

Welcome to a new academic year. I can't wait to get down to work with Councilors old and new on what should be a really exciting year for the SGPS. I have high hopes for what we can achieve for graduate and professional students this year, and much of my planning for the year will be covered in my Year Plan, but let me get you caught up on some of what I've been up to over the last month.

### **Student Learning Experience Task Force**

I have been sitting on a group that is examining the best ways to enhance, support, and encourage positive and innovative teaching practice at Queen's. The group is looking at the best ways to coordinate or integrate all the teaching support services on campus (including the Library, The Centre for Teaching and Learning, The Writing Centre, and various functions of Queen's IT Services). The group is also looking at ways to encourage innovative, research-based, and effective teaching practice through the use of grants, the creation of more teaching support positions, and improved survey and statistical analysis, among other things. Among other things that I've been advocating for on a broader level, I've encouraged the Task Force to take seriously the contribution that graduate students can make to innovative teaching practice, by ensuring the final report proposes grants, training, and other teaching advancement opportunities directed specifically towards graduate students. As both teachers and students learning how to teach, the benefits double when graduate students are supported in their teaching.

I'm curious to know what Council thinks would help improve teaching in their departments, at both the graduate and undergraduate level? More specifically, what support, training, incentives, or other measures could help you improve the quality or innovation present in your teaching?

### **Council Working Group**

The Council Working Group, which is looking at ways to reform SGPS Council met again, and has created four categories that will guide our reform attempts: 1) improving Council attendance, 2) making Council debate more accessible, deliberative, and effective, 3) improving the committee system to drive more motions, initiatives, and bylaws, 4) working with local department student societies to improve their institutions and representation. The Working Group will be working through the fall and will propose all necessary bylaw and procedure changes during the Fall General Meeting that will revolve around the theme topic of Council reform. Most significantly, the Working Group is considering allowing Council motions to be considered in either the traditional form, under Robert's Rules of Order, or in a specially designed break-out-group deliberative setting.

I have two things to ask Council on this issue. First, if any of you are interested in sitting on the Working Group in order to take a closer look at how to improve the functions of Council, we will be requiring new members. Second, as I mentioned last week, if you have feedback on our priorities or any ideas on how to improve Council procedures and debate, by all means, get in touch with me.

### **Communications Strategy**

By next month's Council I will be proposing a bylaw change to create new coordinator positions to assist the SGPS in our communications and promotion. My feeling is that while the Executive Director does a great job in addressing our core communications functions, such as the creation of the newsletter and updating of the website, adding additional communications capacity could improve our ability to communicate with our membership, solicit opinion and feedback, and engage people in graduate and professional student issues on campus.

Included within this strategy will be a new video series highlighting SGPS services and activities, highlighting graduate student achievements, and also making light of our crazy lives as graduate students. Suggestions for what to focus on, and how best to make fun of graduate students will always be welcome.

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. I will also be regularly updating my President blog through the

year with more detailed issues and opinions. You can find that at: <http://iainreevesgps.wordpress.com>. As always, never hesitate to contact me with ideas or concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

Iain Reeve

President  
president@sgps.ca

Dear SGPS Council Members and Members-At-Large,

Welcome (back) to Council! I look forward to working with you over the next eight months. Please feel free to e-mail with any questions, comments or concerns ([vpg@sgps.ca](mailto:vpg@sgps.ca)); I would love to hear from you and/or your colleagues.

### **Student Advisor Program**

The Student Advisor Program is a free and confidential support service for graduate and professional students at Queen's. Advisors can help students navigate through a variety of academic and non-academic issues they may experience during their time at the university.

Fall **office hours** will be held on **Tuesdays from 3pm-5pm, Wednesdays from 10am-noon and Thursdays from 9am-11am** in **JDUC room 203**. To meet with an Advisor please contact them at [advisors@sgps.ca](mailto:advisors@sgps.ca). Please see the Advisor website for more information: <http://www.sgps.ca/services/advisors.html>

The Advisors' year plan appears in this Council package.

### **T4/T4A INFORMATION**

**YOUR TAXES. YOUR CHOICE.**

The SGPS has received information from Human Resources (HR) to suggest that the university is reviewing the possibility of removing CPP and EI contributions made by students prior to the T4A tax re-classification in January 2013. This action would greatly benefit the university as it is assumed that the contributions they made on behalf of student employees would be returned to the university bank account; however, this action does not necessarily advantage students in the same way. The SGPS Executive Assistant (EA) Anne-Marie Grondin, spoke with Trina McGarvey in HR, but did not receive much useful information. Anne-Marie and I intend to meet with university administrators for further clarification and to better understand possible benefits and shortcomings.

The SGPS is seeking a representative from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to facilitate a discussion at Council.

**For individuals and groups looking to reclassify under T4 status, you can do so by filling out the CRA's CPT1 form; please contact me at [vpg@sgps.ca](mailto:vpg@sgps.ca) for more information.**

### **Time-to-Completion**

**Effective September 2013 (for all incoming students), are the two time to completion policies established by the School of Graduate Studies in the winter of 2013; these policies are 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>. Please be aware that the SGPS is not in support of these policies in their current form.

**For more information on this issue and/or if you are interested in getting involved, please contact me at [vpg@sgps.ca](mailto:vpg@sgps.ca).**

### **OSAP**

Were you unable to apply for OSAP this year? Has your OSAP application been put on hold or restricted?

OSAP moved to an electronic application system approximately two years ago. OSAP is now able to access applicant's 2011 tax information, and the organization is suggesting that students who may have accidentally failed to update their information electronically have attempted to defraud the CRA. The expectation is that

large number of students will have their application either held or restricted for some period of time.

**Please contact Student Advisor David at [advisor3@sgps.ca](mailto:advisor3@sgps.ca) if you have questions and/or concerns about your own application.**

### **Graduate Councils and Committees**

All faculties at Queen's have a graduate council or committee that consist of faculty members from all departments within the faculty and a masters and doctoral student from the faculty. Each year the SGPS looks for members to sit on these councils and committees for a one-year term. If you are interested in being involved please contact Anne-Marie Grondin at [ea@sgps.ca](mailto:ea@sgps.ca).

Respectfully,

Becky Pero

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

Attached: Student Advisor year plan.

Dear Councilors,

Welcome to a new semester! For those of you I haven't met yet I look forward to sitting down and finding out what is going on your departments and how I can help.

I continue to mobilize around the issue of intellectual freedom at Queen's. I spent the summer meeting with students across the university and asking questions about how shifting trends at the provincial and federal level in funding and access to other resources (ex. PEARL, experimental lakes and other federal facilities) is affecting their research. I have also been researching how recent changes to provincial and federal legislation impact the quality and kinds of research that happen at Queen's. Much of this research has been aimed at discovering what kinds of research gets prioritized, what gets left behind, and what barriers exist to both conducting research and to publishing the findings.

I have used some of this information to design the workshops available to your departments on changing Tri-Council priorities and funding opportunities. I am looking forward to offering these on a department-by-department basis. Let me know and we can tailor this info specifically for your department and offer them free at a time that works for your members.

I also used some of this information to write an article on intellectual freedom, which was printed in a special joint task force issue of the 901 Bite, and made available to all new students at orientation. If you haven't received a copy and want to check it out let me know, I'd be happy to send it to you.

I am continuing to build and work with a joint task force on grad studies. There are a number of groups on campus whose aim is to improve grad student life. I have been working to get these groups together on a regular basis to share information and co-ordinate on projects to inform and assist our joint memberships.

There is a stand up for science rally being planned for September 16 from noon till one in front of Stauffer. This is a joint initiative on behalf of a number of organizations on Campus. At the time of writing this report we are still looking for speakers. If the current changes to science in Canada are of concern to you come and join us. If you have something to say on the matter- or you know someone who does, let me know.

I am the SGPS member for CFRC, our campus radio station. CFRC is the oldest radio station in the country and an institution within the community. Over the past couple of years the station has been facing a number of changes and challenges - and yet continues to hold strong. It can't do this without your support and it needs you this year more than ever. If you are interested in knowing more about CFRC and/or possibly volunteering some of your time, please contact me, or the station.

I need members for my committee! If you are interested in grassroots organizing both on campus and in the community join me! There is a lot we can do and I would love to work with you. Beyond that, like most of council, I have been busy with orientation. Once that is over I hope to continue getting to know the membership. I'd like to keep touring departments and find out what is happening with grad students across campus. I want to know what matters to you so I can work from there.

Thanks,

Meagan Crane

VP Campaigns and Community Affairs  
vpcca@sgps.ca

Welcome back!

Apologies for missing the last meeting due to unexpected travel changes from the SUDSummit in Vancouver. This summit provided an opportunity to discuss trends and issues in post-secondary education. Iain and I attended the Summit and were able to make connections with student societies at other institutions.

The budget as presented at the last meeting, requires some small tweaks (as you will see in the motions section on the agenda). Specifically, I am asking for Council to support a motion that brings the balance from the 2012-13 fiscal year forward to the current budget year. I will speak more to this at the meeting. Please feel free to email me if you are looking for more details.

Finally, most of August was spent preparing for our Orientation events. I want to take a moment to express my gratitude to all members of the SGPS team for their careful planning so our members can get to know each other and experience some of Kingston and Queen's. Special thanks to the social team for their commitment and planning-hope to see everyone out at all the events. September is a whirlwind of activity with many Orientation Welcome talks and events. Be sure to get involved.

In closing, I am looking forward to the upcoming year and welcome any ideas or suggestions on what services we should provide and how we can better meet the needs of our members.

**NOTE: Health and Dental OPT-OUTS MUST be done between September 9-20. There will be no exceptions!!!**

Respectfully submitted,

Jillian Burford-Grinnell

VP Finance and Services  
vpfs@sgps.ca

Hi SGPS Council,

And welcome! I'm the SGPS Executive Assistant – one of only three full-time (or in my case, not-quite-full-time) staff positions in our organization. I pursued graduate studies at Queen's for four years before putting my PhD on hold so that I could grow my savings a little (save—whaat? Yes, those). After spending two years as an elected member of the SGPS Executive, I was hired in my current role to assist the Executive. I work closely with all members of the Executive, whose mandate is to represent you on a full-time basis despite the fact that theirs are only part-time positions. Since I was hired last July, I helped develop our StudentSaver service; I assisted in the coordination of special events and media communications; I researched and developed materials on issues affecting you, such as the T4 and T4A tax status, student activity fees and Ministry protocols, time to completion policies, and fee withdrawal dates; I helped coordinate hiring and personnel evaluations, and developed ties with the work-study program; I helped develop new and existing outreach strategies by overseeing, for instance, orientation 'kits' (aka tote bags or 'swag'); and I continued developing and strengthening ties with our on- and off-campus partners, including PSAC 901, QUFA, OPIRG, Four Directions Aboriginal Student Center, the Human Rights and Equity offices, the SHRC, the Canadian Federation of Students, Sexual Assault Centre Kingston, and many others.

My report usually consists of a thorough overview of my activities over the last month. To this end, the present report can be summed up rather quickly, with one word, in fact: Orientation. But now that I have your attention..

**If you're looking for a job**, the SGPS hires on a fairly regular basis. Check out our website, [sgps.ca](http://sgps.ca), for details on the home page newsfeed. We will be posting an opening for the Equity Commissioner position this month. The SGPS also hires through the work-study program. If you are eligible for work-study, do look us up on the Career Services website. We continue to advertise work-study positions throughout the year.

**If you're looking to get involved**, we've got oodles for you to plug into. At the internal level, volunteer opportunities abound, from Sustainability, Equity, and Campaigns work to administrative work (e.g. Human Resources) to policy work (e.g. B&P Review Committee) to academic work (e.g. Academic Affairs or Professional Student Committees). There are also countless volunteer opportunities external to the SGPS. We are always looking for volunteers to represent SGPS members on Senate subcommittees, Faculty-specific Graduate Councils, Health and Occupational Safety committees, and the list goes on. Committees are a great way to buffer your administrative resume. They're also excellent spaces to learn about the University and current trends in post-secondary education. To this end, please pass along my contact to your department and to your colleagues. Anyone interested in getting involved can contact me at [ea@sgps.ca](mailto:ea@sgps.ca).

**If you don't have an ISIC card**, get one. They're free! Once your student card is validated, drop by our office (room 021 of the JDUC) and we will hook you up. Alternatively, if you want to avoid the next few weeks' lineups, you can get your ISICard at the Express Table on September 25 and 26. Look for details on our website, Facebook page, and Twitter this month. What's in it for you? Discounts in over 120 countries, including on traveling with Porter Airlines, Greyhound, and Via Rail (through the 'Youth' discount, even if you are over 26 years old – the Via website lies). Your ISICard will also grant you all kinds of neat discounts in Kingston, this thanks to our awesome StudentSaver Coordinators who completed their contracts at the end of August – a million thanks, Fan and Kimberley. You'll find an incomplete list of Kingston discounts in your 2013-14 Handbooks. For a complete list, check out our website: <http://www.sgps.ca/services/discounts.html> and/or follow the Twitter hashtag #50daysofStudentSaver.

**If you have questions**, quips, or if you feel like it would be comforting to know at least one more person on campus, drop in. I'm in Room 236 Mondays to Thursdays, unless otherwise engaged in an SGPS adventure. You have my email (above), and you'll find me on Twitter at @AMGrondin.

Respectfully submitted,  
Anne-Marie Grondin

Executive Assistant  
ea@sgps.ca

Hello Council,

Welcome back to another academic year! This month I will be submitting a brief report as the SGPS activities have been primarily focused on orientation.

This past month I have spoken with the Chair of the Queen's Board for orientation, which has been very helpful in terms of providing some framework around operations and logistics. A special meeting was also held this month (closed session) that was well attended by Trustees. As it stands, the next meeting is scheduled for the homecoming weekend on October 4<sup>th</sup> and October 5<sup>th</sup>. The Capital Assets and Finance Committee will also be meeting on October 4<sup>th</sup>.

The Council Working Group is still going strong. We will be meeting a number of times prior to the Fall GM where we hope to enact any necessary changes to the Bylaws and Policies. I would encourage any Councillors who are interested in becoming involved with this group to get in touch with either the President or myself. We would like to receive as much input as possible from Councillors.

This month is Council orientation, so if you have any burning questions please feel free to bring them along. As indicated in my emails, if you require a new tent card please drop me a line at [speaker@sgps.ca](mailto:speaker@sgps.ca) and I will have one prepared.

Respectfully submitted,

James MacLeod

Speaker & Trustee  
[speaker@sgps.ca](mailto:speaker@sgps.ca)

Orientation week is almost here! The Social Team has been hard at work to ensure that our 2013 Orientation is our best week yet! Expect more updates about orientation in the October council package.

We've been busy responding to our members' emails, making sure that all of the events are in order—which includes confirming numbers with our hosts (Portsmouth Harbour, Corn Maze, The Boiler Room, etc.), and getting our supplies ready to go! It is really shaping up to be a fantastic welcome (or welcome back!) to Kingston – we hope to see you there!

We're also looking forward to the end of September, when our SGPS Sports Hours! will start up again every week on Fridays from 5:30pm-7:00pm. Our first sport is floor hockey on Friday, September 27<sup>th</sup> in Bartlett Gym in the PEC. We at the SGPS like to encourage a healthy, active lifestyle – and what better way to be active than playing some non-competitive sports with your fellow SGPS members!? Our Athletics' coordinator has contacted the Facility Operations Assistant at the ARC to book our sports nights until mid-December. On those occasions when no gym space is available, we will try to offer some outdoor alternatives.

Also, we're in the process of organizing a post-Orientation mixer for the end of September. Sometimes new students and international students do not arrive in Kingston until after Orientation week – so we want to make sure that everybody gets to join in the fun!

We might be swamped during Orientation week (and a little bit exhausted afterwards), but we're always happy to answer any of your questions, listen to your suggestions, or just shoot the breeze at: [social@sgps.ca](mailto:social@sgps.ca).

Regards,

Cassandra Kuyvenhoven

Social Commissioner  
[social@sgps.ca](mailto:social@sgps.ca)

### SGPS Computer Network

- I have applied all necessary patches and updates to our servers and our office workstations.
- I continue to investigate the possibility of integrating the SGPS calendar service with the Queen's Exchange calendar so University staff have an easier time of seeing availability of SGPS Exec and Staff. This job isn't as simple as I had hoped it would be.

### SGPS Website

- I have completed all updates and improvements to the orientation section of our website. The site is now live for the 2013 orientation session:  
<http://www.sgps.ca/orientation>
- I have updated the opt-in form and pricing details for the 2013-2014 health and dental benefit year.
- I am working on the improved health and dental benefit booklet for the 2013-2014 benefit year. I expect to be able to post this in the next couple of weeks. I need to complete a verification step with our insurance broker to be extra sure all the information is accurate.
- I have completed work on the discount section of our website. The section now shows all the new (local) discounts available to our members. Please take a moment to check it out: <http://www.sgps.ca/services/discounts.html>
- Continual updates in the orientation section for registration information and updates when events are sold out.

### Communications

- Work has been completed on the 2013-2014 SGPS Handbook/Agenda/Dayplanner.
- Work has been completed on the 2013-2014 SGPS Orientation Week Survival Guide.
- I have been attending meetings with the Queen's Homecoming people in an effort to integrate SGPS members and past (graduated) SGPS members into the homecoming experience as it has traditionally been undergrad focussed. We have planned 2 great networking events for this year and are dedicated to continuing to improve homecoming for our members over the next few years.
- We have spent considerable time and effort over the last month organizing and preparing communications for our membership with respect to Orientation Week, opt-outs and generally anything to do with new student arrivals.

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

Hello Everyone!

Welcome back! I hope you are all well and have had a wonderful summer.

Summer for the Equity Commission has been largely focused on two things: The Good to Know document and the impending SEEC meeting in September. However, also during the summer the Equity Committee teamed up with Positive Space and several other organizations on campus to organize a Queen's group to walk in Gay Pride. That event was a success and solidified several relationships between the equity committee and other groups that will strengthen equity initiatives taken by the SGPS. Also, we hired a new coordinator, Colleen Webber. Colleen was a member of the Equity Standing Committee and the SGPS is lucky to have her. There is no doubt that she is going to be a wonderful addition to the Equity Team.

Regarding the Good to Know document, the Equity Commission retained assistance in helping create this document. It is essentially a one-stop shop for all equity programs, groups, information, volunteer opportunities, etc. The document is easily updated and will become part of the Equity Committee's yearly duties to keep current. I am going to discuss the possibility of having the Good to Know updating become part of the Equity Coordinator's tasks in the Bylaws and Policies. That means that the coordinator will be able to network easily, and will be an even better source of support to the Commissioner in the future. In other words, one of the best parts about this initiative is that it required contact with essentially every group on campus that is in any way affiliated with Equity. This means better relations overall and more connections for the SGPS in the equity community. Also, each group that is listed in the document was given the opportunity to write their own "blurb" and the document's link will be made available (once it is completely finished) for any other organization on campus to utilize. So the AMS can have a link to the Good to Know document on their website, for example. I am very excited about this project (started several years ago but not made simply enough for yearly use)!

Regarding the SEEC meeting, the intention is to bring to the attention of SEEC the fact that those who withdraw from their graduate programs for financial reasons are quite likely members of the 5 designated groups on campus; single mothers, for example, or those from low income families. I am going to suggest to SEEC that the committee gather numbers regarding who is withdrawing for financial reasons. How many students are working multiple jobs? How does this contribute to mental health issues? Is the limited funding and the 10 hour a week rule affecting certain departments over others? Are any of the 5 designated groups being affected more than members of non-designated groups? I want to try to sell all these things as being an education equity issue. I am thinking, as well, of bringing to the meeting an example of a graduate student budget for the last year: how much funding was received, how much rent cost, etc. My focus will always stay on the educational equity issues, but will point to the larger issues of insufficient graduate student funding.

So, that's about it on my end. Stay tuned!

Robin Westland

Equity Commissioner  
equity@sgps.ca

Hello Council,

The month of August was fairly quiet on the equity side of things. I have spent some time getting to know the responsibilities and priorities of this position, as well as the various committees and groups that the Equity Committee is involved with.

The focus of the upcoming month is the Senate Educational Equity Committee (SEEC) meeting. Robin and I are planning on discussing issues around funding for graduate students (or lack thereof) and its impact on students' success in graduate school. We hope SEEC will be receptive to exploring this issue, so you will likely hear more in the coming months.

I realize this report is brief, but as I said it was a quiet month. I will likely have more to report next month with summer over and everyone returning to a regular routine.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Webber

Equity Coordinator  
equityco@sgps.ca

Hello everyone,

Here is an update of my activities over the last month:

GreenFest/Sustainability Week (Sept. 30th – Oct. 4):

I am currently in the process of working with the Sustainability Office as well as the AMS in planning the 2nd Annual Sustainability Week here at Queen's. We are revamping it with new ideas and activities including the addition of a "Green Careers Forum" which I will be taking charge of with regards to planning. The Green Careers Forum will be an opportunity for the Queen's Community to become informed about different professions in the realm in sustainability with professionals from both in and outside of Kingston coming to participate in a panel discussion. We hope it will fill a noticeable knowledge gap here at Queen's regarding career development in the realm of sustainability. It will be held Oct. 4th from 1-3pm at the Speakers Corner in Stauffer Library.

SaveONEnergy Home Retrofits – Advertising:

Advertising for the SaveONEnergy program offered by Utilities Kingston is well underway. Earlier this month, the receptionists and some Execs (including myself) at the SGPS were trained regarding the program, its offerings as well as how to sign interested participants up at the SGPS office. We will be including the program's information material in the SGPS Orientation packages and SWAG bags. We will also be posting some of their material around different parts of the school and including posts for advertising via social media such as Twitter.

Energy Management in the SLC and JDUC:

Over the last 3 months, I have been working closely with the AMS Environment and Sustainability Commissioner as well as the Facilities Manager for the JDUC and SLC in order to create a strategic plan to measure, monitor and manage energy consumption in AMS/SGPS run facilities. We have created an Energy Policy for the JDUC and SLC which both the AMS and SGPS will agree to adhere to. We are now in the process of Energy Planning in which we will create a system by which we can reduce energy consumption within these facilities while keeping record of our progress over time. The processes that we are following are based off of the internationally accepted ISO 50001 standard.

Committee Meetings:

We held our second SGPS Sustainability Standing Committee Meeting on August 14th. We have begun brainstorming potential project ideas for the coming year and will continue our discussion in the upcoming meeting in September. In our next meeting, we will also begin the process of evaluating the current Ethical Procurement Policy that the SGPS has within its "Bylaws and Policies" document with the hope of finding a way to make this Policy more relevant and applicable. Furthermore, I foresee a new Sustainability Action Fund Application being evaluated and voted on at our next meeting as well.

That is everything for now.

Sincerely,

Gulaid A. Egeh

Sustainability Coordinator  
sustainability@sgps.ca