CFS Motion on T4A Appeal Guide

Working with Lorne, our VP Campaigns and Community Affairs, I drafted a motion for the Canadian Federation of Students General Meeting last fall calling on the CFS to work with their lawyers to prepare an appeal guide for graduate research assistants who are paid by a T4A but want to access the employee protections that come with being on a T4. Our motion was very well-received at the GM and was unanimously passed by student governments from across the country. Hopefully this appeal guide should be ready soon, and I will be following up with the CFS National Executive to keep track of its development.

Student Advisor Program Review

The SGPS Executive is currently in discussions with the Student Advisors on what sort of structural changes might be helpful to assist with institutional memory and to handle client transition in cases of both annual and unexpected Advisor change. We've been getting very helpful feedback from the Advisors. The Executive will be continuing to discuss potential reforms with the Advisors and with the School of Graduate Studies. We expect that this is a conversation that the incoming Executive will continue to have as the Memorandum of Agreement comes up for formal review in September.

Democratically Chosen Reps on Grad Councils and Committees

This is the first year we've had Council representatives from each department select the Academic Reps who sit on the Graduate Council and Committees that make important decisions about graduate programs. There have been a few hiccups putting in place the new consultation processes, but Graduate Academic Caucus has certainly worked as a useful tool for our GSEC to get information and discuss issues before each meeting. I also had productive meetings with some of the Grad Council Reps in liaising with the departments where we explored ways of making the faculty committees more effective. One of the things we're working on is getting lists from all the department grad coordinators of the students who sit on the committees that consider and approve major modification proposals before they get sent up to the SGS. The hope is to have faculty representatives able to get in touch with students from the department before the major modification comes up to a vote at the Grad Council or GSEC. I'll be getting back in touch with the academic reps this month before proposing some new policy amendments at April Council.

Financial Statements

The 2012-13 financial statements have basically been the bane of my existence. For some reason there has been an issue with the third-party fee payments from that fiscal year that never cropped up in previous fiscal years, and we can't get our numbers and the auditors' numbers to harmonize. At this point it's unclear whether we overpaid third party groups that year, there's a problem in the way we documented our payments, or whether the auditors' made a mistake in their estimates of how much we did or were supposed to pay each group. I met with the auditors earlier this semester to work on the problem, and they sent some revised numbers for our Executive Director to verify. We haven't been able to make those revised numbers work, so now basically Sean and one of the auditors are sitting down in a room together with all our financial documents from that fiscal year and not leaving until they can get the numbers to match. It's been a frustrating process for me, because I promised to have the 2013-14 statements done by now, but we've been waiting to fix up this 2012-13 mess before signing the engagement letter for last fiscal year. I'm pushing very hard to get this numbers finalized this week so that they can approved by the Exec and auditors and presented at the General Meeting.

Student Life Centre Governance Discussions

We and the AMS are continuing to work with the university on the new Management & Operations Agreement. The new structure has been agreed on in principle and there have been meetings with the parties and a lawyer to start hammering out the wording of the new agreement. Everyone is very keen on having this thing hammered out by mid-April so that it can be submitted in time for the May Board of Trustees meeting. I can't divulge details until the negotiations are finished, but the model we've settled on should give the SGPS a strong voice in protecting our interests in SLC management.

Education Ancillary Fees

I've been working with a number of stakeholders on ancillary fees in the BEd program since the beginning of my term. On one side, I've been touching base with service providers and Student Affairs to come up with a plan for the impending influx of students this May who won't be paying their normal student fees until September. I've reached agreements with Athletics & Recreation and with the City of Kingston to allow pro-rated spring fees for early access to the ARC and Kingston Transit, respectively. The new bus pass won't kick in until May 2016, but we expect to have ARC access available for this May. I've also been negotiating with Student Affairs about providing more HCDS services to Education students on practicum in exchange for allowing a pro-rated May fee for SGPS members who are starting in May.

On the other side, I've also been in touch with the Faculty of Education about course fees, some of which appear to be in violation of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities' fee protocol. I've managed to get a detailed breakdown of where all the course fees have been spent this year, and I'll be working with the ESS to determine whether any of the non-compliant fees should be validated through a student referendum (if desired) or discontinued for next year.

Professional Student Socials

Thompson can provide more detail on these, but this year they were a big hit and we'll be talking to the AMS about joint policy and funding to make them a permanent thing.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Wiener', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kevin Wiener
President
president@sgps.ca

Dear SGPS Council Members and Members at Large,

Regarding items on my Year Plan, the first was to continue support for and promotion of the Student Advisor Program. I did this in a variety of capacities including creating new outreach materials for the Program to target students, faculty, staff, and administrators and regularly talking about the Program and its benefits to members of the Queen's Community while promoting its value to students, as well as to administrators and to Graduate Student Associations at other universities. I added a fourth Student Advisor position to meet student demand and undertook a successful referendum campaign to increase the Student Activity Fee to support the cost of the fourth position. I also instituted a monthly Student Advisor-VPG meeting so that the VPG can check in more frequently with the Student Advisors, discuss outreach opportunities at places like West Campus or QUIC, and share ideas and strategies to follow up on recommendations arising from Student Advisor Term Reports. Several initiatives that are still underway include preparation from my upcoming presentation about the Program and its importance in improving student-supervisory relationships at GU15 in Calgary in April and the planning and implementation of a workshop series I've helped develop in cooperation with some of the Advisors and our International Student Affairs Commissioner and Coordinator.

Another goal I had for the year was to begin dialogue with different groups about creating and maintaining improved supervisory standards. I've been regularly meeting via skype and telephone with Deans of Graduate Studies at other institutions, and gathering information about the standards and expectations of graduate supervision at their schools. I have continued to advocate for 'minimum standards' of graduate supervision at Queen's as opposed to 'best practices' which faculty can and do occasionally depart from. I have asked for a number of updates to the Graduate Supervision Handbook, particularly the addition of language stating that supervisors are obligated to adequately prepare their students for oral thesis defences and that supervisors should access resources, including Career Services, to better equip students for the career path in and crucially outside of academia. I also assisted in the launch of the Student-Supervisor Meeting Record Keeping (SSMRK) Pilot Project, which is ongoing throughout 2015, a tool we hope will eventually be adopted across all departments for students and supervisors to use to keep track of expectations and milestones and ensure both student and supervisor are on the same page. I have also continued to spread the word about the Student Advisor program to department heads, grad chairs, faculty deans, faculty, and also QUFA, reminding them that the Program is there for students and that Advisors can help resolve problems that emerge in the student-supervisory relationship.

Regarding the next goal of standardizing Faculty Graduate Council appointments, the President and I worked closely on the development of new procedures for electing representatives to the FCGs, reps who also chair and co-chair their SGPS Faculty Committees and sit on our newly minted Graduate Academic Caucus that I chair. On top of the success of the Student Advisor Fee Campaign, I think the creation of GAC has been one of the greatest accomplishments in my portfolio. The Senator and I have been better informed of program revisions and policy developments at the faculty level, thus better preparing us for discussion of these when they come to GSEC. Our GAC representatives have been absolutely instrumental this year in informing our knowledge and decision-making, and really helping us understand things better at the faculty level.

My fourth goal was to make connections and maintain ties with the graduate students in residence at Confederation Basin Hotel since there had been no direct line of communication before. I regularly checked in with the Grad Student Rep in Res, advocated their concerns to Senate Residence Committee and Bruce Griffiths, Director of Housing and Hospitality Services. As of August 2015, Queen's will no longer have allotments for graduate students in residence and is ending its contract with Confederation Basin Hotel. Currently, there are 29 graduate students in residence there, some of whom will be graduating and moving on, others who will move into the community. This year, things have been going fairly well, though lack of laundry facilities has continued to be a nuisance. Thank you to Joddi Alden who has been doing an exceptional job of organizing social events and keeping folks informed of broader SGPS business for the past year.

Lastly, was the development of a SGPS Health and Safety Committee. After a number of meetings with members of the AMS Executive, the AMS Hospitality and Safety Services Director, and several health and safety representatives with PSAC 901, the TA/TF and Post-Doc union in the late fall and early winter term, it made sense to create a broader Student Health and Safety Committee (SHSC). We met once to discuss

areas of mutual concern including unsafe spaces that students study, undertake research, or socialize in and also the need to find ways to promote more heavily the Walkhome Service as a service that is available to SGPS members as well as AMS members. In this sense, the SHSC is both 'occupational' and 'non-occupational' in scope-students should be able to study in safe, hazard free spaces just as an employee has the legal right to work in one. Moving forward, the SHSC still has room to grow and solidify, but it is a starting point. Should the SGPS lose its seats on the University's Joint Health and Safety Committees (I currently sit on the Arts and Science JHSC) if EHS restructures them and/or the RAs unionize, the SHSC is now a forum in which SGPS members can still maintain direct links to PSAC 901 health and safety reps who can raise issues about health and safety hazards in their labs, offices, study spaces, or even halls and stairwells into their department buildings, and then have those issues addressed on the Joint Health and Safety Committees. Finally, in my capacity as Chair of the Unity Council Health and Safety Committee, I added, with the permission of the union local representatives, a permanent place for the AMS so that undergrads can participate too in wider discussions about health and safety that SGPS members, TAs/TFs, Post-Docs, Faculty, Staff, Librarians, and Technicians are already heavily invested in.

While I feel I've largely accomplished each of the five goals I set out to do at the beginning of my term, I feel I have accomplished so much more. Please do have a read of my past Council reports for more information. I'm happy to say I'll be leaving my position with a record of positive and constructive working relationships not only with my colleagues but also with a number of offices and committees at Queen's, including the School of Graduate Studies where we have helped make much headway to allow grad students to get the most out of their academic life at Queen's. I'm also pleased to say I'm now working very closely with my successor, Mr. Mark Kellenberger-VPG Elect. Our transition is extensive but going well-we are going over the 'introductory' aspects of the VPG Portfolio in order to prepare your new VPG and allow him to literally dive in the thick of things alongside me in April, to sit in on meetings and essentially learn the ropes 'on the job.' I hope you will all join me in warmly welcoming Mark to the SGPS Executive and Council and to wish him the very best of luck in his coming term. He's just wonderful and I think he will do splendidly with the excellent initiatives he has in store!

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Exec members Kevin, Patrick, Thompson, Lorne, all of our Student Advisors, Senator Eric Rapos, our intrepid Trustee James McLeod, Max Ma, Peter Charbonneau, Ciara Bracken-Roche, Jhordan Layne, Ahmed Abdel Razek, and every single Member of Council for such a great year and for all of their help they given over the past year in helping me learn the ropes, achieve goals, and helping find solutions to achieve them. My SGPS achievements are collaborative ones. I would also like to thank our very dedicated Graduate Academic Caucus members for all of their hard work and exceptional dedication to improving the graduate student experience and strengthening even more the graduate student voice at Queen's. Finally, I don't think I could have survived this year without the assistance, knowledge, and support of the amazing past and present staff, particularly Sean Richards, Andria Mahon, and our outstanding Front Desk staff member, Nancy Warnica. Our staff, like our Student Advisors, is here for all SGPS members when you need them, and thank goodness for that!

And now, back to my thesis... :)

Respectfully Submitted,

Dinah Jansen
Vice President Graduate
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Dear Council,

Well, that year certainly went by quickly. Also, I'd like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve you for another. Here's what I've been up to since our last GM in November.

Student Wellness, Health, and Safety Working Group and the **Provost's Advisory Committee on Mental Health**. I've grouped both together as we discussed quite similar topics at either. Both meetings were quite fruitful and in particular, I spoke directly to Deputy Provost Daneshmend about the lack of a framework for teaching fellows who require accommodations through either the DSO, or assistance through HCDS, and how this or even an involuntary withdrawal would seriously impact their labour, departmental duties, and continued status in their respective program. I'm quite pleased to say that he was particularly concerned and interested in finding a solution with all stakeholders involved.

Concerning the Student Wellness, Health, and Safety Working Group more specifically, as the group is actively seeking to dissolve itself by divesting its concerns to other better positioned committees and workgroups, not much was covered. Vice-Provost and Dean of Student Affairs Ann Tierney had the results from an internal survey with a rather large number of interesting statistics, figures, and details regarding the overall student community; this is doubly delicious as it also includes Queen's numbers against other similar sized universities. She said she'd give me the slides once things were wrapped up mid-March, so I definitely want to follow up with this.

Health & Wellness Steering Committee

Here I brought up (again) that there's no actual accommodation framework with the DSO insofar as Teaching Fellows are concerned. The head of HCDS Mike Condra was aware of this (and slightly annoyed that I kept bringing this up) and explained that things are being "looked into." When I explained in detail how poorly it would look upon the school should not only a graduate student's life be ruined but also that their 60+ undergrads would be hung out to dry, Ann Tierney and Roxie Denniston-Stewart seemed a lot more concerned. I'm in the process of arranging some further meetings with this in order to speed this desperately needed health and wellness amendment along.

Community Housing Board

Attended a Community Housing Board meeting and passed along some last minute vacancies in An Clachan to Sean for the newsletter; also, the AMS has developed a tool that will allow everyone to collate housing data alongside google maps, so that potential students can see the overall geographic costs of Kingston before making a decision. I think this'll really help those new to Queen's and the surrounding community.

Provost's Advisory Committee on Mental Health

Here I voiced my concern around the proposed procedures for graduate student withdrawal, both voluntary and involuntary. There's a little more going on here but it still concerns me that, once again, a student leaving their courses and teaching via involuntary temporary withdrawal might find themselves in hot water insofar as their employment goes. Roxy Denniston-Stewart explained the process to me and we're going to be meeting up in the near future to continue discussions, as well as following up with the SGS.

Provost's Advisory Committee for Promotion of the Arts

Prior to this meeting we had to weigh the many applications to sit upon the Rosen Lecture subcommittee. Despite their overall high level of talent and merit, we were able to slim the bulk of the applicants down to three faculty and two students. Congratulations are in order and while I can't say their names here, but these happy individuals will be contacted shortly.

Mental Health Working Group

Unfortunately, I had to send my regrets as I was away in Toronto on business.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Working Group

As part of my commitment to a healthier and safer campus I've become involved in the serious and sobering work of this working group. Working alongside our Equity Commissioner Erica, Levana Gender, and our allies in the SHRC and the AMS it is my hope that we can ultimately craft a policy that isn't simply "best practices," but one that takes into consideration our unique experiences and positions as students.

I'd like to thank all of you who had taken part in our survey - it will greatly help steer the efforts of this working group and has already rewarded us with a wealth of data.

I'd furthermore like to thank those of you who attended the Queen's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Working Group's series of open houses held at the Ban Righ Centre. For those of you who missed it, our own President Kevin Weiner stood and delivered suggestions so perfectly articulate and legally weighty that no less than the head of OPIRG came over and shook his hand in thanks. And yes, I realize that was a highly unusual sentence.

Canadian Federation of Students

The CFS had some questions about Queen's sexual assault policy and Andria helped us answer, and the research materials they've provided have been quite useful.

Community Affairs

Shortly after they were elected, I met up with councilors Peter Stroud and Mary Rita Holland to discuss the status of childcare in Kingston and around our campus. Both are deeply concerned about the closure of half of Queen's Day Care and what they feel to be the administration's indecision and opacity. Either were more than happy to bring our concerns to our newly elected Kingston city council and explained that they would be willing to work with our communities both on and off of the campus in order to remedy this situation.

Around the start of the new year it came to my attention that a not insignificant number of our membership were struggling to cover both tuition and rent, due to a hiccup on the end of the University Registrar. I've been meeting with our VP Graduate and her Research Assistant and engaging in conversations with people knowledgeable with the financial structures of the University in order to discern how we'd like to approach this issue; I am of course mindful that the University is rolling out a new fees structure (a change they troublingly made without consulting us), and am including this into my longer range plans for the year.

I've also spoken briefly with the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs Arig in hopes of gleaning some of the quantitative data from surveys that she'd interested in running via the Graduate Student Life Advisory Group (GSLAG) that will better inform our own work on student stress and time to completion. I've likewise briefly discussed with Associate Dean Sandra den Otter the school's ongoing role in stress management amongst graduate students, and hope that these conversations and information will provide me with a wealth of information for campaigns that I plan on undertaking in the coming months.

I'd also like to offer many sincere thanks to those of you who helped me run our Holiday Assistance Program (HAP) and our Food For Fines (FFF) programs back in December. Both were quite successful and well received by both the community and our allies academic and non- around campus. This couldn't have happened without the hard work of my many volunteers, but I'd also be remiss were I to neglect all of the great work that our office staff did in promoting and supporting these great initiatives. Insofar as stronger academic communities are concerned, I believe this paved the way to stronger connections between our friends in the AMS, and I'd like to specifically thank Rebecca, the AMS/SGPS Food Centre Coordinator, and Emily, the Social Issues Commissioner.

I was struck by the idea that it might be beneficial for the partners and spouses of our membership if they had a mixer or social specifically for their benefit. Graduate and professional school can be an intensely isolating time, but often lost in the mix are those partners, and families who uproot their lives and move across the country to support us in our studies. I hope to discuss this further, especially around O-Week when a lot of new students are coming into Queen's, with our Social Commissioner Ciara.

In light of certain events in popular culture, I've been working with the Director of the SHRC Doulton and her staff to bring forth a little PSA for the wider community, dealing with consent, safety, and playing safe in adult matters.

I met with representatives from the Environmental Exposure Unit from Kingston General Hospital who said they'd keep me in the loop whenever they needed participants and volunteers for an upcoming project. I'll have more information at a later point in time, but otherwise I feel that this could be a great benefit for our membership.

Queens Day Care Board/Childcare in General

As an advisory member of QDC board I attended a recent meeting where some interesting developments were discussed. Although I am unable to make any official comments, I can't help but notice that the Queen's Gazette is putting out some pretty darned interesting stories as of late. Seriously.

I was interviewed by the *Queen's Journal* about the status of childcare in the city and around campus. I hope that this interview will better frame the issue and remind our communities of the dire need for this important yet often overlooked necessity.

Too, I am currently in the works with PSAC for the development of a childcare bursary for the benefit of our membership, domestic and international.

It struck me that the longer this problem continues the more help a not insignificant number of our membership need. Keeping this in mind, I managed to meet with a representative of one of the non-profit daycares in the city, and thought that making a repository of all available resources for new and student parents might be a worthwhile endeavor. During our meeting we discussed the possibility of interviews, or even an open house styled event, where parents and guardians of children could become better acquainted with the facilities on a guided tour.

Student Community Relations

I went with other community stakeholders to City Hall to discuss the Student Move Out Weekend at the end of term. I spoke with Joan Jones and followed-up with talks I'd had with her last fall about the logistics of my idea to retain things for our membership and community partners who might be in need of material resources, like Dawn House, United Way, or the Food Centre. Meetings with her are ongoing but otherwise she's quite on board for this idea.

Stauffer Redesign Open House

I attended this event and the 15 or so of us spoke, debated, and brainstormed potential ideas. I drew a full-page annotated illustration that a lot of people seemed to like, that focused around a large and removable canvas roof that provided 2/3 coverage but still let light through, and could be seasonally branded, or prominently feature our tri-colour. I was glad to see that there was a large desire for green spaces, and keeping things interesting during the summer months when students are aware. And while I can't specifically mention names, much to my surprise someone fairly high up within the library itself was quite keen on our VP Professional's suggestion of "waterslides."

Finally, If you're a civic-minded person that would appreciate engaging in meaningful community work, or a feel-good distraction from your thesis work or the lab, don't hesitate to contact myself or Andria (ea@sgps.ca) to let us know your interest.

Dear SGPS Council Members,

I am going to touch on some of the overall work that I have finished this year. Some of this will be repetitive, but it is useful to see a lot of this in one place.

I came into this role with some ideas of what I wanted to work on, including my vision for professional student socials and being a resource for the ESS as they approach their program change in May.

A big part of what I have worked on are projects that came to my attention after working for a number of months with the SGPS – these included the need for the creation of employment contracts, establishing a relationship with a local lawyer for future legal work, and the ongoing review of our bylaws and policies. We have also started the process of reviewing our current commissioner and coordinator structures, to determine ways to best serve the interests of our members while also being financially responsible.

We have also been working closely with our permanent staff to adjust some duties and responsibilities in order to improve institutional memory and overall consistent functioning of the SGPS.

As briefly discussed at last council, I anticipate Mark Asfar taking over the ongoing review of bylaw and policy over the summer, with a goal towards a greatly cleaned up bylaw document and a number of separate policy documents.

As we approach the end of the year, I am pleased with the work of this year's Executive. We have left behind a lot of tangible benefits for future executive teams and worked hard to streamline and clean up where possible.

Best Regards,

Thompson Hamilton
Vice-President Professional
vpp@sgps.ca

Dear SGPS Councillors and members,

It has been a busy and productive semester in respect to my portfolio. I will be giving a financial update presentation during this AGM, but I will briefly summarize our financial picture in this report. On the whole, our budgeting has been incredibly successful in that we were able to maintain all functions, services and expenses within our targets while maintaining a responsible and sustainable bottom line. At the current rate, I am very confident that this will continue for the last quarter of the budgetary year over the summer months. I am working with the VP Finance and Services elect to have her in a strong position to take over the finances of this organization.

We ran into a minor issue where some the funding in our bursary program needed to be moved around. Council approved our proposed changes, and as a result our bursaries continue to be distributed. No funding was removed or added to the bursary program, simply shuffled around within. The exact changes could be found in the February Council Meeting minutes.

Working together with Carla Valerio, we have completed an investment report for the funds in our reserve accounts. The report will be released in the coming days, and I will also give a brief presentation on our findings at Council.

I am happy to report the successful major upgrades to our bursary processing system. The system is largely online, and will continue with the transition until it is all electronic. I have spoken to the incoming VP Finance and Services who supports this project and will see that the progress continues.

We are currently wrapping up changes to our internal human resource structures, the largest section of the budget. The plan has been to promote employee retention, offer competitive compensation, and reaffirm core SGPS values.

In my final weeks in office, I intend to propose changes to the Grants Program policy, which would see a change in processing procedure similar to that of the Sports Fund - I plan on bringing this to Council in April. Further, I intend to propose policy changes around the structure of the Finance and Services Committee to hopefully encourage better engagement and be able to offer better training resources.

Sincerely,



Patrick Gajos
VP Finance and Services
vpfs@sgps.ca

Dear Members of the SGPS,

I am pleased to report on the latest project that Queen's has undertaken – the Richardson Stadium Project. We will be constructing a new stadium on West Campus that will replace our ailing stadium, and remove some deferred maintenance from the books. This new stadium will have similar seating capacity to the existing model, but will feature an artificial turf which will increase the slate of activities that can be offered there. Most importantly, the project is fully funded through the Advancement Office, and features an adequate contingency. There are provisions for the future construction of a pavilion as well, and fundraising efforts to this effect will continue for the next several years.

Queen's pension plan continues to be an area of concern, both on the level of our going concern in addition to our solvency deficit. We are using a smoothed basis to calculate the value of our assets, so while positive variations in equities are not immediately realized, this basis allows us to adequately appreciate the nature of the deficits. Frequent switching between market value of assets and operating on a smoothed basis is not advised by pension actuaries. We currently have a going concern deficit of \$175 million, and a solvency deficit of \$285 million. This solvency deficit has decreased from the last filing of \$332 million on August 31, 2011. We have applied to Stage II solvency relief which will allow the deficit to be amortized over 10 years, rather than 5. We may receive a further 3 year exemption, which would then permit the deficit to be amortized over 7 years. The 3 year exemption would allow us to appreciate market gains on the assets during this period. The Board has been informed that current indicators suggest a positive response from the Ontario government. Credit agencies view management of our current liabilities as positive, and credit ratings are sitting around the AA+ mark.

Consultation around the sexual assault policy are ongoing, and extensive. A number of individuals are involved in providing input in this area, and while the policy will be unique to Queen's, it will be keeping within the legal definition of consent and assault. We expect a finalized policy to be presented in the near future.

With regard to previous financial concerns I have raised surrounding program maintenance, and the ability of the university to continue offering students a plethora of course offerings, I am pleased to report that the School of Urban and Regional Planning and the Department of Geography are offering some new degree programs. As some may recall, the School of Urban and Regional Planning ceased being an entity of its own under changes brought about by the new budget model. We have also received funding for the development of approximately 20 new online courses.

Experiential Learning continues to be a focus at Queen's, and was briefly touched on during our last board meeting. You can expect a more detailed report from me after the next meeting of the board. Areas of focus will involve both curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities.

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

Respectfully submitted,

James MacLeod

Graduate Trustee
trustee@sgps.ca



Society of Graduate & Professional Students
Report of the Speaker
Winter GM 2015

Dear SGPS,

Council. Jon Samosh (deputyspeaker@sgps.ca) and I continue to benefit from our synergy in preparing the meeting packages and conducting the council meetings. Jon has been diligent in ensuring new councilors have their nameplates and the quality of his minutes remains superb.

Bylaw and Policy Committee. The committee continues to be productive. Of the ten main motions on the agenda this evening, eight involve bylaw and policy changes. The council composition motion in particular has seen much councilor engagement. Special thanks to Eric Rapos, Jennifer Wigglesworth, Robert Bentley, Jared Houston, Julian Chesterman, Thompson Hamilton, Kevin Wiener and Sean Richards.

Judicial Committee. Since our fall general meeting, I have met with Matthew Vrbanac, the new chief student constable, and the committee has successfully resolved one case.

Respectfully submitted,

Max Ma
speaker@sgps.ca

SGPS Computer Network

- The SGPS SSL Certificate has been renewed.
- The SGPS has a brand new main office printer.
 - The new printer has about a 50% dpi improvement over our previous printer
 - The new printer uses organic inks that are grown just outside of Toronto, Ontario!
 - Our per copy impression price has gone down slightly for black ink and more substantially for colour
- All phones in the SGPS office have been moved and are now functioning properly (these changes are a result of the office renovation).
- We are completing renovations at our office over the winter holiday. Every piece of furniture and technology needs to be removed from our office as we are getting new flooring. As a result, I have had to design alternative plans to house our servers and important workstations while they will not be in the office. I have spent the bulk of my time this month working to find alternative locations for our servers and preparing our network to be moved. Certainly my goal is to maintain as close to 100% uptime of our servers as possible so email is not affected and access to our website and wiki systems is not compromised while the servers are not in their usual location. This proved more time consuming than I had hoped. I am happy, however, to report that all plans are in place and testing is complete. I will be moving everything the week of December 8th.

SGPS Website

- I have rewritten the entire newsletter page on our website. Not a huge deal but it is now much easier to read and much easier to update. <http://www.sgps.ca/events/newsletter.html>
- I have been using 'Siteimprove' to monitor my progress in updating to our site to make sure it is in compliance with AODA standards. I am happy to report our website is 100% in compliance with AODA (years ahead of schedule!).
- The footer of our website has been updated for the following 2 reasons:
 - We no longer accept faxes so I have removed reference to our fax number
 - To comply with AODA, a message has been added "All communications from the SGPS are available in alternate formats upon request."

Communications

- Andria and I have been working on fillable pdf forms for a number of purposes including bursary applications, award nomination and more. It is more difficult than we hoped to get a universally working fillable pdf solution (for mobile devices, computers, different operating systems). It seems at this point that the best way to move forward is to have the forms translated to HTML and use our servers. This is a project that we will tackle over the course of the summer.
- The process has begun for the 2015-2016 version of the SGPS Handbook/Agenda. If you have any suggestions or comments, please send them to me.
- I have started the process of soliciting advertising for the 2015-2016 agenda as well as the orientation guide.
- I am working on a communication and information strategy for SGPS Elections and Referenda. The goal is to have a set of documents that outline key information for the CRO, campaign groups, candidates and the general membership.

Respectfully submitted,
Sean Richards - info@sgps.ca

Dear members of the SGPS,

It is with great pleasure to submit this winter AGM report to you. Here are some exciting updates from our commission:

Equity Commission Restructuring

The Equity Commission is working on a number of initiatives to better represent the SGPS membership and to strengthen the structure of the commission for years to come. Some of these initiatives include:

- Renaming the commission from the “Equity Commission” to the “Equity & Diversity Commission” through bylaw and policy changes at the March Council meeting and the 2015 Winter AGM.
- The hiring of a Visible Minority Issues Researcher and an Accessibility Issues Researcher to investigate and advise the Equity Commission and Council about future changes to the Commission’s structure to improve its representation of the SGPS membership. The Equity Coordinator is supporting this initiative through focusing on researching LGBTQ issues as a part of their portfolio.
- Improving the presence of the commission on campus through an increased visibility at partner events, involvement on committees, and relationship building with campus stakeholders.

Equity Commission 2014-15 Events

Since the turn over of the Equity Commission in November 2014, the Commission has held two events on campus. These include:

- An event in January at the Grad Club to promote the nomination period for the SGPS Executive elections
- An event in March at the Grad Club to promote the visibility of the Equity Commission

In return, the Equity Commission has been present at other events on and off campus. These include:

- The December 6th memorial of the 1989 École Polytechnique Massacre
- Meetings of the SGPS International Student Affairs Committee

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Working Group

Since January, I have been a member of the [Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Working Group](#). This has included attending working group meetings, open meetings, and facilitating focus groups to receive feedback on the proposed sexual assault policy for the Queen’s community. Tied to the issues of the working group, I attended the CFS Consent Culture conference in March with our Visible Minority Issues Researcher, Marsha Rampersaud. Also worthy of note, Mathieu Crupi, our Equity Coordinator, went to an Ontario-wide gender-based violence conference at York University in February.

I want to thank everyone who took the time to come to the open meetings and/or provide their feedback through the distributed survey. A sexual assault policy, drafted by the working group’s policy subcommittee, is to be delivered by the end of April 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

Erica Baker
Equity Commissioner
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On behalf of:

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Marsha Rampersaud
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