Dear Council:

This is my last report as President. It’s been an honour to spend the last year working for the SGPS membership, and I’m confident that Chris and his team are going to do a fantastic job next year. You all probably have a lot of questions about what’s been going on with the Student Advisor Program, and I discuss the developments in depth from pages 4-9 of this report. But first, there are a number of other things I’ve been working on getting done before the end of April:

**Summer Fees**

Our negotiations with Student Affairs are largely done around the fee protocol appendix and what fees should be charged to students who start programs in May. We’ve managed to get the summer fee slate down to 3 fees (2 this summer) – Athletics, Bus-It and HCDS (which is really a fee that goes to the health clinic). We’ve received assurances that HCDS will remain open to Education students who are on practicum, and over May our understanding is the practicums will largely be in the Kingston area. We also have a commitment from Student Affairs to seriously explore new alternatives to accessing counselling services for students who are off-campus, including students who are on practicum. At this point all that’s left is to write up the agreement with Athletics and confirm the new Bus-It agreement with the AMS and City of Kingston.

**Student Life Centre Governance Agreement**

The SGPS, AMS and the university have almost concluded our negotiations around the governance model for the Student Life Centre. There may have to be a special Council in late April or early May to approve the final text. We anticipate the agreement will be concluded before April 23rd, which is the deadline to submit items to the May 8/9 meeting of the Board of Trustees. It looks like there will be two agreements. There will be a permanent governance agreement that will set out the rights and responsibilities of the three parties over the governance, operation and budget of the SLC. There will also be an agreement between the university and the AMS for a renewable term that will govern the AMS’s responsibilities to the university and to the governing committee as manager. In the event the university ever terminated the AMS as manager or if the management agreement was concluded and not renewed, the SGPS would still maintain our rights under the primary governance agreement to have a substantial role in the governance of the SLC. This is a significant improvement over the current model where we must renegotiate our role every time the agreement expires.

**2013-14 Audit**

We have engaged our existing auditors to start the 2013-14 audit as quickly as possible and to try and get as much of the audit done before the end of April. It is our hope that the issues that led to 2012-13 taking so long have been resolved and will not repeat themselves, allowing the SGPS to catch up its financial statements before the end of the fiscal year and getting us on track to meet the six-month legislated deadline for future financial statements. We are also planning on restructuring the way we manage our internally restricted funds. A motion to change the budget process and internal funds will be before this meeting of Council.

**Investment Strategy**

We have almost concluded our long-term investment plan for the SGPS’s surplus assets. One prong of this has been the negotiation of a loan to the SLC through the AMS to finance the renovations of the JDUC washrooms. Because we pay the SLC more than $70,000 each year in contributions towards the facilities budget, this loan is effectively secured by our right to set-off the interest and a portion of the principal against the money we’d otherwise owe the AMS each year from the University Centre fee. There is therefore a practically non-existent default risk, and the loan will add more than $10,000 to SGPS revenues over the next year (the interest diminishes as the loan gets paid off, but we expect to invest...
those repayments in other investments). The second element of the plan involves the investment policy that is coming before Council. This policy will authorize the Executive to invest our accrued surplus into publicly traded debt and equity securities. While the value of these investments are likely to fluctuate on a year-to-year basis, by leaving the inflation-adjusted principal in the securities while only taking out a small portion each year, these investments should provide a revenue stream to the SGPS indefinitely. In this sense, the investment would be similar to a university endowment, where the university invests the Endowment Fund into securities and takes a small percentage out each year to provide revenues for the endowed expense.

**SHRC Club Room**

As you may have read in the Journal, the Sexual Health Resource Centre is moving to change its affiliation from an AMS club to an SGPS club. The SHRC does fantastic work for graduate, professional and undergraduate students at Queen’s, and we’re proud this club has chosen the SGPS as its home. Right now we are working to try and find appropriate club space that will allow the SHRC to continue to serve as a hub for sex education as well as providing an area for confidential counselling for abortion or sexual assault accompaniments. Our hope is that we can work out an arrangement with the AMS to trade some of our club space for the SHRC’s current room, but none of our club offices are currently of a similar size so the negotiations are ongoing.

**PSAC 901 Health/Bursary Funding**

We have concluded negotiations and signed a new agreement with PSAC to both cover the current academic year as well as provide for automatic renewal for the 2015-16 year and PSAC has now provided its funding for our bursaries and our health & dental plan. As part of this agreement we have a motion before Council to increase the total funding for the International Student Reimbursement from $10,000 to $15,000 – the agreement requires the SGPS to put in $5,000 of funding in addition to PSAC’s $10,000 contribution. We will also be working to include PSAC 901 branding on our health and dental plan, dental bursary and international student bursary materials and there should be a motion coming to the May Council meeting to rename the two bursaries the SGPS-PSAC 901 Dental Bursary and SGPS-PSAC 901 International Student Bursary in recognition of PSAC’s substantial financial contribution towards these bursaries. This renaming was actually promised by the previous Executive in December 2013, but the Executive never brought the motion forward to Council before the agreement lapsed last summer.

**Student Services Planning Exercise**

At the request of the Provost, a number of university departments as well as the SGPS and AMS are participating in a Student Services Planning Exercise headed by the Dean of Student Affairs. This exercise is expected to look at all the student-focused services provided across the university, including from Student Affairs, the SGS, the Faculties, the SGPS, AMS and various other groups on campus. The working group had its first meeting in March, and the meetings will continue after Chris takes office in May. A planning exercise of this sort was one of the main recommendations that many student participants at the Senate-Board retreat pushed for. Our very own Senator Eric Rapos continued to pursue the recommendations from Senate-Board Retreat at Senate, and we’re very glad to see the university respond in this productive way.

**Short-Term Academic Accommodations**

One of the issues I have been pursuing over the last month has to do with short-term academic accommodations across the university. While long-term disability accommodations are decided on by the Disability Services Office, short-term accommodations are governed at the faculty level, with no minimum standards set university wide. Some faculties have robust processes for these types of accommodations, but in other faculties the decision is up to the instructor. This problem has especially come into focus during the current review of the university’s policies and practices when responding to sexual assault. A sexual assault survivor may have to tell their story multiple times to multiple instructors, who may then refuse to grant any accommodations. In reviewing this issue I discovered that a university-wide policy and process for short-term accommodations was one of the key recommendations of the Principal’s Commission on Mental
Health, to be drafted by a recommended Advisory Committee on Academic Accommodations. While this committee exists, it has not met often and there is no timeline for a final policy or process that would ideally be approved by Senate so as to be enforceable on the faculties. I have had a meeting with the Principal on this issue and also brought it up with the Dean of Student Affairs. I expect that at the April Senate meeting there will be some kind of public commitment regarding the timeline to have a binding policy on short-term accommodations in place, and I expect that commitment to accord well with the recommendations that may come from the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Working Group.

**Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Working Group**

I have been in contact with our representatives on this working group to keep track of the important work it is doing. I also had a meeting with the Dean of Student Affairs and the Chair of the Working Group to get an update on both the university’s and the sector’s efforts in this area. The provincial government will be introducing legislation requiring sexual assault policies, but it’s still unclear what the requirements of those policies will be on universities. In the meantime, the Council of Ontario Universities will be retaining a lawyer to prepare a report on the actions Ontario universities can take to deal with accused perpetrators of sexual assault (including procedural rights and whether universities can process a complaint and levy a sanction is there is an ongoing criminal proceeding). At the university level, because the final policy will depend on what the provincial government requires from universities, there is a possibility that the final policy/protocol will require more revision after May 1\textsuperscript{st}, and serve as a sort of ‘living document’. It is also likely to require policy changes by governing bodies at the university to implement some of its recommendations. In the meantime, the indication I have received is that there should be a draft set of recommendations available to the student members of the working group by the mid-April, allowing a couple weeks for final student input on the actual recommendations before they are released publicly at the beginning of May.

**Thesis Publication Restriction Policy at SGS**

A revised policy on when students can restrict their thesis publication will be coming to GSEC for approval on April 16\textsuperscript{th}. This policy incorporated a number of changes recommended by the members of the Graduate Committee for Law on providing greater clarity in decision-making and procedural fairness to students. While I still do not think the policy is perfect, it is a considerable improvement over the initial draft, and makes clear that supervisors cannot withhold their consent to a justifiable request for a thesis embargo unless they themselves have a good reason for denying the embargo. The final decision will be made by the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies.

**Shared Services Agreement**

I am still working with the AMS to finalize the wording for the Shared Services Agreement. One of the things we still need to figure out is what to do with the Journal Fee. The initial negotiations envisioned maintaining the fees at identical levels in the AMS and SGPS, but SGPS members rejected any increase to the Journal fee by a substantial margin. One option on the table is to permanently peg the SGPS fee relative to the AMS fee so that it would not increase by inflation as the AMS fee does but we would be obligated to put to referendum a fee increase of a similar proportion to AMS fee increases (i.e. if the AMS increases their fee by 20% we would have a referendum to increase our lower fee by 20%). A second option is to keep the same goal of harmonized fees, which would let the AMS request a referendum to match the fees again next year as they did this year. A third option is to remove the Journal as a shared service fee entirely, and reclassify it from Class D to Class A Mandatory. This would remove our guaranteed representation from the Journal Management Board and the fee renewal process would still require a referendum next year. But unlike currently, if the AMS does not get a petition to put the Journal fee renewal directly on the ballot, Council would be under now obligation to put it on the ballot ourselves. In other words, if we remove the Journal as a shared service and Council does not believe it provides value to the members as a Class A, we can simply refuse to put it up for renewal and if the AMS wants it on the ballot they would have to get 10% of our membership (about 425 people) to sign a petition.
Professional Students’ Social Committee

I have been working with Thompson and the AMS on getting some policy wording on the structure of this committee so that we can have identical policies put in both SGPS and AMS policy (as we do for the Rector election policy). The AMS have had their last Assembly meeting, but they are likely to have a special Assembly before the end of April. I’m hoping to have text approved by both us and them for that meeting so they can approve it at their Assembly and we can bring it to our next Council meeting in May (AMS Assembly does not sit over the summer). The events put on this committee have been a big hit this year, so I want to make sure it’s appropriately entrenched and funded.

Online Room Bookings

I’m working with Sean to finally get this booking system up and running. One it is, we’ll put a tutorial online and SGPS members should be able to book rooms automatically using their NetID logins. We have currently set up JDUC 235 as a breakout room for meetings of club executives or for group study. We also want to make the social lounge bookable for larger groups while keeping it as a drop-in space, so we’re likely going to be looking at a policy that it can only be booked for groups of ten people or more. I was hoping to have the system up and running for April, but at the very least I’m going to make sure this thing is online before my term is done. This was one of my platform points and while I haven’t been able to put in place 100% of my election platform, we’ve gotten a lot of it done and I intend to have this promise fulfilled too.

Student Advisor Program

Last but not least, we have the Student Advisor Program. I want to preface my remarks by noting that I am somewhat limited in what I can say due to privacy concerns. It is now public knowledge that there are no longer any active Advisors in the Program. Whenever there is an end to an employment relationship, the employer is limited in what they can publicly state about how the relationship ended and what factors may have led to an employee’s decision to resign or an employer’s decision to terminate the contract of the employee. These are human resources matters, and as the SGPS’s corporate board of directors, the Executive is obligated to keep some of this information confidential. It is also difficult for me to go into the timeline of how proposed structural changes were presented to the Advisors and how the Advisors responded to those proposals without moving into human resources issues that we cannot publicly discuss.

Before talking about the structural changes themselves, there are a couple of things I can say about how we got to this point and some assertions made by others that I feel need to be set straight:

- There have been a lot of rumours actively spread among both students and university stakeholders in the program about how proposed changes were presented and how the Advisors responded to those changes. I’ve had the chance to discuss with our partners what has been included in these rumours and I’ve seen the initial draft (which may be changed by the publication of the final agenda package) of a motion coming before Council on these changes where the preamble includes an account of how the consultation was carried out. What I can say is that this account is very incomplete and in the opinion of the Executive includes substantial inaccuracies that we unfortunately cannot correct without delving deeply and publicly into confidential HR matters.
- There has been discussion about the “release and resignation of five Advisors since February 13, 2015.” This wording is an incredible distortion of the truth, and conflates together entirely different issues that have nothing to do with each other. I can confirm the following facts: First, one of the original four Advisors ceased to be an Advisor on February 27, 2015. The first discussions of any structural changes to the program happened after this date and the reasons for this Advisor leaving have nothing to do with any proposed or actual structural changes. Second, Erin Clow gave notice on February 18, 2015 that she was resigning as an Advisor, effective March 20, 2015. She resigned because she was offered a job in the Equity and Human Rights Offices at Queen’s, where she presently works as a Special Projects Officer. I find it very unfortunate that people are lumping together someone getting a job at the university with everything else that has happened in an effort to paint the Executive in a bad light.
On the evening of March 20, 2015, our VPG, Dinah asked the Executive to approve the transfer of day-to-day supervision over the Advisor Program from her to me, effective 4PM on March 23, 2015. By this point in time it had become evident to all five members of the Executive that there would have to be a serious conversation with the Advisors about performance expectations. Given that Dinah had had an ongoing working and social relationship with the Advisors for the previous seven months, I was worried about the kind of stress that would be put on her in those conversations and from the employment decisions that might be necessary as a result. I asked Dinah whether she felt comfortable being in that situation, or whether she’d prefer to have another member of the Executive take on day-to-day supervision of the Program during what was likely to be an emotionally charged time. Dinah told me that she had had similar concerns earlier in the week and also thought it would be better to have another member of the Executive take over direct supervision. Dinah made her formal request later that night. The Executive approved the transfer of authority unanimously.

As the corporate directors of the SGPS, the Executive is required by law to oversee the operations of the SGPS including the performance of its employees. This duty is buttressed by Policy P.2.1.f, which states that it is a primary role of the Executive to “[o]versee employees of the SGPS in the performance of their duties and responsibilities.” At all times, HR and structural decisions were made by the entire current Executive in consultation with the incoming Executive. Combined, the outgoing and incoming Executive has nine members. At no point in time did any one of those nine individuals object to any of the decisions we were making around the Program or its personnel. While confidentiality precludes me from explaining why the Executive made the HR decisions it did, the unanimity of the incoming and outgoing Executives should send a strong signal about whether those decisions were warranted.

New Advisors are being hired for a May 1st start date, and processes have been put in place to ensure clients can receive service from the Program until the new Advisors finish training, with very strong safeguards put in place to protect the confidentiality of existing clients. A statement about the transition period can be found here.

Moving away from the timeline of events, I would like to explain why both the outgoing and incoming Executives felt it was necessary to put in place structural changes leading to a written confidentiality agreement, a file system and staff involvement in administration of the Program, as well as why we considered and still consider it necessary that these changes be put in place by April 30th. A couple of other changes were also explored for the current Executive term, but after consultation with the Advisors those proposed changes were dropped by the current Executive so that the new Executive could do more extensive consultations over the summer. The only changes that were authorized for the April 30th deadline were the changes we felt were absolutely necessary to put in place as quickly as possible to both safeguard the program’s confidentiality and provide the new Executive with information about caseload that would help them to intelligently discuss and decide on further changes.

While the Executive has never received any complaint about the actual advice given by Advisors, we discovered severe structural problems with the ‘back-office’ structure of the program. These problems undermined our ability to provide confidentiality to clients and to adequately supervise the work of Advisors:

All written information about clients of the Program is currently kept in two places:
- Advisors keep emails to, from and about clients in the email server of the SGPS. If a new Advisor is going to take over a client’s case and has a different Advisor account (i.e. moving from advisor1@sgps.ca to advisor2@sgps.ca) then one Advisor has to literally track down and forward all of the emails to the new account. If an Advisor quit without giving notice or was fired, the people trying to retrieve these emails would have no idea when they were sent and would basically have to search by email address. But if the email was to/from a supervisor instead of the student, the new Advisor would have no way of knowing that for the purposes of the search. Of course that’s all moot because under the scope of confidentiality, the new Advisor wouldn’t have the ability to look at the client’s emails or know who they are anyway (I’ll get to that in a bit). The SGS MoA requires client information to be destroyed in accordance with an Advisor File Retention Policy. This policy does not exist. As far as I can tell, there is no process for deleting these emails.
- Advisors keep notebooks with meetings notes and non- emailing correspondence. These notebooks are located in a drawer in the Student Advisor office. That drawer is not locked or lockable. There is also a
cabinet containing client information and training materials. These training materials include ‘examples’ of previous cases that date back to 2007. These examples are not redacted and apparently contain the names of clients from 2007. This cabinet is also not locked or lockable. Because the Advisor office is part of the Student Life Centre, SLC Staff have master keys (as does Campus Security and PPS for cleaning purposes). SLC Staff with master keys include undergraduate students. While I don’t expect they ever would, the current filing system would allow for undergraduate students to enter the Student Advisor office, open the unlocked drawer or filing cabinet, and see the names and confidential information of all of our clients. I consider the lack of a secure filing system to be a gross breach of our confidentiality guarantee to clients. We did not discover the existence of these unsecured confidential documents until this week, but I am mortified that this situation was allowed to occur and this just redoubles the necessity of a secure physical or electronic filing system.

- The scope of confidentiality given to clients is incredibly unclear. The Advisor program promises confidentiality, but there is no indication anywhere in writing about who can and cannot see your confidential information. Anonymized information about cases are put in public reports, but we never receive written agreement from clients that would allow us to make this information public. Furthermore, in the event an Advisor became aware that a client intended to inflict life-threatening harm on him/herself or to inflict harm on another person, we do not have any written agreement or policy that makes clear that we can break confidentiality. By contrast, the Student Rights Centre at the University of Ottawa has a clear policy on confidentiality and exceptions. The AMS Peer Support Centre also lists the exceptions to confidentiality on a form all students must sign before using their services.

- Related to the above, it is unclear who in the Advisor Program is entitled to see client information. The protocol we were told by the Advisors is that confidentiality applies to each Advisor independently. That is, an Advisor cannot share information about a client with another Advisor or the VPG. This also means that when a new Advisor is hired, the new Advisor presumably does not have permission to see the confidential information of a client of an outgoing Advisor, and the outgoing Advisor must receive permission from the client to pass along their information to the new Advisor. I have no idea what happens if this permission is not received. New Advisors take over the email accounts of old Advisors, and there is no process to delete or sequester the emails of a client who denies permission to the new Advisor, who does not respond to the request for permission or whose email account is inactive. Presumably those emails remain in the account and the new Advisor can access the confidential information even though they were never given permission to. I also have no idea what happens to the Advisors’ notebooks where confidential client notes are kept in writing. This also creates a Catch-22 if an Advisor leaves without notice. We need to contact the client in order to get their permission to have a new Advisor see their confidential information. But in order to contact the client, we need to know who the client is. But the client’s identity and email is part of that confidential information. So if an Advisor simply quit the program, was terminated without notice or suffered some kind of accident we would either need to abandon the client or break their confidentiality.

- Because the Advisors’ supervisor (the VPG) has no access to confidential information, the VPG is essentially powerless to supervise the Advisors. I have never heard of another similar workplace where a supervisor has no idea what his or her employees are doing. How many files does an Advisor have at any given time? We have no idea. The term reports will say how many cases an Advisor dealt with over a term, but those cases might be long and complex or they might be incredibly short and involve a referral to another office. They’re also inconsistent across Advisors and occasionally internally inconsistent. For example, this report says that the Advisor had 8 new cases; 2 PhD, 2 Masters and 2 undetermined graduate, which adds up to 6. In any event, finding out how many cases an Advisor had months after the fact is of no use to supervising a Student Advisor day-to-day.

  - This compromises our ability to keep track of Advisor workload. This year, the Executive was told that the Advisors were often juggling 10-15 cases at a time, which was why a fee increase for a fourth Advisor was necessary. In March we had the Advisors fill out an anonymous case summary that contained very basic information about each case (how long we’ve had the case and how complex it was). This survey showed that the Advisors had caseloads of 3, 5, 9 and 9, but that these numbers included some cases that were ‘open’ but where the Advisor might not hear anything or need to take any action on the file for months and indeed may never hear from the client again. Do we actually need four Advisors? Again, nobody on the Executive can be sure, because we have no idea how much work
each file actually entails. How many hours per week are the Advisors working? Is it 10? 15? 5? We have no mechanism in place to track this. The only way for the VPG to know if the Advisors are working their hours is for the Advisors to tell the VPG that they are; the VPG must take it on trust. There are no timesheets or docketing of time. While I doubt this would actually happen, an Advisor could theoretically take on no clients all year, say they have, and we would have no way to double-check. It also means that we can’t balance files between Advisors so that new clients are being directed to Advisors with fewer cases.

○ The inability for the supervisor to have access to confidential information also means there are no quality controls in place to make sure that Advisors are providing accurate or appropriate information. That’s not to say that they aren’t, but from a structural perspective a supervisor needs to have access to this information to double-check that there are no issues. Some of the appeal processes at this university have limitation periods and timelines. If an Advisor ever gave a client wrong information about a timeline, it could compromise a client’s appeal. The SGPS would likely be liable for the faulty information, but we have no checks and balances in place to make sure information going out is accurate. This is a sharp deviation from how this sort of work is normally supervised (for example, the AMS Peer Support Centre allows the director access to all volunteer notes to that s/he can supervise what the volunteers are doing). This doesn’t mean that the VPG should have access to this information, but someone needs to. The alternative is the Advisors operate effectively unsupervised by anyone.

- From a statistical perspective, the way we track and report on cases is inconsistent both between Advisors and from one year to the next. Each Advisor prepares their own reports with no report on the statistics for the entire Program. There is no method to break down client problems into categories that are consistent from year to year. There will be a list of labels, but those labels often overlap, lack definitions and are not used consistently. There is also no analysis that might, for example, show whether certain types of cases are more prevalent in certain departments or whether a problem is increasing or decreasing from year to year. The lack of any kind of statistical rigour to the way we track and report cases substantially inhibits the usefulness of these reports to both the SGS and the SGPS.

- There is no mechanism to ensure new cases go to Advisors who have a lower caseload or a particular expertise. Email requests for meetings go to all the Advisors, who work out between themselves who will take on a case. However, if a client comes in during office hours, whichever Advisor is on call takes on that case. This method of case allocation can cause large imbalances in workload between Advisors and can prevent Advisors from developing areas of expertise that could allow for a more logical division of caseloads between Advisors with more experience dealing with a particular type of appeal or issue.

Some of these problems are significantly more troubling or urgent than others. But collectively they speak to a Program that does not need a couple of minor tweaks but some important changes to the way it operates. The Executive went to the Advisors with a number of proposals for immediate changes to the Program, with the expectation that the incoming Executive would undertake a more comprehensive review over the summer leading up to the rehire period in July. Concerns were expressed about some of these proposals, and those proposals were dropped. For the remaining proposals, the Executive decided to make three changes in principle. The Advisors were given the opportunity to design the implementation themselves, but since the problems these changes were designed to help fix were very urgent, the timeline to decide on the specifics of the changes was set with the expectation that they would be fully in place by April 30th. In part this is because we also felt the changes were necessary to give the new Executive enough information to embark on a more comprehensive review.

These are the changes that were proposed:

1. There would be some kind of filing system for Advisor files. This filing system could involve physical files (kept in a locked cabinet), or electronic files that would be digitally secured. What the filing system would look like was left entirely up to the Advisors, as long as all information about a client (including notes and correspondence) were in the file. This way we could secure client information in one location, and have an actual file retention policy that would let us destroy files a certain period of time after a client’s file was closed.
2. The SGPS Executive Assistant would be involved with the administration of the program. The specifics of her involvement could be worked out over the course of the summer, but she would have access to client files. This is so that she could report to the VPG about Advisor caseload, ensure that Advisors were working their hours, and keep track of what was going on in each file to make sure any information being provided was accurate. The alternative would have been giving the VPG this kind of access directly, and nobody thought that would be a good idea. Having a staff member with access to the confidential information assist the VPG with overall supervision of the program would provide institutional memory and let the VPG supervise in actuality rather than just in name. As an added advantage, the EA could keep track of statistical information from the filing system to prepare robust statistical reports on the program as a whole that could compare the same data from year to year. We left it to the next Executive to decide whether the EA should prepare those sorts of reports, but EA access to the filing system was a bare minimum to make that discussion even possible. All that was decided in March was that the EA would be involved in some administrative capacity and that she would have access to the files.

3. There had to be some kind of confidentiality form for clients to sign before receiving service from the Advisors. In addition to clarifying for clients when we can and cannot provide confidentiality, this form would make clear that the client’s file would be available to all the Advisors and also to the EA. This way if a file ever had to be transferred from one Advisor to another, we would already have permission to do so. This form was also necessary, because we before we could give the other Advisors and the EA the ability to access a file, we had to make sure new and existing clients were aware and had given their informed consent. Beyond these minimum requirements, the Advisors were given full discretion to come up with whatever design they wanted for this form. They could also look at implementing a more fulsome intake form to collect more information in a standardized way (something the Advisor Program used to do a number of years ago), but they were under no obligation to do so.

The Executive regarded (and regards) these changes as the absolute minimum that must be done as soon as possible to fix some of the most egregious issues with the Program and to make sure the next Executive is making other structural decisions with complete information. For the timeline, we wanted all clients of the Program to be in the new filing system by May 1st. This would allow the new Executive could work on the broader changes over the summer without having to worry about implementing these changes while just starting their new roles. April 30th is also when all of our students in course-based programs finish classes.

Of course we could not move clients over to the new filing system unless they signed the consent form, and this would take time. We wanted to give existing clients about a month to come in and sign the form. That meant the form had to be complete by the first week of April. The Executive thought that two weeks was enough time to design a form. There was more flexibility on the timeline for the filing system, as long as enough time was provided in April to put existing and new clients into the system. Tweaks could always be made to the filing system once it was in operation. And if a review over a longer period of time found a better way to maintain files, it would always be possible to move all the information to a new system later. We were not looking for perfect. We were looking for adequate, because the existing filing system was not (and is not) adequate. The goal was simply to bring the Program up to the bare minimum standards necessary as quickly as possible. Then the new Executive could start a conversation about what we’d like the Program to look like on the back-end.

Our hope was that these initial changes could be designed by the Advisors. Unfortunately subsequent events made that impossible, and we currently do not have any Advisors. In the interim, I have been working with our EA to come up with a confidentiality form and filing system ourselves. Unfortunately, because we no longer have Advisors, we were not able to keep a transition period for clients to sign the form. Andria is directly providing Advisor services until the new Advisors are trained, and since she did not previously have permission to access client files, we cannot give service to an existing client until they sign the form and give us permission to have Andria pull their information from the sequestered email accounts. The confidentiality form is now available online. We’re working to put an electronic filing system in place. I should have some mock-ups of what the files will look like in this system available for distribution at the Council meeting. I hope the next Executive will look at how to improve the confidentiality form and filing system over the
summer; these designs aren’t set in stone. But I strongly urge Council: do not rescind these changes. We can’t move forward by turning back.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Wiener
President
president@sgps.ca
Dear Members of Council and SGPS Members at Large,

Transitioning of your new VPG-Elect is going swimmingly. I have worked with him over many meetings to give him a firm understanding of the aspects of the VPG position, and he’ll now be taking more of an active role in ‘doing’ VPG work so that he can hit the ground running in May! I’ve also worked with President-Elect Chris Cochrane, familiarizing him and Mr. Kellenberger with the ins and outs of GAC and GSEC, and ultimately bringing them up to speed on matters of SGS concern.

At Graduate Academic Caucus (GAC), we considered a number of issues that were under discussion at GSEC with Mr. Cochrane and Mr. Kellenberger in attendance too. On the latter front, GSEC approved several major program modifications in the School of Business including adding the new field of International Business, changing the name of the Cornell-Queen’s Executive MBA to ‘Executive MBA Americas’, and adding a new delivery site for the M.Fin Program at Renmin University, Beijing. GSEC also discussed the SGS’s applicant survey report, which discussed reasons why students who received offers chose to come to Queen’s. Several recommendations were made including the need to ensure departmental websites were up to date and also ‘accessible’ in terms of the information they provide to potential students about program milestones and expectations, which of course is crucial to current students as well. There was also discussion of the Annual Reports process. A survey of ten departments was undertaken about the process, compliance, and discussion of its utility. We advocated for the need for departments to ensure supervisors and committee members are mindful of deadlines for feedback, and constructive feedback at that, in order to make the process worthwhile and ultimately useful for students. As for the thesis embargo policy changes introduced in February, GSEC called on the Faculty Grad Councils and Committees to consider the document and offer their feedback. As well, these councils and committees will also be considering revisions to their respective manuals to include guidelines for creating advanced standing into laddered programs. To clarify, this means the new manuals may have new language that outlines how they can approve advanced standing for courses completed in a graduate level certificate or diploma program and count the credentials earned therein toward a higher graduate degree.

I am also heading to Calgary for GU15 https://sites.google.com/site/gu15website/about-gu15, from 5-8 April. I’ve been invited to talk about the Student Advisor Program and its value in advocacy and particularly in improving student-supervisory relationships. We have developed a glossy new booklet to take along, and I’m giving a presentation. GU15 was also keen to learn about other SGPS initiatives related to student-supervisory relationships including new workshop ideas we have been working on for giving domestic and international students tools to effective communication with their supervisors as well as mental health initiatives, and those related to international student affairs. Your VPCCA Mr. Lorne Beswick and your International Student Affairs Commissioner Mr. Jhordan Layne have been instrumental in helping me prepare information packets to share with other GSAs from across the country. I will bring back a tonne of useful information about the work of other GSAs that may also prove useful to the SGPS in approaches and best practices. Essentially, it’s a conference for information sharing and solidarity building.

Thank you everyone for a wonderful year. It has been my pleasure serving as your VPG. Best wishes to the new Exec!

Respectfully Submitted,

Dinah Jansen
Vice President Graduate
vpg@sgps.ca
Dear SGPS Council Members,

I am happy to say that by the time you read this report we will have finalized competitive new employment contracts with some of our permanent staff. This has been a very important and time-consuming project that ensures the SGPS will continue to be served by excellent individuals into the future. It has also allowed us to develop a strong working relationship with a local lawyer who is now familiar with our organization and can be used for any additional legal matters in the future. Part of my transition work will be to ensure that our lawyer knows who my successor is in case of need for future contact.

Our lawyer has also been valuable in developing parental leave policy with supplementary unemployment benefits and a workplace harassment policy to ensure the SGPS is in full compliance with the law in terms of our employee relations. In combination with our revised equity statements, our new AODA policy and good headway into a clean-up of our bylaw and policy documents, I am satisfied that we have taken good steps towards a renewed and streamlined SGPS.

Meetings have scaled back significantly as end-of-year approaches. I have two meetings this April, both for SONAD. Mark will be attending with me to ensure he is up to speed. I will be taking some of the comments I got from the first General Meeting regarding fraternities and sororities to the discussion that will come up in the second April meeting.

I hope that Mark is feeling well positioned to take over. He has quite a large knowledge base to start with, and is up to speed on our current and ongoing projects. Importantly, his HR work will be significantly reduced because of the standardization of contracts and HR processes that took place this year, as well as the changes in reporting structure for the commissioners and coordinators. Mark is excited (lol) to continue our Bylaw and Policy overhaul with Sean this summer.

I can’t believe the year is coming to an end. One-year positions provide continuous fresh perspectives, but make institutional memory a challenge. The importance of our permanent staff, particularly Sean and Andria, cannot be emphasized enough. I have always valued their advice and honesty this year, and would consider them not only co-workers, but also friends. Similarly, I have enjoyed working with the Executive this year. I must take a minute and recognize Kevin Wiener’s value this year. I didn’t know him very well when we started office together, but I can say with honesty that he has an incredible work ethic.
and drive. His seemingly infinite knowledge of all things Queen’s, all things financial, and all things legal has allowed a lot of work to get done this year. I want to personally thank him for his service. I can attest to the fact that he basically did not attend class all year and spent a majority of his time in an SGPS capacity.

I want to also thank council for their service. A majority of grads and professionals are not active in student governance, and your dedication to coming to meetings is important.

I have learned a lot this year, and I hope to leave the SGPS with some beneficial work.

Signing off for the last time,

Best Regards,

Thompson Hamilton
Vice-President Professional
vpp@sgps.ca
Hi Council,

With grading, teaching, and exams, the end of term has been fairly brisk but I’ve managed to stay on top of things. Here’s what’s happened since the Winter General Meeting.

**PSAC/SGPS Joint Childcare Bursary**

I met with a member of PSAC who was investigating the possibility of going forward on an ESA dedicated entirely to childcare. Our initial idea was that each party will contribute $20,000, something that would greatly benefit and aid those in our membership that in addition to being graduate and professional students are also parents and guardians. The meeting was quite fruitful and our executive is very interested in this idea; I am hopeful that we can officially unveil this for the beginning of the 2015 academic year in the fall.

**Queen's Day Care.**

A few more closed Queen's Day Care meetings and a few more meetings cancelled since the entire board had teaching, or exam conflicts.

**CFS Forum to End Sexual Violence on Campus**

In addition to our Equity Commissioner Erica attending the CFS’ Forum to End Sexual Violence on Campus I asked if the director of the SHRC would be interested in also attending as this would be a great opportunity for networking and outreach for this pressing issue. Doulton agreed but was unable to fund the $400 that the CFS required, so I paid for her drawing from a sizable pot of money that I only last week discovered that my position has. I'm pleased to say that the event went even better than expected, with Erica and Doulton engaging in some fruitful networking; also, hat's off to Doulton who was not only chair a roundtable next year, but to also teach future organizers of this valued event.

**Sexual Health Resource Centre**

So the SHRC is now an SGPS club that we're more than happy to welcome. I’m sad to see Doulton’s year come to an end, but look forward to a great year working alongside with her successor.

**Sexual Assault Prevention & Response Working Group**

I've been meeting regularly with the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Working Group and am happy to announce that I was appointed to the policy subcommittee alongside other valued members and stakeholders. It's going to be a brisk pace to meet the April 30th deadline for our final report but we've got a devoted group and I know that we can do it.

**Move Out Weekend**

I met with Joan Jones from Student Community Relations about Move Out and strategized about how we're going to move the materials, who we might partner with, and which local charities we might decide to aid. She’s really thrilled to get this initiative back on track, and I think it's going to benefit all parties involved in addition to improving the SGPS' social profile in the community. Basically, the event is designed to capture some of the gently-used resources that those moving away from Kingston leave behind and rather than seeing perfectly good appliances, clothing, and other resources go to a landfill, it is our hope that they may be given a new lease on life.

You're going to be hearing and seeing a lot more surrounding this event in the coming weeks, but for the last day of April and the first two of May we need folks to help us staff an event that involves light physical activity. We can pay you in food, snacks, sterling letters of merit, and of course, some of the gently-used items, resources, and appliances that show up. If you or an organization that you represent are interested in better communities, sustainability, or are more interested in getting involved with council, please email myself (vpcca@sgps.ca) or Andria (ea@sgps.ca) and let us know your availability.
Mental Health Working Group
I unfortunately had to send regrets to this meeting as I came down with that terrible cold that's going around. I'm doubly steamed for missing this meeting because I wanted to discuss the next item on the agenda with them, but also because I arrogantly told my wife Lisa that it had been so long since I was last sick that I must be immune to disease.

Mental Health Assessment Taxation
I've become aware that the Canada Revenue Association (CRA) has been struggling with elements of the federal budget as unveiled in the fall of 2014 regarding mental health assessments. Although these are not normally covered by the provincial health plans, the fact that the "new" budget seems to suggest that they should now be taxed only burdens those already struggling to cover costs that could easily be hundreds of dollars for mere assessment. To its credit the CRA has been in consultation with the federal government but the results of this, if any, have not yet been disclosed. It is my desire to work with our own HCDS, the SGS, and to reach out to Liberal MP Ted Hsu in order to get some clarity on this pressing issue, as it appears the CRA itself has had a difficult time getting the information in question.

Student Leadership Summit
Myself, Thompson, and Kevin had a wonderful time at this event that gave us some valuable face time with President Woolf, various Vice Provosts, and other important stakeholders within our university community. Wonderfully organized by Rector Mike Young, we were not only able to debate and discuss the future direction of the university, but I'm also pleased to announce that the SGPS again punched above its weight when three of our membership won door prizes, more than any other group present.
Dear SGPS Council Members,

It is with a great sense of pride that I submit my final Council report. I am thrilled with the way the past year has gone, and I want to thank the entire executive for all their hard work in making this year a successful one. In particular, I want to acknowledge Kevin for his tireless efforts in fighting for our membership on so many different fronts - from his progress on non-code harassment policy to financial transparency to uninterrupted office hours and everything in between, Kevin has truly renewed the role of the SGPS at Queen’s.

I also want to thank the other executives for their commitment to the SGPS, and congratulate the team on our progress this year. Thompson’s work as VP Professional has established new interfaculty connections strengthening community within our membership and providing other opportunities for our members. Lorne has cemented the SGPS as a key stakeholder in University and municipal discussions. Dinah has worked hard to advocate for our Graduate membership. I am honored to have worked beside all these distinguished people.

I am proud to report that the finances of the SGPS put us in a strong position now and are sustainable for the future of this organization. We have a large reserve fund that has been invested to expand our budget without raising fees, our financials have been posted publicly, and our audits are just about up to date. Our services have been expanded through more efficient processing procedures, funding, and policy changes, and I hope to see this continue in the coming years.

I am very confident in the incoming executive to take the SGPS to even further heights. Specifically, I have been working with Christina (incoming VPFS) so she can hit the ground running on May 1. We have discussed in detail some plans she has for her portfolio in the coming year, and I am excited for these projects to begin.

In the end, it has been a pleasure working with this Council over the past year to achieve what we did. Good luck to everyone with the close of another school year, and all the best in the future.

Sincerely,

Patrick Gajos
Vice President Finance and Services
Society of Graduate and Professional Students
vpfs@sgps.ca
Dear Council,

It is this time of the year again. Tears.

On behalf of Jonathan Samosh, our deputy speaker, and MacKenzie Bulkowski-Rose, our minute-taker in the fall semester, we thank you for a great year together. We hope to run into you again, and we wish you every peace, love and prosperity.

Respectfully submitted,

Max Ma

Speaker
speaker@sgps.ca
Hello Council,

Here we are, approaching the end of the term yet again.

I apologize for my absence – I am going to be in Austria at the International Conference on Software Testing (ICST) during Council this month – so if you have any questions – please email me, or ask Dinah about GSEC and Kevin about Senate, as they both attended those meetings along with me.

**GSEC Meeting – March 26, 2015**

- Several changes to programs in the School of Business were approved:
  - A new Field was added to the MSc/PhD: International Business
  - A new Name for the Cornell-Queen’s EMBA: Executive MBA Americas – A Partnership with Cornell
  - A new delivery site for the MFin program: Remin University China
- Restriction of Thesis discussions were revisited with cleared up wording that addressed many of the concerns raised by Kevin and Dinah at the last GSEC. The new policy will be going to Faculty Councils for endorsement in the coming month for final approval by GSEC at a later time.
- A review was done of the annual reporting process for doctoral students – a number of good findings and best practices were found, and recommendations are being made to departments to improve the experience for all involved.
- A discussion was had surrounding proposed changes to Faculty Council manuals regarding advanced standing for previous coursework in laddered programs (basically means counting courses taken for a prior certification – for example if you take courses for a diploma then pursue a Masters, they could still count towards the Masters)
  - This will be brought to Faculty councils for endorsement/approval.
- The removal of AODA as a degree requirement for Graduate Students is now official!

**Senate Meeting – March 31, 2015**

The following are a list of items on the Senate agenda that may be of interest. If you have any questions about them – please let me know and I would be happy to answer them.

- SONAD reported that beginning later this year, students will be presented with an abridged version of the Student Code of Conduct on a once-per-calendar-year basis on SOLUS, and must acknowledge that they have read it before being allowed to use SOLUS.
- There were several proposals from SCAD surrounding the creation of new programs/certificates:
  - A Bachelor of Technology (B.Tech) in Mining Engineering, which was approved.
    - [https://queensuniversity.civicweb.net/document/57006/SCAD%20-%20Bachelor%20of%20Technology%20in%20Mining%20Engineering.pdf?handle=0B85BA2C20D7418389A1EBB33AFBC31A](https://queensuniversity.civicweb.net/document/57006/SCAD%20-%20Bachelor%20of%20Technology%20in%20Mining%20Engineering.pdf?handle=0B85BA2C20D7418389A1EBB33AFBC31A)
  - A Bachelor of Applied Science (International Collaboration) program in Engineering and Applied Science, which was approved.
    - This aims to facilitate participation of international students in our engineering programs but providing them credit for previous degree work
- A Graduate Diploma, Master of Science, and PhD in Aging and Health, which was approved.
  - [https://queensuniversity.civicweb.net/document/57026/SCAD%20Aging%20Diploma,%20MSc,%20PhD.pdf?handle=3A4099BC61E14E94B3FC7112E6D0A41B](https://queensuniversity.civicweb.net/document/57026/SCAD%20Aging%20Diploma,%20MSc,%20PhD.pdf?handle=3A4099BC61E14E94B3FC7112E6D0A41B)
- A Certificate in Academic Writing
  - This proposal was defeated on the floor of Senate, largely due to concerns raised by Student Senators that the process for “double-counting” of course credits needs to be revisited prior to attempting something of this sort.

- SCAD proposed the creation of the Department of Critical Care Medicine in the Faculty of Health Sciences, which was approved.
  - [https://queensuniversity.civicweb.net/document/57013/SCAD%20Department%20of%20Critical%20Care%20Medicine.pdf?handle=7986FF4DD8CB485499BC26C89B27C00F](https://queensuniversity.civicweb.net/document/57013/SCAD%20Department%20of%20Critical%20Care%20Medicine.pdf?handle=7986FF4DD8CB485499BC26C89B27C00F)
- SCAD proposed the establishment of the David Allgood Professorship in Business Law in the Faculty of Law, which was approved.
  - [https://queensuniversity.civicweb.net/document/57015/SCAD%20Department%20of%20Critical%20Care%20Medicine.pdf?handle=6E4BBD05D393460398F47EB3658367FE](https://queensuniversity.civicweb.net/document/57015/SCAD%20Department%20of%20Critical%20Care%20Medicine.pdf?handle=6E4BBD05D393460398F47EB3658367FE)
- There was proposal from SCAD to make modifications to the Spanish language program, shifting it to Hispanic Studies, thus expanding the opportunities of study from languages to the whole culture, which was approved.

- The Governance and Nominating Committee was originally requesting a one-time exemption for the Commerce Society Senator position, allowing them to elect students to a 4-month term followed by an 8-month term instead of their traditional 1-year term.
  - This was pulled from the agenda at the beginning of the meeting as it requires further investigation.

- A series of communications were presented to Senate:
  - An update on the Comprehensive International Planning Framework
  - The Queen's University International Center Annual Report
  - Aboriginal Council of Queen's University Annual Report
    - [https://queensuniversity.civicweb.net/document/56873/ACQU%20Annual%20Report%202014.pdf?handle=B3A16462ADB2403DB1BDC6673E100DAD](https://queensuniversity.civicweb.net/document/56873/ACQU%20Annual%20Report%202014.pdf?handle=B3A16462ADB2403DB1BDC6673E100DAD)
  - The Queen's School of Religion is submitting a proposal for the closure of their theology programs (graduate programs only)

And that's all I have for you wonderful councilors!

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Rapos
Graduate Student Senator
senator@sgps.ca
Hello Council,

The Capital Assets and Finance Committee will be meeting on May 8\textsuperscript{th}, 2015. The Board will be meeting on May 8\textsuperscript{th} and 9\textsuperscript{th}, 2015. I will be able to provide an update to Council once these meetings have taken place.

Respectfully submitted,

James MacLeod

Graduate Trustee
trustee@sgps.ca
Dear members of the SGPS,

I hope you had a great end of term. Please find the Commission’s updates below:

**Equity & Diversity Commission Open Meetings**

The Commission hosted its last open meeting of the semester at the beginning of March. Meetings will resume in September. Thank you for everyone who volunteered their time with the Commission this year.

**Name Change**

The Equity Commission is now officially referred to as the “Equity & Diversity Commission” after two motions were successfully passed at the March council meeting and the annual general meeting.

**CFS Consent Culture Conference**

Two members of the Equity & Diversity Commission attended the Consent Culture conference hosted by the CFS in Ottawa this past month. Commission members learned more about efforts to create a culture of consent on other CFS member campuses, as well as heard from speakers addressing numerous topics that intersect with the theme of consent.

Respectfully submitted,

**Erica Baker**  
Equity & Diversity Commissioner  
equity@sgps.ca
Meeting with the Vice Principal International

As a part of the new Internalization plan, proposed by the Vice Principal, International, I was invited to meet with her to discuss my experiences as International Student Affairs Commissioner, the current state of international student affairs in the SGPS, and the current internationalization plan. We had a very fruitful discussion, and I expressed my opinion that supervisory relationships and social isolation are the two issues that need to be foregrounded as a way of ensuring a good experience for all international SGPS members.

Queen’s University International Center

The Queen’s University International Center is hiring a new Queen’s University International center is hiring a new director, as Susan Anderson is leaving in June.

Career Workshop- Resume and Cover letter

Unfortunately, because a short period left for advertising the event, the resume and cover letter workshop scheduled for March 18th was cancelled. I will be in contact with Career Services throughout the summer in order to schedule a similar event in the coming fall term.

Jhordan Layne – international@sgps.ca
Dear SGPS council members and members at large,

It is with great pleasure the Student Advisors (SAs) present this report to you. We are including some of the major updates of the program however, for detailed updates please visit [http://www.sgps.ca/advisors/reports.html](http://www.sgps.ca/advisors/reports.html) for the term reports from each SA.

The SAs have initiated a new pilot project which encourages regular communication between students and supervisors through regular meetings and maintaining written records of these meetings. Requiring written documentation of the supervisory meetings would:

1. Establish the minimum standard of 1 supervisory meeting per month for fulltime students and 1 supervisory meeting every 2 months for part-time students
2. Provide a meeting outline/agenda for students and supervisors that requires them both to maintain focus on short and long-term goals
3. Create a written record of trial and errors so that ill thought-out experiments or chapter directions do not continue for months on end before being addressed
4. Creates accountability for supervisors, students, committee members and Graduate Coordinators/Graduate Heads

SAs have also made a variety of recommendations to the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) including,

1. More information that could be readily available for members of SGPS about medical leave and part-time status
2. Increasing the available emergency funds for international students especially students with families and dependent children
3. Devising inter-cultural awareness training programs to create cultural awareness and an inclusive community on campus
4. Making new opportunities to prepare international students and new graduates for job interviews
5. Formulating a new legal aid program that could support the SGPS members who are facing issues related intellectual property
6. Crafting a document that would outline the expectations of students and supervisors before the commencement of a graduate program

Student Advisor Program Review: Very recently SAs have been involved with evaluating the proposed changes for the program. The SAs are looking forward to receiving a detailed document that outlines the proposed changes for the program. Once this document is received we will meet with various stakeholders and Queen’s community members who offer similar services to gather information on how those services are efficiently run and potentially discuss the merits and potential challenges of the
proposed changes. Then we will make useful recommendations that will help to improve the services offered by the program. This is a lengthy process and the discussion about changes would have to be carried out throughout the 2015 summer term (with inputs from incoming executives) and the changes could be implemented for 2015 fall term.

Sincerely,

Student Advisors