

Hello Council!

Queen's Proposed Mandate Statement and Response to the MTCU Discussion Paper

In August I gave a presentation on this and the Principal spoke about it in September, and the consultation process is now completed. Queen's has submitted a mandate statement to be considered by the government, and in particular, a HEQCO panel. Of particular interest for us is the idea to create graduate programs with different entrance and exit points, for different credentials. Queen's has also created a response to the Ministry's discussion paper on post-secondary education that anonymously reports several reactions from the Queen's internal consultation process, including some submitted by myself. The statement and the response can be read here: <http://queensu.ca/provost/responsibilities/responsetomtcu.html>. With the resignation of Glen Murray, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities who instigated this process, there is uncertainty about where all of this will lead. Still, the documents show some potential directions for Queen's.

The Fee Protocol

Last meeting, we passed a motion recommending that I sign a fee protocol that would set guidelines on the collection of student activity fees, provided that clause 2.9 was removed. That clause made explicit that the University could charge the SGPS and the AMS for the fee collections. I'm happy to report that the Associate Dean of Student Affairs has agreed to remove the clause. Nevertheless, ultimately the University controls the resources used to collect the fees (namely, the Registrar's Office) and it has the power and reserves the right to charge us, whether this is mentioned in the protocol or not. The Associate Dean (SA) does recognize that it would look very bad on the University if it ever took advantage of this right, so I do not predict that it will be a problem in the near future.

As of writing, the protocol is yet to be signed--it still has to go through the AMS and the University processes first. I will keep you updated.

The Faculty of Arts and Science

I am now rather involved with the future of this faculty. I mentioned in a previous report that I sit on the hiring committee for the new Dean. The ad for that position has been posted: <http://academiccareers.ca/careers/dean-faculty-arts-and-science?search=1>

In addition, I'm on the Procedures Committee of Faculty Board for Arts and Science. Faculty Board is the decision making body of the Faculty, and the Procedures Committee governs how it operates. I hope to advance some recent ideas to get graduate student representation on the Board. Although we are enrolled in the School of Graduate Studies, grad students taking programs associated with the Faculty clearly have a stake in it, especially in teaching courses as TAs and TFs. In any event, please let me know if you have ideas for how to improve the Faculty of Arts and Science.

Senate Operations Review Committee

This committee, affectionately known as SORC, continues to oversee Senate reform. It is streamlining committees and the makeup of Senate. Overall, I feel that it has been quite positive to student issues at Senate so far. It is currently reviewing the question of whether there will be a May Senate meeting, when many of the undergraduate students are away.

This streamlining process is part of a wider Queen's governance reform initiative. Queen's has three governing bodies: Senate, which oversees academic matters, the Board of Trustees, which oversees financial matters, and University Council, which is a forum for alumni to offer advice and to elect members to the Board--though all Senators and Board

members are also members of University Council. The Board has already cut its membership nearly in half in the recent past, and University Council is posed to decide whether to do something similar. I will be watching all this closely, as a Senator, a University Councilor, and as a member of SORC, to ensure that core priorities and functionalities are not lost in the reform process. If you have any feedback on how the University is governed, please let me know.

Student Life Centre

As you know, the SGPS pays rent and participates in the governance of the Student Life Centre, which is a term that covers the JDUC, the Queen's Centre, the Grey House, MacGillivray-Brown, and (little known fact) the student street in Mac-Corry Hall. If you are affiliated with an SGPS club or group, you can book rooms (normally for free) in those spaces. You can book space through the SLC office in the JDUC or through the new website: <http://www.studentlifecentre.ca>.

That's all. As always, thank you for your participation in our Society!

Cha Gheill,

Matthew Scribner

President

president@sgps.ca

Dear SGPS Council Members and Members-At-Large,

The OGS application seems to be ready for release. If you are eligible, please check out the School of Graduate Studies' website for more information: <http://www.queensu.ca/sgs/forstudents/funding/ogs.html>.

Graduate Studies Executive Council

At the October meeting of GSEC, the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) spoke about a policy they intend to create whereby students can go on mental health leave for 1-3 terms, pay no tuition fees, and get an amount in funding during their leave. GSEC expects to give this policy a final vote at their December meeting.

Academic Affairs Standing Committee Meeting

The AASC met in October to discuss a number of issues including: graduate student completion times, post-residency fees, funding, T4s and T4As, and intellectual property. The Committee continues to think about how to bring these issues to the fore.

Student Advisor Program

The Student Advisor annual reports are available and can be viewed on the SGPS website: <http://www.sgps.ca/advisors/reports.html>. These reports will be brought to the November SGS meeting. The Advisors will also provide feedback on the SGS' guide to Graduate Supervision.

The Advisors hold office hours on Tuesdays from 1:00pm-3:00pm, Thursdays from 10:00am-12:00pm, and Fridays from 1:30pm-3:30pm in JDUC Room 203. You can reach the Advisors at advisors@sgps.ca.

FREE Queen's

If you are interested in sitting on the FREE QUEEN's steering committee, please send me an email at vpg@sgps.ca. The SGPS seeks to hire a coordinator for FREE QUEEN's; if you (or someone you know) are eligible for the Work-Study Program and are interested in working on this event, please consider applying here: <http://www.queensu.ca/studentawards/financialassistance/workstudy.html#finding>

SGS-SGPS Meetings

The topic of "time to completion" continues to be discussed at the departmental level at brown-bag lunches and other forums. If you would like help in organizing a conversation with your colleagues about this issue, please e-mail vpg@sgps.ca. These discussions have been fruitful and will add significantly to the discussions that have been occurring around time to completion. I would like to remind you that the SGS survey deadline is November 15, 2012, and I would encourage you to fill this survey out with your honest answers.

Respectfully,

Becky Pero

VP Graduate
vpg@sgps.ca

CAGS Annual Meeting

November 4-7, 2012

Fairmount Château Laurier Hotel, Ottawa, ON

Dear SGPS Councilors and Members-at-Large,

I had the privilege of attending the **Canadian Association of Graduate Studies'** (CAGS) annual meeting this month, and I would like to offer up some brief comments to Council about this experience. This organization, which brings together 58 universities from across the country with graduate programs, has been meeting together since 1962; their purpose is to "... promote graduate education and university research through meetings, publications and advocacy" (<http://www.cags.ca/home.html>). Essentially, the idea of CAGS is to bring administrators, deans and graduate students together to discuss and collaborate on relevant issues (although these issues and their discussion are largely defined by the administrators and deans). CAGS also lobbies the Governments to prioritize post-secondary education. I would like to acknowledge the School of Graduate Studies and Queen's University for providing the funds necessary for me to attend this conference.

In this report, I will address two issues (I would, of course, be happy to speak about the experience further with anyone of you). **First, I will discuss graduate student participation at CAGS, and second, barriers to postsecondary education for international students.**

The need for graduate student voices

During a Town Hall meeting for graduate students, which Past-President Jay Doering moderated, graduate student representatives advocated for a voice within CAGS. The moderator asked for this agenda item to be held, but many of the students in attendance requested time for its discussion. Besides Doering, there were a number of other administrators and deans there who were not expected to attend. The moderator himself often remarked in callous or condescending ways; this apparent disregard set the stage for a difficult conversation.

I think that it is important to provide **some historical context** here. At the meeting, Doering made it clear that the student vote represented a "conflict of interest," and while it is still not clear to me, the main reasons that seem to be offered up for eliminating this vote (at last year's CAGS meeting) are as follows: the student representative is said to have always voted against the deans (although this should not be of great concern since the deans outnumbered the one student vote anyway); having students involved means less consensus because they argue too much (should any group that represents mixed interests be able to come to consensus? Do the deans meet consensus on every issue?); and finally, students do not understand that education is a provincial jurisdiction and should be discussed at the provincial level. Furthermore, it was argued that administrators and deans really do understand what graduate students are faced with and have the students' best interests at heart (which is not necessarily the case) and therefore, a student voice is not "necessarily" needed at the table. This rhetoric around student need and know-how is highly problematic, and one audience member pointed out that administrators and deans would not exist without graduate and professional students. Another important fact to note is that the board also voted a Tri-council position out, similarly stating a conflict of interest, and yet, the three Presidents of the Tri-council agencies were invited to give a joint session on the topic of leadership. This same provision was not provided to graduate students.

Ultimately, many students wished to move forward to helpful resolutions and requested more collaboration between students and CAGS, so as to build a meaningful and accountable relationship.

Moving forward: How could we include student voices in graduate studies?

Some of the suggestions made in this regard were (and they are in no particular order):

1. Session(s) at next year's and future CAGS meetings that facilitate and encourage discussion amongst administrators, deans and students - at the same time and in the same place; and
2. Monthly online forums that engage students, deans, university and CAGS administrators.

Barriers to post-secondary education for international students

While I agree that this is an important issue for all students, I want to make speak to international students in particular. Following a presentation from Kenneth Wong about the international student market in China, a graduate student association representative and international student spoke to the barriers that challenge her ability to access her own education in Ontario. The student spoke to issues with funding, as international students cannot apply for SSHRC or OGS, to name a few. She spoke to the lack of basic, provincially-based healthcare coverage for international students. She spoke to difficulties finding meaningful work both during and post study. Essentially, this student asked Wong why Canada promotes itself as a study destination when it clearly does not have the proper supports in place to meet international student needs. Wong was not prepared for this question, and in his answer he bounced around from idea to idea; he discussed his limited role, in that he only promotes Canada as a study destination, he brought up discrimination and used himself as an example of the "Canadian dream," in that we must fight and compete for what we want. Wong also discussed affirmative action for international students, said that it was tough for everyone, and finally, noted that education in Canada is jealously guarded by the Provinces. He did this all in a span of about 2 minutes. Ultimately, the student was using her own experience to point the awkwardness of the rational that decision-makers need to recognize the local contexts and conditions before promoting graduate studies in Canada. Interestingly enough, Doering provided a further response and said that while he did not wish to seem callous, it is really the responsibility of the student to know what the Provinces and individual schools offer.

In conclusion, if it seems as if CAGS is alienating students from deans and administrators, and from decision-making processes, it's because they are. I do, however, think (or at least I hope) that there were some useful things coming out of these meetings and interactions. It is important to have graduate student representatives and representation there. The CAGS annual meeting does present an opportunity for administrators, deans and students to think and talk together, but there is definitely room for improvement.

Regards,

Becky Pero

VP Graduate
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Dear Friends

The weather is turning, snow is predicted, and New York is shot to hell. Also, 50 people died when Hurricane Sandy hit Haiti, which, by the way, is still recovering from the earthquake three years ago. So...we can all take a helper-tourist trip to NYC and check out the MOMA, or we can send 20\$ to Haiti. Your call. Let's just be glad about Obama, and that the shark-in-subway photo was (probably) fake.

In SGPS news, here's what I've been up to since last council meeting:

-Work study. In an effort to channel money to our members, I've tried to get some work study students hired (it costs us about 300\$, and gives them about 2000\$ over the course of the year). Two have been hired, and several positions remain open. We kind of blew it by advertising the jobs late (many students want to have work lined up before starting in September), and the financial requirements of work study mean the pool can be a little small. However, two's better than nothing, and I believe the VPG and VPCCA, who are overseeing the positions for whom no-one has been hired, remain interested in hiring a capable person.

-Law Art show. One of the work study positions is creating an art show at the Law faculty. I was approached by Helen Connop, Equity Officer at the Law Faculty, to help make this position happen. I'm delighted that Paul Bradley, a law student with a strong visual art background, has been hired for this position.

-ongoing meetings with the Provost, and a very pleasant meeting with Tom Harris, the VP at Queen's for Alumni stuff, which was great. Mr Harris is arranging for more content in the Alumni magazine about the affairs of SGPS members, would like to have more SGPS involvement at 'fall reunions,' understands these will continue to be colloquially known as Homecoming, is arranging free tickets to Alumni events to increase SGPS presence there, and is advertising the Holiday Hamper. Go, Tom Harris.

-looked into sharing benefits between SGPS and CFRC employees, in order to provide the Operations Manager with a more economical benefits plan, and also to extend benefits to the other employees of CFRC. VPCCA has taken this over. I hope it works.

-helped the President in advocating for increased space at the Law library, at a member's request.

-did some SONAD things.

That's all for now. It's a pleasure to serve my student union.

Annie Clifford, VPP

Dear SGPS Members,

Shortly after the previous SGPS Council, the executive wrote an open letter to the AMS board regarding the termination of CFRC's Business Manager. The letter can be found here:

<http://www.sgps.ca/downloads/sgps-letter-to-ams-re-cfrc-business-manager.pdf>

Some of you may have noticed that the Queen's Journal also took the time to condemn this action. While this pressure has not been sufficient to motivate the AMS Board to reverse their decision, additional pressure will be brought to bear by AMS members at this week's corporate meeting, at which an alternative budget will be presented to help make the case for the reinstatement of the Business Manager. We've all got our fingers crossed.

The next CFS National General Meeting is coming up in Ottawa at the end of this month! We have submitted several motions: opposing recent changes to the Museum of Civilization; to create policy on food sovereignty on campus; calling on the CFS to adopt a gender-neutral service policy; and to create policy on autonomous student space (this last one is meant to address some of the problems we've noticed with postering and room booking, issues which, it turns out, afflict a few other campuses as well). The full motions package will be published on the SGPS website as soon as it comes out.

The most exciting thing that has happened in the CCA portfolio this month has been the activation of the CCA Committee. With the exception of the day Hurricane Sandy arrived, we have been meeting every week. Following an orientation session, the committee decided that mental health was to be a top priority for campaigning this year. This isn't just because the Principal's Commission on Mental Health has been making so much news recently: many students, both graduate and undergraduate, have brought the issue up to me independently; meanwhile, the WHO recently released a report on stigma and mental health, echoing much of what was in the Principal's Commission (a document that, even before the final version was officially released, was quietly circulated to university administrations around the province, and is being held up as a model policy). The Commission's report, *Towards a mental health strategy for Queen's*, can be read here:

<http://www.queensu.ca/cmh/index/1cmhdiscussionpaperJune2012.pdf>

while the SGPS response can be found here:

<http://www.sgps.ca/downloads/SGPS-Response-PCMH-Discussion%20Paper.pdf>

I expect many of you will already have read these important documents. For any who haven't, I recommend you do.

The CCA committee is still in the process of determining how to run the campaign. Some ideas include: a mental-health-themed trivia night; departmental visits; facilitated meetings between grad students and professors (many of whom may not fully appreciate just how much more stressful grad school has become, as compared to their own experience); organizing a conference; holding a series of short talks. If you have any ideas, or feel that this issue is important to you, please don't hesitate to contact us and/or get involved.

Much of the discourse surrounding 'mental health' seems to focus on individuals afflicted with one or another medicalized disorder (mostly depression). The social and environmental conditions that create much of the mental and emotional distress in the first place - poverty, stress, social isolation, harassment, discrimination, etc - go all but unremarked. This is something that has to change. Grad school is stressful, there's no question about it: there's a lot to do, and a lot to learn, and not a whole lot of time to do it in. But perhaps we should ask if it has to be as stressful as it is? If all of the stresses we are subjected to are actually necessary? This is very important: stress is toxic, not just

psychologically, but physically. Recent evidence suggests that protracted stress will even shrink the brain ... which makes excess stress a bit counterproductive, considering that school is supposed to make us more intelligent, not less.

As one potential example, take mandatory scholarship applications (NSERC/SSHRC and OGS). A lot of time and effort goes into getting these in on schedule: over the course of a 4-year Ph.D., almost two semesters worth of time will be often devoted to this activity (meanwhile, our departments are being harangued about time to completion!) It is very competitive, and very stressful. Meanwhile, recent politically motivated changes to NSERC and SSHRC have redirected large sums away from pure research and towards industry partnerships, thus removing many students from the competition before it has even started. OGS, on the other hand, has simply seen \$50 million cut (in order to fund the infamous 30 Off grant, much touted by the Ontario Liberal Party, and heavily criticized by the CFS, amongst others): this means that about 1600 fewer graduate students will receive research funding this year (as it was, only about 3000 were awarded funding in any given year). Given these changes, does it really make sense for scholarship applications to be mandatory? Or are there better uses of that time (such as, for instance, doing research)?

With these considerations in mind I've drafted a motion for next week's meeting that would call on the School of Graduate Studies to drop their policy of mandatory grant applications.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Shultz

VP Campaigns & Community Affairs
vpcca@sgps.ca

Happy November! It has been a busy month and I have outlined below what has been going on:

Finance & Services Committee:

- met to review some late opt-out appeals for the Health & Dental plan;
- adjudicated numerous DBA's, ESA's, club fund requests and Grant applications;
- worked on revising existing policies & creating the new policy for the International Student Reimbursement;
- discussed ways to increase services;
- began planning the Holiday Assistance Campaign;

Senate Scholarship & Student Aid:

- meeting was cancelled last minute;

Food Committee

- meeting cancelled due to illness;

Budget:

- reviewed the budget;
- updated figures with respect to Grant program;
- MOA was finalized with PSAC & signed ready to go;

Miscellaneous:

- attended the Alumni weekend & Gala and share in the celebration of our many alumni including the Governor General of Canada;
- met with our accountants & attended a morning workshop on Not for profit Accounting changes;
- met with VP Harris at Advancement to discuss fundraising for students and possible ways to increase SGPS member attendance at the Alumni events;
- prepared & sent out the information asking for donations to go towards the Holiday Assistance Campaign.

The Grad Club

- attended board meeting where we discussed the new website which will be up & running soon;
- SGPS Trivia celebration is set for November 22/12 where SGPS will be sponsoring a trivia round including questions supplied by the SGPS & an amazing prize package-hope everyone can make it!

Respectfully submitted,

Jillian Burford-Grinnell

VP Finance & Services
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Lots going on, Councilors. I'll try to be brief (one can be hopeful).

Committees

Committees continue to proliferate like bunnies. It's great to feel wanted (!). Last month, we ensured representation on 4 new committees: the Co-Curricular Record Opportunities Directory Advisory Committee, the Academic Accommodations Committee, the University Committee on Athletics & Recreation, and the Strategic Enrolment Committee. We continue to seek member representatives for:

- Arts & Science Joint Health & Safety Committee (must be a grad student in Arts & Science)
- Social Science and Humanities Library Advisory Committee (must be a grad in SocSci or Hum)
- Queen's Learning Commons Advisory Group
- Engineering Library Advisory Committee (must be a grad in Engineering)
- Student Learning Experience Taskforce
- Accessibility Standards Advisory Council

Internally, we continue to seek membership for the Equity Issues, and the Campaigns & Community Affairs standing committees. Email me (ea@sgps.ca) for more information.

Human Resources

I'm sorry to announce that our Equity Coordinator had to step down from his position due to personal circumstances. Applications are once again open. Details online: <http://www.sgps.ca/jobs/jobs.html>. We have hired 2 people through the Work-Study program. We continue to seek applicants for Free Queen's and Outreach Coordinator positions. Must qualify for Work-Study. Details on the MyCareer website. Finally, I am beginning QUIC's Intercultural Competency Training this week. Excited!

CAUT and History Grads

The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) recently published a report regarding the Administration's treatment of History Professor Dr. Mike Mason, against whom allegations of racism and sexism in the classroom were made. The allegations were brought forward by graduate teaching assistants in the History department. While the report was commissioned to investigate potential procedural mistakes, within the grievance process, on the Administration's part, its authors also dismissed the TAs' concerns and maligned their reputations without first consulting either the concerned students or their union local, PSAC 901. On Thursday, I will be attending a meeting of the History Graduate Students' Association to hear how the SGPS can best provide support to our colleagues in History. You can follow the story and read the exchanges between PSAC 901 and CAUT here: <http://psac901.org/news/>.

Talking PSE

I will be attending a discussion session with Ontario NDP Critic for Training, Colleges, and Universities, Teresa Armstrong, on Thursday, November 8. Of priority will be talking to Minister Armstrong about HEQCO, funding for international students, income-contingent loan repayment schemes, post-residency fees, and the SGPS' response to former Minister of TCU's proposed reforms to post-secondary education. This is a great opportunity to have your say about the future of PSE. Join us! Details on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/112824558877313/?fref=ts>.

Blue Lights

I continue working to raise awareness about the blue lights problem on our campus. Read my full report, also in this Council package, in appendix.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne-Marie Grondin
Executive Assistant
ea@sgps.ca



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the Speaker
November 2012

Dear Council,

I am happy to report that things are running smoothly. The B&P and Judicial committees have not met this month, so I have nothing to report on that front. However, there does appear to be a disconnect in the Judicial committee communication process with campus security, as it has come to my attention that an incident slated for referral went unreported to us. We are currently looking into this.

In others news preparations for the Fall General Meeting are underway!

Respectfully submitted,

James MacLeod

Speaker
speaker@sgps.ca

What is slowly emerging as the “blue lights problem” at Queen’s has to do with the malicious activation of emergency phones. Emergency phones, including outdoor phones equipped with easily discernable blue lights and yellow consoles, target two main purposes: 1) to provide direct contact with campus security when witnessing a crime, or feeling threatened; and 2) to act as a deterrent – that is, to convey the sense that ours is an environment where help is but a red button away. Some blue lights, such as the one North of Stauffer, were implemented in reaction to a reported assault on campus.

There are currently 176 indoor and outdoor phones. Approximately 75 of these are placed outside, and are equipped with blue lights. Only a few lights are CCTV-operational: those in Tindall and ARC parking lots. Thus, campus response relies heavily on audio communication. All calls from emergency phones receive the highest priority response. If no voice is heard, Security staff responds immediately. If no one is sighted upon arrival, Security Supervisors and other nearby Campus Security staff are immediately dispatched to search the vicinity.

Over the last 4 years, malicious activations have increased dramatically. The breakdown for malicious and suspected malicious activations, combined, by year, is as follows¹:

- 2008-09 : 182
- 2009-10 : 194
- 2010-11 : 175
- 2011-12 : 327
- 2012-13 : 83 so far (since September 2012)

Why the surge in blue lights activations? It coincides with the popularity of a ‘game’ involving Queen’s jacket bars. Some bars, deemed “Shenanigans” bars, are earned for having completed challenges that are not condoned by the University. Often involving the consumption of alcohol, many of these bars are highly problematic. The “Perfect Week” bar, for instance, involves “having sex with seven women in seven days *without a single rejection*” (my emphasis). More information about the bars here: <http://gpabars.wikia.com/wiki/Shenanigans>

One such bar, titled the “Blue Light,” involves activating a blue light, shotgunning a Blue Light beer, and taping the can to the phone pole before campus security arrives. Recently, the wiki description of the challenge was changed to include the disclaimer that “Pushing the call button is not recommended or encouraged.” This change has not, so far, led to a decrease in the number of malicious activations. Nor is it any less problematic that inebriated students are using blue lights as targeted locations to party, thereby rendering these locations less, not more, safe.

Until recently, the wiki offered a “True Blue” bar, which involved, beyond what is described above, dismantling part of the targeted blue light. The Engineering Society (EngSoc, who are known to tacitly endorse the disciplinary bars) publicly condemned the True Blue bar after being approached by campus security and the AMS. While the bar no longer appears on the wiki, blue lights continue to be vandalized.

On average, blue lights cost anywhere between \$3,000 and \$10,000 per unit. Their maintenance and repair costs vary: approximately \$900 for the yellow case and phone, which cannot be sold separately; \$2200 for the light and pole; and additional costs, depending on their location, for wiring, underground conduits, etc. What is worse, the lights and their repair are paid for through the Ministry of TCU’s Women’s Campus Safety Fund – funding which is meant to go towards

¹ Data compiled by Queen’s Campus Security, also available online: <http://www.queensu.ca/security/archive/stats/stats-history.html>.

educating the University community about safety and security, and to support programs that address the safety and security needs of women, not to repair existing infrastructure.

Many questions remain. We know that the bars can be ordered through a Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/31619250285/?fref=ts>). We also know that the bars can be ordered through the Campus Bookstore as well as Campus Equipment Outfitters, both run by QUESSI, the EngSoc's incorporated entity. The bars are possibly also sold at some local businesses. It is unclear, however, who is responsible for the wiki, for orders, and ultimately, for purchases.

University administrators have known about this for some time. They, like campus security, are looking to students to provide some kind of response. The SGPS has convened a committee of various on- and off-campus stakeholders to discuss this matter. And while we have a few projects on the go, we believe this particular issue to be the entire campus community's responsibility, not just that of students. Students face significant time constraints, made only more challenging by virtue of the pressure to complete on time and to subsist on limited funding. Moreover, the nature of peer-to-peer dynamics, while at certain times preferable to top-down responses, also makes it difficult to impress the need for change. For instance, the AMS Social Issues Commissioner recently met with the President of EngSoc to discuss the distribution of the Blue Light bar through campus outlets, and was met with a rather tepid response: while the EngSoc President was supportive of the Blue Lights campaign, he positioned himself against stopping the sale of the Blue Lights bar, citing the idea that students would only come up with a different bar to replace it.

As such, the SGPS has reached out to various Kingston and Queen's stakeholders, because we feel this is a community issue that cannot be resolved by working in silos. We feel that, from the very top to the bottom, it is our collective responsibility to address this issue, in whichever way feasible. I'm pleased to report that, since the beginning of October, we have rallied support from Kingston Interval House, Sexual Assault Centre Kingston, HIV/AIDS Regional Services, campus security, the AMS, HCDS, the SHRC, Sydenham United Church, Canada World Youth Exchange, and St. Lawrence College. Together, we have planned, as a preliminary step towards raising campus awareness of the issue, a special vigil to commemorate the gendered homicides at Ecole Polytechnique on December 6th, which will feature an educational component about blue lights and their intended purpose. Anyone who is interested in helping to organize the vigil should contact Deb Kinder at: dkinder@kingston.net.

Hoping to draw further attention to the issue, our coalition is planning a delegation to City Council in the lead-up to the event. If you are interested in presenting our campaign to Council, please contact Michelle LaMarche at: education@kingstonintervalhouse.com. Another part of our campaign is a proposal (in progress) to have a "Hope and Action Tree" at Queen's and at City Hall. Community members would be encouraged to write their pledge to ending violence against women on provided "leaves" of paper. If you are able to aid in this campaign, contact Michelle LaMarche at: education@kingstonintervalhouse.com. Recently, we have broached the topic of blue lights with a few Queen's Senators, who have agreed to take the issue to December's Senate. Finally, we welcome your support, whatever it may look like. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about my report, or if you would like more information, or to get involved.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne-Marie Grondin

Executive Assistant
ea@sgps.ca

Here is a brief update of activities happening at Senate and the committees I'm on:

1. October Senate Meeting:

- The Provost mentioned that the Administration will be proposing an increase in enrolment of 2000 students over the next four years, and that a Strategic Enrolment Management Group will be created soon (which will include student representatives). There are plans to have an informal Senate meeting in January to discuss enrolment, and the many important issues surrounding it.
- The Provost has convened a working group to make recommendations about "mechanisms and processes that would facilitate the development and sustainment of interdisciplinary graduate programs."
- A Task Force on the Student Learning Experience will be established soon, to focus on the Fundamental Academic Skills identified by the Academic Plan that are central to Queen's students' learning experiences.
- Senator Mark Jones asked why Queen's had not responded to the CAUT investigation about the situation and treatment of Dr. Michael Mason in the Department of History (released Sep 20). The Provost argued that CAUT lacked jurisdiction in this issue, that its claims were incorrect, and that it was not possible to discuss the matter at Senate or in public because of personnel issues and confidentiality. PSAC 901 has concerns about how TAs were treated in the CAUT report (<http://psac901.org/category/news/>)

2. Graduate Studies Executive Council (GSEC):

- At the meeting on Oct 18, GSEC discussed a proposal to change completion time limits for Master's and PhD programs. Currently, the time limits are 5/7 years respectively, and the proposal is to have a default of 2/4 years, with requests for time limit extensions submitted no later than term 7/13 of a Master's/PhD program; requests would only be considered for "valid, documented" reasons.
- Continuing with that theme, all of you should have received an invitation from SGS to complete a survey on completion times. I urge you to do the survey (you have until Nov 15), even if you aren't happy with all the questions. To provide further input, Becky Pero, Ann-Marie Grondin and I are encouraging Council Reps to organize meetings with grad students in their departments to discuss completion times and related issues (e.g. what are the reasons why grad students aren't completing on time? What things help with completion? What are things that the University can do to help students complete on time?). Ann-Marie Grondin is happy to help facilitate such meetings and take notes. We will then summarize those discussions and submit to the SGS.

3. Mental Health Working Group:

- The Principal's Commission on Mental Health held their final town hall on October 16, and lots of feedback about their draft report has been received. Their final report will be released this fall.
- Jazz Vocalist Melissa Stylianou and her New York band will be doing a concert on Friday, Nov 16 (Chalmers United Church) to raise awareness of student mental health initiatives: <http://queensevents.ca/2012/10/30/melissa-stylianou-mental-health-initiative-queensu/>
- Green folders to help faculty, staff, TAs and GTFs identify and respond to students in mental health distress have been distributed across campus. If you are a TA or GTF and haven't received a green folder, please go to the Student Affairs website to download and print out the folder: <http://www.queensu.ca/studentaffairs>
- Counselling and Disability Services is offering Mental Health First Aid courses this year, for departments, groups, and individuals, with sessions of 45 minutes up to 3 hours. These workshops are designed to help students, faculty and staff support those who are experiencing mental health issues. If you'd like to take part in one of these workshops, contact Lauren Sharpe at sharpe@queensu.ca or 613-533-6000 x 75154 for workshop times and details.

4. **Academic Planning Task Force:** The APTF's main focus this year is on online learning. The APTF has formed 3 sub-groups to look at: (i) the long-range Queen's strategy for online learning; (ii) quality control mechanisms for online courses; and (iii) issues around technology and support (e.g. learning management systems like Moodle and D2L). The APTF is meeting monthly as a group, and will also be consulting with the Queen's community via meetings, online surveys, and town halls. Our first survey launched on Nov 6 and can be found here: <http://queensu.fluidsveys.com/s/Online-Teaching-survey/>. This survey is aimed at finding out more about experiences of Queen's instructors (including GTFs) with online learning. See the APTF's website for more information: <http://www.queensu.ca/saptf/>

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Bridges

Graduate Student Senator
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Dear Council,

The Social Team has been hard at work planning for the end of the year events, including a card games night at the Grad Club,

In July we planned a most excellent karaoke event, which was so popular that we decided to hold another karaoke event in the Fall semester! We also had a very successful white-water rafting event in Ottawa. Unfortunately I could not attend, but I heard that everyone had a great time.

For August we've planned a Frisbee golf event and a button-making event. We've been getting a lot of good feedback from the event attendees, so we're keeping this in mind when planning future events. It's been a great learning experience to coordinate events that suit a variety of constituents (from athletics to arts and crafts!).

For Orientation week, we've been busy planning and organizing. We're having our big "what still needs to be done" meeting in the next few days, so we should have all of our events finalized and organized. Learning from last year, we've decided to keep a smaller number of events over Orientation week (maximum 3 per day) to ensure that the team and the members aren't too burnt out by the time school starts.

Next month's report will have more of the details of Orientation.

Respectfully submitted,

Cassandra Kuyvenhoven

Social Commissioner
social@sgps.ca

SGPS Computer Network

- I had to replace a RAM module in our webserver. I did this at 1:00a.m. on a weekend so limited disruption would be experienced by members.
- Security patches were applied to our webserver.
- I have done significant work on the calendar system on our server. Newer versions of desktop operating systems were having issues with specific actions against the calendar server. The changes are aimed at alleviating these issues. There are still a few items to work out. My aim is to have the bulk of these changes ready for installation in December (when it will be least disruptive to have calendar downtime).
- I worked with Queen's IT to iron out a couple of network issues that were causing minor delays in network access to our mail server. This was an efficiency update only and not a serious issue of lost e-mail.

SGPS Website

- I have updated the health and dental section of our website with the new 2012-2013 benefit year booklet.
- The social events section of our site was updated for the Frontenacs hockey game.
- Updated the site to include job posting for the Equity Coordinator position.
- I updated the stylesheets for the website to correct issues mapping the website to some handheld devices.

Communications

- I have completed work on the Council Help Sheet document. The document will be available alongside tent cards at each Council meeting (starting in November) with the hope that Council members are more comfortable participating in Council with the help of the help sheet. Special thanks to everyone that had a part in creating this document, especially our International Commissioner, Holly.
- I created posters for Coffee Hour and the upcoming General Meeting. I am bringing these posters to Council in hopes that Councillors will bring the posters back to their departments to post.
- I am working to improve transitional documents for staff.
- Anne-Marie and I have begun work on a comprehensive update to our job posting documents.
- 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 am hopeful to have this complete by December.
- I am compiling a list of all past motions (directive based non policy changing) so the Exec can reference Council directives that are not reflected in our B&Ps. This task is very near to completion.
- I am working with our Equity Commissioner on some new forms and protocols to help a subsection of our membership. We are in the final stages and the final form will be prepared and released in the near future.

Respectfully submitted,
Sean Richards - info@sgps.ca

Hello everyone!

This month began with a meeting with the new Equity Coordinator and setting out some of the tasks that we would work on together in the coming term. These included outreach to various groups on campus that I have not yet made contact with, such as the Four Directions group and the new Men Who Support Feminism group on campus. Unfortunately, Ian had to resign for the position of Equity Coordinator which means that these groups and several others are still needing to be addressed by the SGPS equity team ASAP. I will try to do this in the next several weeks. I also met with the Equity Commissioner Equivalent of the Law Society. We discussed ways in which we could support each other's initiatives around campus and also compared notes about what we found challenging and successful about our positions. What I discovered was that the school of Law has a number of really interesting and well thought-out equity programs that I think should be applied to other departments on campus. This is something that I will be discussing with the Equity Standing Committee.

The goal of having a finalized form to be used to administer funding to graduate or professional students with disabilities in partnership with the Disability Services Office has been achieved. The DSO and the SGPS are both happy with the form and the details of the process and this information has been disseminated among pertinent groups on campus. Essentially the situation is: if a graduate/professional student needs funding for an academic-related need and cannot access grants, they can come to the SGPS for financial assistance if they have been approved to do so by the DSO. We are all really excited to be able to help out our members in this way!

The December 6th planning committee began meeting this month. I have only been able to attend one of the two meetings so far, but in that meeting we discussed a number of ideas for how best to spread the word about the issues surrounding violence against woman. This included the distressing issue of the Blue Light pranks happening across campus. The event is developing into a really interesting amalgamation of ideas. Be sure to come to Wallace Hall on December 6th to see for yourself (much more information to come in the future).

The plans for Disability Awareness Month get better and better. Li Jiang and I met this month to discuss the SGPS' role to play in the March event. We are planning to encourage SGPS members who are researching disability related issues to submit a poster to be on display that month. This will give those members the opportunity to get valuable experience that will look wonderful on a resume. We plan to have a contest for the highest-rated posters. Other DAM events include a coffee-hour with the principle, guest lecturers, etc. I will forward a detailed account of the events as the month approaches.

I met with Becky Pero to let her know about the supervisor-supervisee report I would like to produce with the help of the Equity Standing Committee. Becky was a wealth of information and gave me many ideas of things to look into. This report will first involve a gathering of information and is still in its infancy stage. I also met with David Thompson, the newest student advisor, who also gave me a lot of information that will, I am sure, be very useful. This month was the first Equity Standing Committee meeting. I introduced the initiatives planned for the 2012/13 term and also gave some background on the committees that are looking for representatives. I am hoping to have all the committee seats filled by the end of this week. Our plan is to meet once a month from now on, with our main focus being the supervisor-supervisee report.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Westland

Equity Commissioner
equity@sgps.ca

Dear SGPS Council Members,

The two projects that the Commission has been working on this past month are the Accent Discrimination Campaign and assembling membership for the International Affairs Standing Committee.

Things with the Accent Discrimination Campaign are progressing slowly but surely. We've now established that between the SGPS, PSAC-901, and the Human Rights Office, we have enough money to fund the project. This will entail the hiring of an appropriately skilled RA to administer the survey, analyse the data, write up a report, raise awareness and disseminate the findings. We're about to begin the hiring process.

The idea for the International Affairs Committee is that it will provide the means through which the international student constituency will elect its Council Representative. In conjunction with this, the IAC will provide a forum for international students to communicate any issues or concerns they might have to the SGPS. It will also enable various groups within the international community to communicate with one another and to disseminate any relevant information to their members. To this end, I've identified and got in touch with 17 groups on campus which appear to cater to international students specifically. I'm getting the first trickle of responses back, and we'll see where we go from there.

In addition to these things, both Kris and I have been doing work on the various internal and external committees upon which we sit. We're providing some support to the Cultural Engagement Group in hopes of helping it to establish continuity once the founding members leave next year. We continue to communicate with SGPS's international members through the facebook page and the newsletter – let us know if there's any information or any events which should be posted there.

Please do 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 pertaining to international students at Queen's.

With best wishes,

The SGPS International Team

Holly McIndoe

International Student Affairs Commissioner
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Kris Singh

International Student Affairs Coordinator
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Dear Council and SGPS Members,

Below is an update on the sustainability committee's initiatives since last month's year plan.

Bike Share Program

The survey released to the general public has been closed, and I will be working with the focus group to analyze the results and determine appropriate system details, such as number of bikes and stations and station locations. A key result of this analysis will be determining capital and operating cost estimates, at which point we'll discuss funding options. Any model requiring SGPS funding will be brought to the executive and council for approval, as appropriate.

Water Filling Station Dress-up Event

On October 11, the SGPS participated in the Sustainability Office's water filling station dress-up event, to promote the ban of bottled water sales on campus that came into effect September 1 of this year (<http://www.queensu.ca/sustainability/initiatives/Water/bottledwaterfree.html>). We dressed up the fountain in Stirling Hall with balloons, information posters, and free stuff (including reusable bottles) to highlight the impacts of bottled water and show the SGPS' support for the ban.

Documentary/Speaker Night

We will be planning a documentary showing and/or a speaker presentation for later in the semester or in the winter. Details to come...

Sustainability Week

Together with the AMS, the Sustainability Office, SIFE, and MCRC, we will be planning and running a sustainability week in late February or early March. The week will have a variety of sustainability themes, with loads of activities, speakers, and information to promote environmental and social stewardship among the campus community.

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Wallace

Sustainability Coordinator
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