

SGPS members;

I hope you are all well. This will be my final report to you as the SGPS President as my term will end April 1st. Although somewhat saddened as my year comes to a close, I am enlightened knowing that I have been provided the opportunity to continue to serve the SGPS in my new role. I have very little in terms of updates since February's two reports but will provide an in-depth discussion at our next AGM the end of March. Instead for my March report, I wish to share the report submitted on behalf of the SGPS at the last Board of Trustees meeting. It outlines many of the concerns of our members and the issues they struggle with here at Queen's. The report is as follows:

### **PEOPLESOFT/SOLUS SYSTEM:**

The SGPS has become involved in many cases where students have experienced hardships due to the PeopleSoft system. The University has been working to solve these problems on a case-by-case basis, but sadly, cases continue to emerge. We've heard recently from several students who have spent hours dealing with the Office of the University Registrar to sort out problems caused by a miscalculation of their fees: these students have been faced with the need to produce a large, lump-sum payment or in some cases, a large payment has been withdrawn from their bank accounts without warning. Students have been charged twice for the tuition fees and some students have had to remove themselves from the automatic payment plan as the only viable solution. Importantly, these hardships extend far beyond the economic. They affect students' ability to focus on their research, not only because of the time spent trying to figure out the information on the student portal, making visits and phone calls, and negotiating new payment options, but also because of the stress that comes from uncertainty and lack of control.

As we all know, SOLUS was introduced this past year. Along with this switch came a transition period (which we are still in the midst of). During this transition period, our membership has experienced various issues, ranging from tuition payments not being applied in a timely fashion, to tuition payments being charged twice. One of the main issues that I would like to highlight (which has caused our membership much stress) is the lack of communication between the Office of the University Registrar (OUR) and our membership with regards to registration/SOLUS transition-related issues. For example, by the end of the spring/summer 2011 term, graduate students (as well as the graduate office assistants) had not received any information from the OUR to let them know about the new SOLUS registration procedures for the coming fall 2011 term. While undergraduate students were provided such information, graduate and professional students remained largely unaware of this information.

Graduate students nearing completion of their studies (i.e., in thesis/dissertation writing phase) were particularly confused about what they needed to do in order to remain registered as graduate students in the new system. This lack of communication proved to be stressful for many of our members who emailed us to let us know about their concerns. After bringing this issue to the OUR, the issue was addressed by not charging any late fees on late registration/tuition payments. Other registration/SOLUS transition-related issues have also cropped up over the past many month and we would like to commend the OUR for working hard to resolve these issues for our membership. Going forward, we would like to see any pertinent information related to registration/SOLUS to be communicated duly to all students on campus, as well as any individuals who are first points of contact for our membership (i.e., OUR staff, graduate office assistants, etc.) so that the information is consistently delivered and readily available to all Queen's students. Doing so will go a long way to lessen any undue stress that may be placed on our membership related to registration/SOLUS-related issues. The change to PeopleSoft has been taxing on the University, but it is important to recognize how it has impacted students. The SGPS is supportive of system-wide, proactive planning that will prevent these kinds of difficulties for graduate and professional students next year.

## **SWITCH TO GPA'S**

The switch from percentages to GPA, has negative implications for some of our members when applying for Tri-Council Awards (i.e., their application becomes less competitive when marks get calculated by GPA rather than percentages). This issue has come up at Senate and students have articulated their concerns with this transition. It has had many negative consequences for both SGPS members and AMS members. Specifically the most common issues are:

1. Students with averages between 80% and 85% are being refused candidacy for external scholarships- their GPA mark is below the required threshold. For identical reasons, many students who previously qualified for Honours/Dean's List are no longer eligible. This is particularly problematic for those students stuck in the transition period, since earlier grades were assigned according to the percentage system - thus a 79.4% that might otherwise have been bumped up to an 80% to make the next GPA level but was kept as a 79.4%.
2. Potential employers are annoyed that they can no longer compare a student's performance with that of his or her peers. A GPA grade. The GPA system does not provide the average of the class or a rank for comparison thereby not providing enough context to make an assessment.
3. For students applying to external prestigious institutions (although none equal to Queen's), it looks 'unprofessional' to see an abrupt jump from percentage grades to letter grades, especially in the final two years of coursework. In addition, when asked to electronically submit their grades, the lack of any percentage grade whatsoever in recently-completed courses forces an abandonment of the option of stating percent grades altogether.
4. Tragically, many of Queen's top-performing students are no longer distinguished under the GPA scale. A student with an average between 92-94% in the technical sciences, with upwards of a 1/4 of all courses having a score of 95% or greater, easily finds themselves ambiguously lumped within the 85-90% GPA category. Specifically, the large group of students with scores in the 80s are lumped into two 'baskets' which makes it difficult to differentiate individual performances (i.e. 89% means the same as an 85%).
5. Student performance becomes, when translated from one GPA scale to another artificially distorted. This is particularly a problem for students looking to represent the Queen's degree abroad. Alternatively, a percentage grade is universally understood and can be converted to any scale with much less distortion.

It is my hope that these concerns will be resolved as the Provost has indicated he will be looking into an effective way to alleviate students concerns and issues.

## **LIBRARY and UNIVERSITY SERVICES**

The reduced library hours and staffing during the spring/summer term are problematic for those graduate students who rely on the spring/summer term to get much of their thesis/dissertation writing done. It is this point in their careers that require access to the library and other support services. Specifically, it is challenging to complete a thesis/dissertation if you cannot get access to the materials you need to complete. I am anxious to have the University and Fodd Services specifically, work with the SGPS to actually provide these essential services to our members during the spring-summer months.

Additionally services are reduced including the ARC/fitness facilities and virtually all food/drink services.

Respectfully submitted,

Jillian Burford-Grinnell

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



Society of Graduate and Professional Students  
Report of the VP Graduate  
March 2012

### **Greetings!**

I hope that all is well! Here is what I have been up to this past month:

### **Office of the University Registrar (OUR)**

At the beginning of February, I began receiving emails from our membership who were on the Pre-Authorized Payment (PPL) Plan and who had experienced some issues with their SOLUS accounts (i.e., a monthly pay installment being withdrawn twice, being debited far less than normal, etc.). An email was sent out to our membership in mid-February (via the SGPS Council listserv) to let everyone know about this issue. While the OUR is currently working towards a solution to the problem, it is important to continue to encourage the students within your respective departments who are on the PPL to check their SOLUS accounts periodically, and report any anomalies to the OUR.

### **Academic Affairs Standing Committee (AASC)**

In the December 2011 SGPS Council meeting, the AASC was tasked with developing the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Committee. Members of the AASC have worked hard over the past couple of months to draft the Terms of Reference (TOR) and we are presenting it to you during the March 2012 Council meeting so that it may be included in the SGPS Bylaws and Policies document.

During the March 2012 Council meeting, we also present to you a motion regarding progress reports. Due to the inconsistent (and sometimes ambiguous) nature of the format and use of progress reports, the AASC has drafted its recommendations after reviewing various progress report templates from various faculties/departments across campus. Members of the AASC seek the support of Council to present the Committee's recommendations to various Graduate Councils and Committees for their consideration and use.

In the coming weeks, I will be meeting with various Graduate Councils/Committees to discuss with them ideas on how we can work together to locate interested individuals to become student representatives for these Graduate Councils/Committees. I will also be sharing with them some ideas on what such a process could look like, gathered from the members of the AASC. The reason for this initiative is due to the difficulty that I experienced locating various student representatives to sit on a few of the Graduate Councils/Committee. In those instances, student representative seats remained vacant well into October and November 2011. I hope that by bringing this issue forward, we can work together with the Graduate Councils/Committees towards developing a systematic process of locating interested individuals to serve as student representatives, effectively mitigating the chance of student seats remaining vacant well into the fall term.

### **FREE Queen's 2012**

This is a repeat message from my February 2012 Council report. The first FREE Queen's 2012 workshop was held on Wednesday, February 8, 2012 at this year's FREE Queen's venue: Pathways to Education, 263 Weller Avenue. The event was well-attended, and I would like to thank the Steering Committee members, and all the FREE Queen's 2012 workshop facilitators for helping to make the FREE Queen's 2012 workshop series a reality. Please kindly spread the word about FREE Queen's 2012 amongst your respective departments and the Kingston community outside of Queen's. For a complete list of FREE Queen's 2012 workshops, please visit <http://www.sgps.ca/events/freequeens.html>. In the March 2012 SGPS Council Appendices, please kindly find a poster advertising FREE Queen's 2012. Feel free to print out a few copies and post them on community event boards within the Kingston community to help spread the word. Alternatively, you can email me at [vpg@sgps.ca](mailto:vpg@sgps.ca) and request that I print some out for you to pick up at the SGPS office (JDUC, Room 021). Thank you in advance for your help and support in this initiative!

### **Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL)**

Currently the CTL is looking for individuals within the Film and Media department who are interested, willing, and able to lend their services to create a short piece on the Centre. If you know of any individuals who might be interested in

participating in this volunteer project, please have them contact me at [vpg@sgps.ca](mailto:vpg@sgps.ca) for more information! Thank you in advance for your help!

### **Senate Committee on Academic Development (SCAD)**

A Subcommittee has been formed within the SCAD to address a motion that was referred to the Committee by Senate. The motion pertains to developing a procedure for the suspension of admissions to an academic program. I am interested in bringing forward to the Subcommittee a similar procedure that was proposed by QUFA during its last bargaining round. While we currently do not have a seat on the Subcommittee, I have indicated to the Chairperson of SCAD our desire to have a SGPS student representative sitting on the Subcommittee and I am hoping that this comes to fruition in the near future.

### **Student Advisor Program**

On Monday, March 5, 2012, Victoria Millious (Student Advisor) presented the Student Advisors fall 2011 term reports to the School of Graduate Studies (SGS). Dean Brouwer, Associate Deans Rappaport and den Otter, and Director McKeown were in attendance. During this meeting, Victoria brought forward and discussed with the SGS four main suggestions/future initiatives stemming from the reports: (1) increasing the support of the SGS for the Student Advisor workshop initiative, (2) increasing awareness of the Student Advisors program amongst graduate department coordinators and Department Heads (i.e., seeing the program as a resource for their students, and referring students to the program, as necessary), (3) making departmental policies more publicized and accessible to the graduate students that they affect, and (4) developing an exit survey for graduate students to fill out (once they have successfully received their degrees) pertaining to the quality of relationship with their supervisors. Overall, the SGS seemed receptive to the above points, and we hope to work closely with the SGS to address each of these points in the near future. For more information on these points, please feel free to contact me at [vpg@sgps.ca](mailto:vpg@sgps.ca).

This concludes my report to Council. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support this past year. I have enjoyed representing graduate student interests within the various governing bodies across campus. As of the writing of this report, Becky Pero has been elected (though not yet ratified by Council) as the VP Graduate of 2012-2013. I wish her all the best for her coming term!

Take care, and enjoy the rest of the winter 2012 term!

Respectfully submitted,

Irene Karagiorgakis  
VP Graduate  
[vpg@sgps.ca](mailto:vpg@sgps.ca)

First of all, I want to extend my congratulations to the Exec-elect, Matthew Scribner, Matthew Shultz, Jillian Burford-Grinnell, Becky Pero, and Annie Clifford, the Graduate Senator-elect Terry Bridges, and the Graduate Trustee Tony Gkotsis. I am looking forward to an awesome transition and seeing what amazing work you all will do in the next year.

### **New staff position & HR policy changes**

The HR Committee and I have been hard at work re-writing and creating new HR policy. This is all coming to you at this council meeting! Major excitement! As you can see from the agenda and motions, we are asking you to approve the creation of a new full-time staff position. Andrea and I will provide more details and have the answers to all your questions in our presentation to council. However, for now I will just emphasize that this new position is desperately needed in order for us to be effective going forward.

### **Blue Lights Badges**

This month, a lovely little Queen's tradition came to the attention of the Executive. By completing the "Blue Light" challenge, students can qualify to get a Blue Light Badge that is sold at the bookstore sewn onto their jackets: "Blue Light – In a group (generally consisting of five people), make your way around campus and take turns shotgunning beers at the various safety Blue Lights. Pushing the call button at each Blue Light on completion is not required. Variations in definition: Number of Blue Lights can vary, but is generally either the 69 on main campus or the 73 in total, including the walk to and arrival at West Campus."

([http://queensuniversity.wikia.com/wiki/Queen%27s\\_Traditions](http://queensuniversity.wikia.com/wiki/Queen%27s_Traditions))

You can see what this badge looks like here: <http://www.quicksew.ca/jackets.html>

I brought this issue to the attention of the Senate Committee on Non-Academic Discipline (SONAD). I spoke to why this is an issue that needs to be dealt with through an education and awareness campaign about the purpose of the blue light program and violence against women, linking the impairment of the effectiveness of the blue light system to violence against women on campus and to a culture of violence against women more generally. Student Affairs and Security are, it seems, already aware of this "tradition". The bookstore is not actually owned by the University, so selling the badges there is apparently not within their control. The committee chair, Harry Smith, felt that this issue was not within the jurisdiction of the committee, and the majority of the committee was rather unresponsive. However, Heidi Penning from the Human Rights Office also sits on this committee and she and I spoke after the meeting. She informed her co-worker Margot Coulter, who is in charge of sexual harassment prevention, and Margot is willing to take this on under her portfolio. She and I will be meeting in the next month to discuss how this will go forward. If anyone is interested in working on an awareness campaign in relation to this, please let me know.

### **Non-Academic Discipline Review Committee**

As you have heard in the past, this committee is incredibly frustrating. Dean Tierney has written a draft report and the rest of the committee is providing feedback on it. I am doing my best to remain vocal and represent out interests in this process. While I had previously spoken with the AMS representatives about working together on this process, they have undertaken to write their own report. At this point it looks like the committee will be recommending what they are calling a "hybrid" model that would see the AMS and SGPS systems somewhat retained. A crucial element that remains to be determined is the division of offences into level 1 and level 2 offences. Under the hybrid model, level 1 offences would continue to be AMS and SGPS jurisdiction while level 2 offences would be the University's jurisdiction. Clearly then, how these levels of offences are defined will have a great influence on whether the proposed model will be in the interests of the SGPS: If all but the pithiest of offences are defined as level 2 offences, the independent system will be severely limited, and if only the most serious of offences (for example criminal acts) are defined as level 2 offences, this will be similar to the jurisdiction we currently employ because we have a policy of referring police matters to the police.

The AMS counter-proposal will be distributed to the committee before council, so I can update on it orally.

### **Commissioner and Coordinator Positions**

I would like to encourage everyone to consider applying for a commissioner or coordinator position. They are a great way to get more involved in the SGPS, to develop your leadership and organizational skills, to meet new people, and to make some money while you do it! If you are interested in these positions, check out the descriptions in policy (you can refer to the policy section P.2 in the appendices for this meeting). If you have any questions about any of these positions, feel free to ask me or the people currently in these positions. You can find out that information here: <http://www.sgps.ca/info/people.html>.

### **Grad Club AGM**

The Grad Club AGM will be on Thursday March 29 at 5:30pm. Next's year's board will be elected at this AGM. Nomination forms are available at the Grad Club bar and the SGPS front desk. I also have an electronic copy on the nomination form and can send it to you if you e-mail me.

Respectfully submitted,

Cody Yorke, VP Professional  
vpp@sgps.ca

### Freedom 65

I want to begin my report by congratulating incoming VP Campaigns & Community Affairs, Matthew Schultz, as well as the rest of the SGPS Executive-elect. The SGPS is very lucky to see such dedicated advocates take on its leadership.

### Motion to Senate

Council will remember passing a motion last month to endorse a letter to Senate. I'm pleased to report that Senate voted in favor of seeking out independent legal opinion on the matter of bicameral governance and Senate authority. Senator Jones remarked afterwards that student voices –the respectful protest of student OcQpyers, the letter from SGPS Council, and vocal support from the student Senator caucus- are what swayed the vote. Senator Jones also extended his thanks to Council for your support.

### Mental Health and .. Bell Canada?

I attended the Principal's big reveal on the new mental health partnership at Queen's. As was suggested in the letter to Bill Young that was leaked to the Queen's community and which was the focus of some controversy, Queen's was seemingly able to "leverage its reputation" as a leader in mental health –as demonstrated, I'm assuming, by the existence of the Principal's mental health commission— in one such way as to secure \$1 million in research funds from Bell Canada. The money will go towards research on reducing mental health stigma. I find myself a bit torn on this one. Given sharp increases in mental health diagnoses, research on stigma is critical. At the same time, existing research tells us which factors contribute to mental distress, and financial stress is one of them. I suppose I find it all a bit hypocritical to leverage our reputation as leaders in mental health at the same time as we may well be leading institutional and structural contributors to the same problem. My enthusiasm is further marred by my skepticism of Bell Canada's generous benevolence in the matter. I predict the development of a "new innovative partnership" in cellular reception on the next few years ..... (you heard it here first).

### Residence Fees

On to Senate Residence Committee now, on which I have several few things to report. Part of the story begins prior to the Holidays, when I voted down a motion to implement a mandatory meal plan at Jean Royce Hall. Meal plans were seemingly made mandatory everywhere on main campus, except on West campus. The motion, I was told (Bruce Griffiths, who was moving the motion, was absent at the meeting), was to make all meal plans mandatory for first-year students across the board. Those of you who subscribe to a meal plan will know how expensive it can be, particularly now that we are locked in to an exclusivity contract with Sodexo. Students who cannot afford meal plans are not given any other option, as there is no established process to opt-out. For obvious methodological reasons, we cannot assess the extent to which this (along with rising residence, other ancillary, and tuition fees) deters lower income students from accepting offers of residence, or perhaps even from coming to Queen's. I voted down the motion for these reasons, and argued that attempting to standardize a bad, potentially discriminatory, practice was a terrible idea. Nevertheless, after a fairly lengthy discussion, I was the only student to vote the motion down, and the motion passed. As it turns out, the motion "**That all first-year students, regardless of building assignment, be automatically enrolled in a first-year meal plan beginning with the 2012-2013 academic year**" was intended to do much more than simply to make meal plans mandatory: according to meeting minutes, which were only made available weeks afterwards, this same motion was also to approve residence fee hikes. This was never brought to light at the initial meeting, nor did the mover, who was absent, mention it in his written report. Students subsequently asked the SRC Chair, Dr. Bob Crawford, to review the matter and reverse the decision. In the end, Dr. Crawford ruled that the "considerable discussion" we had had about financial accessibility was reasonably sufficient to justify supporting the passing of the motion. Bruce Griffiths added that the onus was on students to know what motions entail prior to a vote.

### Blue Lights

You may recall the blue lights "game" from one of my previous Council reports that Queen's: students pulling the emergency blue lights around campus, shotgunning a tallboy of Blue Light beer, taping it to the emergency blue light

pole, and running away before getting caught by campus security, all in an effort to earn a “discipline badge” to sew to their Queen’s jackets. In case you are curious, you can access more information on all discipline badges under the header “Queen’s traditions” at the following address:

[http://queensuniversity.wikia.com/wiki/Queen%27s Traditions](http://queensuniversity.wikia.com/wiki/Queen%27s_Traditions)

And, if you are interested in seeing what the badge looks like, you can visit a local business advertisement for sewing services at low cost: <http://www.quicksew.ca/jackets.html>

Badges can be purchased online and ordered in through the campus bookstore. I learned about this, and expressed my concern (read disgust) at a Campus Security Working Group meeting in the fall. So you can imagine my surprise at learning from the Senate Residence Committee that the issue has still not been addressed by the University, despite the fact that folks working in Residence, Student Affairs, and campus security all know about it, and have for some time. In fact, the problem seems to have escalated: part of the game now involves dismantling part of the targeted emergency blue light. Once again, I voiced my concern that this reflects a certain culture dismissive of sexual assault prevention – or, at the very least, a number of students, however small, who have the audacity to think of sexual assault prevention tools as their personal game. I also asked what the University was doing about it. The answer, to my dismay, was an uncomfortable silence, followed by the suggestion that the answer should come from (unpaid, overcommitted) students, and not the administration (who are not only paid, but whose jobs are to address such things).

VP Professional Cody Yorke brought the issue to SONAD, and was met with a similar reception from the committee Chair – but representatives from the Equity Office agreed that something has to be done.

So, Councilors, incoming Executive, I encourage you to keep bringing attention to the issue. Talk about it with your colleagues, with your friends. Blog and Tweet about it, leave post-its about it in bathroom stalls. And don’t hesitate to contact us if you want to get involved.

### **Student Success Research Study**

The SGPS Executive and several other graduate and undergraduate student leaders participated in a research project from OISE seeking to assess factors contributing to student success. One theme seemed to dominate in the discussion, namely the perceived near total disconnect between administrators and their decisions (including tuition hikes), and students’ experiences on the ground. Peer support and positive faculty mentorship appeared to have helped a number of us. At the same time, the development of informal support networks was identified as a positive coping tool necessary to our survival – not exactly a glowing testimonial to graduate student leaders’ experiences at Queen’s.

### **CFS National Graduate Caucus**

The NGC standalone meeting is unfortunately set to take place at the same time as our transition meeting, and as such, the SGPS will not be attending.

### **Via Rail**

Via Rail is still planning on eliminating the discounted fare for students aged 21 years and over. Please encourage everyone in your respective departments or faculties to sign petitions calling for the re-implementation of the ISIC discount.

This concludes my last report to Council proper. If I don’t see you later this month, I want to thank all Councilors for your work this year. It was truly a pleasure to get to know you!

Respectfully submitted,

Anne-Marie Grondin  
VP Campaigns & Community Affairs



February and March are certainly the months of reflection, tying up loose ends, and trying to articulate recommendations for the next executive team, whom I would like to congratulate and welcome to the joys and rigours of SGPS work!

Some of my closing projects include:

#### **Finalizing policies for grants and bursaries**

The Finance & Services Committee need not operate without policy or with inadequate policy when reviewing applications for funding. While the new policies will need to be reviewed and revisited after some use, it will just be nice to have them in place.

#### **Revamping grant and bursary applications**

A current project that needs a few more hours work is restructuring the application forms themselves. The aim is multiple: to improve the confidentiality of the forms to avoid sharing personal information and to contribute to the committee's ability to review impartially; to reflect the new policies or policy changes; to provide more space for office communication about how to administer bursaries; and to provide better instructions for applicants and/or room to provide the information most needed by the committee.

ED (Sean) has suggested taking the application process online, and he has done some preliminary work with the applications to be able to take them live. This is a possibility to consider in the future to increase ease of applying and reviewing; however, the current paper-based system encourages members to visit the SGPS office where the knowledgeable front desk staff provide direction and support, increasing the visibility of the society and creating relationships that may not form as readily without face-to-face contact. Any change must be carefully weighed.

#### **Planning the transition weekend**

Everything is going well for the long-anticipated transition weekend. The current executive considers this a key moment for the incoming team to acquire the foundation absolutely essential to an efficient year. We have booked a spot at RKY Camp, a residential camp on a lake just north of Kingston. The counselling staff will be on hand to help with team-building activities, and we have a full agenda with the history and workings of the SGPS, the history and import of the student movement, the institutional workings of Queen's, past and current issues, committee transitions, strategic planning, and more!

#### **Overseeing the last stage of the audit**

I hope to be able to report orally at the Council meeting that the audit is complete, as I anticipate that we will meet with the auditors by the end of this week.

#### **Reconciliation of Fees**

Teresa Alm, the Interim University Registrar, has reported that the reconciliation is looking good from the University perspective, and that they should have solid results to us by the end of this week, so again, I expect to bring you good news on Tuesday.

#### **Student Life Centre (SLC) Policy**

With reading week taking most students away for a week last month, there was no action on the shared space policy talks. The next meeting is scheduled during the next week, and in anticipation I have been drafting documents that attempt to balance respect for organizations' autonomy with concerns about safety and liability.

### **International Tuition Award Plan**

Since this year's case-by-case solution to the ITA/pre-authorized payment plan problem was time- and energy-consuming for students, and Dean Brouwer had indicated that the School of Graduate Studies would like to implement a more sustainable solution for next year, I will be working over the next few weeks to secure a plan from the SGS to address the issue on a wide scale so that international students will not be disadvantaged by disproportionate tuition fees during the first two terms of the academic year.

### **Planning logistics of PSAC contribution to the SGPS Health & Dental Plan**

Finally, the biggest project of all is working out the details about the PSAC contribution to the Health and Dental Plan bringing immediate benefits to members while maintaining predictable returns on the plan. The funds will be used to both augment some of the limited benefits and create a reserve to protect the longterm wellbeing of the plan. The SGPS will need to secure legal counsel as we come to an agreement with the PSAC; I am currently exploring whether the Queen's Business Law Clinic will be able to serve this need.

A busy month of continued backward and forward looking awaits!

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Phillipson, VP Finance & Services



### **Bylaw and Policy Updates**

As you will see in the agenda, there has been another round of updates to B&P that are being brought forward for approval. There are a number of different things that have been addressed, including items that were tasked by council last fall. These items have been brought back for approval, and we have terms of reference for the Academic Affairs Standing Committee and the Sustainability Standing Committee, as well as some equity policy and HR policy that were both in need of updates.

Additionally, a few other items have come up for approval, such as the creation of a new staff position, as well as several changes to finance and service related policies. Additionally, there has been policy created to deal with effective yearly transitioning of the executive and Appointees of Council. Along with all of these changes there have been some rearrangements to the way B&P has been sectioned off to make more sense of the current policy.

A lot of hard work has went into these proposed changes by many different committees, and I would like to take this time to thank them for their hard work, as well as to encourage Council to read through the proposed changes, familiarize yourself with what is being brought forth, and engage Council with questions and suggestions for improvement. That's the joy of having such a large group of people approving policy, so many different opinions and suggestions makes for excellent policy.

### **Information Services and Technology Student Advisory Committee**

In addition to being the speaker, I also sit on this committee on behalf of the SGPS, and thought this would be a good way to report on what we have been up to. The committee is aimed at soliciting student opinions on current IT practices at the university, and also to disseminate information to students. So first and foremost, if you or any of your constituents have issues they want brought up, feel free to email me and I can ensure they are mentioned at our next meeting.

One of the things we have discussed is a new email client for students (faculty and staff is already being rolled out shortly) that would allow for a much better interface than Squirrel Mail (current), as well as much more storage and functionality. The current proposal is to use Microsoft 365, which is an online version of Microsoft's Office suite, including Microsoft Exchange Online, which is an email, calendar and contacts solution delivered as a cloud service, hosted by Microsoft. Additionally, we have discussed the wireless internet functionality on campus, such as issues with service, how it is most often used, and where would students feel better coverage is needed. Lastly, we discussed the installation of wireless in residences.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

### **Want to Replace Me as the New Speaker?**

I am still looking for interested persons who would like to be the new speaker for the next year. The new speaker is chosen at the April Council meeting, so if you are interested, contact me for more details, also pass the info along to anyone you think may be interested from your department, the Speaker needn't be a Council member.

Eric Rapos  
SGPS Speaker  
[speaker@sgps.ca](mailto:speaker@sgps.ca)



Society of Graduate and Professional Students  
Report of the Social Commissioner  
March, 2012

Hello All,

The SGPS social team is excited to inform you of the great events that we are hosting this month. Our events range from a variety of purely social, athletic and healthy living events. We hope to see everyone come out and interact with the diverse community that is our SGPS members.

### **St. Patty's Day Happy Hour**

The SGPS and the Grad Club are teaming together to help celebrate St. PATTIES day in style! This year we are organizing an extended happy hour that's guaranteed to make this St. PATTIES Day a memorable one. So get decked out in your best festive St. PATTIES day gear and join us for a day/night of socializing, fun games and prizes. This is the perfect opportunity to meet and get to know your fellow SGPS members. There will be free drink tickets (alcoholic and non-alcoholic) for the first 30 students with a green article of clothing.

Cost: Free

Date: Sat 17<sup>th</sup>, March

Time: 4:00-7:00 PM

Location: Grad Club (Barrie & Union)

### **CDC/HDH Run or Walk**

Attention runners and walkers! As part of the SGPS's Healthy Lifestyles Initiative, we invite SGPS members to sign up for the CDC/HDH Race to benefit The University Hospitals Kingston Foundation, Child Development Centre. The SGPS will be subsidizing race entry fees for SGPS members and their families. Please download the PDF entry form, fill it out, place in an envelope with your EMAIL, \$10 cash or cheque ONLY and submit to the SGPS office by February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at NOON. If you plan to collect pledges you can also submit those in your envelope on the 17<sup>th</sup>. The SGPS will drop off your entries to the proper locations.

ENTRY FORM: <http://www.sgps.ca/downloads/2012CDCEntryForm.pdf>

Cost: \$10 for SGPS members (actual cost is \$15 (Child) \$25 (Adults) )

When: Sunday March 25, 2012, 9:45am

Distance:

1 km Fun Run for Kids (Includes a participation medal and a T-shirt)

5 km walk/run (Includes a T-shirt)

10 km run (Includes a T-shirt)

Where: Race begins and ends at the JDUC, Queen's University

Race Kits available on Race Day after 8:30 am. Unisex sizes: S, M, L, XL

\*\*See Website for further details <http://www.events.runningroom.com/site/?raceid=7492>\*\*

Questions or Concerns? Contact [athletics@sgps.ca](mailto:athletics@sgps.ca)

Lastly, the social team would love to hear your feedback regarding the types of events we're running and ways we can make them more appealing to our SGPS members. If you have any general inquiries or feedback don't hesitate to contact us at [social@sgps.ca](mailto:social@sgps.ca).

Respectfully Submitted,

Abdullahi Abunafeesa  
Social Commissioner  
(social@sgps.ca)

#### SGPS Computer Network

- I am waiting on cost quotes for webserver replacement.
- I had to re-work one wireless access point. Turns out the unit was overheating due to a faulty fan, which I have replaced. No further issues have been experienced so far.
- I have completed manual updates (critical components) on office workstation computers. I will be working towards non-critical updates in the next couple of weeks.
- I have prepared for computer transition between the outgoing and incoming Executive.
- I have completed necessary prep work on the server side for our Executive transition.

#### SGPS Website

- I am working with the International Team to generate a section of our website for International students. I expect the information to be ready for posting in the next month or so.
- I updated the election section of our site several times in the last month. Once to add the nomination package, faq, etc. The second time to detail the nominees and the referendum questions. The third time to indicate election results, which are up for ratification at Council.

#### Communications

- Significant effort this month toward the election. Gathering and assembling the voter list from the Office of the University Registrar, working with IT to load student and election/referendum data into the system, testing the system, etc.
- I am working with the VP Finance, Executive Assistant and Front Desk Staff to update some of our bursary application forms.
- I am working to assemble and update transitional documents, which will be used at the upcoming Executive transition retreat.
- All internal mailing lists have been verified and updated.
- I continue to work with Queen's IT to work out kinks with mailing list services. I am making plans to ensure all mailing lists are kept up-to-date.
- I am working with the Office of the University Registrar (OUR) to improve communications between SGPS members and the OUR.
- I continue working on the 2012-2013 version of the SGPS Handbook (dayplanner). Please send any comments or suggestions.
- I am working on a social media policy, which is to be submitted to Council for consideration (to be added to SGPS Bylaws and Policies). I hope to have this policy ready in the next couple of months.

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



Society of Graduate and Professional Students  
Report of the International Students' Affairs Commissioner  
March 2012

Dear SGPS Council Members and Members-At-Large,

This report outlines some of what the International Team has worked on during the month February.

#### The International Team

- Working on an SGPS webpage geared toward international students
- Sourcing endorsements and campaigning for the extension of provincial health insurance for international students in Ontario, and working to educate students and groups on campus about this issue (please see Holly McIndoe's report, the International Student Affairs Coordinator, for more info)
- Invited the SGPS Commissioners and Coordinators to a meeting in February to discuss and share their projects
- FREE Queen's sessions continue
- Met with the City's Student Relations Communications Subcommittee
- A group of international students attended a Kingston Frontenac's hockey game on Friday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> at the KRC
- Continue to communicate relevant information on the SGPS Facebook page, and through the SGS and SGPS newsletters

Please feel free to get in touch if you have any questions or concerns about the above, or if you have any ideas that you would like to share. I still urge you to become involved, if not with the international committee, than with other initiatives within SGPS.

Warm Regards,

Becky Pero  
International Student Affairs Commissioner  
international@sgps.ca



Society of Graduate and Professional Students  
Report of the International Students' Affairs Coordinator  
March 2012

Dear SGPS Council Members,

There are two main initiatives that we've been working on in the second part of this term.

The first is putting together information to put on the SGPS website for in-coming and current international students. We have drafts for information about UHIP vs Greenshield and about the disbursement of the ITA should there be the same difficulties with PeopleSoft next year as this year.

The second is a project to educate Canadian and international students as well as the campus more generally about UHIP, OHIP, and Greenshield in order to be able to advocate more effectively for a policy change regarding UHIP. There are a couple of aspects to this: asking various different groups on campus to sign a letter supporting Queen's (along with the Council of Ontario Universities) 2009 stance supporting the CFS's Healthcare Without Borders Campaign – this will be presented to Principal Woolf; getting an op ed piece published in the Journal; e-mailing out info as part of the newsletter.

Please feel free to get in touch if you have any questions or concerns about the above, or if you have any ideas that you would like to share.

Warm Regards,

Holly McIndoe  
International Student Affairs Coordinator  
isc@sgps.ca





Society of Graduate and Professional Students  
Report of the Athletics Coordinator  
March 2012

Hello Everyone,

Here is my report from UCAR on Feb 28, 2012.

**School of Kin and Health Studies:**

Everything is already into the new planning cycle for next year (budget, curriculum, admissions). A new initiative is happening nationally, The National Terry Fox Foundation University Run will be a formal programme brought to the SKHS to involve the university. They are trying to start this initiative in September 2012.

**Director's Report:**

There is talk about reopening the PEC and the AMS has been vocal about being supportive of UCAR for next year.

**Facilities and Business Development:**

Nixon Field (formally Kingston Field) went to tender in early Feb with a budget of \$2.3 million and they are currently at \$2.2 million. There is a campaign to raise the last \$100 000 within the next 45 days. The field will be open by the end of July.

**Recreation and Sport Clubs:**

Queen's hosted the men's fencing championships and we won the OUA championships. In collaboration with the AMS, the ARC is about ready to close a deal with using Mac Brown (elementary school) for more intramural space.

**Inter-University Sport:**

Both our Men's and Women's volleyball teams won their OUA championships which is a great way to start off the CIS championships March 2-4<sup>th</sup> at Queen's.

On an individual level, IUS committee has secured awards for 4 athletes as well as individual awards for VIP and Rookie of the year.

**Marketing and Communications and Events:**

CIS volleyball advertising has been heavy and steady throughout the months leading up to the event. The marketing team was able to secure sponsors for food, clothing and printing. QTV will be producing the event. All games will be broadcasted through the tv systems in the ARC.

**Advancement:**

The campaign for the last \$100 000 for Nixon field is underway. They are focusing on a three pronged approach: Alumni, Varsity Athletes and Booster Clubs.

**Budget Report:**

The budget committee believes that they will be ahead of our projected surplus. The Budget Meeting is held on March 9, 2012.

**Information Item – Strategic Planning:**

At the end of every five-year cycle UCAR will go over their strategic plan and mandates. Currently they are at the end of the first five-year cycle and are evaluating UCAR through a SWOT analysis of particular departments. This will mean going over goals, values, and mandates in order to create a new strategic plan for the next five years.

**SGPS News**

Finally, the SGPS is sending six runners to the Children's Development Centre 10km run on March 25, 2012. Through the Athletic Budget we were able to subsidize the cost of the race. It should be a great event and a great way to integrate the SGPS with the greater Kingston community.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Meaghan Frauts  
Athletics Coordinator



Society of Graduate and Professional Students  
Report of the History Student's Association and the Graduate  
English Society  
March 2012

Dear Council,

Every year, the Graduate History Student's Association and the Graduate English Society team up to hold an awesome used book fair. Past years have seen us selling everything from century-old relics to video-game prequel paperbacks, from self-help books to upcoming literary classics. All of these come at ridiculously low prices, usually a dollar a book. And to top it all off, there's also a bake sale! So please come and check it out: all proceeds go to the societies themselves.

The sale will be happening over two days, March 15th and 16th, in the lobby of in the lobby of Watson Hall. We'd love to see you there!

Thanks, and best regards,

Doug Nesbitt  
History Representative

Patricia Oprea  
Matthew Scribner  
English Representatives