

### **Provincial Differentiation Framework**

On November 29<sup>th</sup> the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities released more details on their “differentiation framework.” This represents the set of principles and objectives that will guide policy-making in advanced education in Ontario for the foreseeable future. Gone is the previous focus on greatly expanding the number of students at graduate and undergraduate level who are able to attend universities. Instead, institutions are being asked to define what they excel at in comparison to one another. The implication of this being that the ministry will allocate resources and attention to institutions based on their strengths. The ministry argues that this will avoid “needless replication” and other concerns. However, this has raised obvious concerns for the process that will be used to determine what the stronger and weaker departments, degrees, services, and approaches are at our own institution.

The SGPS is not taking any particular action on this so far but will be observing any changes by the university and the ministry to ensure that changes do not adversely affect our graduate and professional students. To view the ministry’s press release and related documents follow this link: <http://news.ontario.ca/tcu/en/2013/11/helping-colleges-and-universities-focus-on-their-strengths.html>.

### **Tuition Fees**

We continue to await final confirmation of the move of tuition fee changes for graduate and professional programs from May until September. As previously stated, we feel this will allow students a better capacity to adjust their budgeting when tuition increases are made.

Beyond this, I remain engaged in conversations with the administration to develop limits on tuition that can be paid while students who have submitted a thesis or major research project can wait before their project is assessed and/or they can defend the project and move towards graduation. Too many students have been forced to continue to pay extra tuition for no fault of their own, and this is unacceptable.

In the New Year, I hope to engage Council in a conversation on the concept of cohort-based tuition. In this model, students would be given a tuition guarantee when they receive their admission offer. This would inform them of the level of tuition that they will pay during their degree along with a promise that this level will not be increased. When paired with a clear statement of financial support and employment, this will give students both a capacity to make clearer decisions about their education, but also give them piece of mind to know that the deal will not change. I also intend to investigate the possibility of pairing this change with a promise of tuition reductions at different stages of degree completion. It is my view that this would have a significantly greater impact on times of completion than any of the other policies that have been proposed in recent years.

### **Collective Agreement**

PSAC 901 and Queen’s have negotiated a new collective agreement for TAs and TFs. First and foremost, I would like to congratulate the entire team for their hard work on negotiations that I know were very challenging. It is clear that, even given the relative youth of the union, they have been exceptionally effective at improving the compensation and protections for TAs and TFs at Queen’s. Further, I’d like to reiterate the importance of the strong relationship between the SGPS and PSAC 901 in improving services, support, and benefits for our mutual membership. I lastly want to call on Councilors to strongly encourage their peers to read the agreement when it is made available, to contact their union representatives with any questions or concerns, and to participate in the ratification vote on December 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Communications Coordinator**

We have hired our first Communications Coordinator and have already begun putting him to work assisting the SGPS with improving our communications and outreach. As the position is new, any and all feedback on activities the position could engage in are very welcome. As noted previously in Council, the position's effectiveness will be assessed next year.

As I will do every month, I encourage you all to follow me on Twitter @sgpspresident, where I will keep all my followers up to date on my activities and views. As always, never hesitate to contact me with ideas or concerns at [president@sgps.ca](mailto:president@sgps.ca).

Respectfully submitted,

Iain Reeve

President  
[president@sgps.ca](mailto:president@sgps.ca)

### **Senate Committee on Non-Academic Discipline (SONAD)**

SONAD is moving to a tri-annual reporting system. This means that we will get reports from all the non-academic discipline systems three times per year, and so will not be looking at things that occurred over a year before.

The SGPS report for 2012-2013 was prepared by James MacLeod and will be presented to the committee. There were three incidents referred to the SGPS non-academic discipline system. Two were found not to be within the jurisdiction of the SGPS system and one alcohol-related incident involving an SGPS member resulted in sanctions.

### **Human Resources**

We have hired a new Equity Commissioner, Tabasum Askeer. I am looking forward to working with her.

Our Executive Assistant, Anne-Marie Grondin, has given her notice. She will not be returning to work with the SGPS in January.

I am conducting annual review for our three full-time staff members.

### **Human Resources Committee**

The Human Resources Committee is looking at two main projects at the moment:

#### 1. Reporting template

We are creating an optional reporting template that those who are required to report to Council will be able to use if they would like to. The goal is to make preparing monthly reports easier and to make preparing year reports and transition documents easier as well.

#### 2. Position Review of the Executive Assistant Position

The Executive Assistant position was supposed to have been reviewed a year ago, 6 months after it started. This was in the motion that was passed when the position was created. The HR Committee is creating a process for this review. I will be collecting as much information as possible from Anne-Maire before she leaves us in order to facilitate this process.

### **Professional Students' Standing Committee**

I was unable to schedule a meeting time that facilitated all the committee members for December. I will try to reschedule for January.

### **Other Business**

Going forward, we will not be filling the seconder in on housekeeping motions at Council (adopting the Agenda, accepting reports, etc). Our hope is that Councillors will volunteer to second these motions and become more active at Council meetings.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

Cody Kolsteren Yorke

VP Professional  
vpp@sgps.ca

Dear SGPS Council Members and Members-At-Large,

Since I missed the deadline for the AGM report a few weeks back, and I had influenza and couldn't make the meeting, and a lot of you didn't make it either, I thought I would incorporate at least some of my term summary into this month's report so you can see what I've been up to and where I'm going...

## **In The Beginning**

I spent a good part of my term early on getting to know the membership, touring departments and finding out what issues grad students across campus were concerned about. I met so many people and learned about their work and some of the challenges they were facing. These meetings have influenced my work with the SGPS and have allowed me to bring personal stories to the table when we are speaking about grad student issues.

## **CFS**

I attended my first the national general meeting of the CFS in May. I used this opportunity to put forward a number of motions that had been compiled by the previous executive, and to start talks around a number of issues that are affecting Queen's Grads- including T2C, changes to t4/t4a, intellectual freedom and shifts in research funding. Many of these issues are also affecting Grads at other universities and we can all benefit from sharing information and organizing both at the university level and on a larger scale.

Dec 21-24 I attended my second national general meeting of the CFS. It was a really good opportunity to connect with Grads from other campuses and to learn about the issues affecting them. As Grad students we face many of the same issues. The big new campaigns that I learned about, that I'd like to bring here, are centered around child care and mental health. I was also able to get share lots of information about the attack on intellectual freedom, some of the ways we are approaching the issue at Queens and to get some great new materials and info I hope to use after the holidays.

## **Campaigns and Community Committee**

I need members! Have some ideas about campaigns you would like to see on campus? Want to get involved? Think that the SGPS could be more involved with the community and would like to help make that happen? Haven't joined a committee yet and are afraid of getting stuck on something boring? Come on. I know there are some great, involved councilors out there. I promise not to take up too much of your time. Send me a msg at [vpcca@sgps.ca](mailto:vpcca@sgps.ca) and let's shake this campus up! If you can't commit but know someone who can pass it on!

## **Get Science Right/ Evidence for Democracy**

This issue of intellectual freedom has been my main focus so far this year. Across Canada, politically inconvenient research continues to be shut down or silenced, federal funding for graduate research has been shifting drastically with base funding for federal research grants dropping appreciably in recent years, and 100% of all new NSERC, SSHRC, and CIHR funding in 2013 going to industry-linked research. The result has been an increasingly significant loss of public science for the public interest.

An issue that hits even closer to home for grad students is the one of "moral rights waivers." These waivers are becoming a standard feature of industry-linked and consultancy-based research contracts on which graduate research increasingly relies. These waivers shield industry and institutions from recourse when they breach standard research ethics practices.

I have been and will continue to offer in-department talks, round tables and workshops around these issues. If you would like me to bring this issue to your department directly please send me an e-mail. We can set up an informal, quick debrief during your monthly meeting or something larger like a workshop or a roundtable for the whole department.

I am also in the beginning stages of setting up a town hall on academic freedom. This is in the very early planning stages. I am currently in talks with the Get Science Right folks and the Evidence For Democracy folks and I already have at least one student committed to talking about their experience. If you have a story to share please let me know.

On another bent if you have a story you would like to share, but would like to keep it anonymous, I would still love to talk to you. I hope compile as many member experiences as possible.

### **Joint Task Force On Grad Studies**

This summer I organized a joint task force on grad studies. There are a number of groups on campus whose aim is to improve grad student life. My goal was/is to get these groups together on a regular basis to share information, and to co-ordinate on a variety of levels. So far the biggest success to come out of this initiative was a joint issue of the 901 Bite which was part of the orientation package for every new member. This issue included articles on a number of grad student issues including time to completion, T4vsT4 and an article I co-authored on intellectual freedom.

On December 9th the SGPS and PSAC held a little get together to celebrate the successful (but as of yet unratified) negotiation of a TA contract for 901. This get together gave us a good chance to talk about some of the work that PSAC 901 and the SGPS collaborate on.

### **Bullying, Harassment and Mental Health**

Queens recently hired an embedded councilor for the School of Graduate Studies. This is great news since mental health is such an important issue for graduate students. It will be terrific to have someone who specializes in Grad student issues to talk to. However, I would hate for the initiative to end there. Grad School is a stressful place for a number of reasons. I am interested in learning about the structural issues that make it so stressful, and how the SGPS can help to tackle the issue at its roots. This initiative is in its initial stages and I am hoping to collaborate with a number of groups on campus. In the meantime there's this survey designed by the CFS to get us started. <http://fs24.formsite.com/cfsontario/form10/index.html>

That about sums up where I've been and where I'm going for now. Have a super break and I'll see you in the new year.

Thanks,

Meagan Crane

VP Campaigns & Community Affairs  
vpcca@sgps.ca

Due to the major commitments I have the first of December (being exams) this will be a very short report.

The last month has been incredibly busy attending Alumni events including the John Orr dinner where we met numerous Alumni who are looking forward to paring up with us for some events n the near future.

The finance & services committee continues to adjudicate applications for emergency student aid, dental assistance and grant programs. The New Year has a lot of great events happening on campus & I encourage everyone to get out and get involved!

I have also met with the graduate students at RMC and we are partnering up with them for some social events and community building-more details in the New Year.

I am delighted to let everyone know that we have been in discussions with PSAC 901 with respect to the health and dental plan partnership and soon we will be able to reveal those details.

The month of December looks to be a busy one as I work organizing and assembling donations for the Holiday Assistance Program.

Respectfully submitted,

Jillian Burford-Grinnell  
[vpfs@sgps.ca](mailto:vpfs@sgps.ca)

## **Human Resources**

With Becky's guidance, I created a new Work-Study position. The Student Advisor Assistant will provide administrative, reporting and outreach support for the Student Advisors (who continue to see increased demand for their peer-to-peer support). Though several people applied for the position, we realized that Career Services mistakenly had placed the job advertisement outside the Work-Study job bank. The majority of applicants were, alas, not eligible for the position. As I reported last month, I met with Career Services to discuss improvements to the online interface for Work-Study. While the position was correctly reposted in the aftermath, hiring for this position has unfortunately been delayed in the process. We were finally able to proceed with interviews in late November. We interviewed two candidates, and selected Parisa Abedhi Zhoozani to take on the new role.

After putting out a second call for the position of Equity Commissioner, we interviewed four very strong candidates late in the month of November. Since she will not yet have received orientation at the time these reports are due, I will hereby introduce you to the newest addition to our team, Tabasum Akseer. You will be able to reach Tabasum by email at [equity@sgps.ca](mailto:equity@sgps.ca) as of December 4, 2013.

Congratulations, Parisa and Tabasum!

## **Training**

Along with the Executive, our newest Student Advisor, Erin, and the members of the SGPS Judicial Committee, I took Conflict Resolution Training with John Curtis on November 19, 2013. Having now completed the training with different training providers, I can say with some degree of confidence that John Curtis' services are on right on par with the work of SGPS staff and Executive members, and best suited to our needs. With further preparation for the different types of roles we play within our organization, I feel that Mr. Curtis would be able to provide training that is even more specific to respective our positions in the future. I strongly recommend continued use of his training services.

## **Committee Representation**

We continue to seek urgent graduate student representation for the Faculty of Health Science. Representatives must be enrolled within the Faculty to be eligible.

- 1 MSc or PhD student for the Joint Health & Safety Committee
- 1 MSc student for the Graduate Council

For more details, please email me at: [ea@sgps.ca](mailto:ea@sgps.ca) .

## **Council Attendance and Reporting**

In response to the concerns raised at the Fall General Meeting a few weeks ago, I met with Iain and the remainder of the Executive to discuss how we can increase meeting attendance and reporting. The SGPS is currently exploring several avenues for redress: 1) team building in January; 2) training; 3) restructuring Council; 4) report templates; and 5) reducing workloads for Coordinators. On the last point, I am submitting a motion at this meeting which would eliminate our Coordinators' responsibility to provide written reports to Council. Council may remember that I sat on our Coordinator and Commissioners staff evaluations last Winter. Consistently, Coordinators expressed difficulty separating their work from the work of the Commissioner or other Coordinators; Coordinators also found it frustrating to spend what little time they have working for us at Council meetings or preparing reports. I believe these reasons explain in part why Council attendance and reporting is not always prioritized. And since Commissioners are responsible for the activities of their respective Commissions as a whole, I will be asking Council to consider removing the obligation for Coordinators to also provide reports.

Respectfully,

Anne-Marie Grondin  
Executive Assistant  
[ea@sgps.ca](mailto:ea@sgps.ca)

Hello Council,

Welcome to our last meeting of the semester! I trust that you are all looking forward to a little downtime after what has been a very busy Fall term.

Owing to some concerns surrounding adequate representation at the General Meeting, we have opted to push the Council Working Group recommendations to this meeting. Please note the inclusion of these materials in the Council package. We welcome your feedback on this matter!

This will be a short report this month, as at the time of writing the Board of Trustees meeting has not yet taken place. I will be attending the Board meeting and the Capital Assets and Finance Committee meetings on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of December. As always, I will provide Council an overview on the activities of the Board in my next report.

Enjoy the upcoming break!

Respectfully submitted,

James MacLeod

Speaker & Trustee  
speaker@sgps.ca



Dear SGPS Council,

November has been a busy month for the SGPS Social Team. We successfully hired new Planning and Athletics Coordinators. Both have been settling into their jobs, and have brought some great new ideas for events in the New Year.

We hosted a mixer for SGPS members and post-graduate students from RMC at the Grad Club November 28. We had a great turn out from our SGPS members, and met a lot of new students who hadn't been out to any of our events before. Unfortunately no students from RMC attended. We heard after the event that many were in the middle of writing final exams, so perhaps that was why we had low turnout.

Our Sports Hours continued throughout November, we played soccer, badminton, floor hockey, and volleyball. As always, we had a lot of students turn out for all of these. As of early November the Sports Hours are now being advertised on the SGS Events webpage, as well as the usual Facebook posts.

The Social Team has been working with the Education Student Society to help plan their Winter Welcome Week the first week of January. We have offered to host a mixer Monday, January 6 at the Grad Club, and will be providing some food and beverages for those students who win a campus scavenger hunt earlier in the day.

The Social Team is hosting our final events of 2013 in the first week of December. A board games night is being held in the Social Lounge on December 4, and we are playing squash December 6.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaux MacDonald

Social Commissioner  
social@sgps.ca

### SGPS Computer Network

- I am working with the CFS to update the registrant name on our domain. Queen's requires a change to the registrant name in order to to maintain compliance with our secure certificate provider.
- I have started the necessary work to test and quality assure a new server framework that we will use to update our mail and wiki server.
- I installed some new back-end server software that is necessary to allow new services from our server. The new services will allow us to streamline some office work and improve our customer service for those people that visit our office. More details to follow in subsequent reports to Council.
- The Queen's network continues to experience e-mail delays and I continue to work with Queen's to make sure SGPS e-mails are delivered properly without delay. We haven't yet had any significant delays. I will stay on top of this.
- I have completed the necessary testing of OS X 10.9. I have discovered some upgrade issues and I will be able to mitigate those issues when installing the new software. I intend to start this process over the holiday office closure.

### SGPS Website

- I have started to rework some of the icons on the website to make navigation a little easier (and improve aesthetics of the site). I will continue to work on icons and the overall aesthetic of the site.
- I have added the holiday assistance program page to our website. Please pass along this initiative far and wide:

<http://www.sgps.ca/events/donate.html>

### Communications

- I am working on the notice boards in the JDUC and MacCorry with a hope to be completed in January.
- I am working to update the signage at our office to make sure people that visit our office are aware of our services.
- We are working on a significant improvement to the reception area of our office. It has been over a decade since anything meaningful was done. Our intention is to totally change the layout so we can better serve members that visit our office. Look for an update (and a picture!) in my next report.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sean Richards - [info@sgps.ca](mailto:info@sgps.ca)

Hello Everyone!

Finally we are approaching the end of the fall term! Here is the summary of what we have been up to.

1. Expanding the networking opportunity for international students

I have attended the Kingston Chamber of Commerce Mixer on November 21<sup>st</sup>, where I have met the international student advisor from St. Lawrence College. She suggested that we can co-organize some networking events together for the international students from Queen's University and St. Lawrence College. She mentioned that they do have international students graduated from Queen's and went to the College to take some part-time courses, such as French, Spanish. Other than their home language and English, international students may want to learn another language from the beginner level. Such fundamental language courses may not be offered from Queen's, and sometimes it is important to let students know the other opportunities available in Kingston Area.

2. Networking Tour

The date for the networking tour has been finalized! It will happen on Feb 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014, which is during the reading week. Cooperating with KIP and Kingston Innovation Park, we are about to bring the students to the Innovation Park to show them the various business there, to meet the businessman and to learn the entrepreneurship. At the end of the day, there will be a mixer for students to communicate with the businessman in person and exchange their contact information.

3. International student Bursary Form

Helped the SGPS staff to refine the international student bursary form. We were trying our best to reduce the confusion and make a clear and concise form for international students to fill in. The form will be available online shortly.

Please feel free to get in touch if you have any concerns, or if you have any ideas would like to share. Good luck to everyone's final exams and enjoy the holiday season!

Tian Lu  
International Student Affairs Commissioner

Kris Singh  
International Student Affairs Coordinator

Over the past month, I have been working with several community organizations to assist with the organizing of the December 6<sup>th</sup> vigil as well as International Women's Week. The vigil is being held this Friday, Dec. 6 at 4 pm at Sydenham United Church. Everyone is welcome to attend. For IWW, we are working on organizing events for the start and end of the week, and local businesses and organizations host most of the events throughout the week. I will be working with the Equity Commissioner and the Equity Standing Committee to look into organizing an event on campus for IWW.

Last month I attended a meeting of the Positive Space Steering Committee. This group is currently looking into revising the Positive Space Award, both in terms of what is awarded (it has traditionally been a monetary award) and how the nomination and application process is conducted. I am working with several representatives from that Committee to draft the terms of reference for the award and develop a new application procedure. The nomination period will be in the new year so we have our work cut out for us in the next few weeks.

As I mentioned in one of my previous reports, the Equity Committee is working with the Human Rights and Equity Offices to develop a self-identification survey for all graduate and professional students at Queen's. The first step for this project is getting the GREB application submitted and approved and so I am working on developing the documents that will go into that application (e.g. cover letter, survey).

Finally, I just wanted to express how happy I am that we have a new Equity Commissioner. It will be great to have a team to work with to keep all of the important equity-related initiatives moving forward!

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Webber

Equity Coordinator  
equityco@sgps.ca

Hello everyone,

Here is an update of my activities over the last month:

### 1) Energy Management

We have drafted up the final version of the Energy Management Policy for SLC buildings and will be seeking to have it approved at SLC Council within the coming weeks. SGPS will have to provide a statement of endorsement for the Policy, which I will discuss with President Ian Reeves once the Policy document is ready. We also had an energy audit performed for the JDUC by Nathan Splinter, the Energy Manager at Queen's University. He has given us a lot of ideas regarding ways of reducing both energy and water consumption in the JDUC and will be assisting us in assessing the reductions from these processes as we try to make the business case for sustainability projects in the SLC buildings. We are hoping to prepare some proposals by next semester so that we can potentially tap into some of the JDUC Revitalization Fund.

### 2) SGPS Sustainability Standing Committee

The final Committee meeting for the semester was held on Wednesday (November 27<sup>th</sup>). Topics of discussion included a review of the outcome of the most recent Sustainability Action Funded events. We then proceeded to a discussion regarding an interesting pilot study being proposed by Committee member Ningsi Mei pertaining to an entrepreneurial endeavour that she is undertaking which is focussed on creating a sustainable laundry alternative for students. The meeting concluded with some discussion regarding where we would like to focus our efforts next semester. I am very interested in continuing creating and promoting informational sustainability events on-campus, but I am interested in seeing how we can get more applied sustainability projects up and running (similar to what Ningsi Mei is proposing) as well as increasing our collaboration with outside groups. Next semester will be focussed on capacity building for next year and our meetings will hopefully be done in conjunction with the AMS Right Directions Forum.

### 3) First Ever Queen's Sustainability Innovation Competition (Tentative Title)

I am in discussions with Colin Robinson from the AMS as well as Annie (an Intern with Commission of Environment and Sustainability) regarding an idea to start an annual Sustainability Innovation Competition. The contest will involve a call-out to all interested participants (both graduate and undergraduate students) who have a unique and interesting sustainability idea that they would like to implement on-campus and are looking for some funding to assist with it. It will emphasize more applied and innovative ideas that bring about tangible benefit. The rationale for this is that we hope to use this event as a way of not only making use of the remaining SAF money by the end of the year, but also as a way of further encouraging and advertising sustainability projects on-campus. The idea has just recently come up in discussion, but we hope to start planning things out within the coming semester.

That is everything for now.

Sincerely,

Gulaid A. Egeh

Sustainability Coordinator  
sustainability@sgps.ca

Dear Members of the SGPS Council,

Preparations for the upcoming Rector elections in January are well underway. The SGPS has set aside funds to contribute \$75 to each candidate in the Rector election, which will be matched by a \$225 (per candidate) contribution from the AMS. I have been in contact with the AMS Elections team and we are in the process of finalizing nomination packages and coordinating a marketing campaign to encourage voter turnout. Details of the campaign should be finalized by December 15<sup>th</sup>.

Since the Rector election coincides with the AMS general election, AMS participation is likely to be high. However, the position of Rector is meant to represent all students, including members of the SGPS. Thus, it is especially important that graduate and professional students vote in the upcoming election in order to ensure that their concerns are heard, as well.

Anyone interested in running is strongly encouraged to do so. The nomination period will open in the first week of the winter term. Nomination packages will be available at the AMS and SGPS front desks.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Levick

Chief Returning Officer  
cro@sgps.ca