

RECRUITMENT AND MARKETING TIPS FOR GRAD PROGRAMS

CREATE A DEPARTMENTAL STRATEGY

This plan should outline tactics for the upcoming year and could include:

Student Outreach: Reaching out to bright undergraduate students in your department by:

- Developing your own key messaging to share with your best and brightest undergrad students that promotes why they should pursue grad studies at Carleton. *Key messages should focus on what makes your program distinctive and/or unique e.g. interdisciplinary, capital advantage, research opportunities, one-of-a-kind. You will also want to refer to the messages developed by FGPA.*
- Identifying top students as early as first year and assigning faculty to talk with them about pursuing graduate studies at Carleton.
- Individual faculty members mentoring strong prospective students in their classes with an eye to grad school.
- In-classroom visits by your faculty with third and fourth year classes to discuss graduate opportunities.
- Follow up on FGPA's fall letters campaign to fourth year students that reminds them of grad program possibilities
- Hosting departmental information nights or afternoon events to share information about your graduate programs.
- Ensuring that all promotional materials are available at other departmental/faculty events such as special lectures etc.
- Encouraging existing Master's and PhD students to speak at events, in classes etc. Word-of-mouth is one of the best ways to get the word out.
- Creating research opportunities for undergrad students (CUREUS initiative) that could lead to an interest in doing further research at the graduate level.
- Producing a departmental newsletter once or twice a year that includes a graduate student section.
- Hiring a photographer to take some great action shots of your students for your website. Lin can provide you with some suggested names of photographers that she has used. (Remember students need to sign consent forms)
- Posting success stories about your existing graduate students on your departmental bulletin boards and on your prospective student page on your website.

- Exploring ways of incorporating Carleton's new social media communications policy in your communiqués about your graduate programs. <http://www2.carleton.ca/socialmedia/>.
- Developing a strategy for personalized follow-up after prospective students have expressed an interest in your program(s) in order to “seal the deal.”
- Assessing tactics annually to see what recruitment strategies worked best.
- Re. PhD program recruitment, some programs have asked Advancement to share the list of their master's alumni so they can inform them about their PhD program.
- As most of our graduate programs attract a different audience, it is important for each department to consider where the best strategic marketing opportunities are. We are happy to brainstorm with you.

Your Website: It's important to create a compelling website page for your prospective grad students. This would be a natural landing page when clicking through from a social media Ad. This page should be user-friendly for prospective graduate students and contain the information they will need to have in order to consider your program. Think about the key messages you want to use as selling points and make sure that these are embedded in some fashion on your site. The Capital Advantage is a natural message. How about research opportunities/areas? Or funding opportunities? Or Carleton's emphasis on the student experience (Grad Navigate, Professional Opportunities, Grad Research Link, and more)? You may want to host a focus group of current grad students to get some feedback about your website.

Alumni: Ask for promotional and mentoring assistance from key alumni. Could be quotes and testimonials, guest talks, career-related opportunities etc. Share “Great Grad” information with the folks in Dev/Alum for their website (<http://cualumni.carleton.ca/grads/>) while ensuring that the former graduate students promoted on this site are strong ambassadors for your programs.

Research: MARKET YOUR PROGRAM THROUGH STORIES! THIS CREATES A BUZZ AND SPREADS THE WORD VIA WORD-OF-MOUTH. Share graduate student research stories with Lin Moody, Recruitment and Communications Officer in FGPA. She will then promote off FGPA website, share with Research (OVPRI), share with University Communications as pitches to external media including community newspapers; share with your Faculty Communications Officer and may include in FGPA's two newsletters (to graduate students and prospective graduate students). This kind of “earned media” is by far more valuable than paid advertising. Lin works with individual graduate students to discuss the key messages they want to share. Research stories are often a back door opportunity to get the word out about great programs and faculty. You may want to develop a systematic approach to sharing graduate students thesis topics and upcoming published articles with Lin.

3MT/Storyteller Competitions: We offer training to help students prepare for these competitions that focus on their research. Winners receive a lot of promotion which can help publicize your program and enhance your reputation.

Other News: Call Lin to share news about grad studies in your department. Over and above graduate student research, she is also interested in new initiatives, published papers by grad students (hot-off-the-press) etc. A quick trick if you are wondering if something is newsworthy: Try to think of a newspaper headline.

Student Societies: Ask relevant student groups to link to your grad program website on their Facebook page and website.

Other Universities: Share your program page (from FGPA's viewbook) with other universities (relevant faculty, departments or career centres.)

Other Groups: Share information with relevant non-profit associations, industry groups and/or relevant government departments. Bring materials with you when you attend conferences or travel. Also undergrad national student conferences in your field are a great place to get the word out. Consider a small sponsorship in return for sharing your brochures in the kits that they hand out to participants.

UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS

- Share your good news with the Media Relations Officer Steven_reid3@Carleton.ca and Manager of Public Affairs Beth.Gorham@carleton.ca. They can then help you figure out if your story would be of interest to the media and the best way to publicize (Media Advisory, News Release, Targeted media call including calling relevant community paper, Hot Topic, Web Story)
- Submit information to the Intranet for the news feed.
- Submit event/brag news to the LED/Bronson electronic signs.
- Submit public events to the university calendar:
- Graduate students who you think have a great research story to tell are welcome to attend the monthly media training courses offered by DUC. This training is useful in the development of key messages that could help promote your faculty and programs. Students are given the opportunity to do role-play interviews.
- More information is available at: [Getting the Word Out](#).

FGPA

Lin will work with you to help you develop appropriate and effective marketing campaigns for new programs, programs that need extra marketing assistance, new initiatives etc.

- Provide timely news about successful initiatives and events to Lin for posting on their website. Photos of grad students in action are welcome and may be shared with DUC (you should ensure that the students have given permission to post these photos.) As it can be confusing about where to share your good news, Lin can always help direct you to the most appropriate place(s).
- As mentioned above, provide details about graduate student research. Lin can help determine what would be the best vehicle to market this news.
- Develop specific marketing campaigns for new programs and initiatives.
- Provide up-to-date information for program pages, posters or other print publications that FGPA may produce for you or help you produce.

- Participate in FGPA-organized recruitment events. We will keep you in the loop about upcoming plans. The Carleton graduate student fair is typically held the third week in Sept. We also offer several in-person information sessions and webinars to interested prospective students.
- Persuade your prospective students to sign up for FGPA's *Connections* newsletter.
- Help develop a paid advertising campaign online (Facebook, Google Plus). Typically, FGPA funds faculty recruitment ads and ads to promote new programs.
- Discuss paid advertisements in relevant trade publications (depending on your budget priorities). A better idea is to consider submitting a story about your program (you would need a news angle)
- Meet with FGPA to talk about recruitment issues and possible solutions. This may involve a little sleuthing to determine what other programs prospective students have chosen to attend and why. FGPA sends out two letters each fall to the best and brightest 4th year Carleton students asking them to Think Carleton re. their grad studies and promissory offers (these are confirmed by the departments before sending.)
- FGPA also visits 17 plus graduate recruitment fairs every fall. These are great opportunities to market Carleton programs to students from other Canadian universities.

If you have other suggestions, please share with lin.moody@carleton.ca