Letter of Invitation – Interview

Support for International Graduate Students at Simon Fraser University: Perceptions of Service Value and the First Year Experience

Researcher:

Karin Kosarzova

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to understand the first year international graduate students’ experiences, successes and struggles in an effort to assist in retention. This understanding will be useful to International Services for Students (ISS) practice, future allocation of resources, and strategic programming to support students. The research will identify gaps in services required from the perspective of the students.

You have been invited to participate in this study as you are an international graduate student at Simon Fraser University. As a graduate student in Education in addition to my professional role as an International Student Advisor, I am interested in learning about the barriers and facilitators impacting on your academic success.

The findings of this project will be used in partial requirements for the completion of my Masters of Educational Leadership (Post-Secondary). The final report and results will be presented during the 2013 Summer Institute, other conferences, and publication opportunities.

Study Procedures:

You have been invited to participate in this study, which will involve being interviewed. The one-on-one interview will last approximately one hour. The interview will explore four main areas of interest: the background of the student, struggles and challenges, success and positive aspects, and services and support.

Participation in this project is entirely voluntary and it will be scheduled at a time and location that is convenient for you. You have the right not to answer any question and to withdraw from the project at any time. Your choice not to participate in this study will have no adverse impact on your employment or education at SFU or your relationship with International Student Services or academic advising in any way. There are minimal risks to you as a participant in this project.
Through participation in this project, the interview discussion may evoke some emotional responses. If this is the case I will check in with you to ensure you are comfortable and consent to continue. If needed I will refer you to an appropriate SFU support service and you will be able to remove yourself from the study if you choose to do so.

The potential benefits of this study to participants and SFU are to identify, plan, and include new services within ISS for international graduate students to accommodate their needs.

Confidentiality:

With your permission the interview will be audio recorded. All information gathered from the interview will be coded and all personal identifiers removed, which assures your confidentiality to the full extent permitted by law.

The tape from the interview and the transcript notes from the audio recording will be kept in a locked office and password protected on a computer hard drive. Only the student researcher, Karin Kosarzova and faculty supervisor, Dr. Michelle Pidgeon, will have access to the data. All personal identifiers will be removed from data. Your confidentiality will be respected during this research project and in the dissemination of its results (at no time will your name and/or affiliation) be disclosed.

Remuneration/Compensation:

For participating in this study, you will be given $10 coffee card.

Contact for information about the study:

If you have any questions about this project, please contact Karin Kosarzova at 604.831.8045 or kka11@sfu.ca. You may also contact Dr. Michelle Pidgeon, Faculty of Education, 778.782.8609 or michelle_pidgeon@sfu.ca.

Contact for concerns about the study:

If you have any concerns about your rights or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Research Ethics via e-mail dore@sfu.ca or phone 778. 782. 6593.

Many thanks for your assistance,

Karin Kosarzova