We asked graduate students:

"How could Queen's University better support you during the COVID-19 pandemic?"

They answered:

Mental health

Increase accessibility to mental health services at Queen's University

Adapted expectations

Have pandemic-adapted expectations for progress and productivity

Equity

Reinstate internal funding streams for international students

Communication

Share new decisions in a timely & transparent manner

Assure students that their concerns are being heard & addressed

Recognition of value of work

Find innovative ways to celebrate successes

Operational considerations

Increase access to workspace and resources to offset inadequate work-from-home conditions

Connectedness

Help integrate new students into the Queen's community

Learn more about how the Faculty of Arts and Science is responding below.

Graduate Student Initiatives Emerging from COVID Review

Themes	
Enrich Learning Environment	
1. Instructional Practises and Online Learning Experiences	1. Working with Teaching and learning to communicate to enhance access to resources for teaching in the remote environment. 2. Worked with PSAC and IT services to advocate to facilitate teaching fellows with early access to Employee NetIDs so they can begin to prepare their classes earlier online and offline. 3. Expanded and developed credential for undergraduate teaching.
Supporting Our People	
2. Connectedness	1. Collected best practices across departments on current and ongoing initiatives for undergraduate and graduate student to foster sense of community and connection. 2. Worked with SGS to provide more resources to students with learning strategies that minimize time spent online, in front of screens. 3. Conducted additional ThoughtExchanges to understand pressing issues and what is working and not working in graduate programs. 4. Developed organizational structure in OnQ so that students can access all information related to graduate school (e.g., steps through the program; reminders to check in with their supervisors) to support students' progress and to onboard them into programs. 5. Through the organizational structure in OnQ continuing to develop a manual to support departments to develop graduate peer mentoring programs.
3. Mental Health	1. Shared information regarding mental health resources and accessing mental health support through regular email channel FAS enews as well as shared messaging coming from central communications. 2. Worked with SGS to share resources to mitigate screen time fatigue. 3. Shared and communicating current approach to mental health in university and graduate student benefits with the addition of a mental health support staff member being hired. 4. Addressed upstream issues contributing to decline in mental health (e.g., financial stress, address unrealistic expectations/timelines with faculty) with OnQ providing timelines,

	accountability and structure of programs while also working to improve stipends.
4. Communication	1. Implemented a feedback system, such as ThoughtExchanges, through which graduate students can provide ongoing feedback regarding their educational experience during the COVID-19 pandemic, and through which the university can make informed decisions on supporting students.
	2. Worked closely with central communications and (other groups or councils?) to ensure clarity and transparency in university-wide decisions regarding tuition and student fees, return to in-person education, access to resources (e.g., mental health support, library access).
	3. FAS will make their best efforts to outline guiding principles around key decisions reviewing information from the university and including links to it from the FAS website
	4. Using multiple channels, such as enews, social channels, and direct email, FAS ensured key information was broadly communicated in a consistent and transparent way.
	5. Facilitated coffee chats and town halls with FAS Dean Barbara Crow and the Dean's senior leadership team to provide an open dialogue between graduate students and decision-makers.
	6. Worked with faculty to provide clear expectations related to degree completion (e.g., when will in-person research resume, access to wet labs).
5. Access to work and recreational spaces	1. Advocated for increased number of workspaces available to access while being compliant with restrictions.
	2. Advocated for a system of access that prioritizes those who do not have access to workspaces or who are at key stages of program (comprehensive exams).
	3. Advocated for the development of a COVID safety plan that would allow interested graduate students to access their laboratories/work areas at least one day per week.
6. Equity Considerations (All Initiatives in progress working with FAS EDII Director Elliot Chapple)	1. Support and address issues of equity regarding underrepresented students who face structural barriers (e.g., lack of quiet space, lack of reliable internet connection) to education.
	2. Educate and raise awareness with faculty and staff for underrepresentative groups in COVID and beyond.
	3. Individualizing training to ensure that it acknowledges, adapts and recognizes the challenges of EDI initiatives, training opportunities,

	and discussions in an online environment. In other words matching training content and timing to the individuals' capacities to participate.
	4. Recognize and identify the mental health issues that underrepresented students, staff, and faculty are experiencing and identify campus based support who can provide interventions where need.
	5. Communicate how to obtain culturally relevant support for the mental health issues that underrepresented students, staff, and faculty experience.
	6. FAS will provide the space to have conversations about how underrepresentative group (students, staff, faculty) have experienced the pandemic.
7. Operational Considerations	1. Addressing financial concerns of students by: 1) reducing tuition; 2) increasing TA or Teaching Fellow opportunities
	2. Address career development concerns regarding length of time in program both financial and also registration (i.e., too long in program) through professional development and education.