

Senate Academic Planning Task Force
Consultation with Graduate and Professional Students
^SGPS AGM, 5:30 pm, March 22, 2011
JDUC

Graduate and professional students have a unique position at Queen's, one that presents both opportunities and challenges. As students, they are here to acquire disciplinary expertise, professional skills, and accreditation. But many have essential roles as teaching assistants and teachers as well. It is important that Queen's Academic Plan bears this double role firmly in mind, and that it attempt to define the guiding principles, goals, and values that should guide graduate and professional teaching, training, and research. In other words, why are graduate and professional students here, and what is their role? Graduate and professional students will inevitably be considered as critical players in connection with the university's goals for teaching, learning, and research, but the Plan must also put their needs and their welfare as students first. It is essential that the Plan also embody a concrete conception of how professional students fit into the broader academic community.

To structure tonight's consultation, I offer three sets of questions, but all comments are welcome.

1. The place of graduate students in academics^:
 - a. Do the university and the departments have coherent strategies around graduate education that ensure excellence in this area?
 - b. How should graduate students contribute to the academic success of the university?
 - c. What support systems are necessary to ensure that graduate students can both contribute to their fields and gain^ the skills they need?
2. The place of graduate students in teaching^:
 - a. Is there a coherent vision of how graduate students fit into the teaching process at Queen's?
 - b. Are there adequate training and resources to support graduates' teaching activities and pedagogical development?
 - c. Are there adequate provisions to ensure that graduates' teaching environments are safe, respectful, and pleasant?
3. The place of professional students^:
 - a. Are there needs of professional students that the university should better recognize and provide for?
 - b. Do professional students feel sufficiently connected to the rest of the Queen's community?
 - c. Do professional students receive the financial and service support ^ they need to succeed in their studies?