

Term Meeting 2017-2018
Laurentian University
Graduate Student Association
January 31st 2018

Graduate Students' Association

President = Amber Tooley

Vice President = Mia Bourque

Treasurer = Nathaniel Davin

Secretary = Celisse Birb

Social Conveners = Yasser Ghoreishi and Shelley Condratto

Executive Director = Roxanne Langemann

1. Impact of 2018-2023 Strategic Plan

- i. **Increase in Graduate Student Enrollment Rate:** with the proposed increase in graduate student enrollment, we seek to understand how this will be accomplished as well as sustainable. The increase will impact both graduate students as well as their faculty, this has the potential to create a larger workload for faculty and delay program development for their graduate students.

2. International Students

- i. International students are an integral part of our college and university campuses, making our institutions more diverse and contributing to the academic community.
- ii. Recruitment of the top International Graduate students will enhance the quality of research conducted by the institution. There is then a responsibility of employment and funding as a necessary aspect of recruiting, financial help in the form of scholarships to cover the difference in tuition, streamlining government and off-campus work permits, and waiving tuition for the top students.

Comments from an International Graduate Student:

Streamlining work permits may not be a possibility since it is all run through the federal government immigration office and the school has nothing to do with it. Students with a student visa are permitted to work on campus part-time (20 hours a week), providing jobs on campus for international students would be beneficial.

- i. Co-ordination with the International Department, the Office of Graduate Studies and the Center for Academic Excellence can provide vital resources for the International students, including ESL skills, specialized program orientation training, and education on the unique weather apparel required to survive northern Ontario climate.

Comments from an International Graduate Student:

More collaboration between the International department, graduate studies office, and center for academic excellence is needed. Most graduate international students until told by another student and some departments do not know there is an international office. The international office is a great resource and should be added on to the admissions letters or have a separate letter explaining the international and graduate resources available. I personally found the international student orientation very useful.

- ii. To attract the top International students, Laurentian must ensure not to charge the International students more than the cost of domestic tuition in addition to governmental support.

Comments from an International Graduate Student:

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Have scholarships, tuition waivers, and bursaries available to international students with financial need to cover the extra cost of tuition/fees. Special note: most international students' currency is weak compared to the Canadian dollar, making paying even the normal tuition fees hard and the international fees impossible for most international students looking to attend this university.

3. Mental Health

- i. The Graduate student is in a unique position, often entrusted with the authority of what were classmates from prior years. Along with research, GTA duties, and classes, the stress and strain on a Graduate student is identifiable. Promotion of campus services, increased presence on campus, preventative measures can improve cost efficiency per FTE (research hours, years to completion).
- ii. A joint submission by the GSA and the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario has been submitted, outlining some of the provincial and Laurentian specific mental health survey results. The report can be accessed here:
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B07X1OMgEi4lMEhiLWh1ekVUeTQ>

Report Recommendations:

1. Create a separate physical space for graduate student counseling services. Separate times alone are not sufficient. Graduate student counseling services need to be physically separate from both undergraduate counseling services and administrative/faculty offices. Choosing an appropriate location is important for maintaining student confidentiality and should not be in a high traffic area, but still be easily accessible to students.
2. In hiring a new highly qualified clinician, consider candidates' familiarity with the graduate studies environment. All attempts should be made to hire someone with a strong understanding of these issues.
 - The consideration of their credentials and community involvement is of the utmost importance. As we have graduate students working within the health sector, it is important that no student feel unable to access mental health services out of fear of being identified.
3. Ensure that graduate student mental health services offer flexible hours, including evening hours. This is necessary to accommodate graduate student schedules which often include being on campus both evenings and weekends while also taking classes, facilitating labs and teaching during regular business hours.
4. Ensure a strong effort be made by Laurentian University to promote awareness among students of the graduate student mental health services.

2018-2023 Strategic Plan:

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- i. Item 7 from the 2018-2023 Strategic Plan identifies that students will be healthier due in part to increased mental health services, through consideration and implementation of the above report recommendations, graduate students will be part of this inclusive plan.

5. Writing Assistance

- i. **Grant Writing Assistance:** national and international recognition from funding bodies will serve to promote Laurentian University research.
- ii. Thesis Writing
- iii. Motion to support : \$\$\$

6. Office Space

- i. **Private Office Space for Graduate Student, particularly those at the PhD level:** As CFS representative for the GSA, Yasser Ghoreishi has learned by attending various meetings of the National Graduate Caucus that students at the PhD level across Canada have access to private office space. Laurentian must consider the allocation of private spaces for graduate students on campus.