

Dear Council:

I'm writing this only a week after our General Meeting, so there isn't much new to report.

### **Harassment Policy**

I've had continued discussion with both the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Principal about the gap in our harassment policies. I expect by January we should know which body is going to take charge of amending our policies to fill this gap.

### **Education Ancillary Fees**

I met with Associate Dean Peter Chin about ancillary fees in the BEd program. The Faculty should be getting me copies of the specific budgets for each course fee so we can flag any fees that look like they may not be Ministry-compliant. Once we've flagged the fees I intend to discuss them with the ESS to find out whether the services that are paid for by those fees are of value to Education students. If they are, some of the ancillary fees can still be maintained if endorsed through a student referendum. Otherwise I will push to have the fees discontinued.

### **JDUC Washroom Renovations**

I've been having talks with the AMS about financing for the planned renovations to the JDUC washrooms. While the Student Life Centre has \$70,000 budgeted each year for capital projects, the university's moratorium on internal loans has created a cash flow problem regarding the up-front-costs of the renovations. Because the SGPS has a significant accumulated surplus, we're exploring whether it makes sense for us to finance the renovations (at a market interest rate). This would both provide additional income to the SGPS budget and help improve one of our student life spaces.

Respectfully submitted,



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

### Student Advisor Program

The SGPS has four fully trained Student Advisors available to assist graduate and professional students with advocacy and support services. Their office hours this Fall Term are:

- Mondays 10:00 am- 12:00 noon
- Tuesdays 1:30- 3:30 pm
- Wednesdays 10:00 am- 12:00 noon
- Thursdays 3:00- 5:00 pm

SGPS members can reach the Student Advisors by emailing [advisors@sgps.ca](mailto:advisors@sgps.ca).  
Visit the website! <http://www.sgps.ca/services/advisors.html>

Dear Members of Council,

Like many students, I'm left wondering what happened to the fall term, it went by so speedily! While I've been up to my ears in regular committee meetings including GSLAG, SRC, GSEC, QNS, Ban Righ Board, ASJHSC, and firming up the new Graduate Academic Caucus, here's a rundown of what I've been up to and what's forthcoming:

### Grad Supervisor Handbook Revisions

As mentioned in my last report, the major theme of CAGS was trying to steer grad students toward the idea that their PhDs may not equate to a career in academia. My takeaway was a concern that graduate supervisors and coordinators also need to be nudged as well. I met with Career Services and SGS to talk about some ideas of how to do this. One doable way that SGS is amenable to is adding language and a link to Career Services in the Graduate Supervision Handbook under sections where supervisor roles include assisting students in their professional development. As well, in the back of the book, there is a 'sliding scale' of expectations. I suggested that this conversation about expectations should be encouraged at the beginning of a student's graduate degree and should include something about what their career goals and expectations are. This way, supervisors can find resources over time as opposed to last minute--in other words, if a supervisor knows a student is interested in doing this or that job with the skills that they acquire at Queen's, and that supervisor encounters information or even opportunities about this or that job, the supervisor can steer it toward the student. Many students in some faculties enjoy this already. Others, especially those in the social sciences and humanities, however, tend to be 'trained' as professors and professors alone. A discussion of 'expectations' early on I think is helpful. What are your thoughts? I'd love to hear them. In the meantime, have a look at the Grad Supervision Handbook for current language. Page 8 says supervisors should advise students on career options and opportunities, but it actually does not guide supervisors to where they can learn about career options and opportunities. This may be less of an issue for degree programs that lead right into industry, but it remains a significant issue for degrees that appear to lead into academia alone.

<http://www.queensu.ca/sgs/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.sgswww/files/files/Students/13-0360%20Graduate%20Supervision%20Handbook.pdf>

### Annual Student Advisor Program Evaluation

I have already begun the process, but I'll be hard at work through December undertaking the annual Student Advisor Program evaluation, a process that is a part of the mandate and Memorandum of Agreement with SGS. I have sent out questionnaires to different helping offices and individuals, am awaiting feedback from these as well as the Student Advisors themselves, and will collate all of this along with info on the kinds of cases and recommendations that our Program has dealt with this year, then write and submit a report at year's end. I would like to invite anyone who has

used the Student Advisor Program to confidentially share their thoughts about the program and its advocacy services. Please email me directly at [vpg@sgps.ca](mailto:vpg@sgps.ca) if you have feedback about the Student Advisor Program by December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

### Promoting the Student Advisor Program

I have now four meetings in December lined up with three Deans and an Ombudsperson from four different universities to discuss various initiatives those schools have undertaken to improve student-supervisory relations while some of these folks also requested information about our Student Advisor Program, the services it offers students, how it got off the ground, how we work with SGS and more. I have also secured a panel position at the next GU15 in Calgary to talk about the program to grad student reps from the top 15 research universities in Canada in the spring. There is a lot of interest in the SGPS Student Advisor Program from other GSAs and university administrations. I think all of this speaks well to how wonderful and useful our service really is. I encourage SGPS Councilors to remind people in their departments that we have this wonderful resource and to reach out to the Student Advisors whenever they need to. In the meantime, I will continue to promote the program at Queen's and around the country. Another means we are now developing to do this is by creating either a video or webinar that will serve as a kind of documentary about the Student Advisor Program that we can deploy to GSAs and administrators. I think this helps raise the profile of our Program even further while forming and solidifying relationships with other grad societies by helping them start their own peer advocacy programs.

### Graduate Academic Caucus (GAC)

Our first meeting went well though only a few people were able to come. We expect fuller attendance at our next meeting on December 16<sup>th</sup> now that members know more about what's happening. One thing we have done is to formulate a plan for reportage in the case that members can't make it to GAC. Most importantly, members of GAC need to submit agenda packages from their Faculty Graduate Councils/Committees and write a brief report of the discussion at these Councils/Committees so that everyone is aware of particular issues that have arisen, or the mood of a particular faculty regarding an issue that is being discussed campus wide. Importantly, these also help the Senator and the VPG better prepare for GSEC. One of the issues that emerged in our first GAC meeting was a discussion from Engineering about the potential of promoting or fast-tracking students directly into PhD, perhaps from the Bachelor's Degree or midway through the Master's. Perhaps Council Members and members at large have questions, concerns, or information about the possibility of promotions to the PhD. Please email me or your Faculty Grad Council/Committee reps if you have questions or feedback you'd like to share about this or other issues that arise. Your rep can talk about these concerns at Faculty Grad Council/Committee meetings while your Senator and VPG can follow up at GSEC. Please do reach out!

### **Graduate Academic Caucus Membership List 2014-2015**

SGPS VP Graduate- Dinah Jansen (Chair) [vpg@sgps.ca](mailto:vpg@sgps.ca)  
Senator- Eric Rapos [senator@sgps.ca](mailto:senator@sgps.ca)

**Faculty of Engineering & Applied Sciences Grad Council**  
Hossein Khonsari, Sarah Seitz, Gerry Angelatos

#### **Education:**

Vita-Marie Ross, James Murray

#### **Faculty of Law Grad Committee:**

Pascale Levesque

#### **Graduate Committee for Business:**

Tashfeen Hussain

**Faculty of Arts Grad Council:** Jared Houston, Fallon Bowman

**Faculty of Science Grad Council:**  
Dave Northeast, Danielle Porplycia

**Faculty of Health Sciences Graduate Council:**  
Piriya Yoganathan, Kristin Ostler

Respectfully Submitted,

Dinah Jansen  
Vice President Graduate  
[vpg@sgps.ca](mailto:vpg@sgps.ca)



Dear SGPS Council Members,

I do not have much to report since the GM 2 weeks ago.

For those who were not at the GM, I have one very exciting update. One of my largest goals for the year was to put in place a committee to plan professional student events, with the underlying goal of bringing together different young professionals across campus. For many in programs like Law, Medicine, or Rehab Therapy, exposure to other groups on campus is very limited, and it is difficult from within one faculty or school to reach out to the different programs on campus, which span across both the AMS and the SGPS.

The committee I put together planned and executed its first event on November 22, and involved Law, Medicine, MBA, Rehab Therapy, and Education. We rented a rink at the K-Rock center, secured more than 70 pairs of skate rentals, and offered free admission and skate rentals. We had approximately **130-150 professional students** come out for an evening of festive music, ugly holiday sweater competitions, and skating. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and many were given the chance to make friends and acquaintances in different programs. We also collected food items and made a substantial donation to local food banks (two large Rubbermaid bins full!).

I was ecstatic about the turnout and the work of the committee. Our next event is underway, and if the success continues, this initiative will be worth expanding to include more students and perhaps a larger budget.

I have only one or two meetings in December, and will be taking time off to go home and see family. I will continue to check my email over the break, but will be leaving campus sometime around December 15. If anyone ever wants to enjoy an eggnog with me I have a mean recipe, so hit me up.

Happy Holidays to everyone!

Thompson Hamilton  
Vice-President Professional  
vpp@sgps.ca

Hey Council,

Papers marked. Grades uploaded. Office hours lonely. Chapters drafted. Semester done!

### **Advisory Committees & Administrative Meetings**

I met with the Student Wellness, Health, and Safety Working Group and the Provost's Advisory Committee on Mental Health. Both meetings were quite fruitful and in particular, I spoke directly to Deputy Provost Daneshmend about the lack of a framework for teaching fellows who require accommodations through either the DSO, or assistance through HCDS, and how this or even an involuntary withdrawal would seriously impact their labour, departmental duties, and continued status in their respective program. I'm quite pleased to say that he was particularly concerned and interested in finding a solution with all stakeholders involved. I've also brought this matter to the attention of our allies in PSAC901 as we hope to collectively solve this problem.

### **Campaigns and Community Affairs Standing Committee**

A big thank you to those of you who have helped me running our Holiday Assistance Program (HAP) and also our Food For Fines program. Both are in full swing and unfortunately both will have concluded by the time that council meets but currently we are still accepting donations for either. I'd also like to thank Andria and the rest of our office staff for making HAP such a success!

I met with Stauffer's logistics officer and through some discussion we were able to resurrect the Food For Fines program! Basically, students may lower their late and overdue fines at any library on campus by bringing in non-perishable donations to any circulation desk, to a maximum of ten dollars. The benefits of which will help stock both our own HAP as well as the AMS/SGPS Food Centre; also, I'd like to thank our partners at the AMS, the Food Centre Coordinator, and their Social Issues Commissioner, who have graciously agreed to help me poster, campaign, and otherwise spread the word on social media about this wonderful opportunity.

### **Community Affairs**

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

As an advisory member of Queen's Day Care board I attended a recent meeting where some interesting developments were discussed. I unfortunately for the sake of privacy cannot discuss them any further which is especially annoying since our colleagues in PSAC901 were particularly interested in this information, but as soon as I am allowed to, I will begin discussing everything that I am able to with our membership.

The first person who is not a member of our executive or directly connected to the SGPS to email me what their favourite food might be, real or imagined, will get a free coffee, on me.

### **Work Study or Research Assistant**

If you're a student in business, economics, management or policy studies, or have interests or abilities in any of those topics, please contact me for an exciting and largely self-directed opportunity to serve as a research Assistant for a Special Project that I'd like to undertake in the new year. This position is well paid, I don't micromanage, and I like to reward success. Please let Andria (ea@sgps.ca) know if you're interested.

Dear SGPS Council Members,

I regret not being able to attend December Council as I have a conflicting exam.

There were a number of policy updates ratified at our last General Meeting and we are now working on implementing these. On the same note, I am drafting some further policy which I hope to have ratified at January's Council. First, we are defining the term "emergency" for the purposes of the Emergency Student Aid bursary. Second, we are creating formal policy on the International Student Bursary to give guidance in processing those applications.

At the GM, we presented a midterm financial update. We spoke about our spending to date, and about potentially changing our annual audit practise. Please see the appendices and minutes from the GM for more information. Alternatively, I am more than happy to meet, discuss, and take feedback on the matter.

I wish everyone the best with exams, and a happy holiday season. I look forward to coming back in the new year to finish our ongoing projects and work with you all.

Best Regards,

Patrick Gajos  
VP Finance and Services  
vpfs@sgps.ca

Ho-ho-holy cow it is December! Do you know what that means?

*It's Time for the SGPS Holiday Assistance Program!*

Unfortunately, by the time this gets to Council the collection period for donations to our annual Holiday Assistance Program will have ended, although the disbursement of donations will have just begun. **If you are in need of assistance this holiday season, please reach out to me at [ea@sgps.ca](mailto:ea@sgps.ca) by 4pm on Thursday December 11<sup>th</sup>.**

I would like to thank Leah Sarson, VPCCA Lorne Beswick, the entire Campaigns and Community Affairs Committee, and all of the SGPS members and Queen's community members that donated. Without all of you giving of your time and your resources, none of this would have been possible. I personally thank you and the SGPS thanks you.

For those of you who do not know, the SGPS Holiday Assistance Program looks to help those of our members who are struggling with financial hardships. The goal of the program is for us to empower these members and relieve some of their winter stress. Although I am currently unable to provide donation totals, as at my time of writing the donation period has yet to close, I am certain that we will be able to meet the needs of our members.

#### **AODA Policy Writer/Analyst**

After a very competitive hiring process, I am pleased to announce that Sarah Budd will be serving as our AODA Policy Writer on a temporary contract basis. Ms. Budd will be responsible for bringing the SGPS into across the board compliance with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. We are tremendously grateful to all of the applicants. I encourage all of our members to keep an eye on the SGPS Newsletter for any future employment opportunities.

#### **New HR Training Model**

The day of the November Council meeting was also the day that we piloted our new training model for incoming Appointees of Council and Executives. This new model has the entirety of Bylaw and Policy mandated training occurring within one day with job specific training occurring in the morning alongside AODA and Anti-Oppression training, and Conflict Resolution training taking place over the entire afternoon. While this is a very intense schedule, both for incoming Appointees of Council/Executives as well as permanent staff, it ensures that everyone receives exactly the same training and that all training is completed within a timely manner. As this was our first test run, we still have some timing bugs to work out but overall it was a success! I would like to thank our newly appointed Commissioners and Coordinators for being such wonderful participants.

#### **Elections Canada**

Elections Canada has reached out to me, hoping that SGPS members would like to apply to the position of "Youth Community Relations Officer." This position would last for four weeks once the election period is called. The expected election date is October 19th 2015 (subject to change), therefore the successful candidate would be working at least 50 hours total from approximately September 21st 2015 to October 19th 2015. Previous hires have gone on to work for Elections Canada once they graduate so it may prove to be an invaluable experience. For more information, or to apply, please [contact me](#).

#### **Volunteer Opportunities**

As always our SGPS committees need YOU! Committees provide a great way to socialize while building marketable skills. Time commitments and requirements vary based on committee, so please feel free to check out [this list](#) on our website and [contact me](#) to get involved!



There are also countless committee volunteer opportunities that are external to the SGPS. Whether you are interested in art installations or academic policy, we can certainly find an external committee for you! Please [reach out to me](#) if you are interested in serving on an external committee or if you are currently serving on one.

In closing, I would like to wish all of you the happiest of holidays. I hope you are all able to take some time to renew yourselves and relax after the end of term chaos comes to a close. Don't forget, if you have questions regarding graduate/professional student life or any questions about getting involved with/employment at the SGPS please [email me](#).

Respectfully submitted,

Andria Mahon  
Executive Assistant  
[ea@sgps.ca](mailto:ea@sgps.ca)



Society of Graduate and Professional Students  
Report of the Speaker  
December 2014

Dear Council,

Have a safe and restful Holiday, and my best wishes to you for a joyous and rewarding new year!

Kind regards,

Max Ma  
Speaker ([speaker@sgps.ca](mailto:speaker@sgps.ca))

P.S. The Society's Fall GM went successfully. Thank you to all who made it.

Hello Council,

The term is almost over! We did it!

### **GSEC Meeting – November 20, 2014**

- Dean's Report:
  - Fall convocation saw the conferring of 777 advanced degrees and diplomas
- Approvals:
  - GSEC Pre Approved both a Professional Masters and a Graduate Diploma in Biomedical Computing
  - GSEC Pre Approved a Master of Earth and Energy Resources Leadership Program
  - GSEC Approved the Sessional Dates for 2015-2016
  - GSEC Approved the Omnibus Report and Fellowship report.
- Discussions:
  - None

### **Senate Meeting – December 2, 2014**

- The agenda for the December Senate Meeting can be found here:  
<https://queensuniversity.civicweb.net/Portal/MeetingInformation.aspx?Org=Cal&Id=611>
- This month's meeting was very short, and there wasn't too much going on, but here is the recap.
- In response to the Principal's report on the Board-Senate Retreat, myself and a number of other student Senators and Trustees felt some details were missing from the report, specifically addressing individual outcomes of the retreat – so I asked the Principal if he would be willing to provide a point by point report on each of the outcomes, addressing progress made and/or plans to address each.
  - He agreed and will be preparing this for January. I will be working with him to ensure that his response meets our request.
- Senate approved the following motions from the Senate Committee on Academic Development:
  - The creation of a combined MSc (Healthcare Quality) and MBA, details found here:  
[https://queensuniversity.civicweb.net/document/49654/SCAD%20Combined%20MSc\(HQ\)%20MBA.pdf?handle=F69504D7015A48BDAC851262A00B6849](https://queensuniversity.civicweb.net/document/49654/SCAD%20Combined%20MSc(HQ)%20MBA.pdf?handle=F69504D7015A48BDAC851262A00B6849)
  - The addition of a one year course based pattern to the MA in Gender Studies, details found here:  
<https://queensuniversity.civicweb.net/document/49660/SCAD%20Major%20Modification%20Gender%20Studies.pdf?handle=FABDFAD36EAA4EF4BOC38BB2084AC6DE>
  - Updates to the Queen's University Quality Assurance Program (QUQAP) policy, as seen here:  
<https://queensuniversity.civicweb.net/document/49666/Amendments%20to%20QUQAP%20Policy.pdf?handle=1DF546710A654987A8E02162C7567B4B>
- Senate approved the following motions from the Senate Governance and Nominating Committee:
  - The Nominating Report, seen here:  
<https://queensuniversity.civicweb.net/document/49857/Nominating%20Report.pdf?handle=E19E423B142741208A53D330F31ED2CF>
  - Revised Terms of Reference for the Senate Committee on Academic Development, as seen here:  
<https://queensuniversity.civicweb.net/document/49647/SCAD%20TOR.pdf?handle=F70B569AB8384871B95DBFB041127E17>
  - Additionally, the following items were communicated as a notice of motion, and for information respectively:

- Notice of motion to changes to the Senate Committee on Non-Academic Discipline, as seen here: <https://queensuniversity.civicweb.net/document/49859/SONAD%20TOR%20-%20Notice.pdf?handle=E6A6B8CB1E444D9D8BA9F9A35DD36001>
- An update was provided on the Senate Effectiveness Survey, specifically based on expert feedback the previously circulated draft is not sufficient and will not yield adequate results, so the committee is beginning the process again to draft a survey.
- The 2014/15 Enrollment report was presented for information, and can be found here: <https://queensuniversity.civicweb.net/document/49746/Enrolment%20Report.pdf?handle=1D1C4374BF6B498082DA25B836EE976E>

And that about wraps up my December Council Report! As always, if you have any questions please ask.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Rapos  
Graduate Student Senator  
[senator@sgps.ca](mailto:senator@sgps.ca)

Hello Council,

The Capital Assets and Finance Committee will be meeting on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014. The Board will be meeting on December 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014. 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

### SGPS Computer Network

- We are completing renovations at our office over the winter holiday. Every piece of furniture and technology needs to be removed from our office as we are getting new flooring. As a result, I have had to design alternative plans to house our servers and important workstations while they will not be in the office. I have spent the bulk of my time this month working to find alternative locations for our servers and preparing our network to be moved. Certainly my goal is to maintain as close to 100% uptime of our servers as possible so email is not affected and access to our website and wiki systems is not compromised while the servers are not in their usual location. This proved more time consuming than I had hoped. I am happy, however, to report that all plans are in place and testing is complete. I will be moving everything the week of December 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Further to the above point, I have also had to redesign our network because of office location moves as we are moving the location of 3 of our permanent staff and I had to make sure all access points were ported to new locations and making sure that security was still working.

### SGPS Website

- I have been using 'Siteimprove' to monitor my progress in updating to our site to make sure it is in compliance with AODA standards. I am happy to report our website is 100% in compliance with AODA (years ahead of schedule!).

### Communications

- I have spent more time finalizing the health/dental plan details for the upcoming release of our new health/dental section of our website. I am still anticipating a go-live date on our site some time in December.

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

# REPORT

Submitted by the Equity Commissioner

SGPS December 2, 2014

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## **REPORT BY THE EQUITY COMMISSIONER**

### **Introduction**

Per my contract with SGPS, my first day of work occurred on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2014. My first assignment was to work with Andria Mahon, Executive Assistant and Thompson Hamilton, Vice President Professional to interview and hire an Equity Coordinator and Sustainability Coordinator. November 11, 2014 was a training session for me and the other Commissioners and Coordinators.

My first week of work was marred by the fact that I had health challenges and had not yet worked out possible accommodations with SGPS. I became overwhelmed with my responsibilities and wanted to resign. However, Sean Richards, the SGPS Director was very helpful in communicating to me SGPS' support and willingness to help me find accommodations that would help me perform all my responsibilities and so I did not resign.

I decided to spend my first month in office interacting with stakeholders in Equity on Queen's campus and members of equity seeking groups in order to get a clear sense of the important issues that the Equity Desk should avert its mind to and tackle. I also decided to use this period to attend as many training sessions as possible to equip me for this position. Finally, I decided to interact with the Equity Coordinator to come up with an agenda for our Desk and also decide how to manage the committees that members of the Equity Desk sit on.

### **Interacting with Stakeholders and Attending Meetings**

I met with Emily Wong, the Social Issues Commissioner of AMS. I wanted to find out whether there were areas that our Desks could collaborate on and also to find out more about pertinent equity issues affecting students on campus. The meeting was successful and I learnt a lot.

I had a meeting as well with the Arig Al Shaibah, the head of the Sexual Assault Working Group which I sit on. The issue of Sexual Assault has been a much discussed topic of late on Queen's campus and it is apparent to all that a lot of work must be done in this area. I am delighted to serve on the Sexual Assault Working Group and my aim is to assist the Group in any way possible and ensure that the needs of Graduate Students are being considered in the Group as well.

I attended my first meeting of the Sexual Assault Working Group on Tuesday December 2, 2014. Principal Woolf was at this meeting and shared his vision for tackling sexual assault in Queen's with the Group. The Group has been tasked with coming up with Recommendations so that a team of experts can draft a policy on sexual assault. I have asked the group to consider ways that Graduate Students can be informed about their options should they find themselves in positions as sexual assault survivors. I know that several Graduate Students live off campus and the nature of our research might be such that we are not able to participate in all campus activities. This can sometimes lead to the point where we miss out on vital information. It is also important to remember that for Graduate Students who are International Students (especially those for whom English is a second language), it might be particularly difficult to know what to do or whom to approach when sexually assaulted. In view of all the above, I believe that there needs to be provisions in the Sexual Assault Policy to address these vulnerabilities that Graduate Students might face. It is my intention to work with the Sexual Assault Working Group to ensure that these interests of Graduate Students are addressed.

Moreover, some of us Graduate Students are Teaching Assistants and they may be approached by students who have been assaulted asking for assistance or for extensions on papers because they are dealing with the fallout from such attacks. It is thus very important that we can be informed about how to deal with such situations so that we can be helpful to students who are in such situations.

Further, I intend to work with the Equity Coordinator to come up with strategies to get feedback from Graduate Students about which particular needs of theirs they would want to be incorporated into the Sexual Assault Policy and particularly about where they believe they are vulnerable and would need protection.

I have interacted with Rebecca Rappaport, Kingston's Coordinator for the White Ribbon Campaign and with Bailey Gerrits, Coordinator of the White Ribbon Campaign on Queen's campus. It was important to do this before December 6<sup>th</sup> because that is the day for commemorating the Ecole Polytechnique massacre especially since the White Ribbon campaign is dedicated to the victims of this attack.

The White Ribbon Campaign works to encourage men to stand against violence against women. Rebecca informed me that the Campaign in Kingston trained the Queen's Rugby team on the issue of violence against women and that this was successful. I am highly interested in working with the Equity Coordinator and the White Ribbon Campaign at Queen's to develop a similar training program for Graduate Student Groups.

Bailey Gerrits informed us that White Ribbon Campaign at Queen's is organizing a program at Sydenham United Church to commemorate the day. The Engineering Society is also organizing a memorial to commemorate the day. I have sent emails to both organizations, on behalf of the Equity Desk, asking them to inform us of any ways that we can be of support to them. The White Ribbon Campaign Queen's has additionally asked us for support for a Miss Representation Project they are organizing in March and I am working with the Equity Coordinator to brainstorm whether we can provide support and which support we can provide.

I am scheduled for a meeting with an officer from Disability Services next week and also for meetings with staffers from the Equity and Human Rights offices.

### **Training Sessions**

I attended a Training Session with Positive Space which was most enlightening. Jean Pfleiderer and two staffers at Positive Space took participants through the different Sexual and Gender Orientations and we had a discussion about how to encourage and support gender and sexual diversity on campus. It is highly important to me that the Equity Desk becomes a Positive Space.

### **Interaction with Equity Coordinator**

The Equity Coordinator and I are scheduled for a meeting this Thursday (December 4<sup>th</sup>) to discuss an agenda for the Equity Desk and coordinate which committees we would work with.

With regards to the agenda, after interacting with stakeholders, the SGPS President and graduate students, I would like the Equity Desk to focus on three main areas this year. These areas are not the only areas we will avert our mind to as we intend to work on all areas relating to equity this year. However, I believe that these areas have some important and urgent issues that need to be tackled.

1. **Accessibility:** Kevin Wiener, the SGPS President educated me on important issues relating to accessibility in Queen's for example making bathrooms accessible to persons of all Genders and including more baby changing facilities in bathrooms. Other issues are making buildings on campus more accessible to persons using wheel-chairs. On the issue of accessibility, one of my dreams for the Equity Desk this year is to work together with the Equity Committee to come up with a Mobility Impairment Project which will work on getting vehicles on Queen's campus to transport students with Mobility Impairments. Although students with mobility challenges have access to the Kingston Access Buses, these buses do not drop persons at their doorsteps, which makes it difficult for them to navigate themselves to their homes especially when it snows. Further, not all students with mobility challenges qualify to use the Access Buses. Additionally, I believe that it would be helpful if such a service were in place with drivers (who could be student volunteers to reduce cost) who had a good idea about various locations on campus to assist disabled students who are new on campus.
2. **Sexual Assault:** This issue has been widely discussed and gained a lot of media attention. I have discussed supra the work that I would like the Equity Desk to do with the Sexual Assault Working Group.
3. **Mental Health:** This is another important area where I would like the Equity Desk to focus on. The SGPS President has asked me to consult the Vice-President Campaigns and Community Affairs on this issue since he works with various groups on campus which focus on this issue.

In addition to all the above, the Equity Coordinator and I will discuss the committees our desks handle and which person should work with which committee.

Since I did not receive any handing over notes from the previous Commissioner, I had to deduce from the emails which committees the previous Commissioner worked with. These committees were in the email:

SLC Accessibility , SEEC ,Staff Appreciation Awards Committee ,Positive Space Steering Committee, Education Training & Awareness Working Group Members, Graduate Learning Committee, QLC Advisory Committee, Student Advisor Personnel Committee, Advisory Committee on Academic Accommodations, ETA Working Group, Equity Standing Committee, Learning Commons Advisory Committee.

The Equity Coordinator has informed me that from her emails, the previous Equity Coordinator was working with two committees namely Positive Space Steering Committee and SEEC. I will confirm with Andria whether these are the only committees that the Equity Desk handled.

#### **Sustainability Coordinator**

I have not worked with the Sustainability Coordinator since I commenced working. I was informed by the SGPS Director and Executive Assistant that the Sustainability Coordinator position will be moved from the Equity Coordinator desk in January 2015 and as such I have not been asking the Coordinator to report to me or provided direction to her. If I am supposed to do this or the desk is not moving away by January, then I will be grateful for further direction from the SGPS Executives on this issue so that I would know how to proceed.

### **Conclusion**

My first month in office has been quite eventful and it has been an opportunity to learn a lot from people who have worked on the issue of equity at Queen's and the Kingston community. In the next few months, I intend to implement all that I have learnt and work further to ensure that the equity needs of Graduate Students are successfully met.

### **Inaugural International Student Affairs Committee Meeting**

I have contacted several SGPS members about their interest in joining the committee. I have submitted a doodle poll for the meeting in first week of the second term. So far, the objectives of the first meeting will be to introduce and meet the members of the committee and discuss our involvement in the upcoming QUIC orientation for international graduate students. The coordinator and I are still looking for interested members to join the committee. If you know anyone that might be interested in addressing the issues that international students face and helping them get the best out of their life at Queen's please direct them to me ([international@sgps.ca](mailto:international@sgps.ca)), or Ahmed ([isc@sgps.ca](mailto:isc@sgps.ca)).

### **Queen's University International Center**

Ahmed and I met with Susan Anderson, the QUIC director to discuss how best we could get involved in the upcoming QUIC/SGS winter orientation for Graduate Students. The orientation takes place on Tuesday, January 13th 2015, and there they will introduce the various support services available. Ahmed and I will be in attendance to inform the incoming international graduate students of the services the SGPS and the international student commission offers them. Susan and the Committee also let us know potential problem areas for international students, one of the most important being isolation. In order to alleviate that feeling of isolation QUIC has regular community events which can be seen on the QUIC online schedule at (<http://quic.queensu.ca/events/>). One upcoming event will be the Holiday Networking Tea on December 19<sup>th</sup> from 2:00pm-4:30pm in QUIC's Churchill Hall. This event is directed towards international students who are staying in Kingston for the holidays. Ahmed and I will be in attendance and we encourage any SGPS members who are in Kingston at that time to join us in making the international students feel comfortable at a time when the university may make them feel deserted.

### **Career Workshop- Resume and Cover letter**

I have been in contact with Debbie Mundell at Career Services and we are currently planning a resume and cover letter workshop geared toward helping international students demonstrate their skills and experience in the Canadian job market. The date for the workshop has been for Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup> 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

Jhordan Layne – [international@sgps.ca](mailto:international@sgps.ca)

Dear members of the SGPS,

My name is Erica Baker and Council has recently appointed me as the incoming Equity Coordinator. My term officially began in early November and I will be working with the Equity Commission until next fall. As a new graduate student at Queen's I look forward to working more closely with the SGPS and our student community. Please find below updates from my portfolio within the Equity Commission:

### **Equity Commission Seeking Membership**

The SGPS Equity Commission is looking for new members who are interested in engaging in equity-related issues for graduate and professional students on Queen's campus. The commission informs and advises the Council and Executive with their perspective on equity issues on campus. In addition, the commission is involved in different initiatives and events on campus that promote equity and inclusion.

The Equity Commission is a great opportunity for SGPS members to become more involved with student governance and issues that are important to our members. Meetings take place the second Wednesday of every month at 5:00pm in JDUC 236. Accessible services are available upon request. **Our next meeting is Wednesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015.** All are welcome to attend and to contribute their ideas and vision for the Commission. To join the Commission and to RSVP for the January meeting please email Andria Mahon at [ea@sgps.ca](mailto:ea@sgps.ca).

### **December 6<sup>th</sup> Memorial**

The Equity Commission encourages members of the SGPS to attend the Engineering Society's annual memorial for the 1989 École Polytechnique Massacre. This year it will be taking place on Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm in the ILC Atrium, although the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women takes place on December 6<sup>th</sup>. For those who cannot attend the memorial you can still observe a moment of silence on December 6<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully submitted,

Erica Baker  
Equity Coordinator  
[equityco@sgps.ca](mailto:equityco@sgps.ca)