

Dear Council,

Since last we met I have been busy trying to promote the organization to the departments. I encountered some of you during that time and I thank you for allowing me to visit your departments. I even got to tour a lab. It was an interesting experience to see all of the buildings in which graduate students work. I hope to have more occasions to visit in the future. Meeting people face-to-face is a the sure way to promote the organization, and this strategy deserves a more thorough job then the rushed timeframe of the orientation period allows.

President's Office Hours

On that note, I have been continuing to hold office hours on both campuses. I need to promote especially the West Campus office hours more. But in any event, please feel free to visit me from 12-1 in room 236 in the JDUC on Tuesdays and from 11:30-1:30 in the Student Street of Duncan McArthur Hall on Wednesdays.

Fee Protocol

The Associate Dean of Student Affairs, the President of the AMS and I have realized that it will take longer to negotiate the Fee Protocol. Also at issue is the schedule for fee transfers from the University to the student societies, among other important logistical matters.

AMS/SGPS Shared Space Policy

SLC Council has passed it, and I include it (for your reference) in the appendix to this Council package. The VP Graduate and I met with the AMS President and VP University Affairs as the Shared Space Committee and allocated space in the Grey House. I am pleased to say that we were able to include most of the groups that have historically been in that location: OPRIG, the Levana Advocacy Centre, the Queen's Pride Project, and Queen's Helping Hands Association. The exceptions are Queen's Amnesty International and the Queen's Literacy Project, which were located in the structurally problematic attic of the Grey House, and the Education for Queer Issues Project, which the AMS preferred to allocate internally as an AMS committee. Nevertheless, I understand that the AMS has found space for those three groups in Mac-Brown Hall, the JDUC, and the Queen's Centre. I hope that everyone is pleased with the arrangement. As I write, the committee still has to decide on a space stewardship agreement that the groups would have to sign to ensure that they do not damage the property and so on. I hope we will even have a final version of this by the time Council meets.

The Initiative Campaign

In the last week of September, I had the great pleasure and honour to attend the launch events for the largest fundraising campaign (\$500 million) in Queen's history. Please visit <http://www.queensu.ca/initiative/> to see the priority goals and to watch the impressive launch video. The VP Professional and I got to meet many interesting alumni and to promote the activities of graduate and professional students. Congratulations to Queen's Advancement team for their hard work.

I am also now sitting on the Principal's Advisory Committee to select the new Dean of Arts and Science, who is coming to the end of his term. As always, I will not be able to discuss the deliberations of the committee, but please let me know if you have advice on the direction of the Faculty of Arts and Science.

Thanks, and I'll see you on the ninth!

Cha Gheill,

Matthew Scribner
President
president@sgps.ca

Dear SGPS Council Members and Members-At-Large,
September has been a busy month, with many meetings and commitments; here are some updates.

Graduate Studies Executive Council

The topic of OGS was discussed at the month's GSEC meeting. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) granted universities the authority to manage OGS at the university level. The MTCU has divided up the OGS funding for 3000 awards so that each eligible Ontario institution gets an allocation. The OGS allocation to Queen's for 2013-14 is 207 scholarships. Of those, 201 scholarships must be awarded to domestic students, and 6 may be awarded to international students. Universities will develop their own internal processes for application, review, adjudication and awarding OGS, effective for the 2013-14 competition. More details will follow.

Academic Affairs Standing Committee Meeting

The AASC Committee met in September to prepare a plan for the 2012-2013 academic year. Items that we hope to address this year include: T4s vs. T4As, departmental funding and external scholarships and paid work, intellectual property and publishing, and more.

Student Advisor Program

Our new Student Advisor is **David Thompson** and we are looking forward to working with him. For more information on the Student Advisor Program itself, please see: <http://www.sgps.ca/services/advisors.html>.

The Student Advisors will hold office hours on Tuesdays from 1:00pm-3:00pm 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.

Centre for Teaching and Learning

The CTL is now searching for new Director; Dr. Joy Mighty, who has been the Director of the CTL and a full Professor in the School of Business since 2003, has made a significant contribution to enhancing the quality of teaching and learning and promoting equity and diversity at Queen's University. Joy leaves Queen's to take up an appointment as the Associate Vice-President of Teaching and Learning at Carleton University. We welcome Denise Stockley as interim Director.

SGS-SGPS Meetings

We are currently working together to further solidify the Student Advisor Program, through a redesign of the Memorandum of Agreement. One issue that was addressed was a report produced by the U15 (The U15 is a group of 15 leading research-intensive universities in Canada) regarding Time to Completion rates of doctoral students. Although cost containment and access to the pursuit of a career are noted as benefits to students who complete on time, I believe that there are several downfalls to this philosophy. These include, primarily, a disregard for decreased funding and issues surrounding mental health. The SGS is open to further consultation with the graduate student population on this issue, and a Town Hall will be organized in the near future. I also attended the Ontario Council of Graduate Studies meeting in Toronto on September 28, and will write more about this my next report.

Fall Orientation

Thanks to everyone who helped make orientation a success!

Respectfully,

Becky Pero, VP Graduate, vpg@sgps.ca



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the VPP and Professional Student Committee
October 2012

Dear Friends,

The trees are changing colours, and the swamp plants have shrunk down from their summer bulk. There has not been a great deal of action in the world of the Professional students:

-The ESS has held their elections, and I've congratulated the new President. She'll be meeting with the SGPS executive this week to discuss the ESS fee slate, and other ESS related issues. Additionally, I've had excellent rapport with her and with the other education students so far, likely helped greatly by our President's keeping regular office hours on West Campus. I'll be taking the hours in the winter term, but he's doing them now, and it was his idea in the first place. I think it's a good one. I think they like it when we have a regular physical presence there.

-The Professional Students Standing Committee has been a bit difficult to round up, but is slowly coming together. Our first meeting will likely be before November Council (and General Meeting).

-Our relations with the Law Students are excellent. Cody Yorke, last year's VPP, had an initiative to allow clubs to ratify with the SGPS as well as with the LSS. This has proved to be huge for the Law students. They tend to not be involved much with the SGPS—many of the things the SGPS provides for Grad students are already provided within the Law Faculty itself—and the availability of more funding is a great thing for the SGPS to be providing for the Law students. Good one, Cody. As well, the LSS president, Rob Thompson, has a goal of getting law students more involved in the greater university and world, and he's finding the SGPS a good resource for that.

-There are three, perhaps soon to be four, work study positions available. Applications are coming in. Please encourage you and yours to peruse the job availability, and apply for jobs they may be interested in. It would be nice to have a broad application pool.

-I am constantly thankful for the work of our new EA, Anne Marie Grondin, without whom I would perish. We are currently working on an HR plan to streamline jobs within the SGPS, with ED Sean. The HR committee is a good one this year.

-Opt-out season is thankfully over, and the office staff have dealt with the (over one thousand!) emails and walk-ins with professionalism and patience. A really big thank you to them. I am delighted at how well our staff put students first.

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

Annie Clifford
VP Professional
vpp@sgps.ca

Dear SGPS Council,

Orientation week went by in a flash! Along with the other executives, I did numerous orientation talks at the various departments, introducing our new members to the SGPS: how we're structured, and what we do for them. I also attended a number of the orientation events organized by our fantastic social team.

Politically, the main thrust of the month has been the Ontario government's PSE discussion paper, which I touched upon in the last report. Together with the CFS, we attempted to hold two town hall events to solicit feedback on the paper from our members. I say 'attempted' because both of these events fizzled entirely.

This is likely due to numerous unexpected difficulties we encountered in getting the word out to people: extraordinary delays in getting a room approved by Event Services meant that posters couldn't go up until just a few days before the event (at least, if we wanted the posters to have the time and place); at the same time, new Student Life Centre policies regarding postering (with restrictions on who can poster, and an approval process that introduces an extra one-day delay) introduced an additional delay.

To add to this, there has been a disturbing pattern of posters being taken down after very short periods of time, and not just from bulletin boards with a time limit. Whether this is due to overzealous SLC removing posters they have decided are inappropriate, or students taking it into their own hands to remove posters advertising events they disagree with politically, is unknown at this point.

To deal at least partially with this outreach problem, future posters will likely include a QR code linking to a Facebook event page, in lieu of the location of the event.

Posters, however, are only part of a disturbing pattern of new policies that are making it increasingly difficult to organize and promote events on campus. During the summer, for instance, we were quite appalled to find that the university is now charging students for the use of rooms and lecture theatres. This additional cost, on top of the already exorbitant rate charged by Sodexo for catering (truly obscene sums considering the inedible fare they provide), is making it unreasonably difficult to host events on campus. During the summer, when we were attempting to promote a Solidarity Speaking Tour featuring students from Quebec, a delay was introduced by Campus Security who apparently now have the power to vet potentially 'controversial' events, all for our 'safety' of course.

Some of you may have been disappointed when, at the last minute, I cancelled the Round Table discussions planned for the Grad Club on Sept 26th. I apologize for this. As I had not been RSVP'd by anyone, I felt it more appropriate to postpone to a later date, likely towards the end of October. Next time I will try to organize things in a more rigorous and transparent fashion (i.e. using Facebook as well as word of mouth and email), so that all interested participants can have some idea of whether it is worth taking time out of their busy schedules (believe me ... I get it!) to attend these discussions.

An additional motivation to postpone the Round Table was that the AMS had organized a very last-minute Town Hall event, which I was invited to as a panel speaker on the day of: given the lack of success of our own Town Halls, it seemed important to participate. It was a great discussion: the other speakers were Anna Godlewska, historian and innovator in online education (a big focus of the discussion paper), and Peter Taylor, mathematician and education researcher. Anna raised concerns about the way in which online education would be implemented, noting in particular that doing it right, as an enhancement to the educational process, was just as, if not more, resource-intensive than educating the old-fashioned way i.e. this was not a valid means of employing fewer people in education. The AMS should release a report based on this town hall soon.

On September 14th, I attended a consultation on the MTCU Discussion Paper, organized by the Ministry, that brought together student representatives from across the province, including the CFS, OUSA, and the CSA. Predictably, the Minister, Glen Murray, was eager to avoid any discussion of tuition fees, post-residency fees, etc. Equally predictably, OUSA and CSA seemed only too happy to oblige. Fortunately CFS reps were there in force, making up well over half of the student attendees, and collectively were quite successful in ensuring that financial concerns were given far more prominence there than they were in the Discussion Paper. Other concerns that were voiced included issues with three year degrees, year-round education (which has implications for grad students and professors, who do most of their research and conference traveling during the summer), and teaching-only professor-ships. Whether the MTCU will accurately report the results of this consultation remains to be seen.

Some of you may have seen some Blue Lights campaign posters going up around campus. While this is an AMS initiative, one that their VP University Affairs has been pursuing with great enthusiasm, at least part of the motivation for this has been the high profile the Blue Lights game (and other activities aimed at earning 'discipline badges') have been given due to our efforts at SGPS and through the CFS. We are currently working together with both the AMS and several off-campus advocacy groups to extend and continue this campaign.

Upcoming Events

At the end of this week (Oct 4th-5th) I will attend the CFS-Ontario Executive Meeting in Toronto, which I will report on at the Council Meeting.

Next week (Oct 13th-14th) is the Province-wide 2012 Activist Assembly in Toronto, another CFS event. This will bring together several hundred student activists from across the province for an intensive two-day series of workshops on the student movement at home and abroad, along with strategies and tactics for campus mobilization. Several other Queen's students, including some undergrads, are already signed up to attend (you don't have to be a CFS member at all!) While registration will be closed by the time this goes out, I am considering holding a 'debriefing session' afterwards for those who are unable to attend, but still interested in the material.

Later in the month (Oct 26th-29th), PowerShift 2012 will happen. This is a fairly large (expected attendance ~1500), student-organized conference on issues of environmental and climate justice. While attendance is not free, it is quite inexpensive. I urge you to tell your departments about it. For more information, see our Newsletter, or simply go to <http://www.wearepowershift.ca/> .

Respectfully submitted,

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



Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Report of the VP Finance & Services
October 2012

Dear SGPS Council,

To comply with the recent request, I will endeavor to keep my report short. Over the last month I have been working on the following:

General

- *worked on fiscal year end for the 2011-12 year which ended August 31, 2012;
- *attended the Queen's Food Committee meeting;
- *attended the SLC (Student Life Centre) Council;

Health & Dental Opt-Outs

- spent the month responding to fee requests;
- have been responding to numerous requests to opt-out of health & dental plan;
- answering general questions in relation to fees & registration;
- following up on opt-outs and inconsistencies on behalf of members.

Finance & Services Committee

- adjudicating (along with the F&S Committee) the ESA's, Dental Bursaries, Grants and Club funding requests;
- preliminary research into the new International Student Bursary (as per MOA with PSAC);
- will be meeting with the committee the second week of October;
- completed the final Memorandum of Understanding with PSAC for the Health & Dental Plan;

Grad Club

- attended monthly meeting to discuss the upcoming year
- reminder all members of the Club get 10% off food;
- Upcoming: the SGPS will be sponsoring a round of trivia-specific details to follow.

Reminders:

- *If you have a Club, you need to re-ratify it for this year. Applications are found on the website.
- *There's room on the Finance & Services Committee where its not all about the money! Email speaker@sgps.ca to become part of the team.

Respectfully submitted,

Jillian Burford-Grinnell
VP Finance & Services
vpfs@sgps.ca

Committee Coordination

Most urgent committee vacancies have been filled, including on the Queen's Daycare Board, ITS, the Queen's Learning Commons Advisory Committee, and all Senate subcommittees – that's 13 Queen's committees, and 17 Senate subcommittees in total so far. We also have representation on 6 new committees. I notice that the Senate subcommittees seats for non-Society-specific "student" representatives are typically occupied by AMS members. Thus, AMS members tend to be somewhat better represented overall. One of my goals for the year is to level student representation on external committees. To do this, I will coordinate the proactive submission of nominations to the Senate Nominating Committee later this year. And, I have asked our esteemed President to sit on the Senate Nominating Committee to help adjudicate nominations (he graciously agreed – thanks, Matt). I would encourage Council to take a look at the various Senate subcommittees on the Secretariat website (<http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/committees.html>) over the next few months, and to let me know if you would like to put in your name for a nomination for next year.

Senate subcommittees aside, SGPS representatives are still needed for the following:

- Engineering & Applied Science Graduate Council (2 seats filled; 1 vacancy remaining). Must be a graduate student in Engineering or Applied Science. The Council oversees matters pertaining to graduate degrees in the Faculty.
- Science Graduate Council (1 seat filled; 1 vacancy remaining). Must be a PhD student enrolled in one of the Science graduate program of the Faculty of Arts & Science.
- Aboriginal Council (0 seats filled; 1 vacancy remaining). Must be an Aboriginal student and SGPS member.

Email me (ea@sgps.ca) if you or someone you know could help us fill these seats.

Human Resources

I met with several Commissioners and Coordinators to discuss year plans, which was extremely fruitful. We discussed overarching goals, strategies to meet them, and short- and long-term targets. We discussed what was realistic for the remainder of the year. We reviewed priorities for the Commissions, as well as for some of the Standing Committees. I find the year plan system, new this year, to be an extremely helpful tool to reach out to staff members. Next year, I recommend having meetings with all staff prior to their submission, and arranging for earlier submission (August Council, perhaps). I also helped Commissioners kick start monthly meetings with one another to ensure communication between the Social, Equity, International, and Communications teams. Additionally, Annie, Sean and I reviewed four work-study job advertisements. Three of these are currently posted, one will be ready to post soon. Annie and I also had a preliminary first review of my work in my new position last week.

Canadian Federation of Students

The semi-annual general meeting of the Canadian Federation of Students (National) will take place November 28 to December 1st in Ottawa. I am making it my personal mission to find an Aboriginal student representative for Aboriginal Caucus, which did not meet quorum at the last provincial meeting. Please, help me pass this message along. The Aboriginal Caucus of the CFS advocates for the interests of all Aboriginal students at the national and international levels; provides a forum for discussion of issues of concern to Aboriginal students; and represents the interests of Aboriginal students within the Canadian Federation of Students.

Committee to Commemorate December 6th

Volunteers needed to help organize the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, December 6th. Email ea@sgps.ca.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne-Marie Grondin
Executive Assistant
ea@sgps.ca

Dear SGPS Council,

I would first like to say a big thank-you to everybody who has sent in their committee preferences. I have been working with our wonderful Executive Assistant, Anne-Marie, to accommodate everyone. We will be providing a list of the committee members to the chairpersons, who will then be able to get in touch with each of their members.

I am happy to report that the Bylaw and Policy Revisions Standing Committee met twice this month to address motions 09/11/12:5 and 09/11/12:6 as tasked by Council at the September meeting. The Professional Students Standing Committee was also brought in when addressing motion 09/11/12:5.

Motion 10/01/12:5

As chair of the Bylaw and Policy Revisions Standing Committee I can report that we primarily recommend a re-tasking of the current Executive transition budget to support a salaried transition for the incoming Executive. Our complete recommendations are highlighted in Appendix 1.

Motion 10/01/12:6

As chair of the Bylaw and Policy Revisions Standing Committee we recommend that Council adopt changes in support of policy geared towards engaging Councilors and encouraging active participation. Specifically, we encourage a Council to consider the distinction between “adding” an item to the agenda and “moving/seconding” an item. Through allowing items to be “added” to the agenda by individuals we are greatly streamlining the process for Councilors, yet will still require moving and seconding at a Council meeting to be addressed. Complete changes as suggested can be seen in the October agenda.

Respectfully submitted,

James MacLeod
Speaker
speaker@sgps.ca

Here is a brief summary of the September Senate meeting, and committees that I'm on.

1. September Senate Meeting:

- The Provost was asked about his investigation into allegations of research misconduct by Queen's and HEQCO in relation to research carried out by Queen's graduate students Jennifer Massey and Sean Field under a contract between Queen's and HEQCO (see [OCUFA](#) and [May Senate Notes](#)). The Provost said that Ms. Massey had been advised about the implications of moral rights waivers by the Office of Research Services; that she had signed the waiver as well as a contract that obliged her to advise any co-researchers of the waiver; and that HEQCO reserved the rights to change the research report until it was "final" (and HEQCO decides what is "final"). The Provost did admit that Queen's staff had changed the report at HEQCO's request. However, the Provost said that he had not looked into the issue of academic integrity, since he felt that there had been no breach of academic integrity. A group of us (myself, some Faculty Senators, and some of the SGPS Executive) do not feel that this issue has been satisfactorily resolved, both in regards to the situation of Jennifer and Sean, and for the larger issue of the nature of research contracts between Queen's and other organizations. We will be meeting soon to discuss how we will pursue this issue.
- I raised a question about the procedures by which a student can file an allegation of a departure from academic integrity by a fellow student, faculty member, or Administrator (since these procedures do not seem to exist at the moment). The Provost said that he had asked Academic Integrity Advisor Jim Lee to speak with Terri Shearer, chair of the Senate Academic Procedures Committee, to investigate this problem and to propose a solution.

2. Graduate Studies Executive Council (GSEC): Becky Pero and I attended the GSEC meeting on September 20. Of relevance here:

- We were told about changes to the Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS) competition. This year, OGS will be managed by each university instead of by the Ontario Ministry. Each university will be allocated a certain number of OGS awards by the Ministry, and then the School of Graduate Studies will award a certain number of those to each unit, weighted by the number of eligible graduate students and past success in the OGS competition. Each unit will nominate their choices for OGS awards. The deadline for application will be March 1, 2013 or unit deadline, whichever is earlier. Each unit will be letting their graduate students know all of the details.
- Graduate student completion times have become an important issue within the Ministry and Ontario universities. Becky and I met with David Rappaport, Associate Dean in the School of Graduate Studies, to discuss how SGS can get student input into completion times. The SGS will be administering an anonymous survey later this fall, and there will be a Town Hall organized by the SGPS (likely in early November). Stay tuned for further details!

3. Academic Planning Task Force: I am the Graduate Student Representative on this group (<http://www.queensu.ca/saptf/>). The role of the Task Force is to carry forward the implementation of the new Queen's Academic Plan (approved by Senate in Nov 2011: <http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/index.html>). As recommended by last year's task force, we will be looking at online learning and faculty renewal; most of our time will be spent on various aspects of online learning. I would welcome graduate student input at any time.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terry Bridges
Graduate Student Senator
senator@sgps.ca

SGPS Computer Network

- I am very pleased to report that our servers and network handled the increased stress load that comes with September. We experience a much higher than usual volume of e-mail and our public webserver experiences a much higher load in September.
- I completed security updates on all our workstation machines.
- Network configurations for the upstairs offices has been verified. All is well with our second floor network.

SGPS Website

- The people section of our website is now totally up-to-date with bios and pics of our current Exec and Staff.
- Minor updates to the health and dental section of our site to reflect changes in the plan.
- Updates to the travel insurance section are complete (reflecting updated policy details and an updated policy number).
- The social events section of our site is updated for the upcoming Fort Fright night.
- I updated the stylesheets for the website to correct issues mapping the website to some handheld devices.

Communications

- I am working to improve transitional documents for staff.
- I continue to work with Queen's IT to work out kinks with mailing list services. I am making plans to ensure all mailing lists are kept up-to-date. This process has been heavily complicated by the new PeopleSoft system. I am hopeful to have this complete by December.
- I met with the communications group at the Office of the University Registrar. We continue to work together to make sure the right information is going out to our membership (especially at this very busy time of year).
- 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.
- The master media list is up-to-date. I am now working on locale specific media lists.
- I am working with our Equity Commissioner on some new forms and protocols to help a subsection of our membership.
- All of our internal mailing lists have been updated. This work is done in concert with our Executive Assistant.
- Our Council membership list and mailing list has undergone some significant changes due to the turnover over Councillors.

Respectfully submitted,
Sean Richards - info@sgps.ca

Following is a summary of what was done during the month of September:

Hello everyone! I am sure you have all had as busy a September as I have! Nice to get back into the swing of things, though ☺

During the month of September I have done the following:

The letter being prepared between myself and the Equity Office regarding the SGPS and the hiring of the 5 designated groups is ready and simply awaits final approval before being sent to all SGPS hires. Once this is done, SGPS hires will be given the opportunity to confidentially self-identify as one of the 5 designated groups. This information will only be seen by the Equity Office and will be used to make the SGPS aware of any of the groups which are underrepresented. This awareness can increase our efforts in the recruiting of underrepresented groups and can only lead to a more diverse and equitable environment overall.

I have also managed to set a date for the second round of Anti-Oppression training which will be taking place on October 26 from 9:30-4:30. This date seems to accommodate the majority of those people who still need to take this training. Positive space training, which is not mandatory, I will try to arrange for another time for those parties who would like to take it.

The long-awaited Disability Awareness Month meeting finally happened this month. The goal from the SGPS standpoint was to state the initiative that the SGPS would like to contribute to DAM. This will be the gathering of graduate students who are doing their research in the field of accessibilities or disabilities and to have them create a poster outlining their research. These posters will be displayed on a rotation around campus in order to help facilitate awareness of disability issues at Queen's and outside it. As well, the meeting provided many other great ideas about how to raise awareness on campus and the SGPS will be part of making these ideas come to fruition. The greatest outcome of the meeting was that the tensions that had been felt between some disability-involved groups around campus seem to have been resolved and there was a general feeling of hope and excitement about this year's DAM.

This month was the first Education Working Group meeting which is a committee set up to plan and implement the Ontario required training of Queen's staff on accessibility issues. This is a requirement set out in the AODA. Many people are already familiar with the two-hour online training that is now required of graduate students. This to-be-implemented training is of a similar nature but much more extensive. This committee has set timelines and guidelines and will be focused on the portion of training directed at access to education.

I attended as well the first Council for Employment Equity meeting in September. This council is planning to open its doors this year to the larger population at Queen's to try and let people know what we do at the University. This door-opening will be in the manner of mini information fairs, the first of which will be held in November. As part of the CEE, I will be responsible for the 'person-ing' of one of the information booths. When the information poster is ready I will send it to be included in the SGPS newsletter and will send it out to all SGPS staff as well.

That is the summary of all of my main September activities. Cheers!

Respectfully Submitted,

Robin Westland
Equity Commissioner
equity@sgps.ca

Dear SGPS Council Members,

This past month, the International Commission has been working on finalizing the Year Plan – which is included in the Council Package this month. Please do let us know if you have any specific comments about the projects the Commission is working on, or any suggestions about what we should be looking at.

There have been a few other tasks in addition to working on the year plan.

- The commissioner and the coordinator have both attended various QUIC orientation events.
- The coordinator has attended an ITS Committee meeting and a QUIC Council meeting
- The commissioner attended the first Senate Educational Equity Committee meeting of the academic year.
- The discussion with Stephanie Simpson about the Accent Discrimination Campaign is on-going. We're now waiting to hear about budgetary constraints and whether we can afford to hire an RA to administer the survey and analyse the data.
- After some discussion about the process of the appointment of the International Representative, there is now international representation on Council for the coming year.
- The discussion around the UHIP Bursary Committee has come to fruition – and is being addressed at Council this month. Here's some context for this item on the agenda which might help inform your vote.

The UHIP Bursary Committee aimed to have Queen's dedicate a pool of funds to pay for UHIP fees on behalf of international students. In the International Commissioner's report of Nov 2010, the phrase "minimum guarantee" is used with regards to this pool of funds. This is distinctly different from having a pool of emergency funds available should international students be in financial difficulty, in that it is intended to be a guaranteed amount provided every year to every international student. In order to lobby for this type of pool of funds to be made available, or, better yet, to have international students re-instated onto OHIP, there needs to be a wider understanding of UHIP's functioning and history on campus amongst Canadian Students, international students, and support staff, like Graduate Co-ordinators and Departmental Assistants. Currently, international students aren't being given enough or the right type of information to enable them to understand their own healthcare plans (in most cases – UHIP + Greenshield). Departmental support staff who are often the first people students go to for assistance also don't have this information, and Canadian students don't either. This is why the education / raising awareness campaign is so important. In other words, we're not abandoning this issue, we're redirecting the International Commission's focus.

- 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.

Warm Regards,

The SGPS International Team

Holly McIndoe
International Student Affairs Commissioner
international@sgps.ca

Kris Singh
International Student Affairs Coordinator
isc@sgps.ca

Greetings Council,

Not much to report this month. For those that weren't at the last Council Meeting for my verbal report, the ESS Elections ended successfully, without actually needing to go to Election, as the positions that were ran for were acclaimed. The acclaimed Exec ran a hiring for the remaining positions, and the ESS Council is well on their way to a successful year.

In regards to our elections, I presented a motion at the last Council Meeting that was met with mixed reviews, and referred to the B&P Committee. The Committee has reviewed the motion and the concerns and will be presenting a revised version for approval at this Council Meeting. I feel the revisions meet the concerns, and keep the original motives as the central focus.

Based on the outcomes of the resulting votes for these changes, I will begin finalizing Elections dates for this year, and planning advertising strategies with Sean.

As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Rapos
Chief Returning Officer
cro@sgps.ca