

### **Council Working Group**

The initial work of the Council Working Group — a group I have assembled to propose reforms to improve participation and engagement with SGPS Council — is complete and the group will be submitting a list of potential reforms for discussion at the Fall General Meeting. It is my hope that the Fall General Meeting can pass a motion calling on Council to trial some of the Council Working Group's recommendations. These can then be reviewed, revised, and if successful, formally adopted at the Annual General Meeting in March.

### **Ontario Municipal Board Appeal**

The appeal of the City of Kingston's Electoral Bylaw to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) took place from October 21-25. I submitted a participant statement and was called as a witness to speak to how the current bylaw prevents students — graduate, professional, and undergraduate — from being effectively represented in City politics, and deprives them of fundamental democratic rights. We await the decision of the OMB, which should come well in advance of the end of December, when the Electoral Bylaw must be in place in advance of an election.

### **Campus Master Plan**

The first draft of the Campus Master Plan is complete and is being circulated amongst members of the Campus Master Plan Advisory Committee. After some final revisions, the plan will go to a Campus Community Open House on December 6<sup>th</sup>. I highly encourage Councilors to become involved in this event — taking a look at the plan, offering feedback, and engaging in discussion — and encouraging students with your department to do the same. The Master Plan will guide infrastructure and capacity planning at the university for decades to come and proposes significant projects, such as major changes to West Campus, that give us a view into the possible future of Queen's. Any feedback can be given directly to representatives from the group at the Town Hall, but could also be directed to me, as I sit on this group as well.

### **Tuition Fee Issues**

As many of my fall priorities wind down, I am looking to what I hope to accomplish in winter semester before my term as President ends. I have already been in discussions with different branches of the administration to change the date on which tuition fee increases are applied to graduate programs from May 1<sup>st</sup> to September 1<sup>st</sup>. This schedule is much more in line with graduate student funding and budgeting timelines, especially given that the summer is typically the hardest semester economically for graduate students. We are hoping that this issue will be resolved this year so that students can immediately benefit from the change.

However, my intention is to continue to ask questions and push for positive changes in the realm of tuition fees. One issue that has been brought to our attention again and again is the need for students who have completed master's research projects, dissertations or other major research projects to continue to pay tuition while they wait for their committee to be struck, for their work to be reviewed, or for defence dates to be set. We will work to achieve a set amount of tuition that students should be expected to pay after formally submitting such work, as it should not be the student who foots the bill in circumstances of delay that are outside of their control.

Lastly, we are investigating the possibility of having tuition fees fixed by cohort. Essentially this would mean that a student would pay a fixed level of tuition for the entire length of their program, an amount that would be outlined to them at the same time as their acceptance letter and financial/work offer. This would allow students to plan more accurately for the cost of their education and go a long way to stabilizing graduate student finances. We feel this is particularly achievable for shorter two-year programs, but should also be explored for longer PhD programs.

If you have feedback on any of these issues, or have any other concerns about tuition please feel free to discuss this with me.

As I will do every month, I encourage you all to follow me on Twitter @sgpspresident, where I will keep all my followers up to date on my activities and views. As always, never hesitate to contact me with ideas or concerns at [president@sgps.ca](mailto:president@sgps.ca).

Respectfully submitted,

Iain Reeve

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

Dear SGPS Council Members and Members-At-Large,

**Student Advisor Program**

Advisor Spring/summer term reports (which include statistics from the 2013-2014 academic year) can now be found on the SGPS website: <http://www.sgps.ca/advisors/reports.html>

**Advisors hold office hours (JDUC Room 203) on:**

Tuesdays from 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Wednesdays from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

The SGPS is currently interviewing candidates for a work-study position that will support the Advisors in their work.

**Canadian Association for Graduate Studies Annual Conference**

I am writing from the Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS) annual meeting, in Montreal (November 4). Student representatives met together yesterday (November 3) to discuss student association priorities. Across the nation, students more or less agreed that the supervisory relationship, mental health support for graduate students and professional development are important topics to discuss with administrators later this week. Today's two plenary sessions regarded academic involvement in the public sphere, particularly with journalists and policy makers (Paul Wells, Senior Columnist, Maclean's) and updates from the research-granting agencies. I also attended a concurrent session that reviewed the Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey data results and implications (Hillary Arnold and Shuping Liu, HECQO, Joan Norris, Wilfrid Laurier University).

**Ontario Council of Graduate Studies (OCGS) Meeting**

The OCGS meeting took place on October 11 in Toronto. The deans that make up this Council met with student representatives from across the province. Student representatives brought forward five items including post residency fees, international student concerns, Tri-Council funding, mental health for graduate students, and Access Copyright. Students were reminded that OCGS is a "support group for deans" and that the group does not advocate or lobby any organizations or the provincial government. I expect little uptake by the deans on these issues as little interest was shown and no action items were set for future dialogue/discussion. As of last year, OCGS invites student representatives to one OCGS meeting a year (the Council meets once a month).

**Time to Completion Task Force**

The time to completion task force will likely not hold its first meeting until December. The membership for the task force has been set and includes four students and four faculty members/administrators. The diversity of this group, in terms of departments and groups represented, is relatively good.

**The School of Graduate Studies established two time to completion policies in the winter of 2013 that were effective September 2013 (for all incoming students); these policies include the Time Limits for Completion of Program and the Extension of Time Limits.** Additional information can be found here: <http://www.sgps.ca/events/time-to-completion.html> AND the policies can be found here: <http://www.queensu.ca/sgs/forstudents/ttc.html>.

**For more information on this issue, please contact me at [vpg@sgps.ca](mailto:vpg@sgps.ca).**

Respectfully,

Becky Pero

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

Dear SGPS Council Members and Members-At-Large,

November already?! I'm sure you are all as surprised to find the fall term creeping closer to the end. With the Year well underway I hope you are all settling in to your roles as councilors... which leads me to my first order of business...

### **Campaigns and Community Committee**

I need members! Have some ideas about campaigns you would like to see on campus? Want to get involved? Think that the SGPS could be more involved with the community and would like to help make that happen? Haven't joined a committee yet and are afraid of getting stuck on something boring? Come on. I know there are some great, involved councilors out there. I promise not to take up too much of your time. Send me a msg at [vpcca@sgps.ca](mailto:vpcca@sgps.ca) and let's shake this campus up! If you can't commit but know someone who can pass it on!

### **Get Science Right/ Evidence for Democracy**

Across Canada, politically inconvenient research continues to be shut down or silenced, federal funding for graduate research has been shifting drastically with base funding for federal research grants dropping appreciably in recent years, and 100% of all new NSERC, SSHRC, and CIHR funding in 2013 going to industry-linked research. The result has been an increasingly significant loss of public science for the public interest.

An issue that hits even closer to home for grad students is the one of "moral rights waivers." These waivers are becoming a standard feature of industry-linked and consultancy-based research contracts on which graduate research increasingly relies. These waivers shield industry and institutions from recourse when they breach standard research ethics practices.

I have been and will continue to offer in-department talks, round tables and workshops around these issues. If you would like me to bring this issue to your department directly please send me an e-mail. We can set up an informal, quick debrief during your monthly meeting or something larger like a workshop or a roundtable for the whole department.

I am also in the beginning stages of setting up a town hall on academic freedom. This is in the very early planning stages. I am currently in talks with the Get Science Right folks and the Evidence For Democracy folks and I already have at least one student committed to talking about their experience. If you have a story to share please let me know.

On another bent if you have a story you would like to share, but would like to keep it anonymous, I would still love to talk to you. I hope compile as many member experiences as possible.

### **Bullying, Harassment and Mental Health**

Queens recently hired an embedded councilor for the School of Graduate Studies. This is great news since mental health is such an important issue for graduate students. It will be terrific to have someone who specializes in Grad student issues to talk to. However, I would hate for the initiative to end there. Grad School is a stressful place for a number of reasons. I am interested in learning about the structural issues that make it so stressful, and how the SGPS can help to tackle the issue at its roots. This initiative is in its initial stages and I am hoping to collaborate with a number of groups on campus. In the meantime there's this survey designed by the CFS to get us started. <http://fs24.formsite.com/cfsontario/form10/index.html>

That's all for now folks! I hope to have lots of new ideas and strategies when I get back from the NGM for CFS at the end of the month.

Thanks,

Meagan Crane

VP Campaigns & Community Affairs  
vpcca@sgps.ca

Happy November (or should I say Mo-vement)

I have very little in the way of updates since our last meeting last month. I have been busy (alongside the F&S Committee) adjudicating the variety of applications for ESA's, DBA's and Grant requests. In addition, I have verified and processed a number of club applications.

We are continuing to communicate with the Registrar's office to try to resolve some of the outstanding issues in relation to tuition fees and student activity fee transfer. In addition, we are in the process of meeting with the Auditors to do the books (as you will see by the motion forthcoming at our GM). However, in order to complete our audit, we need information on membership and fee transfers from the registrar's office in a timely manner. I am hopeful that they will have their work completed in the near future so I can provide an update.

I have meet with PSAC 901 to continue our discussions on how to improve our health and dental plan. In addition, I am in the process (along with our social team) of planning two events. The first will be a joint event with RMC Civilian Graduate students. The second event will be another exciting opportunity for all of you to come out and enjoy a social event – more details to follow.

Finally, as we move forward towards the holiday season, I have begun the planning for our Holiday Assistance Program. As you will see from the motions, I will be asking Council to allocate some of our funds to this most worthwhile program.

As always, I welcome any emails or calls from our members. If you have an idea on how we can improve/increase our services, please let me know.

Respectfully submitted,

Jillian Burford-Grinnell

VP Finance & Services  
vpfs@sgps.ca

### **Committees**

We continue to build SGPS committee capacity. If you have not already done so, please send me an email ([ea@sgps.ca](mailto:ea@sgps.ca)) to let me know which internal committee suits your preference. At present, the Judicial, Equity, and Academic Affairs Standing Committees are full. I will be looking to graduate departmental societies for their input on the Council Working Group this month. Students of the MIR, MPA and Urban & Regional Planning programs may consider sitting on the Professional Students' Standing Committee. We have filled most external committee positions to date (full report to come at the AGM). Urgently, we need two Health Science grads for the following positions:

- Faculty of Health Science Joint Health & Safety Committee
- MSc representative for the Faculty of Health Science Graduate Council

### **Human Resources**

The SGPS will be undertaking the hiring process for the Work-Study positions advertised in my report last month. We encountered several difficulties with the Work-Study program this term. To address them, I met with administrative representatives from both Awards and Career Services. Amongst our demands were clearer employer guidelines for using the Work-Study interface, and better, more efficient communication between Work-Study program administrators and student employees and applicants. Of note, provincial funding for the Work-Study program was cut last year. Seeing value in the program, however, Queen's made an institutional decision to continue funding it. Now working with significantly fewer resources, the Work-Study program is only available to students who take on loans.

We also advertised several positions last month. I'm pleased to report that Margaux MacDonald was hired as Social Commissioner. We have also offered the position of Athletics Coordinator to one of our applicants and are awaiting confirmation of acceptance. All other advertised positions were reposted, as the first round generated too few applications. We are currently seeking applications for the positions of Equity Commissioner, Planning Coordinator, and Communications Coordinator. Applications are due at the end of this week (Nov. 8<sup>th</sup>). Finally, our VP Professional, David Francis, resigned this month. Candidates may also apply until the November 8<sup>th</sup> deadline.

### **Outreach**

Three members-at-large attended the first Ontario Graduate Student Symposium in Hamilton November 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup>. The symposium was organized by the Ontario office of the Canadian Federation of Students and was entirely free to our members (i.e. the SGPS neither had to pay nor subsidize the cost of registration). Panels spanned a variety of topics, including childcare, mental health, and open access. Keynote speakers were PhD Comics author Dr. Jorge Cham and Dr. Katie Gibbs, Executive Director of Evidence for Democracy. Your truly was invited to speak on a panel, and I presented on the "Your taxes, your choice" campaign and the T4/T4A issue. The event was well received and garnered a lot of praise.

### **Training**

I am in the process of completing Intercultural Competence Training with the Queen's International Student Centre. I will also attend Conflict Resolution Training at the end of the month.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne-Marie Grondin

Executive Assitant  
[ea@sgps.ca](mailto:ea@sgps.ca)

Dear SGPS Council,

There are several items that I wish to report on this month. As indicated at the last Council meeting, I will provide an overview of key items discussed during the October 4/5<sup>th</sup> trustee meeting. For those who may be unaware, the trustee section of the Queen's website can be found here: <http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/trustees.html>. Minutes and agendas for past and upcoming meetings can also be found here.

The Board and Capital Assets and Finance Committee met in closed session. There were a number of items brought up which related to the long-term health of the university, and our strategic planning. As indicated in my campaign platform, my voice and votes on these issues were made in accordance with the interests of the graduate and professional student population, and areas of alignment with the overall health of the university.

The Board met in open session at 6:22 pm on October 5<sup>th</sup> where updates were delivered with regard to Richardson Stadium, the pension plan, operations, and talent management. In particular, I am pleased to report that the campaign for revitalization of Richardson Stadium is well underway, with a lead donation already secured. In terms of rankings, Queen's is ranked #1 in student learning experience in Canada, which is excellent news. To me, this indicates effective implementation of our newly developed academic plan. As has been previously been discussed at SGPS Council, I raised a question during the Senate Report regarding the number of international applications we have received this year. I am pleased to report that Queen's received a substantial increase in self-identified international student applications over last year.

The Board-Senate retreat was also held during the same weekend. I found this to be a productive session with a number of interesting topics raised, including: New program development, marketing approaches surrounding degrees, and marketing strategies surrounding our research successes. I look forward to our next retreat, which is scheduled in the coming months.

I would also like to report on the activities of the Alcohol Working Group (AWG). The AWG met this month and discussed, amongst other things, the trial of the "Re-Think the Pre-Drink", training of relevant groups with regard to alcohol awareness (including Campus Security and Walk Home), and the pub renewal agreements. I am pleased to report that Campus Security indicates that the trial of "Re-Think the Pre-Drink" seems to have reduced the number of alcohol-related incidents.

The Council Working Group also met briefly this month. The President has broken down our mandate and assigned portions to subgroups. I have taken ownership of the Council attendance portfolio and chair this subgroup. I have written some policy which will be introduced at the Fall General Meeting.

With regard to the Society's Fall General Meeting, in accordance with Bylaws and Policies, advertising of this meeting was placed in the November 1<sup>st</sup> issue of the Queen's Journal. Social media, councilor, and newsletter advertising will also be implemented.

This month, I also took the time to write a policy that provides guidelines for student use of SGPS-allotted space in the Student Life Centre (SLC). Briefly, the SLC Council designates space for SGPS use each year, yet we have not had a solid policy outlining how this space may be used. Council may note in this month's package the inclusion of this policy for approval.

As you may be aware, the position of the Vice President (Professional) is currently vacant. As the Senate Committee on Non-Academic Discipline is implementing a new reporting structure, I will be taking on this portion of the Vice President Professional's portfolio to ensure compliance. I expect that this should dovetail quite well with my additional role as Complaints Officer and Chair of the Judicial Committee.

Should Council have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

James MacLeod

Speaker & Trustee  
speaker@sgps.ca

Dear SGPS Council and Members-At-Large,

Here is a brief update on meetings I attended:

### **1. Graduate Student Executive Council (GSEC) Meeting on October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

Becky Pero (VP Graduate) and I attended the GSEC meeting (details on GSEC committee mandate can be found here: <http://queensu.ca/sgs/faculty-staff/governance/gsec>).

- The members of the time-to-completion task force were finalized. Becky Pero (as a co-chair) and I will be SGPS representatives on that. I am seeking inputs from the SGPS council members and members-at-large specifically on research-related items/issues which would adversely affect the degree time-to-completion. We will have our first task force meeting in mid-December.
- As we need more input, it would be great if Council Reps meet with graduate students in their departments and discuss the issues related to degree completion times. For instance, the discussion can be around research related issues. What the University can do to assist graduate students to complete their degrees on time?

### **2. Senate Meeting on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

Here are a few highlights of the senate meeting (<http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/agendasminutes.html>):

- As Principal Woolf pointed out, there are still issues related to the strike by the Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers. Recently, there have been long delays in processing visa applications for international students, and faculty members seeking visas to work or visit Canada temporarily. I will keep you updated on this matter.
- The Provost reported that the Strategic Enrolment Management Group (SEMG) will meet in November to start the preparation of a draft of the university long-term enrolment plan to be presented to Senate in spring 2014.
- Principal Woolf mentioned that Homecoming was a success this year. Congratulations!

### **3. Board-Senate Retreat on Saturday October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

- I attended the Board-Senate Retreat on Saturday October 5<sup>th</sup>. The discussion was around the Long-Term Enrolment Planning including how to maximize the campus activities and course offerings year-round, more research activities internationally, student admissions (aboriginal learners, first-generation students, and international students), and retention/graduation rates, to name a few. I invite the council members to take a look at the white paper prepared by SEMG here: <http://www.queensu.ca/provost/enrolmentplanning.html>.

### **4. Mental Health Working Group**

- I have not met with the members of this group yet but I would like to help promote a new fund for student-led mental health initiatives established by the Jack project at Queen's. The Jack project at Queen's Student initiative fund provides funding opportunities starting in fall 2013 for projects and initiatives that support student health and wellness, specifically on mental health. The deadline for application submission for events and activities scheduled after February 2014 is **February 1, 2014**. I would be happy to help with your application submission, all details can be found here: <http://queensu.ca/studentaffairs/fundsandawards/TJPSIF.html>.

Respectfully submitted,

Hamid Falahati

Graduate Student Senator  
senator@sgps.ca

Dear SGPS Council Members and Members-At-Large,

Fall term is well underway for the Social Team. We're currently in the middle of transitioning, after saying goodbye to our previous Social Commissioner and Athletics Coordinate we are now in the process of hiring new Athletics and Planning Coordinators. We have retained half of the team from last year – with Ciara staying on as our Logistics Coordinator, and myself moving from Planning Coordinator to Social Commissioner.

I began in the position of Social Commissioner November 1, and have since been busy interviewing to fill the reaming positions. We are happy to announce that Prashant Agrawal will be joining the team as the new Athletics Coordinator. We look forward to incorporating Prashant's sporting event ideas, including a cricket tournaments and a squash ladder, in addition to our regular Friday sports nights!

The position for Planning Coordinator is being advertised until November 8, 2013. We are hoping to conduct interviews and hire our final team member as soon as possible after the closing date.

In October the Social Team hosted a karaoke night at Maru restaurant and took a group of students to visit Fort Fright. Both events were very successful. We also got to play badminton, handball, and basketball at our Friday night sports. Handball was extremely popular, so we will be sure to organize that again soon!

Due to the transitioning of the Social Team, event planning for November has been slightly delayed. This means our social events will happen in the last two weeks of November, rather than being spread out over the month as we normally like to do. We have plans to host a board game/cards night, as well as a joint SGPS-RMC mixer. This will be a great opportunity for our members to meet some fellow graduate students at RMC!

I look forward to having a full Social Team in place by the end of November, at which point we will set plans for the remainder of the school year.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaux MacDonald

Social Commissioner  
social@sgps.ca

### SGPS Computer Network

- I have completed the updates to our secondary webserver so it is ready for the next high traffic period in January.
- The Queen's network continues to experience e-mail delays and I continue to work with Queen's to make sure SGPS e-mails are delivered properly without delay. We haven't yet had any significant delays. I will stay on top of this.
- I am in the process of investigating the new operating system release from Apple (Mavericks 10.9) to make sure updates to our computer systems go smoothly. I will run a test machine on the new system this week.
- I had to update the mail and calendar server to work with iOS 7 devices.
- I had to update some mail server code to work properly with OS X 10.9.

### SGPS Website

- I have started to rework some of the icons on the website to make navigation a little easier (and improve aesthetics of the site). I will continue to work on icons over the next month or so. The most obvious change is to the newsletter announcements in the news feed.
- I have added the holiday assistance program page to our website. Please pass along this initiative far and wide:  
<http://www.sgps.ca/events/donate.html>
- Continual updates on the site with respect to opt-outs, fee waivers, etc.
- Continual updates with respect to job opportunities at the SGPS:  
<http://www.sgps.ca/jobs/jobs.html>

### Communications

- I am working on the notice boards in the JDUC and MacCorry with a hope to be completed before the next meeting of Council.
- I have updated our Student Advisor booklet, our General Information booklet and have completed work on our new Discount booklet. All are available at our office.
- I am working to update the signage at our office to make sure people that visit our office are aware of our services.

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

In the past month I have met with members from the Equity and Human Rights Offices at Queen's to further discuss our plans on conducting a self-disclosure survey of all graduate and professional students at Queen's. The purpose of this survey would be to collect data on how many students identify themselves as members of one of the five designated groups. The university currently does not have data on how many students self-identify as members of these groups. The results of this survey would provide insight into the need for services on campus that support the designated groups, and would also help these services determine what proportion of students who may benefit from their services are actually using them. The goal is to have this survey developed and ready for implementation next September, as there are many steps that have to be accomplished beforehand (e.g. GREB application, survey development). I would also still like to pursue an exit survey of students who withdraw from studies (as per previous report), and plan on discussing this with the new Equity Commissioner (whenever one is hired).

I have continued to conduct outreach with various university equity-related groups. I've been in touch with many groups to offer assistance or support in any initiatives they are working on, although I have yet to have anyone take me up on the offer. I'm working on setting up a meeting with the Disabilities Services Office, so hopefully that will prove to be successful. I'm also going to be helping out the Sexual Assault Centre Kingston in organizing a December 6<sup>th</sup> event and International Women's Week.

Another activity I was involved in this month was revising the University Human Rights Policy and Procedure on Harassment, Discrimination and Accommodation. I worked with staff from the Human Rights Office to review this policy and provide feedback on ensuring the policy and procedure addressed issues that may be faced by graduate and professional students.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Webber

Equity Coordinator  
equityco@sgps.ca

### **Agnes Benidickson Tricolour Award Update**

Look out for an updated Tricolour Awards policy on the Rector website sometime this week along with the official nomination forms to be released at the same time.

Tricolour Award reception plans are in process right now and the Office just applied to a substantial grant from the QUAA for the event.

### **Website Redesign**

Just a brief update regarding the official Office of the Rector website, I'm redesigning it entirely over the next two weeks. I think it could use an upgrade!

### **John Orr Dinner**

The famous Toronto Alumni Branch awards celebration is fast approaching – the John Orr Dinner. This year's recipient is John Rae, who in the past served as a member of the Board of Trustees and later as chair of the Board. I will be in attendance along with AMS and SGPS executives and members of their teams.

Princeps Servusque Es,

Nicholas Francis

Rector  
rector@queensu.ca