

Aims of the Committee

The Equity Committee has been meeting monthly in order to consolidate information on the activities, initiatives as well as University policies relating to Equity currently taking place. In an effort to increase awareness of the work being done by members of the Equity team as well as communicate and collaborate on those issues, the Equity Committee has prepared a mandate as well as an operating model for the 2010/2011 term to propose to Council.

Creation of the Mandate

The mandate was created by the Daniel Moore (VP Graduate), Meg Southee (Queer Grad Students and Allies club), Carolyn You (Accessibility Representative), Jillian Burford-Grinnel (Mature Student Rep), Sophia Virani (Equity Commissioner), Usman Mushtaq (Student Advisor), Anne-Marie Grondin (VPCCA) and Lara Szabo Greisman (Equity Coordinator). Its purpose is to provide a space to discuss and respond to the equity concerns of SGPS members, to research and anticipate university policies and activities in order to address them proactively from equity perspectives as well as to voice and advocate for equity as it relates to graduate and professional students.

Members of the Committee

The monthly meetings of the Committee will be organized by the Equity Commissioner and Coordinator who will facilitate and contribute to the meetings. In total, nine representatives from different Equity related groups on campus will attend the monthly meetings and will host an open forum bimonthly, so as to gain insight from the larger student body about human rights and equity concerns. The nine regular members will be representatives from the Queer Students and Allies club, the Queen's Coalition against Racial and Ethnic Discrimination, the Queen's Native Students Association, the International Student Coordinator, The Equity Commissioner, the Equity Coordinator, a mature student representative, a representative from the Student Advisors and an Accessibility representative.

Communication Mechanisms

Minutes will be taken at meetings and the Equity Commissioner will include the activities of the Equity Committee in their reports to Council. Issues brought up with the Equity Committee may be brought to Council via the Equity Commissioner who will collaborate with the Equity Coordinator and the VP of Campaigns and Community Affairs.

Open Forums

The open forums will be organized by the Equity Commissioner and Coordinator every two months. The goal of the forums is to bring members of the community into the discussion relating to Equity issues on campus. All grad and professional students are welcome to contribute to these forums.

Thank you for considering the submission of this motion,

Respectfully submitted,

Lara Szabo Greisman
Outgoing Equity Coordinator

March 31, 2010



Dr. Chad Gaffield, President
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
350 Albert Street
P.O. Box 1610
Ottawa, ON K1P 6G4

Dear Dr. Gaffield,

Queen's University is very pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the draft program architecture as described in the document titled *Briefing on SSHRC's Renewed Program Architecture*. The briefing document was widely distributed throughout the Queen's community along with a request for comments; this letter summarizes some of the core common issues raised in the responses received together with the consequent recommendations.

We appreciate the substantial time and effort SSHRC has invested in developing a new program architecture with enhanced "flexibility" and the potential to assist social sciences and humanities researchers to make even greater contributions to Canadian society. In this light, it is especially important to ensure that the direction set now by SSHRC is one that offers the greatest prospective benefits for Canadian researchers and citizens.

Program Flexibility

The draft architecture makes great progress towards a more streamlined funding architecture. Yet, while the description of the programs is definitely simplified and offers new flexibility, clear distinctions in funding priorities have been lost and much needed detail is missing. There are at least two unintended results: researchers and research administrators may spend valuable time determining "the boundaries," and SSHRC may be criticized for a perceived lack of transparency with regard to the adjudication processes.

Recommendation: *Improved flexibility should be accompanied by clear and detailed program descriptions and guidelines for adjudication metrics.*

Defined Review Committees

SSHRC's comment that "applications may be adjudicated by discipline-based, multidisciplinary or thematic committees, based on the nature of the application" has raised substantial concern. The anxiety that review process will not be established prior to submission of proposals, or that it may be changed after application submission is only marginally offset by "To the extent possible, SSHRC will publish committee membership in advance, to assist applicants in selecting an appropriate committee," and negated entirely by "Depending on volume and range of applications received, these committees may either be collapsed to create fewer, multidisciplinary committees of cognate disciplines, or split into separate, more narrowly defined committees grouping like disciplines and approaches." We recommend that the review processes should be clearly defined, including the structure of the review committee, which ***normally should not be changed*** from the time of advertisement of the funding opportunity to the announcement of results.

Recommendation: *The review processes should be clearly defined, including the structure of the review committee, which normally should not be changed from the time of advertisement of the funding opportunity until the announcement of results.*

Proposal Scoring

SSHRC proposes that applications receiving a score of less than 3.0 be deemed “Unacceptable”. We recommend that a different descriptor, such as “Modest” or “Fair” or “not competitive” be applied to proposals below 3.0, and note that the difference between the rating categories “Good” and “Unacceptable” is substantive in qualitative terms.

Research Development Grants and Research Grants

Research Development Grants appear to be the primary funding option for new scholars, even though new scholars can also apply to Research Grants competition. Further clarification of the distinctions between Research Grants and Research Development Grants, particularly as they pertain to new scholars, would be helpful in providing guidance for applicants on the selection of the most appropriate program for their proposed project.

Weighting of Criteria for Adjudication

SSHRC proposes new weighting of criteria for the adjudication for Research Development Grants/Research Grants for new and established scholars as follows:

- Challenge 50/40
- Feasibility 40/40
- Capability 10/20

The low emphasis on “capability” could easily result in a situation where an individual who consistently publishes high-quality research is compared to one with a limited track record. Surely the quality of the proposed research and the researcher's ability to complete and publish the work should be more highly valued than the appropriateness of budget. For new researchers entering the Research Development Program, the reduced weighting is more appropriate.

The proposed structure’s stronger emphasis upon “challenge” risks introducing greater subjectivity on the part of the reviewers. It is suggested that a greater weight be placed on mapping the theory onto research questions (and an appropriate research design), but it is very difficult to discern how these factors fit into the new proposed categorizations (i.e., is it Challenge or Feasibility?). *Additional clarification of these two new proposed categories is required.*

The creation of separate funding envelopes for new and established scholars in the Research Development program is appropriate as it will assist new scholars in advancing their research careers. However, we have concern regarding the review committee structure and adjudication process for these grants because applicants are offered only five committees with very broad mandates. The likelihood of consideration by a reviewer within the discipline is extremely slim; this situation is further compounded by the lack of external assessors. *It is recommended that external letters of assessment be retained and that the committees reviewing Research Grants also review Research Development grants (particularly for new scholars) due to their knowledge of the area and ability to assess new scholars.*

We note that the disciplines of Aboriginal, Northern Studies, New Media, Women’s Studies, and Cultural Studies have been inadvertently omitted from the Research Development Program review committee composition.

Recommendations: *Because it is easier for evaluation committees to more accurately assess research track records than evaluate the merits of new proposals, SSHRC should retain the current system for established scholars. New scholars should be assessed separately from the established cadre, using a system that emphasizes the quality of the proposal and that draws upon a separate funding pool in the Research Grants category.*

Priority Themes

The balance between investigator-inspired research and strategic/partnered research priorities is difficult to discern in the new program architecture. For example, in the proposed Research Grants program, it appears that applications in the “open competition” will be competing in the same pool as applications that fit within a priority theme, which inherently should be given special recognition. It may be advisable to retain two separate programs, or create a separate committee within the Research Grants program to adjudicate priority theme applications.

The research community should be consulted (through transparent processes) to define future research priority theme areas, which should be sufficiently broad in nature.

Program Deadline

We urge SSHRC to consider changing the Research Grants competition deadline from September 15 (CIHR Operating Grant deadline) to October 15. Having the same deadline for two major tri-council operating grants is particularly challenging (if not impossible) for smaller universities to manage.

Partnership and Partnership Development Grants

The recognition of the importance of partnerships for knowledge co-creation is welcomed. However, the requirement of a minimum cash and/or in-kind contribution of 50% of the total budget submitted is seriously limiting for the following reasons:

- Non-government organizations and foundations are but only two groups that seldom have the required level of resources to contribute cash and/or in-kind.
- Research in several disciplines is seldom, if ever, a priority for the private sector and, depending on the discipline, there is hesitancy to fund politically sensitive research.
- There is substantial concern that cash contributions will be favoured over in-kind, which will bias the granting of funds to certain disciplines. *It is recommended that SSHRC clearly state that cash contributions will not be seen as a greater commitment, thus, favoured over projects with only in-kind contributions.*

We appreciate the program flexibility that SSHRC is promoting in the Partnership Development Grants. However, the criteria for assessing the excellence of these varied program structures are substantially different and adjudication committees will be challenged to equitably assess the merits of, for example, a research chair proposal and a network proposal. Further, identifying the “genuineness” of any particular partnership will be difficult. It may be better to assess applications in smaller groups with some comparable criteria.

Recommendations: *To ensure successful transition and implementation, we think it is in the best interest of SSHRC and the research community to allow for a longer period of consultation and program development. Specifically, we suggest that SSHRC provide a second consultation period with the research community prior to presenting the plan to Governing Council for approval.*

SSHRC Institutional Grant (SIG)

The briefing document states that Institutional Grants will be subject to further discussion, consultation, and analysis over the coming year. We will take this opportunity to provide the following input on the value of this program for SSHRC's consideration:

- The SIG enables universities to provide seed funding (i.e., less than \$7,000) to assist scholars in achieving their research goals and is particularly welcomed due to the increased national competition for SSHRC research funds.
- New scholars are able to conduct preliminary research that is essential to enable an early start in seeking external funding from major granting agencies.
- The availability of the SIG funds has enabled social sciences and humanities researchers at Queen's University to travel nationally and internationally to perform research required for their projects.

The University is pleased to work with SSHRC to ensure that the SIG funding continues to advance knowledge and build understanding about individuals, groups and societies.

We look forward to working with SSHRC in the upcoming year to continue refinement of the new program architecture. We would be more than pleased to discuss our comments with you should you require additional clarification.

Yours sincerely,

R. Kerry Rowe
Vice-Principal (Research)

**SSHRC Program Architecture Renewal
Response to March 2010 Briefing Document**

**Queen's University
Faculty of Arts and Science**

To solicit Faculty-wide input on SSHRC's proposed new programs, Heads of the 23 Departments with SSHRC-supported faculty were asked to circulate the document and submit either individual or group feedback. In addition, 14 established SSHRC researchers were individually invited to submit their views. Although overall response rate was low (4 departments, plus 5 individuals responded), the responses provided a range of valuable comment and responders were in good agreement about many points. Responders also indicated they appreciated being asked for feedback and hoped this input will help improve the development of SSHRC's new grant structure.

Responses are grouped under 3 main headings: Overall Strengths, General Concerns, and Specific Suggestions.

1. Overall Strengths

- The "palette" of new and revised grants maintains support for basic research but significantly broadens other opportunities
- New initiatives such as Research Development Grants, Outreach & Tools, partnerships for knowledge co-creation, and enhanced opportunities for international collaboration are seen as especially useful and welcome
- The new Program Architecture provides increased flexibility for diverse research needs at different stages of career, and should attract more applicants
- The move to extend grant durations to 3-5 years is very welcome. It makes SSHRC more comparable with other agencies, potentially recognizes the time required to conduct research and saves researchers from having to write grants every 2-3 years

2. General Concerns

- The Proposal provides no details about proposed allocation of resources to the different grant programs and streams. How do the proposed changes map onto current levels of program support? Such information is essential to evaluate the "mix" of emphasis in the new architecture. Assuming there is no major increase to SSHRC's overall budget, the proposed changes inevitably mean funds will be re-allocated away from mainly curiosity-based research involving 1 or 2 scholars, in favour of larger, collaborative projects focusing on work with perceived social relevance
- If there is increased competition from more applicants for the current level of resources, this could differentially disadvantage Humanities researchers; smaller or fewer grants would reduce quality and thus impact of research; may disadvantage junior researchers, compared to current model
- The new architecture does not clearly acknowledge the current prevalence of single-scholar research funded by SSHRC. The promotion of collaborative

research suggests SSHRC may be moving away from valuing basic research, whereas this kind of activity should be seen as also legitimate and worthy of support. It is important to emphasize that basic research is also essential for the development of applied research, and to ensure such applications are implemented effectively and in an ethical manner

- There are relatively few details provided regarding the funding of collaborative research; new adjudication processes will need to recognize that pools of collaborators within Canada may be quite small, and thus successful collaborations will often be international in scope. The new program will require that SSHRC funds flow to non-Canadians, and adjudication processes will need to be developed to handle this
- The emphasis on matching fund requirements for Partnership and Development grants has the potential to significantly bias research activities towards areas like applied science and business-related inquiries. Again, this can disadvantage research that is fundamentally curiosity-driven. The latter research is more difficult to “sell” to potential partners as its potential impact or application may be more difficult to predict at the outset of a study. SSHRC will need to develop selection criteria to ensure that partnered research does not result in skewing the selection of projects towards those that favour more wealthy and privileged segments of society. SSHRC needs to provide a clearer picture about whether grants with private sector support are going to be given priority and what proportion of the budget will be allocated to each grant type
- The new architecture says little about the urgent need for better integration of SSHRC policies and programs with those of the other Tri-Councils (NSERC, CIHR). Most pressing societal problems will need multidisciplinary approaches if they are to be solved. Recent changes in areas of SSHRC emphasis (eg passing research on special populations over to CIHR) suggest there is a need for fuller discussion and strategic planning among the Tri-Councils to ensure Canadian researchers are adequately supported to take on important societal problems
- The lack of proposed Career Awards (early, mid, senior) or replacements for the previous RTS program (salary release time) should be re-considered. The pressure to move to larger, more collaborative style grants in the absence of provision for teaching release means Canadian researchers will be time-disadvantaged relative to international peers
- Changed (earlier) submission dates for Insight grant applications may be challenging for researchers who conduct their work off campus over the summer as they will have limited time to prepare grants and their lectures.

3. Specific Concerns

Priority Areas for the upcoming funding cycle

- While recognizing these areas include a mix of both previously identified strategic themes and more recent federal initiatives, SSHRC is urged to re-visit these priority areas by involving the stakeholders, with a goal of refining and

perhaps broadening the mix. A number of these priorities have been in place for a substantial period of time and need to be refreshed

Grants and Evaluation

- Introduction (pg 2, section2) "...it is assumed that the objectives of the other two programs will be included in all applications, where appropriate." -This wording needs clarification. For example, it seems clear that Insight grants will include training of HQP and some attempt at knowledge translation, but are the Talent grants supposed to have major knowledge translation components, and are the Connection grants supposed to have training and clear research components?
- Research Grants: (pp20-21) applicants, not SSHRC, are best placed to decide to which committee an application should be submitted; (pg 21) Committee C is a "grab-bag" of disciplines where there may not necessarily be sufficient cross-disciplinary expertise to evaluate others' disciplines; (pg 19) Research Grant applications may be assessed by experts from other sectors, that is, people outside the research community. What does this mean exactly? Why would individuals who are not researchers be allowed to evaluate research grants? These reviewers may not have the required expertise to evaluate the Insight grants
- Research Development Grants: (pg 27) given the interest in interdisciplinarity, the committee categories seem somewhat arbitrary and may raise challenges for the adjudication process; (pg 24) the distinction between new and established scholars needs to be clarified, e.g. just how junior the junior investigators need to be to receive these grants, and how far away from ones previous line of research one needs to go to apply for one of these as a more established researcher. It would be helpful to know what general proportions of funding will be given to each of these two different types of grant; (pg 26) It appears that there will be no external assessors (other than from other sectors) for research development grants. Why not? Given that the committees are so multi-disciplinary in these grants, would it not be especially important to have external referees?
- Weighting: Input on the merits of the proposed weighting schema were mixed. The distinctions between "Challenge" and "Feasibility" (pg 22) are not sufficiently clear, and methodological considerations overlap both categories. All respondents indicated that SSHRC's former weighting of 60% on track record was too high, leaving too little scoring weight for the project proposal, and probably disadvantaging researchers with career interruptions. The proposed re- working of the 20% for the evaluation of the research record was seen as a major shift from previous practice and a potential problem for a number of reasons, including: 1) past behaviour should be the most accurate predictor of future success, 2) accountability for past funding would be reduced, 3) as the weighting for past record decreases, one might expect increasing randomness in the way grants are distributed, since the evaluation of past record should be more accurate than proposal evaluation. SSHRC has the data to test the assertion that subsequent research accomplishment is more accurately predicted by past record score than by new proposal score. One could also pilot some of these new criteria in a few areas and evaluate their utility to determine whether they are a significant improvement over the current system. Overall, any changes to the evaluation process need to be thought through to address potential differences between applicant pools and types of grants.

There was strong opposition to the proposal that new and existing applicants should be evaluated by separate committees. If new scholars were evaluated by only 5 committees, each with a broad mandate, many new applicants would be reviewed by those with less specialized knowledge. The practice of having each current committee evaluate both new and existing applicants (in separate groups, with separate funding envelopes) seems superior.

Training

- Graduate training is an appropriate criterion in grant adjudication and committees need to recognize that skills acquisition (eg languages) should be supported by SSHRC
- SSHRC should evaluate the relative importance of CGS-MA awards in contributing to scholarly training, and consider whether this funding would have more meaningful impact if allocated among doctoral students or faculty with demonstrated research productivity
- SSHRC should evaluate the merit of awarding large (\$50,000) scholarships to small numbers of graduate students.

*Prepared by Dr. Laurene Ratcliffe, Associate Dean (Research)
Faculty of Arts & Science*

TA Consultative Committee Questionnaire

Please return completed Questionnaires to the VP Graduate, Daniel, at the SGPS office (lower JDUC – room 021).

A Teaching Assistant Agreement form is mandated by Senate policy as a means of defining the relationship between TAs and their department. A copy of the approved agreement form can be found at:

http://www.queensu.ca/ctl/community/students/files/Teaching_Assistant_Agreement.pdf

1. Is the practice of using this particular form followed in your department, or does your department use an alternate system for informing TAs of their responsibilities?

2. If your department does not use the standard form, please attach a copy or sample of the agreement form or method that is used.

FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT

BETWEEN:

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY at KINGSTON

(QUEEN'S)

and

THE ALMA MATER SOCIETY

(AMS)

This framework agreement lays out certain elements that will form the basis of a future agreement with the AMS on the operation and management of the Student Life Centre. It is recognized that additional detail will need to be agreed to and incorporated into the final agreement before being finalized, however, in anticipation of good faith bargaining by both parties going forward the signatories agree to the following:

WHEREAS a new building has been constructed on lands owned by Queen's University known as the Queen's Centre (the "Queen's Centre");

AND WHEREAS the AMS has substantially contributed to the funding of the Queen's Centre which will include a student life component (the Student Life Centre);

AND WHEREAS there exists an original Student Centre (JDUC) which was built in memory of Queen's students and graduates killed in World Wars I and II and has historical significance for the Queen's community which has housed some operations of Queen's and the AMS and the SGPS student governments;

AND WHEREAS the operation and funding of the Grey House and MacGillivray Brown Hall, other Student Life Centres, will be addressed in a separate document;

AND WHEREAS the primary purpose of the JDUC and the new Student Life Centre (henceforth referred to jointly as the Student Life Centre) is to offer a home to student governments, to provide facilities for student clubs, faculty societies and organizations, to accommodate social, recreational and cultural activities, and to house student, university and support services that meet the needs of student, faculty, staff and visitors and contribute to the vitality of the Centre and the University;

AND WHEREAS a secondary purpose is to conduct or to allow third parties to conduct activities for the use and convenience of students and staff and to generate revenue from such activities to partially fund the cost of operating the Student Life Centre;

AND WHEREAS in consideration of the historical relationship between Queen's and the AMS and the funding which has and will be provided by the AMS towards the construction of the Queen's Centre,

Queen's has agreed to grant to the AMS, for the term of this agreement, the right to occupy and manage the Student Life Centre, in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

In consideration of the mutual covenants herein contained, the parties hereto agree as follows:

The parties agree that this Agreement shall be based on the following principles:

a) The Agreement shall be administered in such a way that promotes communication and collaboration between the parties to achieve the goals of the Student Life Centre, serve the greater good of the Queen's community, and meet the parties programming needs and the financial objectives of the Student Life Centre;

b) Any commercial or other opportunities will be developed in a way which will enhance the achievement of the programming and financial objectives of the Student Life Centre;

Term

The term of this Agreement shall be for an initial period of two year commencing on the first day of May 2011 and ending on the 30th day of April 2013. If mutually agreeable the term of the agreement will be extended for a further 5 years commencing on the first day of May 2013 and ending on the 30th day of April 2018, subject to early termination clauses as outlined in the final agreement.

Renewal

Provided that the Agreement remains in full force and effect at the end of the Term and any renewed Term, and the AMS is not in material default hereunder, then the AMS shall have the right to renew the Term for successive periods.

Space Allocation

Queen's and the AMS shall jointly agree to, and allocate, all space in the Student Life Centre including which space is to be designated as Retail Space, keeping in mind the current designated use and occupant.

Commercial Tenants

All Commercial Leases shall be approved and executed by Queen's as owner of the Student Life Centre and by the AMS as manager. The parties shall mutually agree what spaces are to be designated retail space and shall mutually agree upon the tenants.

Budget Process

- a) The Student Life Centre shall strive to have a balanced operating budget that benefits from significant revenue generation and prudent cost containment.
- b) The AMS shall prepare an annual balanced budget which will ensure that there is sufficient revenue to meet the Operating, Administrative and Programming costs of the Student Life Centre and sufficient reserves for Student Life Centre minor capital expenditures.
- c) It is agreed that any revenues from Commercial Leases or other User Group Activities, such as space rental fees, shall be applied to reduce the Operating Costs of the Student Life Centre.

Operating Costs

- a) Operating costs will be based on mutually agreed to service level agreements and industry benchmarks.
- b) Queen's PPS shall set a budget for Operating Costs for each Fiscal Year based on a dollar amount per square metre amount.
- c) AMS will allocate the Operating Costs in the Student Centres budget in accordance with a formula that all parties agree to.

Cost Allocation and Revenue Sharing

Queen's will contribute to the costs of the Student Life Centre. Financial arrangements will be structured going forward based on a commitment to equitable cost allocation and appropriate revenue sharing.

Management

- a) Queen's hereby authorizes the AMS to assume the overall management function of the Student Life Centre including responsibility for and supervision of, the day-to-day operations of the Student Life Centre, to the extent specifically set forth in the final agreement.
- b) The AMS will employ a full-time Facility Manager who will be the primary responsible agent for the management of the Student Life Centre including responsibility for communication between Queen's, service personnel, the occupants of the Student Life Centre and the Commercial Tenants.

c) The hiring committee for the selection of the Facility Manger shall include a minimum of one University representative or their respective designates.

Compliance with Regulations

The AMS is responsible for ensuring that all applicable laws, regulations and by-laws and all University policies, procedures and legal obligations are complied with in the conduct of the activities taking place within the Student Life Centre.

Management Functions Retained by Queen's

The AMS acknowledges that certain matters such as the provision of PPS services, security, building insurance etc. will remain the responsibility of Queen's.

Joint Liaison Committee

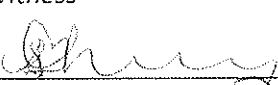
There shall be established a committee (hereinafter called the Joint Liaison Committee") composed of three members appointed by Queen's , three members appointed by the AMS, the Facility Manager and a representative appointed by the SGPS to consider and advise on issues of mutual interest.

DATED at Kingston, this 28th day of April, 2010

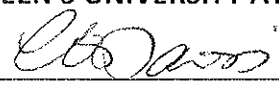
ALMA MATER SOCIETY


Per: Michael Ceci, President, 2009/10

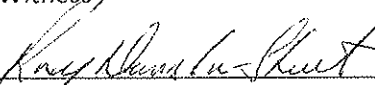
Witness


Safiah Chowdhury, President, 2010-11

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY AT KINGSTON


Per: Caroline Davis, FCA
Vice-Principal (Finance & Administration)

Witness,


Roxy Denniston-Stewart
Associate Dean, Student Affairs

Letter to Principal from SGPS Council

Dear Principal Woolf,

We have discovered recently that the Queen's administration has signed a 'Framework Agreement' with the AMS on the 'Student Life Center' – which has been defined to include both the JDUC and the Queen's Centre. This 'Agreement' purports to speak for three parties, whereas it is in actual fact a collaboration of two against the third. As such, we question how much agreement there actually is within the three parties spoken for within the 'Agreement'.

While we will respond with our views on the 'Agreement' and its substantive (de)merits after broader consultation with our students and legal experts, we are writing to you in response to the way in which members of the administration have treated the SGPS and its membership while the 'Agreement' was being negotiated.

Despite being Queen's students, despite making extraordinary contributions to Queen's financial health through commercially viable research, despite providing Queen's with useable intellectual property, despite attracting precious research grants to the University's research budget, despite attracting sizeable provincial funds to the University's operating budget, despite developing social fabric for the benefit of all students, despite paying ever-increasing tuition, despite being assured in public that 'graduate and professional students are valuable members of the Queen's community', despite paying fees towards the operations of the JDUC, despite having graduate residences at the JDUC and despite many other beneficial contributions we make to Queen's, we were not consulted on an 'Agreement' that attempts to fundamentally alter our rights at our University, specifically our right to govern and manage our own student lives through our own student society.

In fact, these negotiations were kept not merely confidential in the form of Non-Disclosure Agreements but kept entirely secret from the representatives of over 4000 Queen's students. This has driven us to seek legal advice on the issue of how best to protect our pre-existing rights – which indicates a historic low in relations between the University and its graduate and professional students. This is both tragic and shameful - it is also not our fault. To add insult to injury, it diverts our funds and SGPS employees from their normal operations and this affects the students that are counting on its actively expanding services and bursaries. As such, this 'Agreement' promises to be catastrophic towards service delivery for SGPS students.

At the same time as the SGPS was being asked to make detailed proposals for space within the JDUC, administrative control over that very space was being promised away to the AMS in perpetuity. In fact, SGPS employees have been made to spin their wheels for months as mutually incompatible promises on space were made between the AMS and SGPS. At an institutional level, we wonder if this is not just mere incompetence but an attempt at deception. If pre-meditated, this kind of divisive and predatory behavior has no place at our University. Our membership employs the SGPS in order to procure essential services, not to play at Machiavellian politics over tables and chairs.

The situation that faces graduate and professional students at Queen's who want a better social life with their peers is so dire that the SGPS would have been able to do wonders for our members even through some very basic provisions. We had requested the use of a social lounge and some more office space but have been treated as if we had demanded open access to secret archives at the Pentagon. Queen's students deserve better - infinitely better.

Unbelievably, even the conclusion of this 'Agreement' was kept secret, with plans to spring it as a surprise on our representation at the Board of Trustees. Had it not been for callous boasting by the outgoing AMS President, the SGPS would not have known about this in time to report on this development at the Board of Trustees; we would have been left looking embarrassingly out of

touch and SGPS students would have seemed irrelevant to our University's future plans. We are concerned that this seeming irrelevance is being engineered against the wishes of graduate and professional students at Queen's.

The SGPS is a fairly simple student society, so it has neither the administrative clout, commercial depth, political smarts, nor the army of paper-pushers needed to be involved in a game of high-stakes realpolitik over the use of student space. We pay our employees so they can get work done for us, not so they can jump through administrative hoops at one venue while our rights are trampled at another. Our members depend on the SGPS to bring their concerns to the administration and represent them. They also expect members of the administration to respond to their concerns and respect the dignity of their elected office. We deserve better practices and better people at this university – practices that are transparent and people who do not enjoy pitting one student society against another – these are destructive games that poison relations between students and within the Queen's community. At the very least, we need people who are committed to treating Queen's students with a modicum of decency that is not subject to administrative convenience.

As for the 'Agreement' itself, while we have analyzed it and fear that it will irrevocably rupture the social fabric that students are trying to develop here at Queen's, we reserve our final judgment pending broad consultation with our members and legal experts. Nevertheless, it is obvious that it is deliberately punitive, that it is catastrophic for the future of graduate and professional students' social lives and that it attempts to disenfranchise over 4000 students who currently enjoy certain rights through their SGPS membership. These rights are enshrined in long-standing constitutions, principles and pre-existing contracts, so it is clear that they have been arbitrarily abused. Furthermore, the egregious abuse of power that has resulted in this imposition of a settlement stifles SGPS members' aspirations as students further to these basic rights. As it distances SGPS members from the JDUC, which is a historic monument that commemorates the sacrifices of all Queen's students during WWI and WWII - it is also an intolerable symbolic slap in their faces. Is this really how Queen's stature, its heritage, the sacrifices of its students for the benefit of Canada and humanity in general are to be celebrated under this administration?

As for future relations between members of the AMS and SGPS - a question that is absolutely crucial for the creation of a better future for Queen's - this 'Agreement' threatens to cause relations to deteriorate further, then fester and may ultimately destroy a collegial student life altogether. Furthermore, many members of the AMS become SGPS members when they remain at Queen's to pursue further studies, so this 'Agreement' essentially promises them more alienation the further they progress at Queen's - not more inclusion. Are these really the kinds of plans that members of the administration should have for the future of student life experience at our University?

As the administrative head of Queen's and an officer of the entire University community, we remind you gently that your office has a dignity that is far above silence or acquiescence to such divisive processes and the wholesale disenfranchisement of over 4000 students. You are not just the Principal for members of the AMS but for over 4000 SGPS students as well. We expect this fact to be reflected in the way that we are treated and in the way that this University is administered. Only then can we build a University that is truly superlative - one where all Queen's students can feel at home - both intellectually and socially.

We have been asked to consider the question - 'Where Next?' for Queen's. Our short answer is that we want a University that values those who study at it, those who work at it, those who have sacrificed for it, those who have built its excellence and those who will build further on its traditions. This secretly developed 'Agreement' threatens to shatter all these goals spectacularly.

At the moment, apart from immediate behavioural and procedural change from many members within the Queen's administration, we expect an un-spun and jargon-free response to the following questions:

1. Why was the SGPS not consulted on this 'Agreement'?
2. Where did members of the administration derive the legal authority to collude with the AMS and write the SGPS into an 'Agreement' without consulting the SGPS?
3. Where did members of the administration derive the moral authority to arbitrarily marginalize our members' voices and aspirations from the governance and management of the commemorative, symbolic, historical student centre that is the JDUC?
4. Will future capital projects at Queen's be governed and / or managed according to formulas and considerations based on extra capital contributions from student societies in addition to their members' ever-increasing tuition fees?
5. What does the Principal's office plan to do about this 'Agreement' and about the broader issues of disservice and disenfranchisement that we have raised on behalf of the over 4000 students who are members of the SGPS?

Sincerely,

SGPS Council

P.S. The SGPS President received a public apology from VP Caroline Davis and Council recognizes her genuine expression of personal contrition on procedural processes. Our disagreement, however, is not merely over procedural protocol but on substantive issues and foundational principles as well. Nevertheless, Council has not felt it necessary at this point to reference her actions in this particular letter.