

The Grad Zone

The UNB Graduate Student Association

The quality of student life

by Robin Wyllie

At some point in the next couple of weeks, a number of Graduate students will be receiving a survey form on the quality of student life. This is not an attempt by the GSA to choke the recycle bins on campus with more propaganda. It is a baseline survey, designed to compile a database on as broad a cross-section of UNB grads as possible. Do yourself, and your fellow grads, a favour by filling it out and returning it to the GSA before April 15th.

We currently serve over 700 full-time graduate students on campus. In order for this survey to give us a good representation of the graduate student population, we must sample at least 5% of same. That means it would be nice to get at least 35 of these suckers back. This will give any survey results

statistical accuracy, 19 times out of 20. We hope to get an adequate sample of every department on campus, which is the reason for individual mailings. If you are in a small department, please make sure and complete the survey. Chances are if you don't fill one out we will not be proportional to your departmental graduate student population.

There are many reasons for doing the survey. The main one is to get some feedback from you. There are sections on GSA services, campus media, demographics, finances and student-faculty relationships, to name a few. Information from the survey will be used with the aim of improving the quality of graduate student life at UNB. You will note that we do not request your name in order to remove any bias and preserve confidentiality.

The final product of this survey will be a report that will be submitted to the University with a series of recommendations on improvements that can be made to graduate student life. These will cover finances, medical/dental coverage, day care, responsibilities and working conditions, to name a few. It will also provide the GSA with future guidance in our decisions and policies affecting grads.

A lot of work has gone into setting this up, putting the actual survey together and distributing it on campus. There will still be lots of work to do when the surveys come back. Everything has to be tallied up and a report written on the results. If you are of the opinion that this is a crock of shit, then kindly pass on your survey to someone who will fill it out.

The results of the survey will

affect such things as GSA services to clubs and societies; differential fee policies; funding formulae for campus media; policies on faculty-student relations; sexual and racial harassment; grievance procedures, and the Graduate House. I hope you fill one out because I believe we can use the information to improve the graduate student experience at UNB.

If you are still a bit skeptical about filling out this survey, have a chat with any graduate student from another department or even faculty. Find out what kind of work they put into their TA or RA, and what their financial situation is? Ask them how they get along with faculty? What kind of resources do they have regarding office or lab space, and computer access? If you notice any obvious differences, that's what we're trying to help eliminate with this survey. You

might think again about sending one in.

A brief tale

So, one day, when ten, maybe fifteen years have passed, you will walk back on campus retracing old haunts. And maybe you will have a young kid with you - your kid. And you will go into an office like *The Brunswickan* and you will say "Hi, I used to work here, just come to see what it is like now." - feeling really hip. And when you are out of ear-shc, one of the bewildered staffers will exclaim: "My God, what a dork! What the hell kind of paper was this in the nineties, anyway! What a knob!" But you won't feel awful because you won't hear them. Hell of a thing eh?

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