

Minutes - Summer Student Town Hall

July 17, 2014

Facilitated by Austin Hopping

Panel:

Dr. Sue McCracken – Dean's Office

Melanie Walker – Health and Wellness Representative

Michelle Reyes – CBCD

Isabella Piatek – MASO

Carolyn Colwell – MASO

Martin Binkley – Sodexo

Jennifer McCleary – Student Experience

Dr. Sue McCracken:

- The dean's office is working to improve the program and the overall student experience.
- Thursday, June 19th is the specialization session from 3:30-5:30, followed by the 'Grab a slice/Have a cold one with Dean Waverman'. Accounting students will be included in the event since they are on campus. Pizza and beverages will be provided. Sue invites everyone to spread the word to classmates. The Barbeque earlier in the semester had a great turnout.
- Sue asked students to complete the online course evaluations. Many instructors will be giving time within class to complete the survey.
- Sue is offering drop-in hours on a weekly basis, but also has an open-door policy. Students are invited to visit anytime to discuss events, academics, etc.
- Brian Mehi has been promoted and replaced by Mary Lou.
- The Dean's office has been working on a redesign on the current MBA program. This fall, some changes will be implemented. Transition is now 3 ½ days, as opposed to two weeks. This is in response to student feedback. Transition will start on the Tuesday after Labour Day and finish on the Friday before students depart for MBA Bound.
- Prior to transition, CBCD will be hosting career-related clinics to ensure students are ready to start interviewing.
- There will also be a new program called DeGroote Leaders. It involves senior students working with incoming students. They will mentor and guide students through activities throughout the term. Focus Business Consulting is currently recruiting senior students and aiding in the development of the program. Sue invited students to follow the program and keep suggestions in mind on how it can be improved in the future.
- There will also be a new initiative called DeGroote Days that will build on transition week activities. The goal is to develop students as business

- leaders. It will be an interactive format that steers away from in-class activities. More information on the program will be released at a later date.
- The incoming class will not have classes on Wednesdays to accommodate DeGroot Days. The incoming class will be divided into four cohorts that all have the same schedule. The goal is to ensure students are on campus more and allow students better opportunities to schedule group meetings since each cohort will have the same schedule. Wednesday was chosen as a day because it is easier to get Business Leaders involved as well.
 - There will also be two open blocks each week to allow for MASO, Clubs, Library and CBCD workshop sessions.
 - On the first Saturday after class starts there will be an etiquette dinner and fashion show. It will be run by the MBAA Association.
 - These changes will give better opportunities for students and faculty to interact.
 - Next steps are to have a deep review of the curriculum. Sue will call on students to get involved over the next few months.
 - Aravind asked about professor ratings on the surveys. It was clarified that 5 means satisfactory, but a 1 would warrant looking into.
 - Andre asked about whether or not survey results would be available online but Sue clarified that that would be difficult, citing privacy policies. However, she advised that she would look into what could and couldn't be posted.

Melanie Walker:

- Health & Wellness rep, Melanie Walker introduced herself and advised that she is in the RJC 5 hours/week. Her office is on the second floor in the Dean's office area. She is available by appointment. She is willing to meet in person or by phone. The best way to reach out to her by email at bewell@cogeco.ca. Her services are confidential. She meets with students about all issues (e.g. group work struggles, homesickness, stress). She is also open to offering group sessions, however they were not well-attended in the past.

Michelle Reyes:

- She is excited to be in her new role as Manager of CBCD. She is aiming to deliver more services that students are seeking. CBCD is working with the Dean's Office and MASO on the new changes to be implemented this fall. She welcomes feedback from all students.
- Phase one was very successful. 81% of students seeking positions found roles. There are currently 33 students still seeking positions. There are currently 30 positions posted in OscarPlus and more coming. She advised students to continue checking OscarPlus as well as the CBCD Bulletins for other opportunities that are not posted on OscarPlus.
- June 26 there will be a job search strategy workshop, followed by a recruiting session from TD Bank.

- On July 9th there will be an Ice Cream Social in the atrium hosted by CBCD, followed by the end of term meeting. The end of term meeting will involve a similar activity to the welcome back meeting. There will also be things that need to be shared with students to set them up for success in the winter term. CBCD is also looking at bringing in some alumni and senior students. She invites students to provide suggestions for anything else they would like offered.
- The grad directory will begin being put together in the beginning of November. Employers will be looking for it, and it is key in students getting placements after graduation.
- Michelle reminded everyone that she has an open door policy.
- Aravind inquired if students should be seeking their summer placement while in the fall co-op. Michele advised that CBCD will be providing information on that to equip students for actions that need to be taken in the fall term.

Isabella Piatek:

- MASO is busy assessing new applications. Numbers should be finalized by the end of July/Beginning of August. She thanks students who assisted with recruiting events.
- MASO is assisting with the redesign of the MBA and they are also working on the pre-MBA program that is offered to international students.
- MASO is working on the academic calendar and it will be posted in the middle of July.
- The fall term schedule should be ready by the end of next week.
- The final exam schedule is posted online.
- The scholarship and bursary process is opened in September. There are a number of scholarships available ranging from \$1000-10,000. Students are reminded to apply since it is only opened for one month.
- Isabella will be taking a leave of absence for one year starting on July the 1st. Her replacement will be officially announced soon.

Carolyn Colwell:

- Last town hall, students were asking about bus passes and dental benefits. She has been in contact with the people that are able to make the change.
- Bus passes are not currently available to MBA students since they opted out of the Grad Student Union many years ago. GSU is in negotiations with Hamilton Transit now and they will be inquiring about the feasibility of including MBA students again. There will likely be no changes until September 2015.
- Regarding the dental plan, it has been requested that MBA students be offered an opt-in option. She has pamphlets available for students.

Martin Binkley:

- Martin invited comments/concerns from the students.
- Aravind inquired about a 6% admin fee that is charged on bills. Martin explained that it is a fee to offset costs of offering catering services. In order to continue delivering quality service, that is what the market requires. There is not sufficient volume to make a profit on the business but this fee mitigates some of the losses incurred by Sodexo.

Jennifer McCleary:

- Jennifer has been working hard to understand where DeGroote can provide additional support and invest in training student leaders. She is looking forward to what the summer will bring in regard to this.
- Room availability is now viewable online.
- Based on a study done at parking rates at comparable universities, administration is looking at restructuring fees. The results of the study have been presented to administration at main campus. An update will be provided to students when it becomes available. Admin will need to be certain that the new funding structure is adequate to fund seasonal upkeep on the parking lot.

Open Discussion:

- Camilla suggested reminding students about things in the Dean's Bulletin when they return from co-op.
- Aravind mentioned that it might be valuable to give security at the front desk a how-to document on how to book collaboration rooms in the event that no receptionist is available. Martin indicated that would not be a problem.
- When Mary Lou's replacement is chosen, it will be communicated in the Dean's Bulletin.
- Sue invited students to share ideas on how the experience at DeGroote can be improved.
- Aravind mentioned it is difficult to stay engaged while on co-op.
- The group brainstormed on ways to attract students to spend more time on campus/attend scheduled events.
- Rick suggesting that timing for events that are targeted at multiple cohorts could be adjusted to accommodate people travelling from work terms.
- Camilla inquired about mid-term evaluation policy and Sue advised that stop-n-go assessments are not mandatory.
- Jennifer will speak to Dean Waverman to discuss the importance of the online evaluations and how the rating system should be communicated to the students.