

Maple League Executive Director Quarterly Report

September 30, 2019



Executive Director's Quarterly Update

We've had a busy start to the academic year.

A few **highlights** include:

- Hosted a series of Maple League Town Halls September 6 – 11, 2019
- Launched a series of funds available to all members of our communities aimed at supporting research, innovative pedagogies, and travel between campuses (funds were launched September 15, 2019)
- Submitted a Letter of Intent with a request for \$500,000 over two years for ML projects (September 16) to the Future Skills Centre to increase experiential learning opportunities, especially in the humanities, across the four institutions
- Received a RBC grant of \$50,000 for Maple League access to RIIPEN, North America's largest experiential and work integrated learning platform (total funding for this project with matching funds from RIIPEN is worth \$80,000) (September 20: press release October 8)
- McConnell Foundation has awarded the Maple League \$100,000 through the RECODE program (September 26)
- CAGS Board approved a "consortium" membership fee for Maple League Institutions (September 25) and offered all Maple League members access to the membership registration fees for the upcoming conference in Halifax November 4 – 6, 2019
- Submitted four 3M National Teaching Fellowship dossiers for Maple League faculty (September 30, 2019) and one submission to AAU Teaching Award

Upcoming

- Supporting a number of student-led collaborations planned for 2019–2020, including the Up for Debate Weekend October 25 – 27, 2019
- Hosting a Retention Retreat (October 16 – 17th at Acadia University) aimed at targeting our retention challenges and sharing emerging practices and effective interventions to help students complete their degrees in a timely manner
- Leading conversations about quality undergraduate experience nationally, including a featured interview with the Conference Board of Canada, a forthcoming article from University Affairs Magazine on quality undergraduate education in Canada, and a pre-conference at Universities Canada in Ottawa
- Creating a "pathways to leadership" resource to increase the number of 3M Student Fellows, Rhodes scholars, and undergraduate research opportunities

Maple League Town Halls

In early September, we hosted a series of Town Halls facilitated by each university's President, the Executive Director, along with Maple League committee members and student representatives from each campus, to provide an update on the Maple League's activities and achievements over the past year and our objectives and aspirations as we look to the future. We were very pleased with the number of campus community members who attended the town halls (average attendance was approximately 60 attendees) and grateful for the collaboration of partners on each campus who facilitated these meetings.

We were especially excited to announce the launch of **four exciting new funding opportunities** to promote and facilitate collaborative research, innovative teaching, spring and international field study programs, and travel amongst the four campuses.



Fund Name	Available Funding	Awarding Committee
Online learning/Ideas-Based Course Fund	\$25,000	The Maple League Academic Committee
Spring Institutes & International Field Studies Fund	\$10,000	The Maple League Academic Committee
Maple League Research Fund	\$30,000	The Maple League Research Committee
Innovative Pedagogies Fund	\$10,000	The Maple League Teaching & Learning Centre (MLTLC)

Maple League Funding

On September 16, 2019 we submitted a Letter of Intent for \$500,000 over two years to Future Skills Centre

Project Overview: Due to our profile – small class sizes, small, close-knit communities, high interactions between students and faculty, rigorous extra-curricular and co-curricular programming, and a holistic approach to transformative learning and teaching – the Maple League is **particularly well suited to delivering skills development** through a 21st century liberal education, which is increasingly relevant to the workforce system; in the light of the rapidly changing employment sector, individuals must be equipped with innovation attributes, design thinking, and integrative information literacy in order to pivot in new, global marketplaces.

Our central premise is that innovative pedagogical approaches – where students are partners, collaborators, and co-designers with faculty on experiential learning and problem-based learning initiatives – develop tremendous capacities that can then be shared with workplace partners through work-integrated learning opportunities. In this model PSE institutions and workplace partners collaborate for capacity-building and resource-sharing projects that are reciprocal and mutually enriching.

RIIPEN Platform

We are thrilled that the Maple League has received \$80,000 worth of technology investment from RIIPEN (which translated into \$50,000 of funding from RBC) to share across the four campuses to pilot the RIIPEN software, an online platform for project-based experiential learning. It will allow our institutions to bring more experiential and work-integrated learning into our courses and provide support for faculty who want to incorporate industry projects and case studies more easily into the curriculum. Students work on real industry projects to gain hands-on experience, demonstrate employable skills and network with employers.

We have scheduled two information sessions on October 4th to introduce interested faculty to the platform and demonstrate how to design an experiential or capstone assignment and post it to RIIPEN's marketplace of over 3,500 industry partners.

After the first year on the platform as a pilot project, the Maple League would be eligible for annual renewal. As experiential learning is aligned with the emerging and established strategic visions of many of our universities, we are excited to see how this platform can help us with capacity building and resource sharing.

Organizational Membership as a Consortium

Quality Network of Universities (QNU):

The Maple League joined QNU this year with a 4-for-1 membership fee. Our QNU membership led to a conversation with Stephen Higham from the Conference Board of Canada, who is developing a government-funded project exploring institutional mergers in PSE; his thesis is that as PSE institutions face various pressures (financial, demographic, technological, etc.), it seems more likely that collaborative models can help resolve some of those challenges or respond to them. He was interested in highlighting the Maple League as a successful model of a consortium.

Canadian Association of Graduate Studies (CAGS):

Sally Rutherford, Executive Director of CAGS (Canadian Association for Graduate Studies) and the CAGS Board believe that the profile of the Maple League should be included in discussions around quality graduate education. We have been offered a consortium group rate, splitting the institutional membership four ways. She has invited faculty and academic leaders to attend the annual CAGS meeting in Halifax, November 6-8.

Recruitment

We had the opportunity to connect with the four Recruitment teams in advance of their fall campus tours (through direct meetings with their new team members and at the town hall sessions), and they have committed to sharing the Maple League's mission, vision and values with prospective students. We developed a summary sheet of the advantages of choosing a Maple League institution for recruiters, and each institution has dedicated space to the Maple League in their viewbook. Open house dates for the four institutions are also being added to the Maple League website.

Of note, Madison Mackenzie, Enrolment Advisor for the GTA and Western Ontario at Acadia, will be speaking at St. Clements School in Toronto on November 13th as a keynote presenter. As the guidance contact indicated that many of the students at this school would benefit from smaller, more close-knit university communities, Madison plans to highlight the Maple League's distinct advantages in this regard during her presentation.

Maple League Student Fellows

This year we are pleased to have Maple League Student Fellows join our team, who are taking the lead on a number of pillars and building capacities in fields like Communications, Event Planning, External Relations & Advocacy, Advancement, Research, and Project Management.

- *Rebecca Mesay, External Relations & Advocacy (St. Francis Xavier)*
- *Sally Cunningham, Research & Networks (Bishop's)*
- *Lauren Boulton, Advancement & Communications (Bishop's)*
- *Maia Herriot, MLTLC Fellow (Mount Allison)*

External Advocacy

With the assistance of Rebecca Mesay, our Maple League External Relations & Advocacy Student Fellow (also former St. FX Student Union President), we have contacted the Hon. Bernadette Jordan, MP for South Shore—St. Margaret's and a St. FX alumna. As Minister of Rural Economic Development, in June Minister Jordan released a new federal strategy called "Rural Opportunities, National Prosperity: An Economic Development Strategy for Rural Canada". We would like to partner with this federal office to develop a retention strategy for at-risk groups for retention (e.g., rural, lower socio-economic first generation university students). There is great interest in this initiative, although things are on hold due to the upcoming federal election.

Maple League Committees

The following structural committees are fully populated and meeting regularly:

- Academic Committee
- Research Committee
- Teaching and Learning Committee
- Student Advisory Committee

As mentioned at the Town Halls, the Academic Committee is responsible for the oversight of the Online Learning/Ideas-based Course Fund (\$25,000) and the Spring Institutes and International Field Studies Fund (\$10,000). The Teaching and Learning Committee is responsible for the Innovative Pedagogies Fund (\$10,000) and the Research Committee is responsible for the Research Fund (\$30,000).

3M Nominations

The Maple League has committed to supporting the 3M nomination of four faculty members from across the four campuses this fall, a submission to AAU Teaching Award.

3M Student Fellow Nominations

We have been working with student affairs teams and student partners to identify institutional champions and develop Maple League resources to support nominations to the 3M National Student Fellowship program this year (application deadline: January 31, 2020).

Resources include a 3M student mentoring network of past 3M student fellows, handbooks to steward successful applications (which include successful dossiers with tips and advice highlighting the elements of these essays that were high-scoring), and webinars for the mentors, nominators and applicants. The first webinar will be held Friday, October 25, using the four telepresence rooms.

Fall Calendar of Events

Fall 2019 Maple League TLC Brown Bag Lunch Series

The first brown bag event in the series was held September 13 with several more lined up for the coming months; these take place from 11:30-12:15 ET/12:30-1:15 AT.



<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>
September 13	Elizabeth Well and Toni Robert (Mount Allison): “The Feminist Classroom”
October 4	Jerald Sabin (Bishop’s University): “Reconciliation and Canadian Political Science”
November 1	Erin Austin, Riley Chisholm and Corinne Cash (St. FX): “Building sustainability into the curriculum”
December 6	Maple League TLC Book Club: <i>The Heart of Higher Education</i> , Parker Palmer
January	TBA

International Visiting Scholar : The MLTLC has also invited Peter Felten, one of the most influential thinkers, researchers, and advocates for quality undergraduate education, for a Maple League tour in February 15 – 19, 2020. He is Executive Director of the Center for Engaged Learning, and also Assistant Provost for Teaching and Learning and Professor of History at Elon University. We will combine his visit with Maple League Teaching and Learning Week 2020.

Retention Retreat at Acadia: October 16/17, 2019 at Acadia

Representatives from the four Student Affairs teams and the Registrars will meet for a retreat aimed at targeting our retention challenges and sharing emerging practices and effective interventions to help students complete their degrees in a timely manner. Jim Black, an internationally recognized expert in retention, will lead discussions in the morning and facilitate an emerging strategic vision for Maple League Retention.

Up for Debate Weekend: Fall Edition October 25 – 27, 2019

Based on feedback from the Winter 2019 organizers and participants, it was decided to change the timing of this event so that it is held in the Fall semester.

On the weekend of October 25-27th, students and faculty from the Maple League schools will gather at Bishop's for Up for Debate. This year's theme is "The Maple League is committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion".

The program for the weekend will include the debate tournament, TEDxBishopsU talks, a business case competition and social events designed to forge and deepen connections between the students of the four universities.

Universities Canada Pre-Conference Event: October 28, 2019

We have had an excellent response to this event, with 25 presidents confirmed to date.

Event details:

Monday, October 28, 2019
Fairmont Château Laurier
Pre-conference event: 1:30-4:30 pm (Tudor Room)
Reception: 4:30-6:30 pm (L'Orangerie Room)

Some possible outcomes include:

- Identifying a national initiative that would benefit undergraduate education in Canada
- Initiating an assessment of strengths and weaknesses of liberal education and how we ensure its relevance to the 21st century economy and society
- Work towards an Action Plan for advocacy and outreach on identifying the most significant projects/topics that would benefit from a concerted collaboration across multiple institutions

Student Voices Symposium: November 14 – 15, 2019

The Maple League was invited to present at this event following the organizers' interest in one of Dr. Riddell's articles in *University Affairs*, *Using Productive Disruption in Higher Education*. The [Student Voices in Higher Education: Quality Assurance Perspectives and Practices Symposium](#) will take place on November 14 and 15, 2019 in Toronto.

Hosted jointly by Humber and Centennial Colleges, the symposium plans “to disrupt traditional higher education quality assurance practices by promoting the inclusion of the student voice in the process.”



Two of our Maple League Student Fellows, Rebecca Mesay and Lauren Boulton, will present with Dr. Riddell on the following topic:

Maple League of Universities: Building Partnerships for Extraordinary Student Experiences

Presentation summary: The Maple League is an organization with scope and complexity, and navigates diverse sectors at a high level as well as through grassroots conversations in order to align multiple institutional cultures and governance structures that make each institution unique. Balancing transparency and accountability while navigating sometimes fraught conceptual terrains and politically sensitive landscapes is an ongoing challenge. The Maple League is committed to designing and deploying metrics to measure impact and quality assurance.