

## **University Transitions Discussion with School of Human Kinetics Executive**

In attendance: Alex Dumas (Assistant Director of Graduate Studies, SHK), Benoit Séguin (Director and Associate Dean, SHK, Faculty of Health Sciences), Wes Chen (President, HKGSA), Pegah Akbari (VP of Executive Committee and Councillors, HKGSA)

### **1. PROBLEMS**

- **General sensation of chaos/disorganization coming with a lot of transition/change**
  - As a result, students are feeling misguided it and the SHK execs have been feeling pressured too as they cannot affectively address the issues either.
  - New uOzone system is hard to navigate and has a few outstanding bugs.
  - This a big University-wide issue at the moment.
    - (SHK has been in constant contact with the Faculty regarding these issues)
  
- **Students are unable to find or get information**
  - Frustrating cycle of having little or incorrect information. Students are not sure where they can find necessary info and sources or who they can ask once they've exhausted their options searching.
  - Several university websites currently send you in circles. Conversely students have been referred to the academic unit, who don't have answers and are then referred back to the website or to terminology from policy documents, etc. (see FGPS below)
  - Appropriate forms to progress thesis are unclear or unavailable.
    - Limited information that is available is unclear and not very user friendly
  - Students are frustrated and are often met with resistance from the administration when searching for answers.

### **2. DISCUSSION**

- There is currently a “perfect storm” of transition periods happening at every level.
  - a) **University-wide changes**
    - Faculty of Graduate and Post-doctoral Studies (FGPS) has closed down
      - HUGE change causing a lot of the chaos for all grad students
      - Some website links and info is still up there, but a lot of it is out-dated or miss-directional (and hasn't been accordingly fixed).
      - Hence on the current FGPS website: “For more information about graduate studies at the University of Ottawa, please refer to your academic unit.” (<https://www.uottawa.ca/graduate-studies/>)
  
    - New uOzone system implementation is at the university-scale

- New system is has not yet been perfected and often ineffective or hard to navigate.
- Transition issues to get the new system functioning properly are University-wide. Further, faculty specific changes and adjustments are in the process of being created and implemented.

**b) Faculty-level changes**

- Controls movement of Ms. Catherine Coulomb’s role (ie: She is a faculty employee, not SHK)
  - Previously: Ms. Coulomb handled only graduate student related administrative matters. Now, Ms. Coulomb is responsible for handling faculty wide matters, and thus mostly handles undergrad files now.
  - Everything that she did for us in previous years (registration, tuition, etc.) is NO LONGER DIRECTLY ACCESSIBLE to grad students.
- Big problem with that is HK grad students currently don’t have a “FACE” they can go and talk to when they have specific questions now (registration, tuition, scholarships, etc.)
  - Just waiting in those general front desks, who often don’t have the answers to problems specific to grad students and “will get back to you later”.
  - Or students go to Rabéa, who also doesn’t have those kind of answers (see School-level changes below)
- **A clear issue that needs to be addressed so HK grad students know who they can go to when they’re having problems.**

**c) School-level changes**

- Impacted by all these changes happening at the University and Faculty-level
  - Right now, HK grad students need someone with the administration to turn to when they are stuck and have questions with these various issues.
- Ben and Alex will do everything they can do to change what’s under their control at the SHK-level.
  - **Need to better define Rabéa, Manon and Anne’s roles!**
  - ie: Rabéa’s job right now is to manage TA/RA assignments/contracts. However, she doesn’t have information related to the scholarships themselves, or registration, etc.
- SHK now has student feedback to bring back to the Faculty regarding these issues that are directly impacting their students.

### **3. COMING OUT OF THE MEETING**

- Let students know that these administrative issues have been brought to the SHK's attention and their voices are being heard.
  - SHK executives are going to control/change what they can, as well as bring this feedback back to the Faculty.
  
- Fact is, the University and the Faculty ARE NOT going back to how it was before.
  - Change is being implemented, so now it's about focusing on how we can fix these issues that have come up and improve things for the students moving forwards.
  
- SHK needs to improve the flow of information and better define administrative roles at the School-level.
  - Things won't change right away, it will be a process over the Winter and Summer semesters. However, we have been told to not expect things to be chaotic like this next Fall semester.
  
- **Students are encouraged to continue emailing any HKGSA executive members if they have any further feedback or suggestions.**
  - General email: [hkgsa@uottawa.ca](mailto:hkgsa@uottawa.ca)
  - Wes Chen: [wchen079@uottawa.ca](mailto:wchen079@uottawa.ca)
  - Pegah Akbari: [pakba013@uottawa.ca](mailto:pakba013@uottawa.ca)
  
- Concerns regarding employee-related issues and grievances (ie: TAing and RAing) can be directed to VP Academic Jenn Taing, who is our representative CUPE Steward on the union council: [jtain065@uottawa.ca](mailto:jtain065@uottawa.ca)

**\*\*\* For now, HK graduate students should direct any questions or specific problems that they are having to Alex Dumas ([adumas@uottawa.ca](mailto:adumas@uottawa.ca)) \*\*\***