

Dear Councillors,

Hope you are all well. 3 items of note to include in the written section for this month:

Advancement:

The Office of Advancement has now agreed to accept submissions directly from the SGPS without us having to go through the School of Graduate Studies or other Deans as was usual in earlier years. This means that if there are particular student awards, bursaries, buildings, initiatives and difficult requests that you would like to make, there is now a way to do it. I would ask that you ask students in your departments to try and articulate some of their needs and send their submissions to you. If we are able to collate these ideas and send in a coherent submission, we can then ensure that the University puts resources behind raising money for our priorities rather than those that have to do exclusively with the physical renewal of campus. Perhaps we can have a discussion about this at Council, but please email me your questions / ideas on this issue after you have discussed it with your department.

Internationalization:

The Principal has asked me to raise the issue of internationalization with the SGPS Council. It seems that not enough graduate / professional students are taking advantage of Queen's links with foreign universities. I tried to explain that in most cases, we are but mere slaves of our supervisors, but you may have other descriptions of the situation as well. Again - perhaps a discussion at Council is warranted - so go ahead, ask a question.

Get to know the Queen's Admin:

The Dean of Student Affairs, the Vice Principal of Advancement and representatives from the library should be coming to this meeting to present. Please bring questions for them and feel free to discuss whether you feel that you are served by their departments. They are coming to Council so that we can engage with these departments and so they can hear directly from students whether we feel served and whether we have ideas for how we can make their services to us better. Had a less than stellar experience at the career centre? Are unsure about all the bursaries available to you? Ask the right questions - these are good people willing to help. Tell them how they can.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jawad Qureshy

President - SGPS - president@sgps.ca

Human Resources

After vetting a number of strong applications and conducting quite a number of interviews, we have hired a new Logistics Coordinator and are almost done hiring our Research Assistants for the coming year. We would like to thank everybody who applied.

As always, there are a number of other Human Resources issues that continue to require my attention. This includes at the moment an initiative to implement a more formal and consistent evaluation process that is accessible and convenient for the relevant supervisory people to complete. I have also taken over for Sean as the main exec contact person for the Social team and am really excited for that role.

While I have received a few requests to join the Human Resources Standing Committee, there are still a number of spots available. I would strongly encourage anybody still interested in joining a committee to consider joining this very, very important one!

Grad Club

The Grad Club is currently undertaking a strategic planning process of its own, and is pleased with the support our members have shown for this process. A number of exciting events are upcoming, and I encourage you all to attend. We are hoping to have an ESS member join the Board of Directors there soon. Finally, we have had to work to put a few of the labour policies and safety protocols up to speed, but they are on track and progressing well.

ESS

The new ESS has held their first council meeting and seems to be doing really well. I'll be meeting with the ESS President before Council, and am excited by the engaged and proactive spirit they have been showing thus far. We are also working to institutionalize some of our supports for their society in the coming months in order to ensure that future transition periods are even smoother.

SONAD

SONAD met around the time of our last Council meeting. There is little to report in this regard at the moment.

Professional Student Standing Committee

Anne-Marie brought in representatives last month from CFS-ON. My current sense is that this organization is noticeably less well-received at the professional student level, and I raised this issue with the representatives. Most noticeably, the organization seems to have little space for professional student concerns to be well-heard. Coming out of this meeting, the onus is very much on us as membership unions if we want to change this. The NGM for this organization will be at the end of November. If there are professional student groups who would like to pursue some sort of voice within the CFS structure, I am happy to endeavour to start at least an informal professional student caucusing within both the provincial and national CFS meetings. I would, however, like to receive a mandate from our professional members prior to starting such a large endeavour so I would strongly encourage any professional student reps on Council to contact me with their thoughts on the matter.

I am also working to represent Professional Student interests on QSAAC, our student coalition for input into the Academic Plan. I would very much encourage our professional student side to solicit feedback from your members on the plan and how we as professional students fit into it, and be in touch with me regarding the process.

Respectfully submitted,

Shaughnessy Hawkins

Free Queen's

Our VP Finances & Services and myself are on the current Free Queen's committee, and we hope to offer another free-of-charge course to the Kingston community, from January to April approximately. I strongly encourage councilors to forward the call for class proposals to their departments (see appendix) before council meets. Right now, the deadline for proposals is **November 10**.

SCAD (Senate Committee on Academic Development) & Academic Plan

Principal Woolf and Senate referred the academic plan to SCAD in September and, after two meetings, SCAD has returned the plan to Senate, including a brief list of recommendations on how it believes the school should proceed. These include forming a Task Force through Senate, which would 1) include staff, students, and faculty 2) "establish sub-committees focused on specific issues salient to an Academic Plan" 3) "consult widely through the sub-committees, for example by holding open meetings with experts and representatives of stakeholders and by holding town halls" and 4) "consider engaging an external consultant/writer." The question of student and faculty representation was raised with respect to balancing these constituents with administration.

Graduate Précis to "Imagining the Future"

Councilors can find a summary of the Academic Writing Team's recommendations to the University, "Imagining the Future," in the appendix to the Council package. The idea for writing and publishing a summary originated in the Queen's Student Academic Advisory Coalition (chaired by the Rector and attended by AMS and SGPS) as a way to facilitate informed awareness about - and participation with - the academic planning process. An AMS précis is also available. I encourage anyone who is interested in the process to peruse the document and get in touch with the Executive or me if you have specific concerns about "Imagining" and the process to date. I would also encourage all of our members to read Goal 3.2 which concerns graduate and professional students in detail.

In trying to summarize and communicate "Imagining"'s content, I resisted entering into debate with the document but did point out significant omissions, recommendations, and challenges as I observed them. One omission that may remind us of the need to raise our concerns about this process is that professional students are not mentioned in the body of "Imagining" at all. Our response to "Where Next?" already observed that professional students were comparatively absent. Other points of interest in 3.2 are graduate funding packages, graduate program enrolment, career services and post-graduation preparation for graduate students, graduate-student revenue brought to Queen's, and graduate supervision training.

Student Advisors

After a very long round of hiring, I hope to be able to officially announce the third advisor at Council.

Faculty Graduate Councils

We are still looking for graduate students in the Faculty of Science to nominate for the Faculty of Science Graduate Council. There are two seats available, 1 MA and 1 PhD. If you are interested in serving on this Council (primarily composed of graduate coordinators in this faculty), please contact me at vpq@sgps.ca. Participating with this group is an excellent opportunity to serve students in the sciences.

Respectfully submitted,
Daniel Moore

Dear Councilors, the latest:

Equity Climate Survey

After months of preparation, revision, and consultation, we have at last implemented the equity climate survey. For this inroad, we have many partners to thank, including Dr. Audrey Kobayashi (Geography), Dr. Adnan Husain (History), Irène Bujara and Jean Pfleiderer (Human Rights Office), Heidi Penning and Jill Christie (Equity Office), Susan Anderson (QUIC), Dr. Arunima Khanna (HCDS), Catherine Isaacs (Liaison, Statistics Canada and School of Business), and Usman Mushtaq (SGPS Student Advisor and the survey's original author). Indeed, many hours went into preparing this project – and, as such, you can imagine how discouraged I felt when the survey failed to launch on two separate occasions, due to unforeseen technological hurdles. Thanks to the prompt and capable responses of 'Student Voice' staff, however, these were quickly surmounted. Our members will be able to respond to the survey until November 8th, 2010.

Access Copyright Tariff

As briefly mentioned last meeting, our license with Access Copyright (AC) expires December 31, 2010. At present, the license covers administrative and interlibrary loan copies, and classroom handouts. Instead of renewing Canadian university licenses expiring on this date, AC has proposed a per-student tariff of \$45 (which **does not** replace reprography charges) to compensate for capital losses on what, so far, is considered by Canadian copyright law as free digital access. This is problematic for several reasons, including the astronomical increase in per student fees as well as the fact that the proposed tariff would cover several activities which do not require a license under "fair dealing". To discuss these and other matters, Principal Woolf met with the AUCC last week, equipped with a document prepared by the Copyright Working Group which outlined potential risks and benefits involved in operating (or not) under the new tariff. To date, the PVPs have not made their final decision in this regard. Nonetheless, members of the Working Group are now turning their attention towards developing educational materials and resources for faculty, students and staff. For instance, you might consult the following website for integrating online materials into course reading lists: <http://library.queensu.ca/help/coursereadings>; or, for information on linking to online sources: <http://library.queensu.ca/help/links-permanent>). More online information will soon be available through a new website, and the Working Group has also recommended that the university hire a 'copyright officer'. These resources will be all the more important for you as a student and/or instructor if Queen's decides against signing on to the tariff, as risks of scrutiny and prosecution will undoubtedly rise, and it remains unclear where the burden of legal liability will fall.

Student Life: An Clachan and John Orr Tower

Several of our members living in housing complexes (An Claghan and John Orr, specifically) have, for several years, identified a need for a live-in student life coordinator akin to a residence Don. Alas, there exists at present no formal channel to address this. Unlike the Senate Residence Committee (which deals strictly with university residences), the Community Housing Board has historically dealt only with the finances and operations of housing complexes. At the last Housing Board meeting, we suggested that this body address student life in the future. While the Committee appeared amenable to this idea, its members will not meet again until next February – evidently not ideal, particularly for our members. In response, I have contacted the Chair of the Senate Residence Committee (SRC), Dr. Robert Crawford, who has agreed to grant observer status to one student representative from each housing complex (including the CORE). The purpose of this strategy is to provide a space for student reps to compare the organization and discussions of the SRC with that of the Housing Board in preparation for next February's meeting.

Meanwhile, I would like to invite SGPS students-at-large living in either housing complex to meet with myself, Dr. Crawford, and a few administrators from Student Affairs to identify priorities and specific needs, as well as possible (perhaps more timely) responses. Please advise your departmental colleagues of this important and rare opportunity. Interested parties may contact me by email as soon as possible.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne-Marie Grondin

October has been a busy month. There are a few updates to bring to you.

SPACE:

Our renovations are set to finally begin this month. I was able to secure furniture for the new offices on the second floor as well as for the main office at no cost to the SGPS. We will now have new desks, office chairs, bookshelves and a huge boardroom table.

STUDENT LIFE CENTRE:

There have been numerous meetings on a weekly basis but I think we are beginning to finalize some of the details around the operation and management of the Student Life Centre. The budget has essentially been set and we are in the process of sorting out the details on the retail space in the Queen's Centre.

BURSARIES:

There have been a number of applications for the various bursaries over the last few weeks and I just wanted to thank all of our members for their dedication to increasing the conferences/events/activities for the SGPS. If any of you have ideas on additional services that we should consider offering, don't hesitate to contact me at vpfs@sgps.ca.

CFS NGM:

Along with Anne Marie, Daniel and Carolyn, I will be attending the National General Meeting for the CFS in November. This is an opportunity for your voice to be heard at a national level and I encourage you to contact me if there is anything that you would like addressed at this meeting or with other student society locals.

CHILDCARE:

I am still hoping to hear some input from any of you who would use an after hours service beginning in January. I am trying to finalize the results for this type of service should it be available to our members.

HOUSING:

We have an RA who is now starting to sort out the details with respect to Graduate and Professional housing. If you have any ideas or know of any Graduate and Professional students who have housing available, please have them contact the SGPS office. I am hoping to have this up and running as soon as possible to allow our members to list vacancies and/or look for accommodation with other Graduate and Professional students.

In closing, I hope each of you have enjoyed the year to date I thank you for your continued involvement and commitment to the SGPS. I look forward to the upcoming meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

VP Finance and Services

Update for the GreenStudent.ca/ Canadian Directory of Environmental Education

It had come to my attention that the GreenStudent website which acts as a guide to green schools across Canada was missing quite a few important updates about green initiatives at Queen's as well as a mention of the SGPS Sustainability Office – so I compiled a list of updates and sent it in to their editors to post online. Some major updates include talking about the services offered through the SGPS Sustainability, New Collaborative program in Applied Sustainability, signing of the University and College Presidents' Climate Change Statement of Action for Canada, establishment of the Sustainability Advisory Committee and the GHG Working Group.

Details have already been updated and can be accessed here
<http://thegreenstudent.ca/schools/by-province/ontario/queens-university/>

Queen's University Student Sustainability Plan

Members of the SGPS Sustainability Committee are taking part in the AMS organized plan for sustainability on campus. The document will outline the initiatives of sustainability-oriented student groups on campus and will aid in creating a more collaborative student sustainability movement. Key areas to focus will involve waste, recycling, composting, water, transport, awareness and etc. The document will also serve as a response to the Sustainability plan in the works by the Queen's Sustainability Office and we hope will provide a clear picture of what students want to see happen/ change in regards to sustainability.

Queen's GHG Working Group

As a member of the GHG reduction working group I attended the meeting in mid October and we discussed:
Key issues for the policy draft – main document needs to be ready for 2012
Modify and work on the spreadsheet of main energy savings/ GHG reduction initiatives
Timeline of key targets/ long term and short term projects and goals
In addition to financial considerations include all enviro concerns driving the project
Sustainability within the curriculum

Studying the Environment – Queen's Journal Article

I also took part in the Green Supplement for October's issue of The Journal. I was interviewed about sustainability initiatives on campus as well as the Environmental Studies program.
Read more: <http://www.queensjournal.ca/story/2010-10-22/supplement/studying-environment/>

Senate Report for September:

Highlights of the Principal and Provost's Reports

- Mentioned the start of a review into the death of first year engineering students Cameron Bruce
- Finalizing the Queen's Planning Committee, with members from Senate and the Board of Trustees, which will meet for the first time in October and discuss major initiatives with funding implications. Meant to be a bridge between the two bodies.
- The report on the Academic Plan was announced and feedback was solicited. Deadline for the creation of the Academic Plan has been extended into 2011. The plan was referred to the Senate Committee on Academic Development later in the session.
- Noted that a forthcoming meeting of the Council of Ontario Universities would include discussion of university differentiation, access and enrolment, and innovation and modernization of delivery.
- The Ontario government requested a list of infrastructure projects from universities. Funding will take at least a year. The five ideas submitted, in order, were:
 1. teaching building.
 2. engineering building
 3. renovation of existing teaching space.
 4. animal care and life sciences building.

Internal Academic Reviews

The internal academic review on the School of Music details significant budgetary problems within the school and contains significant questions about the future of the department. The view of the report seems to be that the current model, given the current restrictive funding environment, of the department is unsustainable. It is said to be unfocused, pedagogically troubled, and administratively onerous for faculty. It has been suggested that the school work with the Centre for Teaching and Learning to revamp curriculum and consider partnership with the Faculty of Arts and Science.

A full copy of the report can be found here:

http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/Sep23_10/Music.pdf

Operation Review — Interim Report on the Composition of Senate

Partly spurred on, it would seem, by the discussions about the size and composition of the Board of Trustees, Senate has begun a discussion about the size, composition, and purpose of that body. Senators moved into an informal group discussion about this topic, using the existing functions of senate as a jumping off point. They can be found here:

<http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/function.html>

The results of this discussion can be found in the minutes. While there is obvious value in any exercise by such an important body to investigate its composition and purpose in order to assure greater effectiveness, there is concern that an attempt to lower the numbers of senators could harm student representation, which is already low. Clearly, I think it would be a good idea to oppose any policy that decreases student representation and, in fact, seeking an increase seems reasonable. I welcome any feedback people have about the purpose of senate and will continue to update people on this process.

Highlights of the Principal and Provost's Reports

- Has had an increased focus on external affairs as recalibration of his position with the provost's continues.
- The Queen's Board of Trustees has voted to lower its size from 44 to 25 and is awaiting changes to the Queen's Charter in Parliament. The changes will allow the body to control its size in the future.
- Principal's meetings with the Group of 13 University Principals were focused on the issues of copyright, internationalization, and university rankings.
- Queen's removed itself from consideration for the THES rankings due to serious questions about methodology. This has prompted the principal to call for a larger discussion on university rankings that will take place at the next senate meeting. *I welcome feedback and ideas to bring forward to this discussion.*
- The provost announced new international student agreements throughout Europe and in India, Brazil, and South Africa. The president mentioned a forthcoming trip with other principals from Ontario universities to India to establish further international study ties there.
- The provost announced the release of the 2010/11 Action Plan from the Diversity and Equity Task Force and a new financial update.

Queen's University Quality Assurance Program (QUQAP)

Deputy Provost Susan Cole presented details of the proposal for a new quality assurance system that shall be implemented at Queen's in the next year. The new QUQAP will replace the existing Internal Academic Review process that reports on a regular basis to Senate. This process was initiated by the provincial government as a way to create a more uniform, cohesive, and centralized form of academic review and quality assurance. It is aimed at accomplishing these things while still permitting individual universities to retain autonomy in areas of curriculum development, funding, space, and faculty.

The most significant change is that approval of new programs will involve approval by a Quality Control board made up of representatives from various universities in Ontario. Some areas will also see decreased Senate oversight, an issue some members raised concern about. I shall give a detailed presentation during the council meeting on this issue, but anyone who misses this or wants a detailed treatment of this in hard copy can seek the Deputy Provost's powerpoint presentation on the issue. This shall be posted on the Senate website in the coming weeks, but anyone who wants it sooner can email me as I have a copy currently.

The authors of the proposal are welcoming feedback, so taking this information back to your departments would be valuable. From a Senate perspective, the proposal has been referred to the Internal Academic Review Committee (IARC) and Senate Committee on Academic Development for (SCAD) for the time being.

Academic Procedures Committee

The committee tabled changes to the *Senate Policy on Academic Integrity* and the *Senate Policy on Faculty Jurisdiction with Respect to Student Appeals of Academic Decisions*. The changes to the former were meant to close a loophole where students who were facing a charge of academic dishonesty could, before facing said charges, graduate with a three-year degree, thus avoiding reprisal. Concerns were raised about how this would affect the graduation plans of those who have been wrongly accused of academic dishonesty. The chair of the committee assured Senate that all cases would be dealt with as expediently as possible so as to avoid such problems.

The changes to the latter policy concerned clarifying rules for addressing academic discipline when students are taking courses outside of their primary discipline. It attempts to make this area more clear while maintaining consistency with existing Senate policies on the matter. The amendments can be seen in more detail here:

http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/Oct20_10/CrossFac.pdf

Dear Council Members,

October was a very busy month in terms of developing projects and initiatives led by the Equity team, and in which we are collaborating.

Persons Day

On October 18th, Carolyn and I set up the poster display in the Robert Sutherland Room, and I prepared a general summary and discussion outline, as indicated in my last report. However, attendance throughout the day was sporadic, so there never was enough of a group present for the event to proceed quite as planned. I take the lukewarm success of this initiative as a reminder of the importance of publicising upcoming events through as many media as possible, beyond the SGPS newsletter and Facebook.

Social Committee

The first post-Orientation Week meeting was very productive, and I am happy to report that all the events planned for October and more long-term social initiatives are incorporating a sensitivity to equity issues (especially accessibility).

Equity Committee

Membership to the Committee is growing. New members include a representative from the Law Equity Committee and several general members of the SGPS. I will be scheduling a meeting for the Committee in mid-November.

Website/Calendar

Carolyn and I met with Sean to discuss how Equity-related material will be incorporated into the existing structure of the SGPS website. Among the material soon to be posted are a list of important Queen's and Kingston organizations SGPS members should know about and be able to access as wanted/needed, information about equity-related projects and initiatives, and an updated calendar of events. The physical calendar plan is on hiatus while I devote myself to the electronic version. As I have yet to hear back from the Social Issues Commissioner regarding AMS projects/events, they will unfortunately not be included in this update.

Academic Planning

Through meeting with Adnan Husain of the Diversity & Equity Taskforce (DET) on October 7th, we have developed a new approach to making sure equity issues are addressed in Queen's academic planning. A committee including Dr. Husain, the Rector (Nick Day) and the Equity Commissioner (Carolyn Prouse) will establish a committee to develop material to be brought to the Senate Committee on Academic Development (SCAD) to ensure that equity concerns are met. The Equity Committee will also pass along concerns brought to its meeting by its members to this committee.

Accent Discrimination Campaign (name pending)

Our initial meeting to address accent-related barriers in effective communication, ranging from discrimination on the basis of accent to legitimate difficulty in understanding one or more of the various Englishes spoken at Queen's has led to an ambitious project. Under the working title Understanding Each Other: Accented Englishes at Queen's, we are developing this campaign into a web-based project. The first stage will involve disseminating a survey to the Queen's community, inviting members to share their experience(s) of communication difficulty and/or discrimination arising from a difference in spoken English. I am in contact with the General Research Ethics Board (GREB)

to ensure that this survey is conducted according to appropriate ethical standards. At the same time, we are putting together a set of theoretical and pedagogical resources regarding accented communication, which will be the first items posted on the website. The results of the survey will determine the section of the website devoted to specific experiences at Queen's, as well as our action plan for reducing and ultimately eliminating discrimination on the basis of accent at Queen's and promoting effective communication among all members of the University community. We are excited to be working with the Human Rights Office, PSAC Local 901 and the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) on this initiative!

Sexual Violence Action Network

This Network is made up of Queen's- and Kingston-based organizations dedicated to resisting the culture of sexual violence that sadly is very much present Queen's – especially in the first eight weeks of any academic year. The general feeling among the representatives of the various groups at our first meeting on October 19th is that each organization will approach anti-violence from its own standpoint. However, I am committed to promoting collaboration among similarly-mandated groups, and so am in the process of trying to encourage some of these (including the Levana Centre for Gender Advocacy and Education on Gender Issues) to come together later in November to organize a chapter of the White Ribbon Campaign, or a similar large-scale anti-violence initiative in the week(s) leading up to the National Day of Remembrance & Action on Violence Against Women (December 6th). I also represent the SGPS on the committee currently planning the memorial event to be held on this day.

If anyone is interested in joining the Network, and/or collaborating on a November project, please contact me at equityco@sqps.ca.

In general, I remind Council that any equity-related concern on behalf of the SGPS members represented can be directed to me at the above email, and to equity@sqps.ca.

Respectfully submitted,

Kalanthe Khaiat
Equity Coordinator

Hello again, a busy planning month has been happening for us, lots going on, and lots coming up, so without further ado, we shall update you on the goings on of GCS.

A Full Council

Since our last report, we held our elections for our Officer Positions, and now have the full GCS Council on board and eager to plan events for our students, and represent them within their respective committees.

Check out our website for the complete listing of Council Members.

We also recently held our first Council meeting, and I am pleased to say that we have a very spirited bunch, and we all very much enjoy contributing to discussion, so it promises to be a great year for GCS.

QGCS

Planning is underway for the 2nd Annual Queen's Graduate Computing Society Conference. The Conference was held in May for the first time, and it was quite successful, so we are aiming to top that with the next one. Many ideas have been thrown around about how to improve and evolve the conference. The previous one was held over one day, on the Sunday of Spring Reunion Weekend, and for this year we are hoping to increase attendance by reformatting and holding it at a different time of the year.

At this point we are looking to hold the conference during the Winter Term, so as to include undergraduates in the conference. In addition to that, we want to expand to a day and a half time period, beginning on a Friday evening, and all day Saturday. This allows more room for people to attend, and it also increases the overall scale of the event, in hopes of attracting sponsors. As of now, we are looking at early March for the timing of the conference, the reason why planning is underway now.

The game plan at this point is still very preliminary, but we are looking to have a more informal and relaxed Friday night with one keynote speaker, and possibly some activities such as a programming challenge open to all, and then swing into formal presentations and poster displays for the Saturday. All of this is subject to change upon consultation with potential sponsors, as well as the Director of the School of Computing, but we are confident in our desire to expand the conference.

We promise to keep you updated as details come through.

Events

We are aiming to get the ball rolling on events for the remainder of this term, as well as for next term. Ideas so far have included shared movie nights with Computing undergrads, trips out of town (sporting, attractions, etc.), skating events in market square, and much more, so with all of these ideas, Computing students will certainly be busy.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Rapos and Layan Nahlawi
SGPS Relations Officers
Graduate Computing Society
<http://sites.cs.queensu.ca/gcs/main/>

In the month of October, I provided feedback on the draft of my college Amir's Report on International Students. I helped to promote Provost and Vice-Principal Academic Bob Silverman's invitation to Queen's international students to participate in an information and discussion session on the strengths, and possible areas for improvement, of the Queen's experience from an international student perspective - particularly as it regards tuition. I also encouraged international students to attend QUIC's monthly international community building lunch. I secured 10 free tickets to the December 3rd Kingston Frontenacs' game at the K-Rock Centre, which I have handed out to international graduate and professional students after promoting the event in the SGPS Newsletter. Many of the students requested the availability of similar outings. I had the opportunity to meet with Paul Bowman at Career Services; I will help his counterpart Whitney Babcock to deliver career related support to international students in January. During the month of November I expect to develop the international students' standing committee as well as participate in a session regarding residency for students and an information session being provided by Kingston Immigration Partnership.

Respectfully,

Becky Pero

SGPS Computer Network

- I am working to cost some new hardware that is necessary for our new office space.
- I have initiated work on a backup system for our mail and wiki server.
- I have been working with the finance and services committee to finalize costs on printing services for our members. I should have more information on this very soon.
- I am working to prepare the SGPS network for our new offices. There are some challenges involved in securing our network across multiple offices and multiple floors of the JDUC. I expect to have the necessary changes made to our network completed when we take possession of our new office space.

SGPS Website

- I continue to work with the Equity Team to incorporate equity into the SGPS website. We are working to add a few new pages and incorporate our equity initiatives into existing sections of our website.
- My initial transition to HTML5 is completed. I am now in the process of adding new functionality to the website to take better advantage of new web standards.
- I believe our website is now fully compliant with all major mobile platforms. If you experience any issues viewing our site on a mobile device, I would love to hear about it.

Communications

- I have been in meetings with Queen's IT to discuss the future of our online optional fee opt-out system. We are working to tweak the system so it functions more smoothly next year.
- I have been working with the ESS to strengthen our communication network and begin some new initiatives between the SGPS and the ESS. I anticipate working with other constituent bodies throughout the year.
- I am investigating the feasibility of an online election system for the SGPS. I am paying close attention to things like security, accessibility and availability.
- Xerox has given us a new copy/printer/scanner. The original one they delivered had some faulty parts. I am very pleased with the way Xerox is treating us. The new machine appears to work as expected.
- I have completed updates on the JDUC poster board. I will be working on the MacCorry board in the next little while.
- I am working to update our bursary application forms. We are making slight modifications, which will allow us to be more efficient in dealing with bursary applications.

Respectfully submitted,
Sean Richards - info@sgps.ca

Dear Councilors,

Council/Committee Meetings:

This month has been busy with various council and committee meetings. I've been working with the SGPS Strategic Planning Committee to help develop a survey for all SGPS members to assess future directions of the SGPS. My main goal, as Equity Commissioner, is to ensure that equity-related questions and concerns are included in all aspects of the survey. In this month's Council on Employment Equity meeting I was updated on the Diversity and Equity Taskforce's recent equity workshop with Senior Administrators. Principal Woolf, VPs Tom Harris and Caroline Davies, and Provost Bob Silverman, among others, were in attendance. The training was a success and DET is now looking to implement similar sessions with the Deans. This is important from an SGPS perspective, as we are institutionalizing very similar training with our staff and executive, and it speaks to the growing commitment of Queen's administration to equity issues. PSAC Local 901 has also been invited to sit on Council meetings, so our members that are TAs and TFs will have representation on the Council in their capacity as University employees. Thirdly, Queen's Accessibility met to discuss a number of issues, such as the best method to compile and store accessibility scan data in such a manner as to make it easy to run reports and get a snapshot of the accessibility issues at Queen's. Furthermore, CFRC is working with QA to find ways to become more accessible. We should pay particular attention to this process, as it may help facilitate the SGPS in ensuring our location is as accessible as possible in a similarly old building. Finally, QA is supporting Mike Condra from Health, Counseling and Disability Services, to make easier the process of course selection for students in need of accommodations.

Events and Campaigns

This month the Equity Team also had it's first meeting with Stephanie Simpson from the Human Rights Office to discuss our upcoming Accent Discrimination Campaign. The campaign will be broad-based and will address accent discrimination as an oppression issue, but also seek to establish constructive dialogue between TAs/Profs and student who may have problems understanding particular "accents." We are currently in the information-gathering phase and will keep our membership up to date on this process.

SGPS Internal

VPCCA Anne-Marie Grondin, Executive Director Sean Richards and I met to discuss equity internal to the SGPS. A large focus of our portfolio this year will be to institutional equity within our organization and policy structure. To this end, we've mandated that the Equity Commissioner sit in on one executive meeting per month, and our Equity Coordinator sit on the Social Planning Committee. I will work closely with the ED on various policy initiatives throughout the year to ensure equity is on the agenda of all executive and staff. We will bring our various policy amendments to Council, so please stay tuned for more information. Furthermore, we're integrating equity-related initiatives into the SGPS website – such as links to organizations, a calendar of events, and various programs – so check the site regularly.

The Equity Team is also committed to outreaching to other student organizations and the administration. We've worked with Adnan Husain from the DET to develop an Equity Plan of Action for the SGPS. We are currently having all SGPS executive sign off on this plan, and then will release it and promote it in conjunction with the AMS plan. The DET has kindly offered to post it on their website and we will be looking for additional ways to spread the word about our commitment to equity this year.

Finally, I've met with Victoria Au of Queen's Law Equity Committee to discuss how we might complement each other this year. We look to establish stronger ties with the Law Society and, with the Law Equity Committee, work on mutual projects, share information and resources, etc.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Prouse
Equity Commissioner

Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Social Commissioner
November, 2010

Hello All,

The social team is very excited to inform our fellow SGPS members of all the great events that we'll be 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.

SGPS & Grad Club Karaoke Mixer

The SGPS is teaming up with the Grad Club to bring you an entertaining night of Karaoke. This event is guaranteed to be a hit whether you're an aspiring singer that wants to be discovered, or haven't realized your singing should be confined to the shower. For those of us who are faint of heart this event will provide a great opportunity to hear unique renditions of our favorite songs, mingle and meet other SGPS members. There will be prizes for some of us that are brave enough to go up there and ravish some old classics.

Date: Saturday, November 6th
Place: Grad Club (162 Barrie Street)
Time: 9:00 pm

SGPS Yoga Classes; Challenge your inner Yogi (HLI)

As a part of our new Healthy Living Initiative the SGPS social team is providing you with a chance to challenge your inner yogi. Whether you've never tried yoga or you are a seasoned yogi, these workshops are safe and inclusive to all levels of ability and familiarity with the discipline. Grant yourself a break from the grind of being a graduate or professional student and participate in the SGPS's FREE yoga class this month, taught by a certified yoga instructor! Based in the Sanskrit meaning of "union", yoga is a physical discipline that unites the body and the mind in a system of movement. There are many benefits to yoga; such as its wonderful health and fitness benefits, as well as stress reduction. There will be two classes offered in November, the exact dates and locations to be announced in the next newsletter and via SGPS facebook group. For more information regarding this event please contact Nikki at planning@sgps.ca.

SGPS Varsity Sport Night

On November 27th, the SGPS Social team has planned a Queen's varsity support day. This will be an excellent chance to lend your support for your fellow Queens Varsity athletes. The varsity games tend to have a great competitive atmosphere that is enhanced with great music and enthusiastic fans. We will be meeting at the SGPS office at 12:30 p.m. then walk to the ARC to watch the men's volleyball team face off against Western. After the game we will head to the Grad Club for some mingling and complementary appetizers! If you're interested in participating or have any inquiries please contact Amanda at athletics@sgps.ca.

Bewic Sports Days

The highlight of the Intramural Calendar at Queen's University is BEWIC Sports Days. This consists of a marathon of co-ed sport tournament that takes over the Athletics and Recreation Centre January 21-22, 2011. 32 co-ed teams and over 1,100 students, play a variety of unique games such as:

- Rugby-Basketball
- Water-Volleyball
- Innertube Waterpolo

Floorball

There will be awards given to the teams with the most spirit, competitiveness and a grand award to the overall winners of the tournament. All participants will receive a tournament t-shirt, and the event will wrap up with a catered banquet on the Saturday evening. If you would like to participate, please email Amanda at athletics@sgps.ca ASAP. We must register early to ensure we have Graduate/Professional entry in the tournament, due to spots filling up quickly. We need a minimum of 15 males and 15 females in order to enter, so SIGN UP, SIGN UP AND SIGN UP....NOW!!

SGPS PRESENTS “ MO'TIME”

In support of the fight against prostate cancer, the SGPS has been MO-tivated to run a series of events to support all of the graduate and professional students participating in MOVEMBER. The funds raised through these events will be donated to the registered team or individual with the best Movember getup in the end of the campaign party. SO, MO'-FOLKS: register for a chance to win the donation for your campaign!! The kick-off for our Movember campaign is a night of endless musical debauchery with our KARAOKE NIGHT, Saturday, November 6th at the Grad Club. Movember participants will be introduced, as well as details on the theme of the end of the month campaign party unveiled! Teams or individuals must register with the Movember website as participants, and must send their name, faculty, and link to their fundraising homepage to planning@sgps.ca. Individuals interested in participating who have not yet registered can also contact planning@sgps.ca to join the general SGPS team!

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.

Respectfully Submitted,

Abdullahi Abunafeesa
Social Commissioner
(social@sgps.ca)

SGPS Report on International Students

by: Amir Hossein Nosrat

Special Thanks to: Dr. Adnan Husain, Usman Mushtaq, Wayne Myles, Becky Pero, Anne-Marie Gordon, Carolyn Prouse, Kalanthe Khaiat and members of QUIC Council

“[One] should not assume that international students have *only* difficulties and problems. They are human beings with successes and struggles.”

Soodabeh Salehi, PhD '06

In a Nutshell: For international students (and for international postgraduate students in particular), the university environment is, at present, minimally satisfactory. Individuals at Queen's University (both students and administrators) seem to prefer being reactive rather than a proactive when it comes to the governance of international students' affairs. In my view, this is unacceptable, particularly for an institution claiming to expand its diversity and internationalization profile. Furthermore, the situation is deteriorating and any increase of non-exchange international students will require a formidable investment of resources from the university to maintain or improve the quality of education and experience of international students at Queen's. There must be more done to honor diversity on our university campus.

Introduction: This report should be viewed with two presumptions. First, it is by no means exhaustive. It should be thought of as a preliminary effort to collect information and begin discussions within the SGPS on how to address the various problems that international students must routinely face. Given the breadth and complexity of the issues at hand, it is often difficult to separate one from the other, let alone to begin suggesting effective solutions. Studies and reports on international students are not few^{1 2 3 4}, but they tend to share one of two main problems: they are either too focused on specific issues, and thus fail to highlight how problems are interconnected; or they are diluted as 'components' of broader themes such as issues of equity or of academic restructuring. They are not intended to approach international students' issues in a comprehensive manner, which is what I hope to rectify in the present report.

Second, the report's findings and recommendations are not primarily representative of international students' voices. Rather, its conclusions were drawn from my own experiences with international student communities – and, at times, from personal experiences as well as an international student myself. Due to resource limitations, the valuable input of international students is neglected in this report – a shortcoming which I hope will promptly be addressed, pending additional resources.

The SGPS should be lauded for having made a proactive approach nearly two years ago in creating the International Student Coordinator (ISC) position to challenge the issues that international students face. This year, the SGPS hired two ISCs in order to address divergent but nonetheless vital priorities. However, much remains to be done if we are to provide meaningful change for the lives of international students at Queen's University. This report was prepared as a collection of casual conversations with various individuals who deal regularly with international students such as Susan Anderson from QUIC, Dr. Adnan Husain from the Equity Office, Vice-Provost (International) John Dixon, counselors from counseling services, and Usman Mushtaq from the Student Advisor program. It has been broken down based on five broad issues facing graduate international students. The issues have at times overlapped, but were sufficiently distinct to warrant their own discussion. The

¹ Mighty, J., Irwin, R., & Sparling, H. (2004). *As if Equity Mattered*. Kingston, Ontario: CTL.

² Mushtaq, U. (2009). *Student Advisor Winter Term Report*. Kingston: SGPS.

³ Mushtaq, U., Blinkley, L., & Bowen, S. (2009). *Student Advisors Case Study Summaries: 2004-2008*. Kingston: SGPS.

⁴ SGPS Special Committee (2007). *Addressing the Cost of UHIP for International Graduate and Professional Students*. Kingston: SGPS.

recommendations presented here include broad and specific changes that have been put forth by the individuals mentioned above as well as my own suggestions for change and modifications to existing strategies. A preliminary draft was circulated amongst members of the same conversational circles to modify as needed.

Who are Our International Students?

In the 2008-2009 academic year, there were a total of 1469 international students registered at Queen's, or roughly 8.5 percent of all Queen's University students. Of this number, 561 are here for graduate studies (~14% of the SGPS membership): 529 will be attaining a degree at Queen's and 26 are on an exchange program. These students are underrepresented in nearly all of Queen's professional programs (the Faculty of Law in particular has no international JD students) and can be attributed to the local nature of professional programs and their incompatibility with international norms.

Even within graduate studies, most international students seem to be focused in natural and applied sciences. While there was not sufficient time to cite academic sources to explain this trend, the author believes that this phenomenon is a result of the Eurocentrism, and particularly the 'Canada-centrism' of social sciences at Queen's. This would not necessarily impact 'Western' and English-speaking international students such as students from the United States that constitute the majority of international students at Queen's⁵, but rather the roughly 850 students that arrive from Asia, Africa, and South America. Natural and applied sciences at Queen's, on the other hand, while technically Eurocentric are more or less internationally applicable and even favorable in the view of non-Western citizens. Furthermore, the Canadian immigration system favors individuals seeking out technical degrees⁶, which in turn has a tangible impact on the type of students that choose to study in an institution such as Queen's.

The overall undergraduate international student population was slightly higher at 765 students (~6% of AMS membership), with 531 students working towards a degree at Queen's and the remainder as 1 or 2 term exchange students. There are both similar and differing issues facing this portion of international students, but this report will be focusing on the needs of graduate international student needs. It is also important to note here that 1,813 Queen's University students were participating in a study abroad program. These students use the same limited resources allocated to the Queen's University International Centre (QUIC) that is also intended to accommodate students arriving from abroad, whether as exchange or fulltime students. Support services for Queen's students studying abroad seem to be enjoying a higher level of standard than for students arriving to Queen's from the same places. This is primarily due to the backing of different faculty to nurture these services (such as the Queen's School of Business that enjoys a 75% participation rate amongst its students). Furthermore, the parents of many participating students are actively interested and connected these services and that is often hard to imagine being reflected by parents of students who come here from abroad to study at Queen's.

Despite comprising nearly a tenth of the university student population at Queen's, international students' lack of cohesion and a 'rallying point' around a particular issue, interest, or program leaves them dispersed and invisible. They are, what the author likes to call, Queen's University's largest invisible minority. It is often difficult to imagine and address the systemic issues facing this category of

⁵ It should be mentioned here that international student needs are quite heterogeneous and have different needs for every national and ethnic category. This report does not aim to address specific needs of different cultural, religious, and national groups. However, for international students coming from the US in particular, the experience is radically different as the perceived cultural and economic dominance of the US to Canada considerably affects interactions between US students at Queen's and domestic students. This does not mean that US international students do not face any issues cited in this report, but rather indicate that where many other non-US students face cultural, language, and academic barriers, US students are at an advantage owing to cultural similarities between the US and Canada.

⁶ <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/skilled/apply-who.asp>

students as they do not have the strong presence that other groups may have (such as student societies).

Core Issues:

1. **Ambiguous and Disadvantageous Supervisory Relations:** Ambiguity in university policy on the relationship between students and their supervisors and a lack of commitment by the university administration to enforce any existing policies leaves many international students vulnerable. While this issue affects graduate students at large, international students are at a particular disadvantage owing from the underprivileged realities facing them. International students who come to Canada may be reluctant to challenge their supervisors or departments as their legal status as landed immigrants entirely depends on their enrolment in their university. Any subsequent immigration status is entirely dependent on their graduation, therefore promoting compliance amongst international students on conflicts and disadvantages with respect to their supervisors and departments.

In a report written by 2009-2010 SGPS Student Advisors to SEEC, the director of educational and equity projects at Queen's, incidents pertaining to international students included harassment, unfair authorship credit for academic work, derogatory and threatening behavior by supervisors towards their students, and lack of attention and guidance by supervisor specifically towards their international students. Furthermore, the majority of those seeking advice did not follow up with a formal complaint process as they simply wanted to finish their time here at Queen's as quickly as possible. These sentiments were echoed in an interview with Counseling Services advisors from Queen's University. Counseling services is currently working to provide qualitative reports on the type of issues facing this category of students. Even so, the true number of grievances is unknown as many may choose not to even take such issues to the Student Advisors or Counseling Services at Queen's University.

A vivid example of the qualitative experience international students have is documented in a record of the Instructional Development Centre's Cross-Faculty Teaching Forum in 2004. The Forum was organized in response to an invitation from the Senate Educational Equity Committee to address issues of equity in higher education and to assist in carrying out Senate policy. Soodabeh Salehi, an education PhD student had arrived at Queen's University after seven years of teaching arts in universities across Iran had participated in the forum to share her thoughts on international student issues. A selection of her documented experience is quoted here:

"When Soodabeh first arrived here, everything was different and confusing. While many helped her, she found that people would look at her as if she were stupid when she had language difficulties. Too often, no one would help her. For example, she applied for a teaching assistantship but was told she would have to have some prior teaching experience in Ontario. She applied then for a research assistantship and was also turned down. Soodabeh argued that it is the university's responsibility to open up ways for international students to be involved in Canadian society. She spoke of how, in Iran, she had everything but gave it up to come here and learn more about her field. She anticipated that everything would work out well for her because she was coming to a developed country. But she does not even have an appropriate supervisor (her supervisor works in the sciences while her background is in art). She concluded that professors should not assume that international students have *only* difficulties and problems. They are human beings with successes and struggles. Canadians should open doors for them."

In its concluding comments, the forum established that International students' concerns are *not* represented. The amount they pay is not the chief concern, but rather that if they pay and do *not* learn, then there is a problem.

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) has introduced a 'Focus on Diversity' training course for Faculty based on a grant they obtained from NSERC. The objective of this course is to sensitize professors to the needs of diverse backgrounds, particularly those arriving from extra-Canadian territories. The course is to remain in effect for the remainder of the five years, and though it is not mandatory for supervisors to take the course, its value must be recognized and advertised broadly amongst faculty. While the focus of the course is on issues of diversity in teaching, lessons can be inferred for supervisor-student relations. Ideally, it is recommended that such a course become mandatory for professors that supervise international students. But the author is aware of the various political and logistical problems facing such an objective (policy must be approved by both Senate and Board of Trustees and negotiated effectively with the faculty union). The Queen's University International Centre also offers an "International Educators Training Program" that offer similar training to staff and students on campus. Similarly, the CTL offers a one-day training event on graduate supervision for faculty but lacks the focus on issues facing international students.

As an interesting comparison, Thompson Rivers University of Kamloops, British Columbia has been heralded for its 'Globally Minded Campus' internationalization model. Part of this model includes a mandatory two and a half week preparation for all instructors, including instruction on how to bring up culturally sensitive issues and understanding the cultural shock process that faces every international student. The model was created in response to the rapid internationalization of the university and implemented after many years of planning and institutional commitment, coupled with expertise from diversity experts and scholars. While Thompson Rivers is a much smaller institution that can effectively introduce such proactive measures, Queen's University has a plethora of human and financial capital to tackle poor supervisory relations (one amongst many issues facing international students)⁷.

2. Limited Financial and Academic Resources: In a SGPS survey of international students conducted in May 2006, it was found that only eight percent of international students have *not* been in a position of financial need while studying at Queen's University. This phenomenon is also reflected in the disproportionately high amount of international students applying to the SGPS Emergency Student Aid applications in the 2009-2010 academic year. Tuition rates for international students are nearly three times as high as domestic students and many cannot depend on any sources of income from their home countries due to monetary disparities. This creates an incredible strain for international students to meet financial needs at Queen's and can serve as a serious obstacle for providing high quality or even completing academic work.

The School of Graduate Studies made a very laudable move in 2007-2008 academic year by promising \$5,000 per year to all thesis-oriented graduate international students arriving at Queen's. This fund, known as the International Tuition Awards, significantly reduced the financial disparity between domestic and international students, but left many others seeking professional and course-based degrees stranded. Even so, this was partly scaled back in 2010⁸ as new Ontario regulations required universities to meet international student quotas that in turn were expected to introduce a strain to the bursary. Under the new scheme, only PhD students are guaranteed funding through this bursary. Ontario's model to 'internationalize' without providing resources is one that Queen's University should steer clear from.

⁷ Such resources include Counselling Services, the Centre for Teaching & Learning, the Equity and Human Rights Office and most importantly student societies.

⁸ Memo to Department Heads with Graduate Programs from Associate VP and Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, Janice Deakin; October 26, 2009. Can be accessed in Appendices of SGPS Council'

The authors of the SGPS response to Principal Woolf's *'Where Next?'* document were correct in supporting the Principal's vision of internationalization while at the same time expressing concern about tending to their financial needs only as an afterthought. In 2009-2010 Student Advisor's report to SEEC, it has been noted that

"[m]any international students face considerable financial challenges. While graduate students are fortunate to be able to take advantage of opportunities offered through Student Awards, and even the Ban Righ Centre, there remains a concern over funding in the sciences because that funding is tied to specific professors or projects. Unlike the humanities, sciences and engineering provide a less flexible funding environment when there are conflicts between students and supervisors. At the same time, the lack of comprehensive internal funding at Queen's affects the most marginalized groups on campus. International students are seeing rising tuition costs while funding streams like TAships are becoming scarcer. Many departments are cutting TA/RA positions to save costs, but many students depend on these sources of funding. When supervisors fund their students, this can lead to problems as supervisors can allocate funds to their research groups/labs as they see fit. Again, marginalized student groups are often pushed outside since those students (for various reasons) may not be as quick or 'efficient' with their research. With International Tuition Awards being "downloaded" to the departmental level and not guaranteed for Master's students, we anticipate that international students will be facing even more financial pressure. In addition, it should come as no surprise that students are concerned with funding beyond their funding eligible years. This general problem is disproportionately borne by international students, who have far less access to the typical financial resources accessed by domestic students when their funding runs out such as bank loans. Several international graduate students approaching their fifth year have contacted the program for advice and assistance. Unfortunately, there is little we can do for students in this situation other than to make them aware of various resources, from bursary assistance through Student Awards to emergency help from the Chaplin's office or the AMS foodbank. It seems both unfortunate and absurd for the University to partially subsidize the first four years of an international student's PhD only to force them out in the fifth year, particularly when the average time to completion in some departments remains high. Unfortunately, it seems that Queen's is pressing ahead in the wrong direction on this issue. The existing situation will no doubt be exacerbated by the new tuition increase, which is also designed, in real terms, to be disproportionately borne by international students. "

The 'disproportionality' of international tuition fees was a concern echoed by the School of Graduate Studies as well during their opposition to a proposed tuition hike for international graduate students in 2009⁹.

The bottom line of these many examples is a disproportional amount of financial difficulty and barriers experienced by permanent international students. The SGPS and the administration should seek ways in augmenting present bursaries, addressing priority allotment for international students who unlike their domestic counterparts are not eligible from Canadian government funding, and establishing new ones as well in order to remove many of these financial barriers. Such plans should be reflected in the Queen's Capital Plan that is currently being drafted by the Office of Advancement under the leadership of VP Tom Harris.

While financial resources are the most immediate concern facing international students, academic resources also prove to be limited for international students seeking to non-Eurocentric topics. This issue is particularly accentuated amongst social sciences, but also reflected in natural and applied sciences. The difficulty of graduate students in collecting relevant research and accessing pertinent personnel for non-Eurocentric topics leaves Queen's a poor destination for 'internationalization'. While this is not as immediate and urgent as limited

⁹ Trustees Finance Committee Report to the Board of Trustees, Dec 24-25 2009.

financial resources, any serious implementation of 'internationalization' must incorporate an investment in academic resources that supports curricular diversity to embrace non-Eurocentric approaches to academic themes and subjects like global and non-western cultures, histories, languages, literatures, and religions. If this cannot be accomplished within current disciplinary and departmental structures, interdisciplinary programs and initiatives that take an innovative approach should be developed and supported.

It should also be mentioned that QUIC has done an extraordinary job in providing additional support such as legal and immigration advice, amongst other things, for international students despite being strapped for resources.

3. UHIP: As of 1994, the government of Ontario has decided to withhold coverage of international students and their dependents through the Ontario Health Insurance Premium (OHIP). OHIP serves as very basic health insurance coverage intended to cover the simplest medical procedures and is offered to all other residents of Ontario. In response, the Council of Ontario Universities established the University Health Insurance Premium (UHIP) and is intended to offer the same level of coverage as OHIP. According to regulations established by the Council of Ontario Universities, all international students are required to have this coverage.

Unfortunately, international students themselves are responsible for paying the costs of the premium (non-International Students do not pay for OHIP), which as of 2009-2010 roughly equaled to \$800 for individuals and as high as \$3000 for families. This is not to be confused with the supplemental health and dental insurance offered by the SGPS which is supposed to offer coverage medical procedures that aren't covered by UHIP or OHIP. Furthermore, many medical institutions that do not regularly interact with international students may not know of UHIP and could therefore mistakenly refuse to provide assistance in non-emergency situations (even though UHIP has the equivalent coverage of OHIP). While this does not affect Queen's international students in the downtown Kingston area, the Canadian Federation of Students has reported a number of negative experiences in the Greater Toronto Area and other areas with less visible student populations. Reports from committees and staff of the SGPS reveal that this situation is flawed and in the opinion of the author is a biased institutional policy against international students. The SGPS has lobbied the Queen's University administration and with the help of the Canadian Federation of Students lobbied the Ontarian government to reverse this decision. To this day, there have been no tangible outcomes made, though Susan Anderson of QUIC indicates that there may be changes made by the provincial government in the near future.

A 2007 SGPS special report on UHIP had made a final recommendation of establishing a special bursary for international students that is to be administered by the SGPS, faculty, and QUIC. This, in the view of the author, is an excellent recommendation and should be augmented by optional fees from the SGPS and AMS student populations as well as a minimum guarantee by the administration.

4. Poor Physical Infrastructure: At nearly 50 years of age, the Queen's University International Centre office was created in an era where government ambitions to attract international students were high on the agenda. It's relatively large physical and at the time separate space was comparable to that of the John Deutsch University Centre and was a testimony to the vision universities had for attracting and accommodating international students. Currently, the QUIC office is considered to be a cramped space serving thousands of students and a minor and hidden addition to student life facilities on campus. Its allegorical representation to the recent lack of proactive measures for international students on campus cannot be any more accurate.

Aside from lacking an effective and visible physical space for international students to gather and socialize, Queen's housing services offer little designated space for international students (Harkness International Hall being the only such space). While QUIC has taken extraordinary measures to establish initial accommodation services for students arriving abroad as well as creating an online listing of available properties through the International Housing Office, the absence of guaranteed space for international students is a heavy burden for students arriving from abroad. The lack of knowledge and familiarity of Kingston's housing market and virtual impossibility to assess housing quality outside of Canada's borders leaves many international students, especially those with families, with an immense burden of finding accommodation blindfolded. Furthermore, existing accommodations are primarily tailored to address first year undergraduate students that only form a relatively small portion of international students at Queen's. The John Orr Tower and An Clachan residential complexes located on the outskirts of John A. MacDonald boulevard remain the most heavily utilized Queen's residential facility by international students (An Clachan residences do not have a dorm to accommodate newly arriving students). The most effective way to address this shortcoming is for Queen's University to build designated housing for international students.

Even more importantly, the lack of any 'focal point' for international students leaves such students diffused and submerged in the Queen's culture. This is particularly important as international students lack any visible space to reciprocate their backgrounds into the Queen's community. Queen's physical planning document, for example, speaks of hubs and main crossroads to establish such 'focal points' for student activities. Physical Plant Services acknowledges the necessity of accommodating the needs of food services, student services, housing, athletic facilities, and study space but fails to recognize the needs of international students as a separate and recognizable need. An effective internationalization plan cannot take place without a visible physical space for international students. Such a space cannot be accomplished without recognition in university wide physical and financial planning documents. This is particularly important as the capital and physical plans of the university are undergoing their most recent drafting process. As of November 2010, the SGPS Executive are not informed of any plans to amend this issue, despite being raised at a number of pertinent university bodies.

5. Cultural and Language Barriers: Most readers can imagine the difficulty of establishing new networks, friends, and communities when moving from one place to another. It can only be harder when doing this in an environment that is difficult to communicate or connect with. The process of acclimatization for international students at Queen's is an emotionally intense and at times traumatic experience that is often hard to convey to other international students, let alone Canadians. Each experience is unique and local to the individual's background and community in Queen's. Yet it is rare for any student arriving from abroad to avoid this culture shock.

There is also often a sense of intimidation from the Queen's community towards foreign students. Incidents of accent discrimination and the failure of the dominant Queen's culture to absorb certain individuals and groups only exacerbate the situation. For example, the recent campaign by AMS to institute mandatory training for TA's failing to meet comprehensible standards of speaking English without any initiative to tackle accent discrimination amongst undergraduate students against their TA's is an indicator of such failure. To add salt to wound, Queen's University now bills such TA's to receive the training that has been mandated by AMS campaigning, further entrenching institutional bias against such individuals. The 'Accent Discrimination Awareness' campaign organized by various equity-related bodies at Queen's in 2009 and 2010 are significant measures to challenge this phenomenon and should be consistently supported by students and the administration.

While this remains the most difficult issue to address, there can be measures taken to mitigate the effects. QUIC's social events (particularly extra-university ones) have proven to be valuable in helping international students overcome these culture shocks. Unfortunately, these events were downgraded due to the most recent budget cuts. The SGPS social team, supported by the biggest non-wage budget line in all of the SGPS, should communicate and support QUIC in hosting more of these events.

Counselling services is also a valuable asset for addressing experienced cultural barriers at Queen's. This service should be advertised by QUIC, SGS, and SGPS frequently and widely to international students.

Recommendations:

Based on the identified issues above, the recommendations have been broken down into short-medium term goals and longer strategic goals. The recommendations are then listed according to their urgency in the view of the author.

Short-Medium Term Goals

1. The SGPS initiate and administer a bursary for international students enrolled in UHIP (both graduate and undergraduate students). The funding of the bursary should be attained from SGPS and AMS optional fees as well as a minimum guarantee by the administration. The administrative design should be performed by the SGPS, QUIC, AMS, and appropriate equity-related offices. (Issue of Concern: UHIP and poor financial resources)
2. The SGPS should allocate sufficient resources (such as money and staff hours for surveys and polls) to receive input directly from international students, in particular SGPS members, to counter the 'sky view' perspective that is prevalent in current discussions regarding international student issues. The SGPS should also commit a designated amount of research hours by staff per year for international student issues. (Issue of Concern: Lack of information regarding international students)
3. The administration should include targeted sections in exit surveys for international students that probed identified issues facing them. The lack of any graduate-oriented exit polls makes it particularly difficult to understand the needs of graduate students, let alone the international contingent of graduate students. (Issue of Concern: Lack of information regarding international students)
4. The SGPS should require that all SGPS staff members are trained in the International Educators Training Program offered by QUIC. (Issue of Concern: Cultural and language barriers)
5. The SGPS and the administration should embark on a campaign to encourage supervisors, departmental heads and their respective staff to attend the diversity training courses offered by CTL and QUIC. (Issue of Concern: Poor supervisory relations and cultural and language barriers)
6. The SGPS should lobby TAFE to include a designated international student representative in all of its decision-making organs. The international student representative could prove to be an effective tool to address issues in TA-related supervisory relations. (Issue of Concern: Poor supervisory relations)
7. The SGPS and administration perform a joint review involving research services, the library, and the AVP-International, among other relevant groups, to examine the endemic barriers and deficits in expertise and resources for teaching and researching in non-Western fields of the Social Sciences and Humanities and to put forward mechanisms for realistic remedies. One component of this strategy should include measures for improving the recruitment and support of graduate students internationally who possess foreign language abilities and regional knowledge that can support the undergraduate teaching and other library and research services that need to expand and diversify. (Issue of Concern: Limited academic resources)
8. The SGPS and administration establish a residence don for An Clachan residences that is accustomed to international student needs. (Issue of Concern: Cultural and language barriers).
9. Remove registration fees associated with SGS 802: English Language Communication Skills for Teaching Purposes. (Issue of Concern: Limited financial resources and cultural and language barriers).

10. The SGPS social team should collaborate with and augment QUIC social events. (Issue of concern: Cultural and language barriers)
11. The SGPS, QUIC, and the SGS advertise counseling services to address cultural shock experiences. (Issue of concern: Cultural and language barriers)

Long-Term Strategic Goals

1. The SGPS and administration should actively investigate the augmentation, favoritism, and initiation of bursaries designed to subsidize tuition for international students. Any increase in international tuition fees should be suspended until such time appropriate compensation has been established. The Office of Advancement and government grants (particularly the Reaching Higher program) can prove to be potent tools in achieving this end. In short, non-government issued grants and bursaries should favor international students due to their disadvantage in the Canadian higher education system (both in tuition amounts and eligibility for government grants). (Issue of Concern: Limited financial resources)
2. The SGPS and administration should actively investigate and plan the construction of housing, social, and administrative space designated for international students. The plans should take place in conjunction with the appropriate Board of Trustees and Senate committees and reflected in upcoming physical and financial planning documents. (Issue of Concern: Poor physical infrastructure)
3. As international students heavily utilize the Student Advisor Program, the SGPS, in collaboration with the SGS, should introduce a permanent student advisor that will stay abreast of and be an expert on issues facing international students. This will address the steep learning curve required to become a Student Advisor and be sensitized to international student needs. (Issue of Concern: Poor supervisory relations and cultural and language barriers)
4. The SGPS and SGS should pursue clearer supervisory relation policies and stronger enforcements within the administration. These policies should incorporate a stronger voice for international students studying at Queen's. More importantly, the SGPS and the SGS should actively inform international students of such policies. Orientation material and venues could be a good medium of communication for such issues. (Issue of Concern: Poor supervisory relations)
5. The administration establishes and maintains permanent courses for faculty, staff, and students for cultural sensitivity and diversity training courses. (Issue of Concern: Poor supervisory relations and cultural and language barriers)
6. The SGPS and the administration should pursue investigations on implementing mandatory diversity training for supervisors and staff. The idea should be introduced to Senate and Board of Trustees in a timely manner. (Issue of Concern: Poor supervisory relations and cultural and language barriers)