

SGPS Student Advisor Program
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March 2007

Student Advisor Winter Term Report

This report includes a summary of my activities as an Advisor for the Winter Term (to date) of 2007.

Email Exchanges:

There have been over 700 between January and mid-March, with most taking place late February and early March. The bulk of these pertain to a recent case, with an additional number being requests for information or direction.

Cases and Support

Cases continue to consist entirely of poor working relationships between accented/international graduate students and their supervisors, administration or other faculty. Overall, major files (academic appeals and serious ongoing supervisor conflicts) are fewer than last year thus far. The cases of a serious nature that I have dealt with from the School of Business have been resolved either by the end of the Fall semester or this Winter in the students' favour.

Time

The most time-consuming event of this term for me has been an academic dispute in the Chemistry Department.

- Meetings with the chemistry department, the student's legal counsel, the SGSR, the SGPS Executive, with the advisors, and office hours have amounted to 45 hours over January, February, and the first half of March (10 weeks).
- E-mail work and researching information have amounted to 70 hours over January, February, and the first half of March.
- Promotional meetings with various graduate student societies, work on our new posters, and contribution to the MOA and our complaint policy have amounted to 15 hours over January, February, and the first half of March. In total then, I have worked 13 hours per week thus far his winter

At this point, we advisors have decided that it will be in the best interests of our office for me to spend time focusing more on policy development, advertising, and raising the office profile across campus, awakening our currently dormant CAAD campaign, as well

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as dealing with short cases, and assisting the other advisors in their cases. This will give the other advisors an opportunity to learn more about the experience of working on difficult cases, and may set the SGSR's mind at rest about the appearance of advisor personality affecting the process of difficult cases, where it may be discovered that difficult cases by their nature can produce such an appearance.

Promotion and Profile

In January, we took part in the International Student orientation, welcoming students to Canada, Kingston and Queen's, informing them about the Student Advisor Program, and delivering a brief presentation on the academic culture at Queen's.

Also in January, I took the lead in designing a new series of posters (attached) to draw graduate students' attention to our office.

I have met with three graduate student societies in order to increase awareness about our office's functions.

Recommendations

We concluded last year that each case should be handled by an advisor so that one person is familiar with all aspects of a case, but there may be reasons to reconsider that practice; it may be that due to faculty complaints, having a secondary advisor on each serious case would reduce the chance of complaints becoming personal in nature rather than based on actions taken.

Although no students have complained about our services this year, (on the contrary, have expressed in writing and otherwise great appreciation for our work) it seems that in the interests of providing a cogent mechanism for dealing with complaints from faculty, the draft of a process for dealing with complaints designed with considerable care by another Student Advisor should be approved by the SGSR.