

Dear Councilors,

And so we come to the end of another school year! I hope that it has been a good one for you. For my part it's certainly been an interesting first month on the job! I was hoping for a slower start. I refer you to the VPCCA's report about the HEQCO affair. In the meantime, there is a lot else going on:

The Board of Trustees: Tuition

The Board of Trustees meets Friday, May 4th. The May meeting is where all fees are set for the upcoming year, including tuition fees. Provost Harrison's tuition fee report can be found here:

http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/agendasminutes/170412/Apr17_12AppC.pdf

Essentially, the report recommends (based on the new government legislation) an eight percent increase in all programs in their first year, and four percent in all subsequent years of the program. This includes undergraduate programs, Law, the Master of Engineering, and the Master in Urban and Regional Planning. Incoming students in Education and the Master of Public Administration will only have their tuition raised four and a half percent and four percent, respectively. Happily, the report recommends no raise in tuition for students in all other graduate programs. Another piece of good news is that the report suggests international tuition only be raised in proportion to domestic rates, that is, eight and four percent, and zero for most graduate programs. International student tuition is, of course, not regulated by the government, so Queen's could well have chosen to raise it disproportionately. I am happy that they have not, though international student tuition is still very high.

I personally do not get the sense from other student leaders that these tuition fees could be effectively protested at the university level. The real place to lower tuition fees is at the government level. The SGPS remains committed to lobbying for lower fees with the rest of the Canadian Federation of Students locals.

The Board of Trustees: Education Student Society Fees

There is another matter that I will need to address at the Board, however. Members of the Education Student Society currently pay a reduced fee slate whereby on certain mandatory fees (like the SGPS Society Fee, WalkHome, Queen's Oxfam, and so forth) they are only assessed fifty percent of the normal fee. Fees essential for University services, like the Athletics and Recreation fee, are not reduced, and neither are the Bus-It fee, CFS membership fee, or any optional fees. There have been concerns that any sub-societies that join the SGPS in the future could also come in with reduced fee slates, to the detriment of University and AMS finances. We have long been successful in allaying those concerns and trying to grandfather in the ESS slate, but lately, the issue has been brought up again, and the issue has gone to the Provost to make a suggestion to the Board. Regrettably, Provost Harrison will be recommending that the Board discontinue this reduced fee slate.

I strongly oppose this move and have sent a written report (co-authored with Jillian) to the Board to that effect. I understand the concerns of the University and the AMS; however, I believe that these concerns are best addressed through direct negotiation. Jillian attempted to negotiate a memorandum of agreement with the AMS during her time as President, to no avail. As for the University, we have suggested adopting a more formal fee protocol, like those at other universities, and Provost Harrison agrees. I will report to you in person about how this matter progresses. In the meantime, I assure you that the SGPS remains committed to the reduced ESS fee slate and do not take the needs of our sub-societies lightly.

I truly regret that I could be seen as starting on the wrong foot with the administration and, in particular, with my counterparts at the AMS. One goal of mine this year is to improve the relationship between the leaderships of our two

organizations (our respective members get along fine with each other!) and this will remain a priority throughout the year. The issue with the reduced ESS fee slate is not about money: it is about the right of student governments to set their own fee schedules according to their own democratic apparatuses.

SGPS at Kingston Pride

We'll have a presence at Kingston's Pride Parade this year! It's June 16th at 11, and promises to be a blast! Please contact our Equity Commissioner Robin Westland at equity@sgps.ca for more information.

Other Issues

I have met with some of our members about particular issues. One member brought up the problem that library fines no longer appear in the personal library web page: they go straight to SOLUS. This can lead to large fines fairly easily, as they cannot be monitored. I am pleased to say that the Executive Director and I have been meeting Library administrators to try to improve communication over this issue. I want to thank the University Librarian and her staff for their interest and attention to this issue.

The VP Graduate and I have also met with some of our members from Queen's Community Housing. They reported that there has been neglect and lack of patience with international student issues. The previous Executive had already started to address these problems, and we will continue their work.

One piece of late-breaking good news: Dean Tierney has informed us that the Writing Centre's summer hours will not be discontinued this year, and in fact, they will be having a special program to assist with writing a thesis. I want to thank Student Affairs for listening to our concerns.

The commonality between all three of these issues is that they were all brought to the Executive by our members. Please continue to do so! It's our job to assist you and to listen to your concerns. On that note, please visit me during my new office hours, 12-1 on Tuesdays, in Room 213 of the JDUC. It's also right around the corner from the Student Advisors' office.

Finally, not to be one of those people who shamelessly asks for people to follow him on Twitter, but please follow me on Twitter: @SGPSPresident. Lots of interesting things happening there already!

Thanks, as always, for your service to the SGPS and to the University.

Cha Gheill,

Matt Scribner

President

president@sgps.ca

Dear SGPS Council Members and Members-At-Large,

Congratulations to you all for completing winter term - I hope that the spring and summer terms bring time for relaxation, as well as productivity, and that you experience much success during these terms. Below is a report on meetings and initiatives from the last month.

City's Student Relations Communications Subcommittee

The *Town-Gown Symposium* will take place from **May 13-15**, at the Four Points Sheraton hotel on King Street, and **SGPS has been invited to host a Networking Break on May 15 from 2:30pm-3:00pm. All SGPS members are invited to attend this event for free.** This conference is hosted by the City of Kingston's Student Relations Communications Subcommittee and the Kingston Economic Development Corporation, and will discuss various Town-Gown issues. University, local government and student groups from across Ontario will be in attendance. This invite is significant to SGPS because it reiterates the importance of the presence of graduate and professional students in the Kingston community and will encourage City officials and various community groups to acknowledge our contributions as different and separate than those of our undergraduate counterparts.

Please let me know (vpg@sgps.ca) if you are interested in attending this break. For more information on the Symposium, please visit: <http://tourism.kingstoncanada.com/en/TGAO2012.asp>

Academic Affairs Standing Committee Meeting

The AASC's hard work paid off; the Progress Report motion passed, as you know, at the April 10 meeting of Council. As stipulated, the Progress Report policy has been disseminated to SGS and graduate departments across campus. The Committee will meet again on April 16.

Student Advisor Meeting

The Student Advisors provided case updates when I met with them on April 25, and we discussed the summer schedule. This was our last meeting with Student Advisor Lauren McNicol, who is moving on from her role; however, Victoria Millious and Shauna Shiels will continue to provide support over the summer months. Thanks Lauren for your wonderful work this past year.

The Student Advisors will continue to have office hours throughout the spring and summer terms, on Mondays and Tuesdays from 1:00pm-3:00pm.

FREE Queen's

The 2011-2012 *FREE Queen's* sessions are now complete; a big thanks goes out to all of our presenters and to the Pathways to Education folks on Weller Avenue.

It may be early, but if you are interested in presenting at next year's event or sitting on the Committee, please let me know (vpg@sgps.ca).

Centre for Teaching and Learning

I met with Dr. Joy Mighty on May 1 to discuss meetings between the CTL and SGPS. Dr. Mighty communicated the different teaching and learning initiatives that the CTL is involved in. This Centre is an immense resource, and if you have not already, please familiarize yourself with all the Centre has to offer: <http://www.queensu.ca/ctl/index.html>. In addition, Dr. Mighty noted that **Teaching Development Day** will be held on **September 5** of this year.

SGS-SGPS Meeting

The SGPS will meet with the School of Graduate Studies again on May 22 and I will provide an update at the next Council meeting in August.

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 Academic Affairs Standing Committee, than with other committees/initiatives within SGPS.

Respectfully submitted,

Becky Pero
VP Graduate
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Dear Council,

I am looking forward to working with Eric Rapos, the new CRO, to strengthen SGPS ties with the ESS, and work within the framework of their needs for their upcoming election in September. Also looking forward to hearing Eric's plans for the upcoming year and helping to make them happen.

Ad-Hoc Committee

The ad-hoc committee is meeting right after this council meeting. Our tentative goal (we will be agreeing on a goal at this meeting) is to clarify the role of council officers, and to put these roles in writing. This will help council officers know and fulfill their duties, and will hopefully avoid confusion about the achievement of these duties. For our first meeting, we agreed to all review any relevant parts of the bylaws, and pursue institutional memory about the clarity of the role of council officers.

Non-Academic Student Misconduct Review Committee

They have issued their final report. Ann Tierney has asked the Provost to not bring any proposals forward, that would happen under this report, until September. The AMS are preparing a supplementary report. I am too: the gist of it is, we don't want our constituents to be disciplined for non-academic matters by the University. Anyone with interest in this subject is asked to send me their comments for the report, which will be sent to the Provost in late June.

Coordinator and Commissioner Hiring

We had a very strong pool of applicants, and interviewed roughly 25 people. All of them were excellent, and while we can't hire them all, I indicated to all interviewees that they should apply again in the future, and please stay involved in SGPS events.

Confirmed successful applicants are: Cassandra Kuyhoven as Social Commissioner, Chris Harris as Athletics Coordinator, Margeaux MacDonald as Planning Coordinator, Robin Westland as Equity Commissioner (continuing on in her current position), Ben Fisher as Equity Coordinator, Holly McIndoe as International Student Commissioner.

The International Student Coordinator position had two equally strong candidates, and the ED, the VP Graduate, and myself are giving these two candidates a second round of interviews. The Logistics and Sustainability positions have not yet been filled, and the ED has posted those notices again. Please encourage anyone you think would be a good candidate to apply.

New Executive Assistant position

Application period has now closed, and we have received a great number of applications, some excellent, some awful. The executive has reviewed the applications and is interviewing the shortlist the week of May 7 to 11.

Please feel free to get in touch with me if you have any questions or comments about this report. I look forward to hearing your replies.

Respectfully submitted,

Annie Clifford
VPP
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Dear SGPS members,

Society of Graduate and Professional Students Report of the VP Campaigns & Community Affairs MAY 2012

My first month on the job has proved to be an eventful one. I hadn't occupied the office for more than a week when SGPS members Jennifer Massey and Sean Field blew the whistle on politically motivated modifications made to a research report they'd written under the aegis of a contract between Queen's and the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO). The report itself concerns the academic effectiveness of so-called 'supplementary initiatives' such as student learning groups or undergraduate TAs; the conclusions appear to have been altered in such a way as to make such programs appear more effective, potentially bolstering a case for saving money by replacing graduate student TAs with undergraduates, who would be compensated with course credit.

A response from HEQCO's president soon followed, in which he claimed the modifications had been made at Queen's, and then smeared Mrs. Massey and Mr. Field as lazy and incompetent for turning in a report that was overdue and incomplete. This line was picked up by the Ontario Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, Glen Murray, amongst others in the media.

The other side, however, was given voice by the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) and the SGPS. Both had media releases out within a day of the story breaking and were actively engaged both with Mr. Murray and other emphasizing the crucial detail that the authors had explicitly (and repeatedly, hence the report's late acceptance) refused to perform the changes that were made on grounds of methodological rigour. That HEQCO then had Queen's modify the work without the authors' knowledge, published it under their name with a disclaimer that the opinions and conclusions therein were those of the authors and not the sponsoring body, may not in fact violate the contract between Queen's and HEQCO, but it suggests a disturbing lack of respect for basic principles of academic integrity on the part of both parties.

While there is a certain irony to such behaviour at HEQCO, given the ostensible purpose of the body implied in its very name, this scandal is no laughing matter: the provincial government builds its post-secondary educational policy largely based on HEQCO's reports, and it is only natural to wonder how much of the research presented therein is largely window-dressing for pre-determined policy recommendations (and the CFS, one must note, has been harshly criticizing the shoddy quality of HEQCO's research almost since its inception). The Ontario College and University Faculty Association (OCUFA) recently released a statement on this matter, coming out strongly in favour of a thorough review of HEQCO's research practices, on the one hand, and a similar review at Queen's together with an internal investigation.

The authors' demands are simple: retraction of the paper and publication of the report in its submitted form; a public apology from HEQCO; and an explanation for why this was done. HEQCO's contemptuous counter-offer is simply to remove their names from the report without further comment. As a first step in what may become a long battle, Mrs. Massey and Mr. Field have filed a Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) request with HEQCO ... and were then billed over \$1000 each, much of it for dozens of hours of 'research'. One presumes their email archives are not easily accessible via modern keyword search algorithms. Alternatively, HEQCO is trying to dissuade their FIPPA request. Either way, the CFS is looking into this matter and negotiating to get these fees reduced.

I have highlighted this issue for you today because, first, I do not expect that it is yet widely known, and second, I believe that whether or not Mrs. Massey and Mr. Field were acting as SGPS members when writing the report, they are fighting a battle whose outcome has implications for every graduate student at this university. There is the obvious threat posed to graduate student funding by a push to replace graduate student TAs with unpaid undergraduates. There is also a more subtle, but potentially much more serious, issue at stake: if Queen's gains a reputation as an institution that will readily massage research results in order to please funding bodies (the contract in question was for a mere \$45,000), everything coming out of this

institution will be suspect ... and those who have obtained degrees through it will themselves be under suspicion.

Two weeks ago I accompanied PSAC 901 to an Ontario Federation of Labour rally at Queen's Park. Approximately 15,000 people attended the event, held in advance on the provincial budget vote. While it is difficult to gauge the effectiveness of such actions, the provincial government did agree to some NDP demands (in particular, a slightly higher tax rate for those making over \$500,000 per year) ... however, there remains very little for students, and graduate students in particular, to love about the provincial budget. In particular, for every dollar of 'additional' funding via, e.g., the means-tested tuition grant, \$1.20 is being clawed back from other provincial post-secondary programs. Opposition to this austerity agenda is widespread and growing more vocal by the day; there will undoubtedly be discussion of this at the upcoming CFS National Annual General Meeting, which I will be attending at the end of May; and at the provincial executive CFS meeting, in mid-May. I encourage anyone who has specific concerns or ideas they would like brought to the CFS NAGM to contact me beforehand.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Shultz
VP Campaigns & Community Affairs
vpcca@sgps.ca

Greetings!

It has been a busy month. I met with the Senate Scholarship and Student Aid Committee to approve new and modified awards and scholarships. This will go to Senate this month for approval. Look for some new funding in the Fall 2012.

Finance & Services Committee:

The F&S committee met in May and reviewed some ESA, Grant and dental bursary applications. We also reviewed the policies surrounding these and have brought forward two motions to amend our policies. These changes will enable our members to access the bursaries and programs to alleviate any economic issues that may arise from their situation. Please see the main motions for specific details.

Sustainability Committee

At the time of writing this report, we had yet to hire a new coordinator. I met with the committee on May 1st to ensure that things are moving along. We approved a tentative budget and discussed a few possible projects for the upcoming year.

Fees

There has been much contention with the University administration with respect to the fee slate that we provide to our ESS members and how this group came to join the SGPS. To make a long story short, every year we submit a fee slate to the Board of Trustees in May for approval. These are fees that are University related, like Health, Counseling & Disability Services or the Athletics and Recreation fee as well as fees that are donative like OPIRG, CFRC, AMS Walkhome and TALK-Telephone Aid Line Kingston. One of the points of contention for the University and the AMS is that these students pay a reduced rate, which is how the SGPS voted to accept this group and there is no agreement in place between the AMS and the SGPS to determine how student groups move from AMS to SGPS or vice versa. At the time of writing this report, the Provost submitted a recommendation to the Board of Trustees that the Board approve a full fee slate for all SGPS members. This is problematic for a variety of reasons but most importantly, it is contrary to government protocol (. Specifically, the University does not have jurisdiction over the fees in question-they are donative fees and the SGPS membership can vote to reduce or increase or eliminate these fees as the members see fit or alternatively, to introduce new fees; this is the same case for AMS fees. The AMS members decide how to decrease, increase or eliminate their student fees-a recent example of which is the OPIRG fee voted at the last AMS referendum. Unfortunately, at the time of writing this report, the Board of Trustees has not met (set for Friday, May 4th) so I am hopeful that our President, Matt will have some good news for the members.

Graduate Residence:

We (SGPS President, Matt and I) have been working with Residence Life towards improving residences and graduate social space for our members. This has been an ongoing discussion and we are hoping to have some announcements to make in the near future.

Grad Club:

Our executive decided that I should sit on the Grad Club board as the SGPS rep. The Grad Club is looking for new ideas to promote the Club and the patio is now open for the season. Keep you eyes peeled for delicious, frozen drinks and fantastic specials in the near future! DID YOU KNOW???? The Grad Club has the least expensive (READ: cheapest) & tastiest, HOMEMADE burger on campus (possibly even in Kingston)!!! Members of the Club also get 10% off food purchase and free room rentals so be sure to book your social event and celebrations there.

In closing, although the summer will soon be upon us, please consider getting involved at the SGPS or through some of the social events. Upcoming activities include white water rafting and we are hoping to pan some athletic events (including those events for the not so athletic!).

Thanks for coming out to Council & I look forward to the upcoming year!

Jillian Burford-Grinnell
VP Finance and Services
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Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Speaker
May 2012

Dear Council,

This is my first official report since taking over as Speaker (May 1st), and I'm pleased to report that I have been transitioning well into this role. I owe many thanks to both Sean and Eric for their support and guidance, and perhaps most importantly, their patience with all the questions I have been asking!

I will be undertaking a complete review of our new Bylaws and Policies over the next two months, as well as an examination of our committee compositions. For those of you who may be unfamiliar with Council, we have a number of working committees in place and all Councilors will have the opportunity to serve on one of them. In addition, I will be hiring a Deputy Speaker over the summer, so you can look for a new face at Council in August.

I'm very pleased with how things are panning out for our May meeting and I look forward to seeing you all soon!

Respectfully submitted,

James MacLeod
Speaker
speaker@sgps.ca

SGPS Computer Network

- Our secondary webserver experienced a hard drive failure. It has been replaced and everything is back up and running. Our website experienced no downtime.
- I completed the task of cleaning and preparing the laptops for new Exec members. All current Exec members have their computers and have reported no issues thus far.
- I am in the process of changing ownership of e-mail addresses for our Commissioners and Coordinators (our newly hired staff people). This process should be complete in the next week or as soon as I can meet with new staff people.
- I am preparing a new workstation for the Student Advisor office.
- I am preparing a new workstation for the soon to be hired Executive Assistant.
- I am running verification processes to ensure a smooth transition of the Executive Assistant to the Assistant Executive Director (name change in preparation for the new Executive Assistant position). This is a server-side process. Everything is looking good with respect to the switch.

SGPS Website

- I have updated the people section of our website to reflect the newly hired staff.
- I have updated the job section of our website to reflect our need for more candidates for Logistics Coordinator and Sustainability Coordinator.
- The job posting for the new Executive Assistant was posted on our website for the hiring period (which has closed).
- The SGPS Award nomination period was extended. I have updated the website so the nomination forms are available.

Communications

- Working on the final touches to our updated bursary application forms. I have received the final changes from our VP Finance and will be posting new forms in the next week or so.
- I am working to improve transitional documents for staff.
- 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. This process has been heavily complicated by the new PeopleSoft system.
- I met with the University Registrar and the Associate University Registrar to work on better communication between the Registrar and our members.
- I am working with Front Desk Staff to generate organizational charts for all units at Queen's. The goal is to improve our internal understanding of how the University operates.
- I have completed the 2012-2013 version of the SGPS Handbook (dayplanner).
- I continue to work on the 2012-2013 Orientation Week Survival Guide.

Respectfully submitted,
Sean Richards - info@sgps.ca

Dear Council,

The following is a summary of what was done during the month of April:

April 5th

- Met with Ekta Singh from the Equity Office.
- Got introduced to the Council on Employment Equity and we discussed the upcoming year and how it would be laid out.

April 10th

- Had a meeting with Stephanie Simpson in the HR office to discuss Anti-Oppression training
- Set a date for Anti-Oppression training. Training to be Wednesday, June 6 and Thursday June
 - o June 6th will be full day, June 7th is 1/2 day
- Also discussed Accent Discrimination
 - o Asked to follow up with Usman who was hired as an RA to prepare the accent discrimination proposal destined to go to GREB*
 - *Follow up achieved, made contact with Usman and let him know that we would be looking to hire a new RA so that he may feel free to let go of the project
 - o Discuss the formulation of a small action group to finalize changes to the accent discrimination proposal and survey
 - o Will be looking into arranging for expert help re: survey

April 10th

- SEEC meeting
 - o It appears that there has been a change with the mature student policy at Queens whereby mature students are no longer admitted to take courses on campus, but rather have to take the courses online. This is an Educational Equity issue because not everyone is able to thrive in online courses. Also, the students who are typically applying for mature student status are already disadvantaged. This new policy creates yet another barrier to them being able to succeed academically. The issue was left that the Chair would request of the senate more information about this issue and would report back to SEEC
 - o A "functions of Senate" document was received by SEEC for review. The document included several recommendations that the attendees of the meeting took issue with. It was decided to form a sub-committee to review this document
 - o Drop Fees issues were brought up. There was a discussion about how Queens is perceived, and some suggestion that Queens is seen as a "rich school" and therefore off-limits in many ways. While the tuition at Queens is not comparatively high, the high rents in Kingston may make it difficult for people to consider attending Queens. However, there are no statistics to back any of this up, and so it was discussed that perhaps a census should be done on students to find out. There is a letter being addressed to the principle about the drop fees problem and providing an explanation about why we need the student census.

April 13th

- Attended the Disability Awareness Month re-cap meeting. We discussed what had worked and what hadn't worked
- The possibility of doing a conference next year rather than trying another gala was brought up. The idea would be to arrange speakers from industry, government, graduate studies, etc, in order to keep the topics interesting. The conference would be free for anyone affiliated with Queen's, but it was suggested to possibly charge

anyone from outside the University. This is all still at the very early stages, but I will be a support for Li, the student hired as Disability Awareness Month coordinator.

April 18th

- Attended the CEE meeting. The meeting largely focused on whether or not to change the format of the meetings for the upcoming year. The thought is to change it so that the meetings are more interactive and, possibly, even opening up the first half of the meetings to include other interested parties who do not officially sit on the CEE committee.
- There was also some talk about hiring policies and how to ensure that your group (ie. SGPS) is following the provincial mandate to hire from the 4 marginalized groups, as well as the 5th that Queen's recognizes (that being sexual orientation). It was mentioned that if a group would like help in setting up a way to monitor these statistics and ensure that your group is following proper guidelines that HR would be happy to help.
 - o Have arranged to meet with Irene Bujara in early May to find out more information about this
- There will be a new monthly Equity Newsletter that CEE members have been asked to distribute to our groups once it is ready
 - o Have confirmed that this should be possible
- Wondering if we could do the same sort of newsletter idea with disability awareness?

Throughout the Month

- Disabilities
 - o The discussion about the excess disability money has continued. I have a meeting with Jeanette Parsons later in May to further this issue along. It has been decided to let Disability Services know that the SGPS has money available to those students with disabilities who are in need of financial assistance with regards to extra services they require.
 - o The details for this arrangement are still being worked out. For now, I will begin designing a poster or pamphlet that disability services can distribute to their students who are SGPS members to let them know about this service.
- Transition Document
 - o Have had several discussions with pertinent SGPS council members and staff about how they perceive the roles of Equity Commissioner/Coordinator and how they should be "run".
 - o I plan to start an Equity Commissioner transition document this month in an attempt to clarify what is expected of the Equity Commissioner.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Westland
Equity Commissioner
equity@sgps.ca

Greetings Council,

This is my first report in my new role, and I am really excited to be continuing on with such an enthusiastic bunch of Councilors. I would first like to begin by wishing the new Speaker, James MacLeod, best of luck in his coming term, and I have no doubt that he is going to do great!

As today (May 1st) is my first day in the position, I have not really begun much work, but have set out plans for what I hope to accomplish over the year.

The following are my goals and plans:

- Bylaw and Policy
 - I plan to continue serving as a member of the B&P Committee
 - I have already begun a policy review of elections policy and will likely be bringing some recommendations to the committee towards the end of the summer in terms of clarifying some holes in the policy and further migrating the policy to reflect the use of our online balloting
 - The referendum policy is misaligned in some places, so I plan to ensure that all policy in relation to referenda and elections is aligned and correct
- Online balloting issues
 - In order to preempt the issues from last year (students being unable to vote) I will be working with Sean (the Executive Director) to attempt to form a method of ensuring students are on the voting list prior to the election. I have several ideas, but will keep you informed via my reports each month as they progress
- Elections Publicity
 - My goal is to work on publicizing and advertising elections early and hard, I want to make sure all students are aware of the election, in hopes of gathering a greater number of candidates
 - I would ideally like to see a more exciting election this year with multiple candidates, a full debate, and creative campaigning. In the past with such a high number of acclamations, candidates have not needed to campaign to their fullest extent, and this has had an impact on voter turnout, which I would like to increase
 - I plan to work with the Communications Commissioner to work on marketing in every possible manner, really taking advantage of Social Media, as well as print media and word of mouth marketing
- Voter Turnout
 - The low voter turnout in previous years has been quite discouraging, and I would like to make a change, that is why I am setting the goal of a 30% voter turnout in this year's executive election, and will do everything in my power to ensure this goal is met
- Mikhail's Suggestions
 - My predecessor, in his final report left a number of suggestions and observations about the role, and I plan to address them all in order to ensure that his concerns are addressed and fixes implemented to make for a better elections process
 - One of the major areas that I am looking into currently is the date of elections, and the issue of the majority of campaigning falling during reading week; his suggestion was to move the deadline to have the elections completed by the second week of March, but I feel this would not allow for sufficient transitioning for the incoming executive, so I am looking into other options for the best possible solution
- ESS Elections
 - I am just trying to get myself up to speed with what has transpired in regards to the ESS elections, and the advancements this year

- These elections have always been an issue due to the late arrival and short stay of ESS students, so it is of the utmost importance to ensure their elections are run smoothly
- I would like to make incoming students aware of the positions earlier on in the summer, and to promote involvement, thus increasing interest in positions, much like with the SGPS Elections
- Mikhail made a number of suggestions for ESS elections that I have been looking into as well, and will report back on the progress made over the summer
- Twitter
 - I have created an SGPS CRO Twitter Account that will be a main source of information for social media during ESS and SGPS Elections and Referenda
 - You can follow the account @SGPS_CRO
 - Note: it will likely be pretty boring right now...

And that about does it for my first report.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to contact me, I certainly welcome the dialog.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Rapos
SGPS Chief Returning Officer (CRO)
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