



GDVM Association Plan 2020-2021

Virtual learning is a significant challenge for students particularly in developing a sense of belonging, stimulating classroom engagement and fostering meaningful discussions. Students were somewhat pleased with the program but indicated a need for increased support in learning about and applying for scholarships, finding employment, and finding a research topic and supervisor. Students rated the level mental health support provided 3-5.

Intended Results: To address the findings of the Survey, the GDVM has prepared the following Action Plan. By the end of the Winter 2021 semester, the GDVM aims to have contributed to creating a virtual community that fosters relationship building and knowledge sharing; and provided spaces that cultivate meaningful interactions online that meet the academic, professional and social needs of all graduate students at the School of International Development and Globalization.

Accountability Measures: In the Plan which follows, the GDVM executives are responsible for collaborating in all of the activities and are strongly encouraged to consider the following points.

- Collaboration between Representatives on the planning and execution of initiatives should be strongly encouraged depending on the nature of the event, Representative's mandates and available time and resources.
 - This can be done in accordance (but not limited to) to the [proposed GDVM structure](#).
 - This could include but is not limited to meetings outside of GDVM's monthly meeting, co-sponsorship of initiatives, and working groups for like minded initiatives/mandates.
- In close coordination with the Communications Representative and where appropriate, all initiatives should aim to develop a strong communications component wherein Facebook, Instagram, email and/or monthly newsletter blurbs are prepared and distributed in a timely manner to strengthen engagement and participation.
- If possible and appropriate, Representatives should track engagement, participation and feedback to gauge the success of each initiative, as well as determine possible areas to strengthen.
 - This can be done using the [GDVM post-event report form](#).

Part 1 - Getting to know the students

First- and second-year students seem more active in GDVM engagement, suggesting that tailoring programming and events to this audience could further increase engagement. However, the overrepresentation of English and MA students also suggests two areas to strengthen GDVM engagement: PhD and Francophone students.

Action Items

- 1. GDVM will conduct outreach directly to all students with strategic and tailored actions.



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- 2. GDVM will prepare a rough-draft events schedule for the remainder of the academic year to be used internally as a planning tool.
- 3. GDVM will prepare a “Get to know your executives” communication campaign.

Part 2 - Academics and Coursework

Students seem pleased overall with their course work and course load, however would like to see more diverse course offerings. The virtual setting is negatively impacting the quality of discussion and interaction in the classroom along with students’ ability to feel part of a community. GDVM and SIDGS may wish to consider ways of fostering relationships between professors and students, as well as students and their peers. Courses, course work and course content received overall positive feedback however, students would like to see more diverse course offerings.

Action Items

- 4. GDVM will share the survey report prepared by Catherine with Paul, Joshua, Susan, and Anick.
- 5. GDVM will share a condensed and translated version of the survey results with members.
- 6. GDVM will meet with SIDGS.

Part 3 - Program Organization, Resources and Learning Environment

Respondents appeared pleased with the overall level of academic and library services, and the relevance of their program to future plans. However, students noted a need for more information on scholarships and employment, and finding a research topic and supervisor. These responses were also directly linked to students’ responses to factors that contribute to a safe and happy learning environment.

Action Items

- 7. GDVM will consider organizing a second workshop on Scholarship Applications.
- 8. GDVM will work on developing guides that support:
- 9. GDVM will share the guide on finding a research supervisor.
- 10. GDVM will find ways to provide guidance on how to choose a research topic.

Part Four: How can GDVM better serve students?

The overall response rate to the survey is promising, suggesting a number of students are familiar with GDVM. However, GDVM could focus on increasing awareness of the work that we do and who we are particularly to those who did not respond. Students also indicated interest in receiving additional supporting in navigating the program, their research and funding/jobs. Strengthening French in the program, peer relationships and anti-racism efforts were also noted. Students' responses further suggest that GDVM could focus in multiple areas – academic, research, social, career, activism, and student safety and well-being.

Action Items:

- 11. GDVM will work on hosting an activist workshop series.



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- 12. GDVM will work on hosting an event with Alumni and Development Professionals.
- 13. GDVM will send the mental health newsletter with various resources available for students.
- 14. GDVM will increase the variety of social and academic events that are hosted.
- 15. GDVM will provide monthly newsletters to members containing important information for students.