

Dear Councillors,

Hope you are all well. For those of you who are new - Welcome to SGPS Council!

Let me just start by saying that you have made an excellent choice by taking on this responsibility for your department. As someone who serves on quite a few bodies / committees on campus, I should tell you that it is actually the SGPS Council that is the finest deliberative body at Queen's. While other Queen's bodies generally have set business agendas and largely pre-meditated outcomes, we try and make things a bit more exciting at the SGPS. We speak about issues openly, candidly and generally quite thoughtfully (but with the requisite dose of inanity of course). Our relationship with each other is also more collegial - we go out for drinks after our meetings despite often being on opposite sides of vehement disagreements. Other bodies at Queen's seem to adhere to more severe ideological lines, so you are joining what is a safer, relatively less politicized, but intensely political organization. Personally, I am glad that I report to a Council with this kind of counter-culture and I am hopeful that you will enjoy your time on Council as well.

While our meetings are mostly quite enjoyable, this does not preclude the seriousness of outcomes that we generate as a result of our candid debates. In order to familiarize yourselves with what these have been recently, I would encourage you to read the last few months of reports. This familiarity will serve you well, but do feel free to ask questions in case you find yourselves a bit lost on the historical development of the various issues that face us as a community.

For this month, there are 3 issues towards which I'd like to point your attention:

Orientation Funds:

The annual orientation for new graduate and professional students is currently being entirely underwritten by SGPS students themselves. Neither Student Affairs nor the School of Graduate Studies has helped out much in terms of finances. In my meetings with the Provost and new Dean of Student Affairs, I have asked for some monetary support. A verbal commitment to look at the issue has been made, but we should be hearing back on how important Student Affairs thinks the integration and inclusion of new SGPS students is to Queen's shortly. Departmental orientations are great, but we also happen to be Queen's students more broadly - developing an inter-departmental, inter-faculty, Queen'swide community of graduate and professional students is a priority for both the SGPS and the senior administration - so let's get serious and do more to see this happen as soon as people arrive.

Library Initiatives:

We have asked the University Librarian for a few things. Of immediate note are:

- A negotiation with the U of T library system to remove the ~\$200 fee that they now require from Queen's graduate students in order to allow them to borrow from their stacks at Robart's. Both Ryerson and York have been able to guarantee their students free access after successful negotiations - so we have asked the librarian to procure for similar rights and privileges for SGPS students.
- More SGPS student space: These would be of the lockable carrel variety. The library will be clearing up some space so there is no reason why we shouldn't be able to expand the space available to us from the current small number of carrels and the isolation of the graduate reading room.
- Expansion of electronic resources / databases for graduate and professional students: We will be asking for input from your departments (that means from you) on these so please raise the issue at your end and start to develop a list of Journals / Databases to which you do not want to pay \$3 / article or to which you currently do not have access. This is important - so please start to develop a list of your research needs.

Advancement:

Discussions on how to get SGPS student priorities onto the priority list for advancement efforts continue. This is quite likely to become a joint SGPS / AMS priority (remind me to tell you why), but I am trying to get independent input into the setting of their fundraising priorities. I have also asked for a full disclosure and publicization of all the awards that are currently available to SGPS members. Our VP FS has added this to the list of work for an RA, but this may prove to be a challenge to procure. As a department, Advancement raises money for all sorts of University initiatives, but we would like them to have more of a focus on graduate and professional student priorities and become more sensitive to the

particular needs of the SGPS community over the long run. While I have asked the Strategic Planning Committee to think of how they can include this initiative in the long-term plan for the SGPS, I would encourage Council-members to continue to raise this as a priority for us as an organization if we are unsuccessful over the term of the present Executive. In an era of budget cuts that will negatively impact our departments and may affect our ability to receive departmental funds, finding alternative avenues to overcome the challenges of affordability and debt becomes crucial. Working well with the Office of Advancement could be a potential way to alleviate such problems.

Board of Trustees (observations):

While our esteemed representative to the Board of Trustees, Ben Grant, will no doubt make the formal report on the Trustees meeting, I have just a couple of observations to make about our place at the Board. From my perspective as an observer of how that body functions and its role at Queen's, SGPS students do not currently have adequate representation on Board committees. While there are many issues that the Board deals with in which our particular interests are incidental, there are some committees on which I think the SGPS should have a presence. At the moment, I have a voting seat on the Campus Planning and Development Committee and Ben has a seat on the full Board. This means that we have a limited say on campus re-development only. If I could add more committees, I would add the committees for Advancement and Finance. Also, the QUPC (Queen's University Planning Committee) will become quite important over time as well - so we will have to rely on Nick Day (our esteemed and universally admired Rector) to represent our concerns and participate with our ideas on that body. This is a tricky issue - we obviously need to be a helpful and non-disruptive presence on these committees while also helping broaden their current scope to include the needs of graduate and professional students at a deep level. We also have responsibilities to Queen's more generally and insights to offer from our place within it that are crucial for the evolution of the University.

In the immediate term, we need to build the capacity of the SGPS as an organization to adequately take advantage of and contribute through even our current complement of representation. The next step after that would be to ask for presence on other committees. I would also add that this is not a narrow agenda item for just the SGPS membership, but a matter for the future evolution for Queen's itself. I think that the committees in question and the University community in general would in fact benefit greatly from having thoughtful, sharp and committed SGPS students included at the early stages of initiatives rather than at the tail end as is currently the case. Both the Academic plan and the respective Faculties' movement towards having graduate councils point to this eventuality. As Queen's is run through a complex of committees, this will be an issue to keep in mind as I and future executives make further reports to Council from the various bodies upon which they serve.

Finally - I should add that I am now more than halfway through my term so if someone wants to run for President next year, this would be a good time for a midstream de-brief. From my perspective, the last few months have seen our relations with the rest of the University improve considerably; we have solved some festering and seemingly intractable issues from the past; we have welcomed over 1300 new students to our community successfully and we are beginning to be taken seriously when we ask for particular actions from the senior administration. Above all, we have an excellent and vibrant team that makes the SGPS run in a manner reminiscent of a finely tuned machine. Obviously, how this has happened is all beyond me and I take credit for none of it, but I would like to bring this to your attention as a reflection upon the current state of affairs.

In closing, you should know that the SGPS continues to be ready to work on your priorities. If there are initiatives that you would like to add the list of the ones we are currently working on, I would ask that you bring them up at any and every opportunity. As members of SGPS Council, we report to you - this means that you can tell us what to do - it really is that simple.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jawad Qureshy
President - SGPS
President@sgps.ca

Hey everyone! Hope the first month has relaxed somewhat and everyone is lovin' the fall weather we are having.

Just a few updates:

SOCIAL SPACE—don't forget friends, we have a super cozy social space on the second floor of the JDUC Room 237. This is a great place for coffee, a snack or a chat.

RETAIL COMMITTEE--the committee met a few times and discussions are continuing on what retail operations will be in the Queen's Centre. It is a slow process with many administrative hurdles but we seem to be making some progress.

Student Life Centre (SLC) BUDGET COMMITTEE-- The budget has almost been finalized. We are hoping that the retail operations that go into the Centre will be effective in helping to lower costs. As per the direction of the SGPS council, we will continue to support the operational side of this new centre. Discussions regarding the governance and the AMS' role as manager of the new SLC are still ongoing. It seems as though we are making some progress towards an end result that all students will be pleased with.

SGPS FINANCE & SERVICES—The opt-out period ended on September 24, 2010. We have received a few appeals to opt-out after the deadline. Pursuant to our policies and bylaws, the committee met last week to review and discuss the appeals we received. In addition, we reviewed and discussed some Dental Bursaries, ESA application's and Grant applications. It looks like an exciting term ahead with tons of great events and conferences planned. We are always looking for volunteers to welcome to finance and services.

FAMILY EVENTS—The very first event, Sunday Sundae was held on October 3 out at west campus (An Clachan) and it was an absolute success. Keep your eyes peeled for the next event coming in November.

CHILDCARE-- As expected this is a slow process but an essential service that needs to be looked into. I would ask that anyone who would use this service please email me to discuss your childcare needs specifically. Feel free to email me at vpfs@sgps.ca. Ideally if the need is there, I would like to see this service commence in January 2011 but feedback is desperately needed.

Respectfully submitted,
Jillian Burford-Grinnell VP Finance and Services

... October, already? Unreal. The last month disappeared into a flurry of orientation events and inaugural committee meetings for the school year. The main highlights are summarized below.

Equity

The Equity Team helped to make the SGPS and our commitment to equity more visible during orientation by participating in various events throughout the month, including the International Graduate Student orientation held by the QUIC, and Queerorientation organized by EQUiP. On September 25th, we also attended the 4th annual Queen's University Educational Powwow, which was a total success despite the chilly weather.

I'm also delighted to advertise an upcoming conference that is being held at Queen's and which was organized by some of our fellow graduate students. Specifically, *Instigate 2010: Anti-Poverty Rant-In* is an interdisciplinary conference which will gather together scholars, activists, and community members to initiate dialogue and networking hubs on poverty-related matters. You can still register online (it's free!) for workshops being held between October 14th and 16th: <http://povertyconference2010.wordpress.com/>.

Copyright and Open Access

My quest to wrap my head around 'fair dealing' and Canadian copyright law continues. I was invited by University Librarian Martha Whitehead to join Queen's Copyright Working Group last month. After having submitted a letter of opposition (not unlike the one Council put together last August) to Access Copyright (AC)'s proposed student tariff, the working group is currently looking into the feasibility and repercussions of either agreeing or refusing to sign AC's Interim Agreement. Regardless of the University's final decision, I will work with other members of the group to raise awareness about said-repercussions, particularly as they apply to TAs and TFs who need to be informed of the types of 'copies' (including reproductions on Power Point and use of videos in class) which do and do not fall under the ambit of 'fair dealing'.

I have also joined the Open Access Week Planning Group. Open Access Week is taking place October 18-22, and will be kicked off by a set of panels on Monday October 18th, starting at noon. These will include: a webcast from the University of Toronto featuring representatives from NSERC, SSHRC, and CIHR; a panel discussion addressing the potential risks and rewards for post-graduate students pursuing open access as a means of reaching a broader audience; and finally, a panel discussion directed by faculty members who are also editors of open access journals.

Municipal Elections

The municipal elections are upon us! Members of the SGPS are invited to join AMS members on October 7th in Grant Hall to meet mayoral candidates (meet & greet starts at 7pm) and to ask questions during debate (beginning at 7:30pm).

I ask that Councillors kindly remind their colleagues of the following:

- Advanced voting day is on October 16th from 10am to 8pm;
- Members can also vote on October 20th **or** October 25th from 10am to 8pm;
- All voters **MUST** bring identification to their polling stations. Any original document(s) featuring voters' names, signatures, and addresses will be accepted as identification;
- Students who live in residence are also eligible to vote. They can use their campus residence address as their official Kingston address.

For information on electoral candidates and polling locations, please visit:

<http://www.cityofkingston.ca/cityhall/election/>.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne-Marie Grondin
VP Campaigns & Community Affairs

Academic Planning

Last month the Senate Committee on Academic Development was tasked with moving the academic planning process forward. The group met last week where the chair, Susan Cole, opened the floor for anyone to offer suggestions on how the committee should proceed. A number of concerns, ideas, and recommendations were put forward, including some who felt that further consultation with various groups on campus should continue before work begins on a draft. The meeting concluded with a handful of full members volunteering to meet again before the next regular SCAD meeting to investigate how consultation might proceed and in what format. This ad hoc group will report to SCAD in October and solicit feedback from the committee.

I encourage all Councilors to read the latest document to emerge from the planning process, “Imagining the Future: Towards an Academic Plan for Queen’s University” (<http://www.queensu.ca/news/articles/academic-planning-process-moves-senate>). Before next Council meeting you will receive a précis of the academic plan, which I hope Councilors will circulate among their departments so as to facilitate input and participation among our members in the planning process. The joint AMS-SGPS committee, Student Academic Advisory Coalition, will publish our summary of “Imagining the Future” along with the AMS’s on its website and is interested in hearing and tracking student recommendations.

Student Advisors

The Student Advisor Program (<http://www.sgps.ca/services/advisors.html>) handled a number of cases last month regarding acceptance guidelines, conditions, and practices within departments. After bringing these up with the School of Graduate Studies at our monthly meeting, the SGS agreed to speak with deans about the conditions that should be stated in letters of acceptance sent out by the SGS and departments. The SGS said that in the future they will seek to ensure their letters are clear about the fact that the terms of acceptance are laid out in the departments’ letters and that these letters, in turn, are clear about any such terms (i.e. if an acceptance is conditional upon a supervisor’s funding, the letter sent out by the department should state that.)

Academic Affairs Standing Committee

Our internal Academic Affairs Committee met last month to discuss withdrawal policies laid out in Faculty Graduate Councils (<http://www.queensu.ca/sgs/forfacultyandstaff/SGSgovernance/council.html>) and the possible optional change to graduate RAs’ employment status. The members are currently researching a specific question RAs might have regarding the new employment option with the goal of publishing a FAQ report for RAs when the change is introduced. Two new members will join the committee this month, but there is still room for Councilors from the Engineering, Applied Science, or the Faculty of Science to join.

Graduate Life Working Group

This group’s meeting last month was dedicated to orientation follow-up. The SGS mentioned that not all graduate coordinators responded to their request to participate in the SGS orientation at BioSci. We seconded their concern with regards to coordinators inviting us to give orientation talks. We proposed that next year a single registration page (online) be used to consolidate all orientation events for graduate students. The group felt this will pose several logistical hurdles but liked the idea and tasked the SGS with reporting back on how to proceed.

Our Executive Assistant brought up the feeling among some of our members that 8:30 – 10:30 is unfortunately early. Student Affairs and the SGS agreed to hold it from 9:30 – 11:30 next year.

We also discussed the orientation event for new students in January. The idea emerged that this could also serve as an event for returning students as well since many students could still not attend or might desire more

info from the groups they met in September. Along with Student Affairs, we are looking into holding this event in the JDUC.

Respectfully submitted,
Daniel Moore
VP Graduate

Human Resources

We've extended the date for applications for the Logistics Coordinator position with the Social team and are hoping to find a strong candidate through this search. We are also working to develop a number of contracts for new positions within the organization, and are slowly working, with the help of the QBLC, to ascertain how to structure employment contracts for our elected executive, as was mandated by Council at the last AGM.

Pursuant to this goal, and also to the increasingly apparent need within the SGPS to update our Human Resources Policies, with particular regard to harassment and human rights obligations, I am seeking members for the Human Resources Standing Committee to assist with these (rather large) projects.

Grad Club

The Grad Club continues to do well. We have opened discussion with some of our members who seek to discuss possibilities with regards to the Grad Club-SGPS relationship and I am very excited to see where this leads. A number of exciting events are upcoming, and I encourage you all to attend. They are interested in maintaining the spirit of cooperation established over the orientation week with our social team, and in particular I think we would benefit by making the ESS event, as well as the Mixer, annual events in order to continue developing our relationship with the Grad Club.

ESS

ESS elections were held and the executive seems fabulous. A lot of things to address this year, including most notably the senator issue and hopefully generally building our relationship and improving some of the infrastructure in place to aid with transitions in the future. We are looking to collapse the "B.Ed. Coordinator" position into another role as part of this change.

LSS

I have been pursuing a few initiatives both within and outside of the law school, and hope to have more to report on this in the coming months.

SONAD

SONAD will be meeting for the first time this year on the Wednesday after this report is due. I will provide any relevant updates to Council, though do not expect any of the business arising to be relevant.

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.

On this and any other number of relevant professional student issues, I will be regularly soliciting feedback. With this in mind, I strongly encourage our professional students to join, or encourage members of their departments to join, our Professional Student Standing Committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Shaughnessy Hawkins

Update to the Council: Queen's Solar Initiative

Background:

In November 2009 the SGPS Sustainability Standing Committee got involved with the Solar PV Initiative - along with the Dr. Pearce's Applied Sustainability Lab we were among the first to be part of this project and look into the opportunity to bring PV solar arrays to Queen's and take advantage of the Ontario feed-in-tariff program. We requested from the SGPS Council that the SGPS Sustainability Committee look into the original study done and report any findings and developments in a timely manner. The request was granted and since we have been involved with a variety of Queen's groups (AMS, MECH Queen's Applied Sustainability and Queen's backing action on climate change-QBACC) and as a member of Queen's Sustainability Advisory Committee we advertised and spurred the administration to give it serious consideration. We also established a facebook group with over 2,000 members and counting.

Update:

Needless to say our efforts were fruitful: last month Queen's issued a public RFI (request for proposals) which was looked by 60 solar firms and is currently issuing an RFP (for proposals) for about 15 of the companies that are serious contenders. Queen's is looking into maximizing the pv systems on campus and examining all 3 options: owning, leasing and a bit of both. The heritage buildings are the only ones excluded from the proposal. The renewable energy feed in tariff expires in October 2011.

Queen's Sustainability Advisory Committee

QSAC held its first meeting of the year this past month: Issues discussed included the solar pv updates, drafting of the QSAC's framework and terms of reference, Investing in energy savings, bottled-water ban and GHG reduction strategy. All of the above are progressing forward- special groups within the QSAC were formed to focus on particular issues such as the GHG reduction strategy (I am in that group), as well as a group looking into ways to promote/ encourage sustainability within the curriculum. More info will be available at the next meeting October 25th.

SGPS Standing Sustainability Committee + AMS Forums

Last week of September also saw first SGPS sustainability committee meeting as well as the AMS forum. Both meetings were very productive in terms of generating ideas for projects and collaboration. The SGPS meeting also had quite a turn-out with new members and volunteers which is great – hopefully we can form factions within the committee which will work on particular issues.

I have also created a google site for the SGPS Sustainability Committee accessible to all:

<https://sites.google.com/site/queenssgpssustainability/>

The AMS Sustainability forum was also productive: There were several sustainability related groups including Aaron Ball from the Sustainability Office. His office is working on a sustainability framework for the campus, so we can use the AMS forum to go over the draft and provide a collective feedback in terms of where we stand and where we would like to go.

In September, I worked with a number of groups and individuals to represent international graduate and professional students at Queen's. For example, I sit on the Equity team's committee and will help support and coordinate initiatives and events in this regard. I will work on an accent discrimination campaign as well as provide feedback on the Diversity and Equity Taskforce's plan of action. I will also work to promote equity events such as QCRED's upcoming orientation events. I have had the opportunity to engage with stakeholders at Queen's and in Kingston to better understand issues faced by international graduate and professional students and collaborate on initiatives that positively effect this group of students. These groups and individuals include: Student Affairs, the Equity Office, QUIC, and Immigrant Services Kingston and Area. The Kingston Multicultural Arts Festival was held on September 25th, hosted jointly by Immigrant Services Kingston and Area and Kingston Immigration Partnership, and this provided the perfect venue to reach out to international graduate and professional students in a community setting. I had the opportunity to attend the event with students and visit the event's many different Kingston-based cultural organizations and vendors. Sundae Sunday, hosted by the SGPS and Student Affairs, was a success. This event was held at the An Clachan residence buildings on Sunday, October 3rd. Through it, our aim was to connect domestic and international students as well as their families. Over 150 students were in attendance. I have also attended several sessions of the QUIC organized Socio-Cultural Competency Training program, developed to encourage international newcomers and help them to better understand major points of Canadian cultures. These sessions have been very informative and have given me the chance to meet with international graduate and professional students in a less academic setting. Within SGPS, I have helped to recreate the Society's display board and have made suggestions for the display cases that are housed in the JDUC and the Mackintosh Corry building. I believe that it is important to develop these communication pieces to inform international as well as domestic graduate and professional students about SGPS and what supports the Society offers. Within the next month I expect to continue outreach to students and lay ground in developing effective programs for international graduate and professional students at Queen's.

Respectfully submitted,
Becky Pero

Dear Councilors,

I have spent much of last month interviewing various individuals that deal regularly with international students. I have prepared a 10 page draft capturing my discussions. The report has identified 5 major issues facing international students (disadvantageous supervisory relations, limited financial and academic resources, UHIP, poor infrastructure, and cultural and language barriers). The report concludes with 17 short-term and long term recommendations on how to address these issues. It is currently being reviewed by pertinent circles for suggestions and improvements and criticism and will be submitted to Council for final approval in a timely manner.

Afterwards, I hope to have discussions on how to move implement these recommendations with the SGPS Executive and Queen's administration.

Respectfully submitted,
Amir Hossein Nosrat

SGPS Computer Network

- I continue my work to improve the internal network of the SGPS. I am working towards a fully closed and secure network. Currently important servers and computers that require sensitive access are secured.
- I am working on an automated backup service that will keep important backups both on and off-site. The biggest difficulty for this task is ensuring a fully secure transmission system for our data.
- I have been working with the tech people for our new copy/printing/scanning machine.
- The upgrades I added to our web-server allowed our website to function without service outages for the duration of September. There were multiple days when we experienced more than 30,000 page hits.

SGPS Website

- I am working with the Equity Team to incorporate a new equity section to our website.
- I continue to transition our site code to be compliant with HTML5. I will ensure browsers that don't support HTML5 still see our site as expected.
- I have completed the work necessary to ensure website compatibility with Apple mobile devices. I am working on the final details to ensure Android and Blackberry compatibility.

Communications

- The online optional fee opt-out server worked well this year. There were a pocket of students that experienced issues with the opt-out process. I am debriefing with Queen's IT to find the source of the problem so we can make sure it is corrected for next year.
- I am working to update the SGPS poster boards in the JDUC and Mac Corry.
- I am completing an update to our bylaws and policies. An updated version will be posted on our website in the near future.
- I have updated all of our job posting documents to conform with our bylaws and policies.
- I continue to work to update our current bursary application forms and to create new forms for bursaries that will be available in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,
Sean Richards - info@sgps.ca

Hello All,

We have had an amazing start to the year with our hugely successful orientation week. I would like to thank our SPGS staff and executives for all their support, and all our members for their participation during Orientation week. We are looking to build on this momentum with some great activities in October and the following months.

1) SPGS Freaky Fort Fright

The SGPS dares you to join us as we walk through the eerie gates of Fort Henry into the frightening experience of Fort Fright. This engaging haunted attraction is guaranteed to raise goose bumps with their interactive use of ghouls and monsters. Fort Fright represents one of the largest-scale, detailed event productions in eastern Ontario. Additionally, this event employs the use of over 50 movie styles, quality animatronics, dynamic special effects, intense sound and lighting and a large number of costumed animators. Therefore, it's safe to say that it will be a very entertaining night.

Date: Friday, October 22nd

Time: 7:00 pm- 9:30 pm

Place: Meet at the JDUC (at the corner of Union and University)

Price: \$ 10.00

N.B. Wear warm clothing, due to some of the attractions being outside

2) Halloween Movie Night

The SGPS is planning a classic Halloween movie marathon night. We're looking to play 2-3 movies depending on our members' interests. A ballot will determine the selection of the movie titles. Students can stop by the SGPS office and cast a vote for their favorite classic horror movie. The SGPS will be providing complementary snacks and drinks at the viewing.

Date: Wednesday, October 27th

Time: 6:30 pm- 10:30 pm

Place: SGPS Social Lounge (JDUC 237)

Price: FREE!!!!

N.B. Make sure you stop by the SGPS office and vote for you favorite movie. The winners will be announced at the beginning of the viewing.

3) Active Living Initiative

The social team and the SGPS are looking to support healthy and active living among our members. We understand that it's difficult sometimes as graduate and professional students to find the time and the motivation to lead a healthy active lifestyle. Thus, we are looking to facilitate healthy living through group activities. This will primarily be achieved through the promotion and the possible subsidizing of group activities. We are currently working on getting a reduced group rate from yoga studios and running room workshops. If you have any activities that you think would garner interest from our SGPS members, please do not hesitate to contact us at social@sgps.ca.

4) Volunteering for the Social Team

The SGSP Social Team is looking for student volunteers to help plan and execute events throughout the year. We are looking for outgoing individuals with a strong desire to improve the social lives of graduate and professional students. Having a broad base of volunteers will help us better address the social needs of all of our SGPS members. Additionally, it will provide us with an invaluable grass root medium to inform our members of the great SGPS events that will take place this year. Hence, it would be greatly appreciated if you can take the handouts (provided at the beginning of the meeting) and post them in a public lounge at your respective faculties.

Respectfully Submitted,

Abdullahi Abunafeesa
Social Commissioner
(social@sgps.ca)

Dear Councilors,

Council/Committee Meetings:

As per my Equity Commissioner duties, I've attended a number of different council, committee and board meetings this month. At the Queen's Day Care Board of Directors monthly meeting we discussed the instability of daycare attendance during the summer months and we planned for the annual Corn Roast. There was nothing significant to report in terms of SGPS equity-related issues. The Council on Employment Equity met on Wednesday September 29th. We reviewed the Queen's University Employment Equity Plan and established a method by which we will examine all of the items under review in the coming months. We also discussed how we might include an equity-related exit survey for all outgoing faculty and staff at Queen's. Currently there is no method to do this, but the CEE is working with Human Resources to distribute the survey with other exit documents.

We also had our first Equity Standing Committee meeting, chaired by myself. In this meeting we discussed our mandate and decided that we would hold one open forum discussion this semester, pertaining to a specific equity-related issue, and advertise the Commissioner and Coordinator emails for relating any other concerns. We also strengthened relationships with equity committee members and anti-oppression colleagues at Queen's, such as those with QGSA, QCRED, and Levana Gender Advocacy Group.

Events and Campaigns

With significant assistance from VP CCA Anne-Marie Grondin and Equity Coordinator Kalanthe Khaiat, the Equity Team represented the SGPS at the annual Educational Pow Wow on Saturday, September 25th. We distributed SGPS Good to Know booklets, promoted the Student Advisor program, and spoke about our commitment to the right to education and First Nations University.

I also attended the launch for the Journal of Critical Race Inquiry held on Queen's campus. This is a very exciting initiative that has resulted from the dedicated work of leading anti-oppression activists (both faculty and staff) at Queen's and will hopefully assist in making Queen's a Canadian leader in critical race studies.

Finally, we are in the initial stages of working on an Accent Discrimination campaign. Many graduate and professional students on campus are discriminated against because of accents that are not deemed 'Canadian' by many within the student body. We will work with the Human Rights Office to raise awareness of how these dominant ideas marginalize particular students on campus. If you're interested in participating in this campaign, please contact equity@sgps.ca and equityco@sgps.ca

Academic Planning and the Diversity and Equity Taskforce

We are also looking forward to meeting with Adnan Husain of the Diversity and Equity Taskforce and other student leadership (the Social Issues Commissioner of the AMS and the Rector) in the coming week to determine how we can support each other in our equity-related goals for the year. The Equity Team is thus preparing its 2010/2011 vision to present to these other anti-oppression factions on campus.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Prouse
Equity Commissioner

The Board of Trustees met on Friday, October 1. In addition to attending the Environment, Health and Safety Committee, of which I am a member, I attended the Board's Finance committee. I encourage SGPS members who have concerns related to Environment, Health and Safety to forward them to my attention at any time, and I will endeavour to follow up on them.

High importance items approved by the Board in this meeting include the approval of funds for the design of a dedicated teaching building, the approval of the petition to Parliament to amend the Charter in regards to the composition of the Board, which I have discussed at previous councils, and the approval of an additional 1.5 million dollars to the QUASR project.

The SPC has met twice since the last Council meeting. Our primary task has been to design an external survey that will provide quality data for the upcoming strategic plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Benjamin Grant

Hello SGPS Council!

Introduction

First off, let me introduce myself. My name is Eric Rapos and I am a first year Masters Student in the School of Computing. I will be one of the two representatives of the Graduate Computing Society (GCS) to the SGPS Council. Our second representative will be joining me at the Meeting, but at the time of writing this report, they are currently unknown.

GCS Executive 2010 – 2011

The following are the members of our executive for the current academic year:

President – Sunny Gupta

Vice President Finance – Karolina Zurowska

Vice President Operations – Dumitru Onceanu (Fall 2010) and Eric Rapos (Winter/Spring 2011)

They (we) will be busy working with our soon to be elected officers to make another great year for Computing Graduate Students.

GCS Officer Elections

Our Elections Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday October 6, 2010 at noon, so it will have likely happened by the time anyone gets this package, but the important point to note is that we will be electing our officer positions, which range from committee representatives, social officer, and our newly created Industry Liaison Officer. This is certainly an exciting time for us. If you would like to know about the results of our election they will likely be posted on our website, or you can email me, or ask me in person at Council.

QGCSC 2011

Initial planning is underway for the Queen's Graduate Computing Society Conference, and we are hoping to make this one just as successful, if not more, than last year's. I promise to keep you updated often with any news on the conference!

Closing

I look forward to spending the second Tuesday of each month with this fine group of people, and I am glad to be a part of such a body.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Rapos

Graduate Computing Society – SGPS Liaison Officer

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Dear Council Members,

This past month in my new role as Equity Coordinator has been very busy and fruitful, meeting with many of the committed anti-oppression organizations on campus and attending as many of their events as possible. The Equity Committee also held its first meeting, bringing together representatives from some of the social justice committed groups on campus. Through this body, the SGPS Equity team can keep informed of upcoming events to be held by other organizations, provide support to them when it is requested, and plan out our own initiatives addressing issues these other groups might not be covering. I would also like to remind Council that any interested SGPS members are invited to attend upcoming meetings of the Equity Committee (dates TBA), and that we would welcome new members to it. Through the most recent newsletter, we have also provided the SGPS membership with information about how to get in touch with the Equity Team (and through us, the Equity Committee), in order to address and advocate for any equity-related issues they feel should be brought to the attention of the Queen's administration and/or community.

Keeping both the SGPS membership and members of anti-oppression organizations on campus and in the Kingston community informed of what events and campaigns are being held by other groups (and when all of these projects are taking place) is a key part of my position. As such, my current major project is creating a calendar of equity-related events happening at Queen's and in Kingston, which will (initially) span the week after Thanksgiving to the end of term in December. Working version of this calendar will be ready in electronic format and on a wall calendar in the SGPS office by the end of Thanksgiving (that is to say, the day of Council meeting). We are looking forward to an Equity section being added to the SGPS website, where this calendar, along with a list of anti-oppression organizations and other equity resources will be easily accessible by all members and friends of the SGPS.

I am also developing a follow-up to last year's celebration of the 90th anniversary of Persons Day, initiated by the previous Equity Coordinator, Lara Szabo-Greisman. This is an important milestone date to mark, inasmuch as it is at once a celebration of social justice progress achieved in Canada and a reminder of the challenges still faced by those individuals not entirely treated as persons (legally or practically) within the current system. It is also an excellent opportunity to bring up questions surrounding the importance of our right to vote as a means to promote social change for the better. The event (as currently conceived) will be held around noon on Monday October 18th in the Robert Sutherland Room. I would appreciate any input regarding this event and/or feedback from it after the fact – if interested, please talk to me or contact me at equityco@sgps.ca.

Finally, I am working in partnership with the Equity Commissioner, Carolyn Prouse to develop an equity-focused response to the new academic planning document, "Imagining the Future." We have invited of the Equity Committee and SGPS members at large to send us any concerns they feel should be included in this response. At this time, the form our response will take has not been determined – but a meeting with the Diversity and Equity Taskforce (DET) on October 7th will give us a better sense of this, come Council Meeting.

I hope you all had a wonderful long weekend!
Respectfully submitted,
Kalanthe Khaiat
Equity Coordinator

Esteemed, honourable, and deeply attractive SGPS councillors:
I kneel humbly before you in need of your service.

The Academic plan is entering the 'how next' stage.

The long, roman road to this stage has involved incalculable introspection, diabolical deceptions, Gregarious get-togethers, positively Byzantine machinations, and of course all manner of voluptuous verbiage and protuberant perspicacity. Neverthemind, we find ourselves now at the very moment of inevitability - before the blink of an eye we'll be writing what will become guiding university curricular policy.

Last Spring, as many of you well know, there were fiercely articulated student preponderances about the prospect of a plan that, while purporting to protect the persistence of pre-eminent pedagogical, preparatory and proselytistic practices at this prominent Ivory Pillar, in actuality accelerated the abasement of our academic accreditations, aggravated the attrition of advantages by which we had accomplished the admiration of antecedent academicians, and of course advanced the annihilation of the attendant accoutrements to which we had become accustomed.

Anyway, due to those fears and their expression at the highest levels, we have navigated the academic planning process into a space that leaves us, I think, in quite a good position.

First, we have gotten the most we possibly could have out of the preliminary process. We have sustained pressure on the administration in order that the summer writing process not be responsible for producing a final academic plan, but instead became a protracted 'conversation' which would lead inevitably to a drafting process in which we could have a bigger hand. We have shifted the discourse around academic planning from one of 'do less with less' - i.e., a guiding document for budget cuts - to one that looks different. Now, the academic plan is being talked about at the highest levels as a document that will guide the fiscal planning at the University; not the other way around. In other words, the rhetoric recognizes that in response to resounding reactions from student representatives, real academic planning must register unrestricted curricular ambitions, rather than retire to the constraints of fiscal reality.

This has left us with a solid guiding document of broadly articulated and imagined 'goals', written by the six faculty members over the summer, which will then go into the Senate to be shaped into actual policy independent of administrative intervention. Thus, by pressuring the administration to adjust the planning process, we have succeeded in opening it up to ourselves - we can produce a final plan that looks the way we want it to look.

Needless to say, budget constraints and hard fiscal decisions will come down, either way. There is no way, through the use of internal policy alone, to resolve that reality. This may cast some doubts on how relevantly the resultant academic plan will resonate throughout the lived reality of institutioal practice. However and

nevertheless, the plan itself can be good, not simply respond to financial shortfalls.

In other words - we have reclaimed the academic plan to the realm of our imagination over what we would like Queen's to be; it remains to be seen how far we can push the reality to live up to that imagination, in the end. But this is where you start, no? easier to push upwards from a solid footing of constitutional conviction than from treading water in an abyss of institutional apathy.

What remains to be done is to lobby, advocate, machinate and push hard during the policy-writing stage to ensure that we use the framework we've been given to write a final document that reflects what we want to see for the university. For example, starting from the recommendation (contained in the academic writing team document) that inclusivity/equity/diversity be more holistically incorporated into the University, we can (if we are vigilant in getting our hands on the rest of the planning process) ensure that this translates into a final policy with a comprehensive, specific, targeted and ambitious set of prescriptions (rather than the relatively empty and vague declarations of principled support to which we are accustomed)

To that end, the following:

- 1) Heavy student involvement in SCAD (senate committee on academic development), which committee has been charged with dictating the next phase of the plan. Your excellent VP grad Daniel Moore, myself, A law school senator, a PhD student-at-large, and the AMS academic affairs commissioner all sit at that committee table and are busily orchestrating affairs to our inevitable advantage.
- 2) Voluminous and vociferous student input: as we enter the next stage, we will need everyone on their toes to deliver usable feedback on particular policy areas. Let's see a revival of the excitement we had last spring, now that we're positioned to lever our feedback on a real writing process.

Thank you,
Nick Day"

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