The Grad CRC is a partnership between SGS, Student Life and UTGSU supporting members of the U of T graduate community. With a focus on graduate issues, appropriate campus resources and policies, and best practices in conflict prevention and early and effective conflict resolution, this partnership models the collaborative and collective responsibility that the Grad CRC promotes as essential for effective conflict management in higher education.

*What makes this work sustainable is that we can collectively hold space for each other to both honour the difficult moments and celebrate the successes.*

– Tony, G2G 2018/2019

Our key supports for graduate students are confidential, low-barrier, grad-to-grad conflict coaching from trained G2G Peer Advisors, and peer facilitated conflict resolution training. Faculty and staff can also consult confidentially with the GradCRC or request customized training/workshops.

Through our work we identify trends in graduate conflicts and issues, as well as concerns and questions about services available and processes intended to define the graduate academic experience at U of T. We share back this information to departments, to our partners, and use data to inform our in-house training and workshops for the graduate community.

*A surprising insight that I learned this year was that one’s conflict style need not be collaboration all the time. While collaboration is often posed as an ideal manner for people to work together, it can also be resource intensive. Instead, what is most important is intentionality: selecting the conflict style that aligns best with one’s situation and considers the resources, time and stakes involved.*

– Amika, G2G Peer Advisor 2017-2019

**Highlights from the 2018/2019 year:**

- Individualized conflict coaching to 160 students, staff and faculty - this year, 16.8% of those conversations (27) were with faculty & staff – up from 7% (2017/2018) & 8% (2016/2017)

- 48% of our coaching conversations were 30-60 minutes, and 18% were longer than 1 hour (2017/2018 - 46% longer than 45 minutes – 22% over 1 hour)

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1 Informal and confidential interactions are priorities for the GradCRC. While we do track information about our conversations via a secure survey link, we do not keep files or request/require any names or other personal information from anyone who uses our service, and any data shared is done anonymously and in the aggregate.
• 56% of the time we observed that the individual we were speaking with seemed “upset”, upset “at times” or “somewhat” upset (2017-2018 - 59%)

• Developed and facilitated 49 unique workshops/talks for 818 attendees (161 faculty/staff & 657 students). This is a slight increase over 2017-2018: 47 workshops for 768 attendees.

• G2G hosted 462 informal weekly drop-in locations across the university and on Skype where they connected with 265 individuals and answered questions about the GradCRC², including DLSPH, Grad Room, Student Family Housing, UTSC & Hart House.

• Facebook Live videos done in collaboration with GradLife: “10 things grad students should know” on 26/09/19 - 3000 +Views & “Hidden Gems on Campus” on 4/3/19 – 354+ Views

• A top tweet (@GradCRCUofT) with a photo of G2G Anuya at the Grad Room drop in

What we’ve been talking about this year

Most people were simply looking for a listening ear, and many described complex, multi-issue situations; 160 conversations yielded discussions about 310 issues. Supervision remains consistently the top issue year over year, including: committee issues; concerns about communication/relationship/conflict with supervisor(s) or committee members; supervisor behaviour; expectations about supervisory roles/responsibilities and/or guidance; challenges/questions about changing supervisors or committee members.

Top 10 issues (all over 10 instances)

1. 19% Supervision
2. 11% Escalating/Policies/Processes
3. 10% CR & Communication
4. 7% Interpersonal
5. 7% CRC/G2G services & resources
6. 7% Supports/Resources
7. 6% Grad school issues/challenges
8. 6% Lab related
9. 4% Health & Wellness
10. 4% Academic Progress

² Only individuals who engaged in conflict coaching conversations (over 5 minutes) would have been included in the 160 number.
Examples of the types of supervision issues students are concerned about:

- PhD student’s supervisor expects the student to run experiments that are outside the scope of the student’s research. Student finds it difficult to find time away from the lab to focus on writing. The student also says that the supervisor is a micromanager and very difficult to talk to. The student asking about options/supports to help them finish writing their thesis.

- Masters student wants help preparing for what they expect to be a difficult meeting with their advisory committee the following week. Last time they met, the student’s supervisor advised them that their research progress was not satisfactory. Student is discouraged and has been losing sleep over this matter. They are panicking about having to face their supervisor and don’t feel confident that their committee is going to be supportive.

- PhD student has failed their comprehensive exam and is unsure about next steps. They talked about the power dynamics in their relationship with their supervisory committee and mentioned that while they disagree with a lot of feedback, they don’t think their voice will matter.

- PhD student has had a difficult relationship with their supervisor for a few years. The student was anticipating feedback from the supervisor and committee on what they thought was their final draft of their thesis, and instead was invited to a meeting with the Chair to the student’s failure to make satisfactory academic progress and the options of termination by the department, or voluntary withdrawal by the student. The student doesn’t feel like the Chair has accurate information, in particular about the role that the supervisor has played in delaying the student’s progress. Student wanted information about the appeals process and supports (e.g. UTGSU advocate).

Our service provides an outlet that is not mired in power dynamics and or university politics. Often times we have had students return to us to troubleshoot new and old situations. Graduate students trust us, they feel listened to and they tend to leave the session feeling much better then when they first arrived. They feel like they have moved from a place of no options, anxiety and sense of being overwhelmed by their dilemma- to a place of possibilities, choices and options.

- Kim G2G 2017-2019
No issue is too small to discuss!

Any member of the graduate community can connect confidentially with the Grad CRC. We offer appointments (in-person, Skype/phone), as well as informal drop-in sessions at a number of locations across the university. Question/Comments? Please contact us - we are listening!

**Website**  gradcrc.utoronto.ca for TIPS & ADVICE and more information.

**Email**  gradcrc@utoronto.ca

**Twitter**  @GradCRCUofT

**Facebook**  We guest post on GradlifeUofT facebook page

**Appointments**  clnx.utoronto.ca [GradCRC Appointments calendar]

**Events/Drop-ins**  clnx.utoronto.ca [GradCRC Events calendar & Grad Student Calendar]

**Blog**  gradcrc.utoronto.ca/blog/

**Videos**  www.youtube.com/channel/UCSEL9gt_DbEzFQ5vKUdNOQ