

## REPORT ON MA STUDENT CONSULTATION, 15 JAN. 2020

Prepared by: Paul Haslam (MA Coordinator)

Overview: A consultation with 7 MA students was held on Jan 15, 2020, including representatives of the MA student association (GDVM). Susan Spronk (interim Director) and Paul Haslam (MA Coordinator) represented the School. The Consultation was an opportunity for the MA students to identify some problems with the program.

Paul Haslam provided some context on the history of the MA program, as well as future directions that may address some of the problems already identified by the students. These were:

- A new course-based option and “Concentration in Development Practice” will open in September 2020, associated with a suite of new summer courses, and with the possibility of a single Co-op placement (accelerated to May 2020 as a result of the pandemic)

### Issues raised by the Students

#### **(a) Supervisors and progress through the program**

- Intimidating to find a supervisor (suggestions included an open-door afternoon, where students could walk around and talk to profs one-on-one, perhaps post supervisory subject on the door).
- Students anxious about the general research process (for thesis and MRP), unsure about deadlines and dates (recommend a “formalization” of the process)
- MA handbook is difficult to find and not user-friendly (although note that Administrative staff [Josée and Alex] are very helpful)
- Students suggest an optional reading list may be useful for students entering the program

### Actions Taken in Response

- The MA Coordinator will draft a “How to find a supervisor” document that provides advice on the student-supervisor relationship. This document will be presented to incoming students at the Meet-and-Greet in Oct/Nov, and posted on the website (within the Graduate Students’ Handbook)
- The Senior Fellows program has been reformed so that Senior Fellows will be matched with incoming graduate students with the objective of mentoring them.
- The Graduate Student Handbook has been updated, and is available through a

link on the School's splash page. The "Suggested Progress" through the program document has been updated, and is available in the Handbook here: (English)<https://socialsciences.uottawa.ca/international-development-global-studies/programs/handbook-suggested-progress-masters>; and (French): <https://sciencessociales.uottawa.ca/developpement-international-mondialisatio n/programmes/guide-cheminement-suggere-maitrise>

#### Actions Taken in Response (continued)

- "Quick Guidelines/ Lignes directrices" have been developed within the Graduate Students' Handbook to give a quick overview of the 3 options within the MA program (thesis, MRP, and coursework). These can be found here:
  - Thesis:<https://socialsciences.uottawa.ca/international-development-global-studies/programs/masters-thesis>
  - MRP:  
<https://socialsciences.uottawa.ca/international-development-global-studies/programs/masters-major-research-paper>
  - Coursework:  
<https://socialsciences.uottawa.ca/international-development-global-studies/programs/masters-coursework>
  - Thèse:  
<https://sciencessociales.uottawa.ca/developpement-international-mondialisatio n/programmes/maitrise-these>
  - Mémoire:  
<https://sciencessociales.uottawa.ca/developpement-international-mondialisatio n/programmes/maitrise-memoire>
  - Cours:  
<https://sciencessociales.uottawa.ca/developpement-international-mondialisatio n/programmes/maitrise-option-cours>
- In the June communication with incoming students for September 2020 who (accepted and registered) a recommended reading list was provided (the two textbooks developed by DVM profs and used widely in the program):
  - Haslam, Paul A., Schafer, Jessica, and Beaudet, Pierre, eds. Introduction to International Development: Approaches, Actors, Issues, and Practice, 3rd ed. Don Mills, Oxford University Press, 2017.
  - Beaudet, Pierre, Caouette, Dominique, Haslam, Paul, and Benhamide, Abdelhamid eds. Enjeux et défis du développement international :

Acteurs et champs d'action, 2e ed. Ottawa, University of Ottawa Press, 2019.

### **(b) Coop**

- Domestic students generally satisfied with the Coop program, but international students frustrated that it is not truly available to them.

#### Actions Taken in Response

There is little either we or the Co-op Office can do to address this problem, since it derives from the difficulty of international students getting the security clearance required to work in the federal government. However, we are making additional efforts to inform international students that they are unlikely to be able to do Co-op within the program. During the June meeting with new students (entering September 2020), Paul Haslam underlined these problems with Co-op and made it clear that for international students if ability to pay for the program depends on being able to do Co-op they shouldn't come.

### **(c) Coursework**

- Concerns over first semester courses (workload light compared to second semester; no theory covered in core courses).
- Limited selection of courses; interest in night courses.

#### Actions Taken in Response

- DVM 5100 (English) course will be taught by a different professor in Fall 2020, and we expect this change will bring a more appropriate workload and provide a more comprehensive introduction to international development (including theory).
- Course availability is limited by the number of professors we have, but as part of the new Concentration in Development Practice, we plan to offer 6 new courses (3 in each language) in the spring/summer semesters. Efforts will be made to offer these courses on a timetable that will allow students to take them while working.

### **(d) Program structure**

- Some students thought (and hoped) the program was bilingual, seeing it as an opportunity to improve their language skills in the other official language – and found it frustrating that students are streamed into a specific language.

- Lack of clarity about the relationship between globalization and development (most students don't realize their thesis or MRP doesn't have to be about development)

#### Actions Taken in Response

Clarification: Students can take courses (other than the core courses) in the other official language (this has always been the case)

- We are drafting a program reform to develop an Immersion Option within the program that would allow anglophone students (with an adequate level of French) to register for the French-language program.
- We are drafting a reform to eliminate the language test "exit requirement" for the program which has never been used, but may mislead students into thinking the program is bilingual. Both reforms will be presented to the Faculty of Social Sciences in the Fall 2020.

Clarification: Almost any topic of study fits under the theme of "globalization and development" so students should not feel compelled to choose a development topic for their MRP or thesis. Many don't.

- We are drafting a reform to change the name of the program from "Globalization and International Development" to "International Development and Globalization" to better reflect the expertise of the professors and content delivered in the program. This reform will be presented to the Faculty of Social Sciences in Fall 2020.