

## **Thematic Summary of Student Reviewer Reflections**

### **How would you describe your recent experience as a student reviewer? What role did you play? What questions did you ask?**

- Eagerness of external and internal reviewers to hear a student perspective and to include the student reviewer in all conversations.
  - o Reviewer panel decided to let the student reviewer lead the questions when meeting with the student groups.

Questions asked by the student reviewers were typically about: supervision, opportunities for mentorship, feedback measures within the department, mental health and accessibility supports, experiential learning opportunities, clubs and sense of program community, common challenges experienced in the program.

### **Drawing from your student experience at Western, as well as this recent experience as a student reviewer, what program features and/or factors are most impactful on student learning?**

- Ensuring that students have support from the department to raise concerns or issues when they do arise.
  - o Ensuring that there are measures in place to monitor student achievement of milestones and support as needed.
- Atmosphere and culture within a program are important to student learning and student productivity, and if that is neglected, it is easy for students to stagnate in their programs.
- Experiential learning allows students to reinforce their classroom knowledge while also gaining new skills that will improve their employability.
- Feeling included within the classroom and feel that their institution is making an effort for inclusive and supportive learning.
- Mitigating stressors goes a long way in ensuring students have the time as well as the mental and emotional capacity to tackle challenging programs.

### **What do you feel are the best ways to engage students in continuous program enhancement?**

- **Students need multiple modalities or routes to give feedback. Some modalities should be anonymous.**

- Inviting students to engage in, and be at the table for, program development discussions.
- Inviting students to focus groups or townhalls regarding their program/faculty that may be hosted by students from other faculty to support the sharing of experiences.

### **Other Comments:**

- Better inform the external reviewers about the role of the student reviewers.
  - o One student reviewer mentioned that they needed to actively make space for 1-2 questions throughout the process and to ensure that they jumped in before the end of the meeting.
- Inclusion of the program's student association members in a dedicated meeting.

### **A Few Excerpts:**

*I had a fantastic experience as a student reviewer. The team that I worked with on this review was eager to include me and to ensure that the graduate student perspective was at the forefront of the review.*

*I thoroughly enjoyed this experience reviewing the \_\_\_\_\_ graduate program. I felt very well received by the people being interviewed and had the opportunity to voice my questions and discuss my opinions with other reviewers.*

*Being a student reviewer for the first time, it was a great learning experience. I thoroughly enjoyed learning the process behind program reviews and the amount of effort that is put into how to make a program better for students.*

*This was a wonderful experience in which I was made to feel really welcome and encouraged to offer my thoughts and discuss my experiences as a student. I would strongly urge my student peers to participate in such program reviews since it is an excellent way of learning about the work that goes into designing an academic program.*

**All students** who acted as student reviewers indicated that they would be interested in participating in future program review assignments.