Graduate Conflict Resolution Centre (Grad CRC)
Insights July 2016-June 2017 – SUMMARY

We are happy to share some insights from July 2016 and June 2017 about what the Grad CRC does, who we connected with and what we’ve talked about. **No issue is too small to discuss!**

**What we do**

The Grad CRC is a partnership of SGS, the UTGSU and Student Life. Through training, conflict coaching, peer support and collaboration across departmental and divisional boundaries, we provide support to all members of the tri-campus graduate community to manage conflict earlier and more effectively. Conflicts that arise in grad school can be among the most complex and challenging to navigate. The partners share a desire to support the mental well-being and academic progress of grad students, in particular, navigating supervisory challenges.

One of our key initiatives is the trained G2G (grad-to-grad) team: a diverse group of masters and PhD students who facilitate workshops and provide conflict coaching through informal and confidential conversations with fellow grad students.

> “I learned that being a G2G is more than helping fellow grad students navigate their way through their negative grad experiences. In addition to acquiring public speaking skills, the role helped with my own grad experience…I was a confident grad student compared to some of my cohort, as I understood that the university would provide me with support if necessary.” Jacey, G2G

**Who is connecting with the Grad CRC?**

Any member of the graduate community can connect confidentially with the Grad CRC. We offer appointments (phone, in-person, Skype), as well as informal drop-in sessions at a number of locations across the university. Here are some highlights:

- 205 students, staff and faculty connected with us for individual coaching
- 35% PhD, 38% Masters, 8% Faculty/Staff, 6% Grad student (unspecified), remaining 13% included Post-Docs, undergrads or other (including not disclosed)
- 50% of the time the person was upset for at least part of the conversation
- 45 minutes is the average time for a coaching session
- In total we engaged in over 153 hours of active listening!
- 63% of the time we make referrals, including to: SGS (Supervision Guidelines website), UTGSU advocacy services), Department/Supervisors, the Ombudsperson, and SL services.
What we’ve been talking about

Most people were simply looking for a listening ear, and many described complex, multi-issue situations. Within the 205 interactions 342 issues were discussed:

- 14% supervision related issues, incl. communicating with supervisors or committee members, expectations about supervisory roles/responsibilities and/or guidance
- 7% research/thesis issues, incl. writing, co-authorship, intellectual property
- 7% non-supervisory interpersonal relationships/issues/conflict, incl. relationships with other students, TAs, faculty
- 6% who to talk to/how and when to escalate concerns
- 5% challenges being a grad student including difficult being a grad, expense, being a new student, struggling, lack of personal time, love/hate of research
- 5% academic progress questions & concerns, including extensions, qualifying exams, time management, time to completion, motivation, wanting to defend/graduate

We also talked about conflict resolution and communication strategies (9%) and answered questions about our services (7%), UofT supports / resources for graduate students (7%).

“It can be super easy to get trapped in one way of thinking about a problem without recognizing that that one mode isn’t a sure fit for everyone. When I hear my G2G team members talk about their co-coaching experiences or when I think about co-facilitating workshops, I get to experience just how important it is to be open to different perspectives and the power of collaboration.” Margeaux, G2G

Sharing best practices

Effective conflict management is an individual and a community responsibility.

- Facilitated 38 unique workshops/talks at UTSG, UTM, UTSC, plus the UofT Institute for Aerospace Studies (UTIAS), for 532 students, and 147 staff and faculty
- G2G were guest bloggers on the GradLife blog and active Tweeters @GradCRCUofT

“For engaging with the diverse experiences of my colleagues and the students who use our service continues to broaden my point of view on and off campus.” Rebecca, G2G

For 2017/2018 we will continue to share our findings and to discuss with the partners how the data from our service might be used to modify or create more timely and relevant training and workshops for the graduate community. We have recently created a Facebook page (@GradCRCUofT) and a blog for our website (gradcrc.utoronto.ca) to share more dispute resolution best practices online, as well as information about events and customized training.

We are listening – please email gradcrc@utoronto.ca with questions or comments.

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