



General Manager's Report
GSA Legal Aid Service
May 5, 2017

The GSA has offered private Legal Aid consultations to students for over 30 years. The service remained very much the same since it was initiated, with a modest update being the ability to request an appointment using an [online form](#). The GSA Legal Aid consultation sessions are offered approximately three times per term. Graduate students may request an appointment and meet with the GSA lawyer, Mr. Cameron Trotter. Students facing an issue that is time sensitive may receive a voucher for up to \$30.00 of service from Mr. Trotter. All consultations are confidential between the lawyer and the student (client).

September 2016 – April 30, 2017

Thirty-two graduate students used the Legal Aid service from May 2016 to April 30, 2017, and came in person to consult with the Mr. Trotter. Thirteen vouchers were issued for graduate students to arrange to see Mr. Trotter at his office in Kitchener. There is a drop in use of the service from last year (~90 students).

Landlord/Tenant issues make up a significant portion of the Legal Aid consultations. The GSA may consider further investigation of the housing issues of graduate students by collaborating with the University's Housing Resources (off-campus housing) to improve service to students.

Family law deals with issues of marriage, divorce, wills, and children.

Notary services capture non-academic document certifications. Several notaries are available on campus, but will only deal with academic items.

A large component of the "other" category is unknown due to lawyer and their client privilege. When warranted, the General Manager may refer students to the lawyer for more expert advice in dealing with contracts (university or employer) or to assure students that their legal issue will not specifically be tracked by anyone on campus. (Questions of human rights).

The expenditure for legal aid services for the period September 2016 – March 2017 is 92% of the budget expectation, that is, \$966.00 of the \$1050.00 forecast in the budget. This works out to be approximately \$22.50 per student.

Recommendations

The GSA:

- Continues to provide legal aid sessions two - three times per term.
- Budgets an amount for "emergency or time sensitive need" to provide vouchers. Estimate 5 x \$30.00 vouchers/term, or up to \$450.00 total per year.
- Considers a supplemental service that specifically deals with housing. This could be a seminar, information documentation, and/or continued legal referral.
- Develops a policy and procedure for the Legal Aid Service.
- Currently criminal and immigration issues are not dealt with through the GSA Legal Aid program.
- [Students having challenges with academic issues](#) may consult with the GSA General Manager for support and advice.