The topic of the session was Recruitment: considerations, strategies and practices.

- Importance of personal contact
  - programs reported that students confirm that personal contact was one of the primary reasons that they chose Queen’s above other institutions
    - Some programs require applicants to find a supervisor before they get too far into the application process so they need guidance on how to do that (e.g. Approach faculty directly, through grad coordinator, how?)
    - When a potential student approaches someone at Queen’s, we have a responsibility to respond to them in a timely fashion

- Effective and ineffective recruitment strategies
  - SGS funding to support student visits has proven very effective in recruiting students to the program
  - Keeping past graduates informed of school/unit activities, recognizing they are ambassadors for the program and can be valuable recruiters.
  - Information sessions involving faculty, staff, alumni and/or current students providing info to undergrads/Masters students from same discipline or cognate. Can be held several times per year, students can talk about their experience, faculty/staff can describe the program, how to apply for scholarships eg. OGS...
  - The value of phoning applicants – the personal touch increases the likelihood of choosing Queen’s. (SGS will communicate a mechanism of doing this)
  - Supplying business cards to graduate students for them to distribute at conferences, workshops, etc… It’s status for our students and recognition of our programs. Consider including program information on the back.
  - Placing ads does not appear to work (this may be different across disciplines, but certainly warrants tracking of the effectiveness)

- June 2011 there were a large number of applications for which no decision had been made – this is very late and too long to leave applicants in limbo without communication.
  - It is very important to communicate with applicants in a timely manner and keep them informed about the status of their application and when they can expect a decision (it keeps them interested and informed).
  - A lack of communication reflects poorly on the university and increases the risk of losing the student (and future applicants)
• Use an entrance survey to find out about how your students learned about the program, what attracted them ... and an exit survey to learn about best features of the program and graduate experience, plans for the future and contact information. All of which can be used to inform advertising, marketing, quality assurance, and maintain long term relationship.

• Departments should approach their alumni who currently hold academic positions at other universities and ask them to speak our Queen’s programs and encourage their students to apply
  o During academic conferences, ask students, faculty and alumni to take materials with them and discuss our programs
  o Some programs contact referees of successful applicants to thank them for the recommendation and informally to let them know of the student’s progress

• Track what graduates of your programs are doing post-graduation; applicants often seek information about career options following grad training.
  ▪ Information useful for cyclical reviews under QUQAP
  ▪ Supervisors and fellow students can often provide this information
    o Profiles of past/current graduates on website
    o List careers that alumni have pursued on website (increasingly important as PhD grads who go on to academic positions in the minority)

• Do application fees may deter prospective applicants? (note from SGS – do not expect change here, we are in the pack with our sister institutions).
  o SGS can work with individual departments who wish to cover application fees themselves

• Emphasize to prospective students extracurricular activities that can enhance their graduate experience e.g. Expanding Horizons Professional and Skills Development Series
  o Professional skills development for graduate students (leadership, communication,...)
  o The “versatile” PhD – skills and professional training to prepare for various career choices
  o Makes them more marketable for employment

• Recruitment from within Queen’ More and more units are recruiting from their own undergraduate and Master’s programs or from cognate units – this varies across disciplines – holding information sessions with current undergraduate students can be very useful – some programs have current grad. Students meet with undergrads.

• Social Media – Facebook groups can provide a community for applicants such that they “know” each other before the start. Little known about value as a marketing tool, recruitment tool, etc... See following link for interesting commentary on social media (Thanks Debby Robertson for bringing it to our attention) http://www.cnn.com/2011/10/20/tech/social-media/universities-social-media/index.html?hpt=hp_bn6