Continuous Improvement Review Process for COVID Response

Supporting Staff and Faculty During COVID-19: Listening to UG and Grad Chairs and Assistants Voices

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COVID Review Overview

1. Teaching and Learning
   i. Survey undergraduate students (FAS)
   ii. Survey faculty (university wide)
   iii. ThoughtExchanges UG students, graduate students, UG and Grad Chairs, and Heads (FAS)
   iv. ThoughtExchange Educational Developers
   v. Environmental scan of teaching resources, practises, supports and services, and policies and procedures
COVID Review Overview

1. Mental Health and Remote Learning Environment
   a. Partnership with UFLOURISH Survey for UG and Grad students
   b. Developed UFLOURISH for Staff and Faculty
   c. ThoughtExchange FAS Departmental Managers

2. Organizational
   a. ThoughtExchange with Heads (FAS)
ThoughtExchange Question

“How could Queen’s University better support you in your role as an undergraduate/graduate chair or assistant during the COVID-19 pandemic?”
ThoughtExchange Process

Electronic Invitation
- Representative sample of undergraduate and graduate chairs and assistants

Thought Exchange
- Exchange open for 13 days
- Sharing and rating of thoughts

Data Analysis
- Themes generated by artificial intelligence
- Themes reviewed and refined
ThoughtExchange Participants

53 Participants  69 Thoughts  1,113 Ratings
Demographics

Position Type
- 26% UG Chair (13)
- 26% Grad Chair (13)
- 24% UG Assistant (12)
- 24% Grad Assistant (12)

Years of Experience
- 29% Less than 1 Year
- 30% 1-3 Years
- 41% More than 3 Years
Percentage of Respondents who report...

- Mental Health Disrupted
- Feel less supported during COVID
- Timelines inappropriate
ThoughtExchange Question

“How could Queen’s University better support you during the COVID-19 pandemic?”
Average Rating by Theme

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Top Rated Thoughts

- communication
- deadlines
- decisions
- timetabling
- staff
- timelines

- tasks
- plans
- resource
- issues
- new
- year

- help
- transparent
- time

- remote
- health

- staff
- decisions
- timetabling
- timelines

- staff
- decisions
- timetabling
- timelines

- experienced
- departments
- learn
- support
- issues
- feel

- work
- help
- work
- help

- substantial
- administration
- processes
- work
- help

- graduate
- research
- teaching
- important
- computer
- load

- share
- time
- important
- computer
- load

- chair
- know
- think
- mental
- information
- miss
Theme: Operational Decisions

A calendar that plots out UG-Chair deadlines for the year (enrolment dates, open house, degree lists, awards, etc.) It would be great to have schedule of the tasks we have to do over the year: it would help with planning.

More lead time for tasks coming out of the Faculty Office Given our much heavier teaching loads this year (due to converting our courses for remote delivery), it is very hard to carry out new tasks quickly.

Make big decisions sooner Over the summer many important and impactful decisions were left too late, results in increased workload at the front end (e.g. UG office)
Theme: Communication Decisions

Clearer communication and more decisiveness

Consistency in communication content. So we are all on the same page.

Make big decisions sooner Over the summer many important and impactful decisions were left too late, resulting in increased workload at the front end (e.g. UG office).
Theme: Inter-Department Connection

Facilitate ways for departments to share best practices amongst each other - many staff are in similar roles but have no contact with each other. Shared resource that gives examples of processes/procedures that are common to all FAS depts (i.e. timetabling, tracking student progress, etc)

Better communication between departments run into issues when different areas have different timelines and overlapping needs

Centrally, or have each unit compile a list of Grad Chair duties and a timeline of yearly tasks (and events) as a document to share with new GCs. Relying on being briefed by our predecessor may miss important things and fail to share best practices between units.
Theme: Mental Health and Stress

by making bigger decisions early enough that staff can act on these decisions with appropriate timelines and deadlines. I feel like this entire year has been extremely reactive instead of proactive. Staff had to work extremely hard under lots of stress.

Exhaustion. Can we just focus on our core mission now - teaching, getting through term, and maybe recruitment? Faculty and department admins have been going flat out through the summer and fall. You will see the long-term impacts if the status quo isn't changed

More time on deadlines It's already stressful to work with deadlines as they are
Recognition and Value of Work

- Value little and big things
- Celebrate the wins
- In the moment and over time
- Constant shifting and changing of expectations and plans but operations need to keep going
Next Steps

● FAS is creating an action plan with concrete next steps, metrics, and timelines to address concerns in short term and long term

● Monitoring and assessing progress on proposed actions will continue

● A webpage will be created where progress can be viewed
Take Home Messages

● We are in this together

● These are challenging times for all and we recognize that!

● Committed to supporting and are responding with concrete actions

● Grateful for the work you do every day

● Critical learning to help us in time of COVID but also opportunity to understand what we do well and how we can do better moving forward
Thank you for making a difference by sharing your thoughts