

Social Research Unit Department of Sociology

The Social Research Unit (SRU) was created in 1983 with a one time non-renewable grant of \$500 from the Office of the VP Research. While the SRU's mandate has been to facilitate and support Department of Sociology faculty members' research and the dissemination of findings, the SRU has expanded its operations to provide technical and infrastructural research support and assistance to faculty members from other academic units and organizations.

This space is available for the research support staff for the Department's faculty members who are conducting externally funded research. Currently, five computer workstations are housed within the SRU, with additional space for one laptop computer. In November 2009, the SRU received \$9,319.10 from the College of Arts and Science, Capital Equipment funds to support the purchase of two computer and one laptop package. Also housed within the SRU space are: a printer, secure filing cabinets for data storage and a flip chart for use with focus group discussions. Software programs currently being utilized include SPSS, EndNote and QSR NVivo (qualitative data analysis). Six phone lines are available in the SRU. In addition, the SRU has twelve cell phones that are used to conduct telephone surveys. Other research equipment includes one analogue recorder, one analogue transcriber, four micro-cassette recorders, one micro-cassette transcriber, two digital recorders, three digital transcribing kits and one digital camera. The Sociology Office oversees the loan and return of this equipment.

A key responsibility of the Director will be membership on the recently formed Social Sciences Research Committee. C. Brooks is currently chairing this committee. The committee has a broad mandate. As part of its initial, information-gathering stage, the Committee has invited several speakers to attend the meetings. These included: Carrie Winters, College Analyst; Phani Adapa, Engineering; Joe Garcea, Political Studies; Amelie Gagnon, SKY-RDC; and Stuart von Wolff, Librarian. Laura Zink, College Research Coordinator, has also shared information about upcoming issues and initiatives thought to be relevant to researchers. As well, the Committee is functioning as a clearinghouse for information about departmental initiatives (e.g., statistics and writing workshops for graduate students).

Thus far, the Committee has also: 1. Reviewed and recommended a c.v. management system; 2. Provided input into University level strategy and recommendation of internal funding programs for SSHRC researchers; 3. Supported the organization of meetings of Health Researchers to develop divisional strategies, and provided input into both University strategies and to begin exploring the impact of the change in SSHRC health related funding; 4. Approved the development of a graduate professional development seminar series and created a sub-committee to work on this initiative. All of the above were discussed by the SRU

Committee. Faculty are invited to bring their research concerns to the attention of the SRU committee.

The SRU's Director is Roanne Thomas-MacLean. Carolyn Brooks is the acting director. Liz Quinlan is serving as a committee member. Laurie Schimpf and Kristen Harms also provide support for this committee.