

I'm delighted to be bringing my first report as SGPS President to you. The past month since the election has seen me transition into my new position with the help of the SGPS staff, outgoing and incoming exec, and particularly, our recently former President Matthew Scribner.

First and foremost, I want to thank Matthew on behalf of the SGPS for his year of service to the SGPS as President. Matt was a great representative and an exceptionally hard working President. His accomplishments were underscored this week when he played a key role in encouraging Senate to pass Senator Bridge's motion to convene a time to completion working group. It was a good last day in office, to be sure.

My first report will first speak to what I've been working on during my transition, and then give some insight into my plans for the year.

Time to Completion

The VP Graduate's report will deal with this in more detail, but the time to completion issue is one that dominated my early days of transition and I intend to stay close to the issue in the coming months.

Within a couple days of being acclaimed I attempted to reinvigorate efforts to get members of our executive, the Graduate Student Senator, and some concerned students who had been working with us at the table with the School of Graduate Studies to see where we could next take the issue. This was a success though, in general, we felt the meetings, while cordial and helpful for exchanging information, did not lead to any significant shift in course on the policy.

This is why we felt that the Senate motion is an important step in the right direction. The hope is that this will motivate GSEC to, via the proposed working, look at the issue more holistically and consider new policies and changes to the existing policy should they be deemed necessary by this closer investigation.

City Council Electoral Redistricting Issue

The other major issue I have been engaged with is the 7-6 decision by Kingston City Council to ignore the preferred recommendation of their Electoral Boundary Review, in lieu of a secondary option. The preferred option would have included students in the tabulation of municipal electoral boundaries for the first time, while the secondary option does not.

The SGPS' position is that students are citizens of Kingston — as demonstrated by our legally protected ability to vote — and that excluding us from other elements of equal citizenship constitutes discrimination. I have raised these issues at City Council and in the Whig Standard, but to no avail. Thus, the SGPS along with the AMS and community partners will be pursuing other options including an appeal to the Ontario Board of Municipalities or the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Priorities for the Year

I think it is essential that as President I am very clear with both Council and the membership at large about my goals and intentions for the year. This report will serve as a first pass at discussing what I hope to accomplish as President. Over the summer, I will hope to accomplish many of these things. However, I also plan to come to the August Council meeting with a detailed breakdown of my priorities, how I intend to achieve them, and a timeline for their completion. This is both to highlight my activities to council and the membership at large, but also to ensure that I am accountable for my own aspirations to you, our representative body.

In no particular ideas, these are some of my key priorities for the year. As always, I welcome insight, feedback, and criticism of my goals, and welcome any ideas that you feel I've missed.

- A review of internal SGPS operations including:
 - A review of our human resources practices and contracts.
 - A review of the staff and executive functions to ensure the best balance between our roles as institutions, and the particular skills of the people currently occupying them.
 - The creation of a detailed and centralized office and human resources procedure manual.
- A review of SGPS membership outreach and communications strategies.
 - Aim to foster more effective promotion of SGPS services, activities, and advocacy.

- Ensure that graduate and professional students of all corners of the university are consulted and included in our activities to the best possible ability.
- A review of our election bylaws and practices in order to make our elections more competitive and fair and to increase interest and turnout.
- A review of Council procedures.
 - To make council an engaging place to discuss shared issues and opportunities.
 - To recruit the best possible people to challenge the Executive and engage actively in the work of the SGPS.
 - To how whether council structure can be changed to better facilitate substantive debate and collaboration.
 - Revitalize and review our internal committee system.
- Work with departments to create and promote best practices around departmental student societies to strengthen their ability to represent their interests internally, at the SGPS, and elsewhere.
- Create a dissertation, master's thesis, and major research project printing and mailing service within the SGPS.
- Work with the SGS, departments, and our student advisors to develop a strategy to improve student/supervisor relationships and conduct.
- Work with the SGS, hopefully through the working group structure endorsed by Senate, to find the correct balance on a time to completion policy.
- Pursue options with the AMS and other partners to ensure the democratic rights of students in our city.
- Perhaps most importantly, be a responsive, responsible, and accountable representative for graduate and professional student interests.

I can't wait to get going on these priorities (and in some cases already have). I encourage you all to follow me on Twitter @sgpspresident, where I will keep all my followers up to date on my activities and views. I will also be regularly updating my President blog with more detailed issues and opinions. You can find that at: <http://iainreevesgps.wordpress.com>. See you in August!

Respectfully submitted,

Iain Reeve

President
 president@sgps.ca

Dear SGPS Council Members and Members-At-Large,

Student Advisor Program

The Student Advisors will hold **summer office hours** for members on **Tuesdays from 1pm-3pm** and **Thursdays from 10am-12pm**. If you would like to meet with an Advisor, please contact them at advisors@sgps.ca.

The Advisor Program is currently undergoing its annual evaluation, which will lead us into the re-hiring and hiring processes. **The Program seeks to hire at least one Advisor for the next academic year**, so keep your eyes on the SGPS website for the job posting and/or communicate this information with colleagues who may fit the role. Please e-mail me at vpg@sgps.ca if you have any questions.

Time-to-Completion

The Extension of Time Limits motion, the second of two time-to-completion motions, was voted on at GSEC (the Graduate Studies Executive Council) on April 18, and **passed**. Past-Graduate Student Senator, Terry Bridges and I abstained from voting on this motion. Students who require more time to complete, beyond the stipulated 2 or 4 years, can potentially access 2 extensions, the first at the department-level, and the second at the SGS-level. The original extension motion received several changes to make it more digestible; departments can decide whether they will grant an automatic extension to all students or whether students will individually apply for an extension from the department at the end of year 4. Terry and I pointed out that this modification acknowledges that some programs are designed and structured to take five years and that this option may unfairly differentiate between students based on department-based decisions.

Terry submitted a motion to Senate last month that passed, asking GSEC to strike a task force to further investigate time-to-completion and suspend the policies until the task force completes its objectives and makes its recommendations. The task force is a recommendation that came out of the T2C Report that Terry and I compiled. **A draft set of Terms of Reference will be brought to GSEC this month** (May 9) and we are hopeful that GSEC will respond positively and seriously to these and Senate's decision.

For more information on this issue or if you are interested in getting involved, please contact me at vpg@sgps.ca. You can find additional information (i.e. media coverage, letters of support from faculty members and alumni, etc.) on the SGPS website.

T4/T4A INFORMATION

Your taxes. Your choice.

I met with the University's tax consultants, from Bergen and Associates, **last month** to ask whether Principal Investigators have the right to choose a student's tax status for them. Doug Bergen told me that he had answers, but that they would need to be vetted first by the University before he could respond. I am still waiting for his response. I have asked Doug to make a presentation at Council in the future.

For individuals and groups looking to reclassify under a T4 status, you can do so by filling out the Canada Revenue Agency's (CRA) CPT1 form; please contact me at vpg@sgps.ca for more information.

Transition

I attended transition weekend at RKY Camp on April 20; there were a number of good questions raised and ideas formulated, and of course, some excellent bonds build with new, past and continuing Executive members, staff and their families.

Respectfully,

Becky Pero

VP Graduate
vpg@sgps.ca

Dear Councilors,

Given that my term is only a few days in I don't have much to report.

Current initiatives

I am currently investigating the issue of intellectual freedom at Queen's. In particular I am interested in how trends in funding allocation at the university, provincial and federal level, and recent changes to provincial and federal legislation impact the quality and kinds of research that happens at Queen's. I'm also interested in discovering what, if any, kind of research gets prioritized and what, if any, barriers exist to both conducting research and to publishing the findings. This initiative is only in the very early stages and I am hoping to strike an ad-hoc committee this month.

Looking Forward

I will be attending my first meeting of the Canadian Federation of Students at the end of the month and I am looking forward to getting up to date with some of the broader initiatives coming out of the student movement, and learning how they can help Queen's graduate and professional students.

I hope to spend most of the summer really getting to know the membership. I'd like to tour as many departments as possible and find out what is happening with grad students across campus. I'd love to know what is working well and what kinds of issues are important to the graduate and professional students at Queen's, so that I can start the fall focused on the things that really matter to the membership. I am also hoping this initiative will bring the campus closer together and encourage a greater participation within the SGPS.

That's really all I can say for now.

Thanks,

Meagan Crane

VP Campaigns & Community Affairs
vpcca@sgps.ca

Dear Council,

I'll begin by extending a warm welcome to Team SGPS Executive 2013-14 – we've had but a short month of transition time together, but I can already say with confidence that we will have a very productive year together.

As advertised in my last Council report, the SGPS and QUFA co-hosted a town hall on austerity in post-secondary education on April 11th. Based on feedback received by attendees, the event was, by all means, a success. The panel was riveting from beginning to end, the auditorium was packed, and the event provided a great opportunity for faculty, undergraduate and graduate students to share commonalities. To top it all, CFRC was with us to record and air the proceedings.

Otherwise, we had a busy month at the office with transition. The past weeks have also been fairly human resources-heavy on my end. Along with Stephanie Simpson from the Human Rights Office, I am currently co-supervising the Research Assistant for the 'Understanding Each Other' project on accent discrimination. Anita will be working with us to compile a literature review, resubmit the project's ethics application, and create an online survey tool. Pending GREB approval, the second half of the project to be completed later this summer will entail conducting focus groups and analyzing and reporting research results.

Furthermore, I helped to create a personnel appraisal process and with Sean, conducted six personnel evaluations for Coordinators and Commissioners wishing to have their contracts extended to the new hiring period (new because of the change to Bylaws & Policies implemented earlier this academic year) in the Fall. Our congratulations go to Cassandra Kuyvenhoven, Ciara Racken-Broche, Margaux MacDonald, Robin Westland, Tian Lu, and Kris Singh for their hard work over the last year, and for their contract extension.

We are sad to lose our International Students' Affairs Commissioner, our Sustainability Coordinator, and our Athletics Coordinator. Holly, Jack, and Chris are moving on to new pursuits – we wish them the very best. Interviews for the position of Sustainability Coordinator begin this week, and for International Students' Affairs Commissioner next week. The deadline to apply for Athletics Coordinator is May 19th (see details here: <http://www.sgps.ca/jobs/jobs.html>).

I am also coordinating rehiring for the positions of StudentSaver and Outreach Coordinator through the Work-Study program. Contracts for both positions will run through the spring/summer term. Hiring is set to begin mid-May. If you are eligible for Work/Study compensation, please consult the following website for more information: <http://careers.queensu.ca/students/services/employmentprograms/workstudy.html>

Finally, I am helping our VP Graduate, Becky, to coordinate hiring and rehiring for the Student Advisor program. Stay tuned for the posting of the position on our website near the end of this month.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne-Marie Grondin

Executive Assistant
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Dear Council,

The 2012-2013 Council term is coming to a close. I would like to take a moment to remind everyone that there are no meetings in June or July, and that we will be back into the swing of things in the 2013-2014 term with our first meeting in August. I will be setting the new Council schedule shortly, so please get in touch with me if you have any concerns.

Although the first meeting of the term is in August, it has been my experience that we do have a number of new Councillors joining us in September. As such, I am currently planning on undertaking a partial Council orientation in August (if required), and will be giving a full run-through come September, saving us from going through the same presentation twice.

In terms of upcoming business, there are a few areas that could benefit from some simplification and clarification in the Bylaws and Policies – a task I would like to undertake over the next two months with assistance from the Bylaw and Policy Revisions Standing Committee. The remainder of my time this month has been dedicated to transitioning into the Trustee role. My official term does not start until September, however I hold Observer status in the interim and will be attending the meeting on the 10th and 11th of this month.

Finally, I will be hiring a new Deputy Speaker over towards the end of the summer, so if you have any friends who may be interested in becoming involved with Council please encourage their application. A call will be announced via the newsletter and on the website.

Respectfully submitted,

James MacLeod

Speaker
speaker@spgs.ca

There have been some changes to the Social Team in the past month, including the loss of Chris Harris, our Athletics Coordinator who has decided to focus on being the most fantastic soccer-playing pharmacologist around; he will be greatly missed on the Social Team. He had a lot of fantastic ideas about Summer athletics events that we are going to try and sort out in the coming month once a new Athletics Coordinator is hired (the posting is until May 19th, 2013).

For May, we were planning on doing an afternoon, family-friendly BBQ (which was held with great success on Sunday, May 5th at the Grad Club) and a Blue Jays baseball game. The BBQ was attended by over 40 adults and little ones.

For the baseball game, the Planning Coordinator was responsible for getting a quote from Coach Canada for a roundtrip from Kingston to Toronto on Sunday May, 26th. However, the bus was quite expensive (over \$2000) with a capacity of 45 people. Margaux then got a quote from Stover's Bus Lines that was significantly cheaper (~\$700) with a similar capacity.

The Logistics Coordinator was responsible for contacting the Blue Jays ticket manager to find the best group rate. We were given several seating options, the most reasonable being the seats in the 500s or "nosebleeds" (~\$10-\$20 per ticket). Ciara was also in touch about food/drink specials, although the deals were not spectacular.

However, after a cost analysis, we decided that it would not be economically feasible to take the trip to Toronto. We wanted to give our constituents the lowest rate possible, but that wouldn't be possible unless we could guarantee a full bus (and after having cancelled the last sports-watching trip to Toronto because of lack of interest, we felt that we couldn't guarantee a full bus). Therefore, we are going to replace the event with a hockey playoffs event at Fanatics. However, we're still looking at dates and locations to ensure a sizeable crowd.

We're already looking into a possible Canada's Wonderland trip in June. However, we're similarly experiencing difficulty finding a good price for our membership. The bus quotes (from both Stover and Coach Canada) are similar to those we received for the Blue Jays game. We will continue to look into whether or not this is economically feasible.

Best,

Cassandra Kuyvenhoven

Social Commissioner
social@sgps.ca

SGPS Computer Network

- More security patches were applied to our servers.
- New Executive members have started their terms and have decided to occupy some of our upstairs offices (not used by Exec in the past). As a result, I needed to extend our network in order to give proper access. This involved the activation of a network port (done via Queen's IT) and installation and coordination of new hardware. This work is very near completion. This is not the first network extension I have done so I do not expect any issues whatsoever.
- The changeover of accounts has occurred for the new members of the Executive. The new members now have full access to necessary computer services (e-mail, calendar, wiki, etc).
- I continue to investigate the possibility of integrating the SGPS calendar service with the Queen's Exchange calendar so University staff have an easier time of seeing availability of SGPS Exec and Staff.
- I am working on some updates to our servers that will allow me to create some new functionality on the site which is aimed at streamlining office processes during September. This work continues to come along nicely.

SGPS Website

- I have been going over the website logs to determine the most used portions of the SGPS website. I am working on a sub-section of the website for mobile devices that cover the most used sections of the website. The idea is to make the viewing experience on mobile devices as good as possible. Work will continue on this over the next couple of months.
- I have added a new item to the 'Follow Us' section of our homepage. The new item is a link to the new President's blog. I encourage you to check it out!
- I added a new page on our site. The new page is a collection of items pertaining to time to completion. <http://www.sgps.ca/events/time-to-completion.html>
- I added a new page on our site. The new page is a collection of items pertaining the City of Kingston's redistricting motion. <http://www.sgps.ca/events/electoral-realignment.html>
- I continue to rework the services section of our website in an effort to streamline the information and to make room for a new section that will house student discount information. Most of the changes have been implemented offline. Once Anne-Marie finalizes the contracts with the new discount locations, the updates will be pushed to the live website.

Communications

- Work has been completed on the 2013-2014 SGPS Handbook/Agenda/Dayplanner.
- The Council motions section of our website is mostly complete. Please check out the page and send me any feedback. The page will go live soon. <http://www.sgps.ca/council/motions.html>
- I am working on a significant formatting update to our Bylaw and Policy document. I am transferring the source from one format to another. This will ease updates in the future and will also make the presentation of the document more friendly to end users.

Respectfully submitted,
Sean Richards - info@sgps.ca

Hello Everyone,

I hope you are all enjoying the start of the summer season!

On the Equity Commissioner end, April was a relatively slow month. With the term ending, school was the dominant focus!

Tian and I met to discuss our plans for the summer this month and we decided to focus on a couple of key issues. First of all, we want to prepare for the next year of sitting on the Senate for Educational Equity Commission. With the Time to Completion issues as well as concerns over the allotment process for graduate student bursaries, we have lots to discuss! Personally I would like to bring to SEEC a suggestion to do away with the '10 hours of working a week allowed' stipulation for graduate students. I think that this limit is unreasonable and risks forcing graduate students who have financial responsibilities such as children or homes (etc.) to withdraw from their programs in order to support themselves and their families.

The equity commission will also be looking to do outreach over the summer with groups on campus that represent one of the five designated groups and who the SGPS currently has little interaction with. For example, an improved relationship of helping and supporting the 4-Directions center.

I will also be working with the student advisors and Becky Pero on preparing a list of recommendations or some sort of document that proposes better safety nets be put in place for graduate students who are having difficult times with their supervisors. Stay tuned for that one! Lots more to come.

That's about it for April. It was mostly just about preparing for the summer ahead! In particular, keep your eyes out for the call for people to walk with the SGPS in the Gay Pride Parade this summer!

Take care,

Robin Westland

Equity Commissioner
equity@sgps.ca

Dear SGPS Council Members,

Following is a summary of what I have done during the month of April.

- Update for QGB (Queen's General Bursary)

I have attended the SEEC meeting, the last SEEC meeting in the academic year. This time, they invited the University Registrar, John Metcalf, to make a presentation regarding the QGB history. Basically, what he said was: in 2006, Ontario Government allows Queen's University to increase the tuition amount conditioned on opening the students' excess program. This program aimed to know how much would OSAP cover and what would be the excess cost needed by students. QGB is part of this program, thus, QGB has to be tied with the OSAP. However, for international students, the funding resource is different. So they don't need to fall into this category.

For students who have culture issues, as long as they are permanent residents or Canadian citizens, they have to have OSAP to be considered for the bursary. However, one approach they can do would be: apply for OSAP, get the money and save the money, then return the money before the interest starts. This way, they will be considered for QGB while not using any loans. However, I think this is not a permanent solution and more work should be done to find a permanent solution such as finding other funding resources, advocating for specific graduate bursary. All those info above have been forwarded to the students who complained the assessment of QGB.

- Time to Completion Meeting

I have attended the Time-to-Completion meeting this month. Through the discussion, I understood that this police change can be considered as a marginalization for women and international grad students. The news article written by Meaghan Frauts gave a clear explanation why women students would be affected the most by the police change. Also, someone in the meeting pointed that international students are not eligible for most of the internal scholarships. Thus, they have to rely on part-time jobs to support themselves. This police change may put them into a financial difficulty. Therefore, this issue should be presented in SEEC and more attention should be gathered. As the SEEC will be off in the summer time, we have come to an agreement of bringing this issue to SEEC in September.

I also met Alex, the Co-Chief Steward in PSAC 901, and he directed the Equity Officer in PSAC 901 to help us. I have responded them that we will work together when September comes and bring this issue to all the institutional levels.

- Summer Plan for the Equity Team

I have met Robin to discuss our summer plan. Robin has proposed some great initiatives and projects for the summer, and we had a clear concept for the distribution of work.

1. Outreach for other designated groups on campus, such as aboriginal people, visible-minorities. Robin will be responsible for communicating with the aboriginal organizations (Four Direction Aboriginal Centre, Native Association). I will be mainly making connection with the visible-minority groups (Black community, Islamic community...).
2. Gay Pride Parade. This event will be held around June and more organization will be made in May to make this event successful. I also invited the Equity Officer in PSAC 901 to be part of it.

- Executive Meeting

I, as a proxy, attended the Executive Meeting on April 24th to report the progress made by the Equity Team. Basically, I went over with the summer plans Robin proposed earlier. Then the equity team also put up a proposal to hire a Disability Coordinator. This new position intends to reduce the burden of the Equity Commissioner, as 90% of her emails were from Disability-related organizations on campus. A responsible and experienced individual should be hired.

- Personnel Review Meeting

I have met with Anne-Marie and Sean to complete my personnel review. I have reported what I have done in the past 5 months and I made 3 suggestions for the SGPS. I would like to appreciate Robin for her supervision and training, which indeed helped me a lot. I have received some valuable feedback/advice from Anne-Marie regarding applying strategy and tactic in my work. I will have a follow-up meeting with her in May to further discuss the strategy for SEEC and expanding equity standing committee.

- Chaplain Interview

I received a lot emails from the selection committee. Unfortunately, most of their meetings conflict with my schedule. The actual interview will be on May 24th and May 27th. So far I have studied the hiring requirement from the documents they sent to me. I will attend the interview on May 24th. However, I have a dental surgery scheduled on May 27th, and I will find a proxy for that.

Feel free to contact me if you have any comments/thoughts/opinions/feedback. Thank you very much.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tian Lu

Equity Coordinator
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