

Report to Senate – Orientation Activities in the School of Graduate Studies

The School of Graduate Studies' (SGS) 2013 orientation for graduate students was attended by approximately 500 new and returning graduate students. The event began in the Biosciences Atrium with our annual **Resource Fair** that featured a record number of support service groups from Queen's and the Kingston Community. The volunteers who manned the booths (forty in total) provided materials and information relevant to our international and domestic graduate students. Throughout the two-hour fair, volunteers conversed with students about the support services available to graduate students and their families as they transition to graduate school and settle in the Kingston community.

Principal Woolf delivered the welcome address that was followed by a 45 minute presentation on "*Strategies for Success*" led by Dean Brouwer. Topics covered included expectations for graduate studies, roles and responsibilities, health and wellness, professional development and how to be connected with the Queen's and Kingston communities through social media and blogs. Ann Tierney, (Vice Provost and Dean, Student Affairs) highlighted the academic and non-academic support services available to graduate students and Rebecca Pero, (Vice-President, Society for Graduate and Professional Students) provided an overview of the SGPS student advisor services and their social activities. A team from Alumni Relations encouraged students to participate in the Homecoming events through volunteering.

Key resource documents were highlighted to promote awareness of academic and non-academic matters including the [*International Student Handbook*](#), the [*Graduate Supervision Handbook*](#) and [*Intellectual Property Guidelines*](#). To promote professional and skill development, graduate students were provided with a brochure describing the [*Expanding Horizons workshop series*](#)

Two campus tours were available during the course of the orientation as well as throughout the first week of September. These are always popular with students new to Queen's.

The SGS also participated in the **International Graduate Orientation** organized by the Queen's University International Centre (QUIC). Participants enjoyed the opportunity to socialize with QUIC staff, members of the SGPS, SGS, and other students from across the university.

Orientation Activities in the School of Graduate Studies' Academic Units

School of Policy Studies (SPS)

Students in the Public Administration and Industrial Relations programs were welcomed by Dr. Kim Nossal, Director of the SPS. The event spanned four-days and featured a series of workshops and activities. Presentations about Queen's Information Resources and Professional Writing were delivered by Queen's librarians and the Writing Centre, respectively. In addition, separate events for students in the Master of Public Administration (MPA), Professional MPA, Master of Industrial Relations (MIR), and Professional MIR provided program-specific information and opportunities to meet the faculty. The MIR Statistics Camp with refresher math and Excel workshops, prepared students for courses in Economics and Quantitative Methods. Insights into public service were offered by Malcolm Brown, Executive Vice-

President, Canada Border Services Agency, about how their MPA/MIR programs prepared them for the job market and the opportunities available to graduates holding SPS graduate credentials. Dr. Michael Condra gave a presentation on Health Counselling and Disability services. These well-attended orientation activities were geared towards building community.

School of Urban and Regional Planning (SURP)

The SURP orientation was organized by second year students of the Queen's Graduate Association of Planning Students Orientation Committee. Prior to the arrival of the incoming graduate class on campus, information and practical advice was provided via Facebook. As such, there was already a sense of community by the time students arrived at Queen's to begin a five-day orientation. All students received a *Welcome Package* in the summer, providing tips on housing and what to expect of the life at Queen's and with the program. An overview of the program was provided by Dr. David Gordon, the Director of the School and students participated in a variety of resource-focused and academic planning activities. These were interspersed with several social events attended by faculty, staff and students. Participation was high, with 97% of the incoming class attending the events. An important element of the School of Urban and Regional Planning's ongoing success is the strong relationships that are created amongst students, faculty, and staff during orientation week.

The School of Graduate gratefully acknowledges the support provided from the many campus services and units who contribute to making the graduate orientation such a success.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Brouwer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brenda Brouwer, Ph.D.
Vice-Provost and Dean