Doctoral Students Association Report to Faculty Council
November 22, 2013

Activities of the Doctoral Students’ Association, 2013-2014

In the 2013-2014 academic year, the Doctoral Students Association (DSA) has planned to organize more events to encourage collegiality and to provide social support to all of its members. At the beginning of the Fall term, we held a doctoral students potluck to introduce and meet the new doctoral students.

The DSA hosts “Forum Fridays” from 3:30-5:00 p.m. every other Friday. The “Forum Friday” events we have held so far this year are:

- Welcome to Grad Life, September 20
- Junior Professor Research Day, October 4
- Grant Applications, October 18
- Work-Life Balance, November 1
- 3-Minute Elevator Pitch, November 15

The “Forum Friday” events that are planned for the rest of the Fall term are:

- Supervision, Leslie Shade, November 29
- Non-Academic Job Market, Kelly Lyons and Jeff Crelinsten, December 13

The “Forum Friday” events that are being planned for the Winter term are:

- Conference success
- Mental health
- Research and Ethics Workshop
- The Academic Job Market, Patrick Keilty, Irina Mihalache, and Leslie Shade.
- PhD Funding
- Academic Writing Workshop, Barry Wellman
- CUPE3902 Information Session

We invite faculty members to please contact Jenna Jacobson if you would like to host a “Forum Friday”—an informal knowledge-sharing event with the doctoral students. We are open to any ideas you may have and hope that faculty will be involved once a month in the Forum Friday events and socializing.

The DSA has established a Peer Mentorship Program to help integrate the first year doctoral students into the program. We held a mix and mingle event for first and upper year doctoral students to be paired on October 16, 2013. All first year students who wanted an upper year mentor were paired. 9 out of 10 first year students are participating, which indicates the great interest and successful launch of this initiative.

The Tech Fund Committee of the DSA will be planning to make some additional purchases to provide program and social support for its members.
Jenna Jacobson, current DSA President, represented the Faculty of Information at President Meric Gertler’s Installation as the university’s 16th president. The new Faculty of Information gonfalon (banner) will be used in future Convocation ceremonies.

Concerns of the Doctoral Students Association, 2013-2014

In the last DSA Faculty Council Report, we outlined our members concerns regarding their doctoral program experience. The two main issues were categorized as: 1) a perceived lack of communication from the Faculty of Information administration; and 2) a perceived lack of supervisory support from doctoral student supervisors and advisors.

To address some of these issues the executive committee of the DSA met with the Dean Seamus Ross, Director of Doctoral Studies Leslie Shade, and Chair of Faculty Council Andrew Drummond on October 31. Some sustainable solutions are being developed. We appreciate the opportunity to work with the faculty on this and look forward to discussing further.

The DSA has also undertaken a few initiatives to address some of these issues. The DSA will populate its sharable calendar with iSchool related events for its members to add to their electronic calendars. The DSA has informed its members that they can still edit their individual web pages on the old iSchool site as it is currently searchable through many search engines. On Friday November 29, we will have a Friday Forum on Supervision with the Director of Doctoral Studies Leslie Shade to go over SGS guidelines our members.