Dear Council:

It’s only been a couple weeks since our last Council meeting so there’s not a huge amount to report. Orientation is in full swing and incoming students seem keen to engage with the SGPS. Some of the broader goals I have for my position are outlined in my Year Plan, but here are some of the things that have come up over the last two weeks.

**Student Life Space Plan**

At its last meeting the Campus Planning Advisory Committee created a number of new subcommittees. One of them, the Student Life Space Plan Advisory Subcommittee, will be essentially working on a master plan for student life space. It will answer questions like how much space we need, the types of uses made of that space (group meetings, permanent offices, large spaces, etc) and create a framework that the university can use when making space and construction decisions to ensure that we retain and build upon the strong student life at Queen’s. I will be sitting on this committee on behalf of the SGPS. The framework for the committee is to have a proposed plan ready for report in Fall 2015 but with a substantial update for April 2015. I will be working to make sure that the plan reflects the unique student life needs of graduate and professional students.

**Property Standards Enforcement Report**

Over the summer Alia Tulloch, a student in the School of Urban Planning, has been working on a research report for the SGPS on proactive options to deal with property standards in the University District. The report is now complete. It is quite thorough and I hope all of you take the time to give it a read before the Council meeting. It’s my hope that this can serve as a framework for a strong discussion about maintaining and enforcing property standards in Kingston during this municipal election. The report succinctly lays out some of the advantages and costs associated with the two alternative approaches to property standards enforcement. Over the coming months I hope to have some fruitful discussions with the major candidates for mayor and city council in the near-university wards about making housing quality a priority for the next council term.

**SGPS Statement on the CFS Israel BDS Motion**

There has been concern expressed by some SGPS members about the process that led to the statement recently released on the SGPS website about boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) motion that was passed by the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario AGM in mid-August. I wanted to spend part of this report outlining the timeline of events so that members of Council can better understand why and how the Executive came to make a statement on the issue.

The CFS-O has two general meetings a year. The AGM takes place every August with a second GM held in January. Generally speaking it is the primary responsibility of the VP Campaigns and Community Affairs to attend CFS meetings on behalf of the SGPS but occasionally other Executive members will attend these conferences either in addition to or instead of the VPCCA. Generally speaking the SGPS Executive will attempt to consult with Council and the membership on upcoming resolutions at conferences to determine their desires. Sometimes because of the time of year or because a resolution is an emergency resolution submitted with notice, the SGPS Executive will have to exercise its judgment on how to vote or comment on a CFS resolution. Making those kinds of decisions in short timeframes is one of the important reasons why student governments have elected full-time executives.

For the CFS-O meeting held this past August, scheduling conflicts prevented any of the Executive members from attending the conference. We made some preliminary arrangements to proxy our vote to the Graduate Students Union at the University of Toronto but ultimately they did not get back to us in time to make that arrangement work. The CFS-O also never mailed us the Second Notice for the meeting, which is the notice that contains all the resolutions that have
been submitted for discussion and vote at the conference. As the CFS-O does not post their agendas online, the official notice is the only way to receive a copy of the agenda.

The week after the CFS-O AGM a news story was run in a few news outlets including the Globe and Mail about a resolution that was unanimously passed at the conference endorsing the use of BDS against Israel. As the SGPS did not have a delegate at the conference, we were not involved in making this decision. The Globe article was included in the university’s daily ‘Issues of Interest’ email that goes out to most of the senior administration. Beyond noting the resolution personally and discussing it in passing with the principal (simply to inform him that while the resolution was passed unanimously, the SGPS was not at the meeting and had not made any formal statement on the issue), I had no plans to make any kind of comment on the resolution in a formal capacity. There was no discussion about the article among the Executive. The CFS and CFS-O occasionally discuss political issues. Most of the time there’s no media reporting on these decisions. Moreover, because CFS and CFS-O decisions don’t tend to bind the actions of member locals, the SGPS generally makes no particular effort to comment on them. To put it simply, I intended to ignore the resolution and continue on with my job.

On August 25, Sean Richards, our Executive Director, received an email from the Queen’s Journal requesting comment on the CFS resolution. For the sake of full disclosure, I reproduce it below:

Hi,

We’re doing a story for the Journal about the Canadian Federation of Students’ unanimous vote to join the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement. We’d like to get Kevin’s perspective on this vote and why SGPS chose to vote in favor of BDS. My assistant news editor, Kylée Pedersen, is writing this story, and I’ve cc’ed her so that you can set up an interview. Thanks!

Chloe Sobel
News Editor
The Queen’s Journal

At this point we had not yet seen the text of the resolution. The evening I received the request I managed to get a copy of the agenda from an Executive at another Local and verified that there was no motion on Israel-Palestine. I also checked the CFS-O by-laws to determine the circumstances under which a resolution could be debated without notice.

The Executive had a meeting scheduled the late morning of that day (the 26th) and that morning we also received a request from the Kingston Whig-Standard to do an interview with me on the topic. The Whig is a daily newspaper that runs on a tighter deadline than the Journal so we would not have much time to formulate a response. At this point I contacted the CFS-O office to make them aware that a story was happening and to request a copy of the emergency resolution that was passed so we could comment on it intelligently. I put the topic of the interview request on the Executive meeting agenda. In attendance at the meeting was the entire Executive except Patrick Gajos, our VP Finance and Services. As is normally the case at Executive meetings, our discussion was largely conversational without any formal rules of procedure.

At the meeting we discussed whether we should comment on the issue at all, and if so whether we should do so through an actual interview or a written statement and what we would want to say. The Executive came to a consensus that we needed to make some kind of comment. The Journal was under the misapprehension that we voted in favour of the resolution and if we did not comment they would likely run with that false information. We were also aware that if I spoke to the Journal and simply said that we were not at the meeting, they would likely ask me whether we had a similar position on the conflict to the CFS-O and how we would have voted on the resolution. We felt that in such circumstances we did not have the mandate to use the voice of SGPS members to comment on a foreign policy issue, whether directly in our own right or indirectly through the CFS.

At the meeting we decided that we would draft up a statement to release to the Journal and Whig and based on their response to the statement we could decide whether or not to do a further interview. Because news outlets can choose
what portions of a statement to put in an article, we felt that it would be best to put the statement on our website so that our membership could see the statement in its totality.

There was no formal resolution or vote taken at the meeting, but we were all in favour of the course to take. As ‘action items’ the Executive tasked me with drafting a statement for release to the media and on our website. I would circulate the draft statement to the Executive and once everyone gave a go-ahead we would email it and post it online. Andria Mahon, our Executive Assistant, was tasked with contacting the Journal to get more information about the scope of the article.

After the meeting Andria contacted me at around 1:30 PM while I was at lunch to tell me that the Whig needed comment by 4PM. I typed up a draft statement on my BlackBerry and had it circulated to the rest of the Executive at 2:04 PM. Over the next hour other members of the Executive indicated they were fine with the wording and Andria emailed it out to the Whig just after 3PM. The other members of the Executive emailed to say they were fine with the wording at which point Andria emailed it out to the Journal and Whig. Later that evening Sean put the statement up on our website. The statement used my name because it is general practice when dealing with the media that any comment put in quotation marks has to be attributable to an individual rather than a group. As President, I am the chief spokesperson for the SGPS and we felt it appropriate to have the statement under my name.

The Whig and Journal requested more comment in an interview and the Whig pushed the article back a day. I spoke with the Whig on Wednesday, August 27 and the Journal on Thursday, August 28. As of this writing the Journal has not yet published their article.

I realize this is much more in-depth than Executive Reports normally go on these issues but as there have been some questions raised about the process used to make this decision I thought it was important to be absolutely clear on what happened and why we acted as we did. In hindsight there may be some things we could have tweaked about our statement, but we had a period of a few hours to make a comment or risk having the media misrepresent our position and upset a significant portion of our membership. As executives, it is our job to make snap decisions where they are required and in this case we were dealing with a highly charged political issue and there was no decision we could have made that would have pleased everyone. Plus, we were dealing with the risk that national news outlets like the National Post, Sun News or Maclean’s could seize on a poorly worded statement to run a national story about the CFS’s relationship with its locals. As I said in our statement, our main focus is on the issues each of us ran on during the last SGPS election and we did not want the distraction or headache of getting dragged into a national media circus. Other members of the SGPS may have made a different decision if they were in our shoes, but I firmly believe that we acted reasonably under the circumstances and continue to act reasonably by avoiding comment on an issue that is likely to cause deep divisions in our membership.

Should any of you or your constituents have questions about the process or our statement, the other members of the Executive and I are happy to meet with any SGPS members or answer any of your questions at Council. I am also happy, as ever, to answer any questions you may have by email.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Wiener
President
president@sgps.ca
Dear Members of Council,

I do not have much to report on in the two weeks since our last Council meeting on 19 August 2014. I had taken a well-deserved break from student governance for about a week to prepare for teaching my course in the Department of History this fall.

**Student Advisor Program**

All four of our Student Advisors are now fully trained and available to assist graduate and professional students. Their office hours this Fall Term are:

- **Mondays** 10:00 am - 12:00 noon
- **Tuesdays** 1:30 - 3:30 pm
- **Wednesdays** 10:00 am - 12:00 noon
- **Thursdays** 3:00 - 5:00 pm

SGPS members can reach the Student Advisors by emailing advisors@sgps.ca

**VPG Activities Summary**

Since our last council meeting, I have still been working with the President on the initiative we put forward at August Council regarding the election of grad representatives to Faculty Councils and Committees. As well, with our Executive Assistant, Andria Mahon’s help, I am booked and well prepared to do a number of departmental visits during Orientation Week, which will occupy the bulk of my time between now and our September Council meeting. I have begun the task of reading through the nomination packages for Prizes for Excellence in Research in preparation for the first SARC meeting of the year on 9 September. The Executive also met on Labour Day to discuss our portfolios and undertake year-planning. Lastly, I also met with Ashley Vanstone, the embedded councilor at SGS, to discuss his office’s mandate and our Student Advisor Program.

**Upcoming in September**

September I expect to be a very busy month with many Orientation Week social events and departmental visits. As well, the committees I sit on are getting back into the swing of things including Senate Residence Committee, Senate Advisory Research Committee, the Arts and Science Joint Health and Safety Committee, the Graduate Student Life Advisory Group, and GSEC. Perhaps of interest to SGPS members who are also TAs or TFs, the PSAC 901 Fall General Meeting has tentatively been set for 18 September and there are a number of positions to run for on the executive committee. Of interest to work-study eligible SGPS members, we have also created a Research Assistant to the VPG position. The application deadline is 12 September and the details are available on the Career Services Website under work-study positions. The Job ID 61841. Please do apply!

Respectfully Submitted,

Dinah Jansen
Vice President Graduate
SGPS
Dear SGPS Council Members,

Not much to report since council two weeks ago. For those who missed August council, I invite you to take a look back at my report for an overview of what we were working on this summer.

I am excited to announce that the SGPS has sponsored a new music festival on campus this fall, called QPOP. This festival is designed to focus on Canadian talent and campus venues. There will be events at the Grad Club, Clark Hall, Underground, and Common Ground. The line-up includes July Talk, The Darcy’s, Zeus, Rich Aucoin, P.S. I Love You and Matthew Barber. More bands to be announced soon! The SGPS contributed $5000 and we negotiated for preferred payback from ticket sales, meaning there is very little risk for the SGPS. This festival will be a great event and a much needed boost for our campus pub scene. Please check out http://myams.org/news/introducing-qpop-music-festival.aspx for full details.

We have been busy prepping our Orientation schedules, giving short info sessions to new grad and professional students. We will also be attending social events where possible, though the events are fully sold out with the exception of the semi-formal. Kudos to the Social Commission for the excellent planning and execution of O-week so far!

We also have our year plans finalized and attached. The Executive met to discuss and fine-tune these so that we all have an idea of the goals for the year. Some of these are already completed and others are ongoing. I will be happy to go over this in more detail at council.

Yours truly,

Thompson Hamilton
Vice-President Professional
vpp@sgps.ca
Dear Council,

Even though it's only been a few weeks since we'd last met, with orientation week happening all around us this has been an exceptionally busy time for us.

**Orientation Week**
My orientation week talks are progressing well. I've already spoken with the new Master's cohort in Economics, and will continue on to speak with Cultural Studies, Religious Studies, Neuroscience, English, and Geography. I likewise hope to participate in many of the social events as a means of fostering a sense of community with our new and incoming grads and professionals; these include but are not limited to the SGPS boat cruise, our annual semi-formal dance, and the corn maize (ha!) on Wolfe Island.

**Meeting with MPP Sophie Kiwala**
The president and myself met with recently elected MPP Sophie Kiwala to discuss many issues, foremost of which was the ongoing T4/T4A dispute involving Research Assistantships (RAs) at Queen's. Generally speaking the decision to switch the majority of RAs to fellowship income, which is reported on a T4A, strongly harms our community of international students by limiting their ability to apply for permanent residence due to the T4A not having the same weight as the standard T4 when Citizenship and Immigration Canada considers applicants. MPP Kiwala was very interested in these recent developments and asked us to provide her with more information that she might share with her colleagues once provincial legislature reconvenes later this fall.

I do not feel that I'm stepping out of line when I say that it is the position of this executive that it is in the best interest of our academic, local, and international communities that these talented, and hard-working graduate students be eligible to remain in Canada permanently without falling prey to an unfortunate pit-fall of the Canadian tax code.

**United Way Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington (KFL&A)**
In hopes of fostering better community relations with groups and other charities designed to ease and potentially offset some of the difficulties and inequities of life, I met with United Way KFL&A last week. Our first meeting saw myself and other university and community stakeholders outlining some initiatives that we'd like to undertake over the year, as well as giving and community goals. While I know that many grads and professionals (myself included) may not be able to contribute financially, I am hoping that establishing these inroads will lead to other opportunities for us to demonstrate that we're capable, talented, and committed individuals who take seriously the issues negatively affecting our communities.

**Outdoor Arts Advisory Committee**
As many of you know, one of my campaign promises was to ensure that Queen's cultural and artistic communities were protected, especially in an age of ever-shrinking budgets. So when an opportunity to join this committee came up, I naturally jumped on it. A subset of the Campus Planning Advisory Committee, the Outdoor Arts Advisory Committee will help to improve the quality of outdoor art on campus, encourage awareness of the arts, and ensure that the campus grounds may showcase a rich display of artwork for the aesthetic and cultural benefit of students, faculty, staff, and visitors alike.
Dear SGPS Council Members,

For those who were unable to attend the August council meeting, I presented the annual SGPS budget. I am pleased to say the budget passed first reading and I will give another presentation with highlights tonight. The full document is posted on our website at sgps.ca/council/documents.

The exec and staff have been planning orientation activities and we are very excited to welcome incoming grad and professional students at a number of events, classroom talks and other activities. Everyone on the team has been dedicating a lot of their time and effort to make this orientation a memorable one.

Our new health and dental plan is now officially active. We have a wealth of literature on our website and at our front office describing the new plan. Please feel free to come by or direct your constituents to us on the matter and we are more than ready to answer any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Gajos
VP Finance and Services
Society of Graduate and Professional Students
Dear SGPS Council Members,

Welcome back everyone! I hope you all had a fantastic summer.

For those of you who do not know me, my name is Andria Mahon and I am the Executive Assistant to the SGPS. I have been in my position since April 1st, taking over for my predecessor Anne-Marie Grondin. I graduated from Queen’s in November 2013 with my Masters in Gender Studies so I have the lived experience of being a grad student at Queen’s and now I have the experience of being part of the administrative machine that aids graduate and professional students. If ever have any questions about getting involved with the SGPS or any questions in general, feel free to email me and I will be glad to help!

As my last report was only submitted three weeks ago, I can sum everything up in one word – Orientation. At the time of writing, O-Week is on the horizon and we are all very excited about meeting our incoming members. I am personally looking forward to connecting with everyone at the SGS Info Fair, the Faculty of Education Opening Day BBQ, and New Student Card Day. I would like to publically thank the volunteers from the Sexual Health Resource Centre (SHRC) for helping us pack our awesome swag bags!

Employment Opportunities
Our Fall/Winter Work Study Positions are live on the Career Services website. If you are Work Study eligible, we strongly encourage you to apply.
If you are not Work Study eligible, do not fret! Keep an eye on upcoming SGPS Newsletters for information about applying for our Commissioner and Coordinator positions. The hiring process begins in October with training and transition taking place in November.

Volunteer Opportunities
As always our SGPS committees need YOU! Committees provide a great way to socialize while building marketable skills. Time commitments and requirements vary based on committee, so please feel free to check out this list on our website and contact me to get involved!
There are also countless committee volunteer opportunities that are external to the SGPS. Whether you are interested in art installations or academic policy, we can certainly find an external committee for you! Please reach out to me if you are interested in serving on an external committee or if you are currently serving on one.

Departmental Representatives to SGPS Council
I am looking to connect with those that will be serving as on SGPS Council for the 2014-15 academic year. Please give me a shout and say hi!

Respectfully submitted,

Andria Mahon
Executive Assistant
eam@sgps.ca
Dear Council,

Big thanks to Thompson Hamilton for chairing the May and August council meetings, and to Stephanie Hodge for taking the minutes at the August council meeting.

Jon Samosh, our Deputy Speaker, is not able to take council meeting minutes in the fall semester due to conflicts with a mandatory class. If you know any SGPS member, who also happens to be a competent minutes taker and is interested in filling him in for a meeting or two, Jon can be reached at deputyspeaker@sgps.ca

Kind regards,

Max Ma
B.A. (Hons.), J.D. Candidate 2015
Speaker (speaker@sgps.ca)
Greetings Council,

I have returned to Campus, and look forward to working with you all at Council for the rest of the year.

That being said, with last month’s Council being late in the month, and this one being early in the month, combined with the fact that neither GSEC nor Senate have met in the interim, I actually don’t have anything to report this month.

However, if you missed my report from last month, I encourage you to read it, as it contains details about the May Senate and GSEC Meetings.

See you all at Council!

Respectfully submitted,
Eric Rapos
Graduate Student Senator
senator@sgps.ca
Hello Council,

Please be advised that the Board of Trustees will be meeting on the 19th and 20th of September. The Capital Assets and Finance Committee will be meeting on the 19th of September. I will be able to provide an update to Council once these meetings have taken place.

Respectfully submitted,

James MacLeod

Graduate Trustee

trustee@sgps.ca
A smaller than usual amount to report as the window between August and September Council was short and the bulk of what happened in the last 2 weeks relates to preparation and execution of orientation events and activities.

SGPS Computer Network
- I have completed the work required to give wireless access to the Student Advisors in their offices. I will complete the networking printer setup asap.
- I continue to hunt an annoying bug in our wiki system that is preventing name updates. This is not a serious issue but rather one that is inconvenient and annoying. The wiki continues to be usable, people simply see the wrong name on their profile.

SGPS Website
- I have completed all updates and improvements to the orientation section of our website. The site is now live for the 2014 orientation session: [http://www.sgps.ca/orientation](http://www.sgps.ca/orientation)
- I have been working with our VP Graduate and a Work-Study student implementing new and improved information on the Student Advisor section of our website. We are very close to posting this great new resource.

Communications
- The vast majority of time since my last report was spent organizing logistics and executing orientation events and activities. We moved a great deal of swag and materials to the various events and activities around campus. We met a great deal of our new and returning students and answered questions and provided information.
- Ian is writing and animating a short informational video about the structure and activities of the SGPS, as well as promotional videos to spread awareness of the SGPS Student Advisor program and the Fall GM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sean Richards - info@sgps.ca
Hello,

There are not many significant updates since last month’s report. A lot of the projects and commitments that were listed in the prior report (the Energy Management Committee, the Sustainability Procurement Working Group and Queen’s Sustainability Week) have continued on at a steady pace.

Specifically, the Sustainability Careers Workshop event that is the sole responsibility of the SGPS Sustainability Committee, has confirmed details of the event more precisely. This event will take place on Thursday October 9th 2014 from 1:00-3:00 pm. Three of the four panel speakers have RSVP’d to the event, while we are still waiting reply from the last potential panel member. Speakers Corner is Stauffer library has been booked for this event and I will soon be applying to the SGPS Sustainability Action Fund for $168.50 to cover the cost of coffee and snacks.

I have begun to recruit new committee members for the SGPS Sustainability Committee through personal contacts, managing to already solidify twelve committee members. I plan on contacting more potential committee members through various list serves in the next week or so to reach a greater audience.
Update – Summer Work

I spent this summer predominantly in Ottawa with bi-weekly stints in Kingston. I was asked to co-chair the planning and oversight committee for the AMS’s ReUnion Street Festival that is going to occur on Homecoming weekend with VP Advancement, Tom Harris, and we have been very pleased with the work put in thus far. Full credit to the AMS Executive for putting this together and all the progress made thus far, and to our committee of experts in their various departments for their invaluable wisdom and contributions. There is still much to be done, but I believe this addition to Homecoming programming will be a great thing for Queen’s moving forward. The opportunity for students and alumni to connect with each other on the Saturday night of Homecoming weekend has never been so accessible and is one that all students, inclusive of the SGPS, can and should enjoy.

I will also mention that I have been consistently in touch with the Principal, the Provost, and the Dean of Student Affairs to monitor the status of enrolment. I have been very pleased with how accessible and forthcoming the administration has been with myself and the student body throughout this process. There are definite student concerns that remain that relate to student services, spaces in residence, general traffic on campus, etc., but I have confidence that the administration will monitor these issues and work to remedy issues that arise. I look forward to working with the administration to determine alternate ways of generating revenue moving forward rather than having enrolment growth be the only option.

New Projects

I have undertaken a few new projects that I’ll bring briefly to your attention. Firstly, I am in the midst of creating an award will serve to recognize outstanding work in the area of mental health and wellness at Queen's. This is an initiative that fills a void in student awards that currently exists at Queen's, and will hopefully serve to solidify the commitment of the Rector and Queen's students to being leaders in mental health support, resources, and activism on an ongoing basis. I will be working with different campus leaders who work in the area of mental health and wellness as I continue developing the award. I hope to have it implemented this year. If any of you are interested in working on this project with me, please don’t hesitate to reach out.

I have also launched the “Rector’s Blog” on the office’s website. If you’re interested in checking out what it looks like, you can do so here: http://queensu.ca/rector/blog.html

This is one of the ways in my platform that I vowed to create the office more accessible. Ideally, it will be an effective way to engage the student body on important issues happening at the University. Additionally, I have revamped the entire Rector website. One change, for example, is
that now all reports and speeches I give are readily accessible to anyone who is interested in reading them.

Lastly, I hope to work with Lon Knox and his team at the Secretariat over the next several months to establish a clear job policy document for the position of Rector. I’ll be putting together a comprehensive list of official duties and responsibilities and further legitimizing/formalizing the office and the job in writing. I hope to establish this document as a stand-alone document and to remove the Rector terms of reference from the AMS Constitution in which it currently resides. I will also be updating and formalizing the terms of reference for the Tricolour Award in a similar fashion.

**Concluding Remarks**

I am very excited to follow through on my promise to further engage my graduate and professional constituents. Please don’t be a stranger – stop by and say hi!