

Student Advisor Annual Report – 2008-2009

Introduction

Each of the three Advisors independently draft their own term and annual reports based on their own experiences serving students. The statistical information provided reflects only students that I have served directly.

This statistics in this report reflect the summer term, while I have also included a summary of services and common themes and issues encountered over the entire year. Through previous arrangements I agreed to work 30 hours per month during the spring and summer terms. With an increase in the volume of cases, coupled with the decreased availability of other Advisors, I worked beyond my required hours throughout the spring-summer term. Although the extra hours worked are not of concern, it is important to recognize the continued demand for the program through the summer months.

In accordance with the criteria for the Term/Annual Report set out in the Memorandum of Agreement, please find below an account of the following for the spring-summer term:

1. Statistics on number of cases, including a distinction between new and continuing cases
 2. Statistics on types of cases
 3. Statistics on offices to which referrals were made or from which information was provided
 4. Description of follow-up taken
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1. Statistics on number of cases

- 42 cases total
- 39 new cases (3 ongoing)
- 0 continuing/reopened cases

2. Statistics on types of cases

(Note: total number exceeds number of cases because some cases involve multiple issues)

- 16 cases involved conflicts with a supervisor or faculty member
- 6 cases involved supervisor/program change
- 3 cases involved housing issues
- 4 cases involved potential human rights issues
- 1 cases involved non-discriminatory harassment
- 2 cases involved intellectual property issues
- 15 cases involved funding challenges
- 2 cases involved TA/RA employment issues
- 1 cases involved possible email harassment
- 2 cases involved a disputed grade
- 6 case involved a conflict re lab responsibilities

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- 2 case involved part-time status issues
- 5 case involved medical leave
- 2 case involved immigration issues
- 0 case involved a conflict re use of a listserv

3. Statistics on offices to which referrals were made (including discussed or suggested as options) or from which information was provided

- Dept head/grad coordinator: 12
- SGSR (deans/registrar/staff/website): 9
- Department office/website: 5
- Coordinator of Dispute Resolution Mechanisms: 0
- SGPS: 6
- Human Rights Office: 5
- Health, Counselling and Disability Services: 13
- Student Awards: 8
- Queen's Legal Aid: 4
- Other Student Advisors: 2
- Apartment & Housing Services: 3
- Legal Aid Ontario/Lawyer Referral Service: 2
- International Centre: 8
- Town Gown: 0
- Kingston Immigrant Services: 3
- City Councillor: 0
- Ban Righ Centre: 6
- Chaplin's Office: 0
- Queen's Website: 6
- Government Office: 1
- AMS: 0

Description of follow-up taken:

Most cases involved some or all of the following:

- Online research and online communication through e-mail
- Providing information, strategic advice, and communication skills coaching
- Several cases involved multiple in-person meetings with the student concerned
- Several cases required my direct intervention, requiring a meeting with a supervisor, department head, and/or graduate coordinator.
 - Two cases with supervisors involved different issues of control over publications
 - Seven separate issues involved student/ supervisor conflict, including human rights issues, and non-discriminatory harassment. Five of these issues were referred to the Human Rights Office
 - Several cases handled during the summer term involved international students.

- Three cases are ongoing. Two cases involve a human rights complaints, and funding issues, while the third involves housing issues.

The case load during the summer term was quite different than that of the previous two terms. The summer produced a greater number of students concerned about their financial situation, and understandably so, considering the economic climate. The summer term was also different than the previous terms in that the large majority of cases were male students.

Recommendations for the entire year:

- **International Graduate Students:**
A large majority of the case load over the past year involved international students. While the winter term saw an increase in female international students using Advisor services, there was a dramatic swing in the opposite direction during the summer term. There is a difference in the majority of issues that international male and female students experience. The primary issue facing international female students revolves around working conditions. There seems to be a gap in technology training by international students, while supervisors are demanding timelier and more efficient project completions. International male students, also faced with issues within their departments but are more concerned with the working relationships between colleagues, and also concerned with funding.
- **Intellectual property standards:** The intellectual property issues during the summer term involved two separate cases of disagreements between co-authors. These issues were both resolved through coaching.
- **Program Awareness:** The summer term brought in more students through referrals.
- **Additional Recommendations:** Over the summer term a great number of international male students, as well as fewer domestic students brought forward concerns of financial challenges. Many were directed toward the variety of possibilities through Student Awards. While graduate students are fortunate to be able to take advantage of opportunities offered through Student Awards, and even the Ban Righ Centre, there remains a concern over funding when funding in the Sciences is tied to specific professors or projects. Unlike Arts, Sciences provides a less flexible environment when there are conflicts between students and advisors. Although some cases were handled through coaching, or departmental discussions where I was asked to be present, the sciences appear to host more of these types of concerns than do other departments.