

Maple League of Universities Monthly Report

May 31, 2021



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Executive Director's Note:

In the past year we've made tremendous progress in collaborative alliances across the universities. The consortium has established connections essential to building and sustaining robust integrated networks. The Maple League is a diverse social network that energizes cross-connections, improves knowledge sharing and mobilization, and enhances learning across grassroots microcultures (cf. Cross & Parker, 2004; Hannah & Lester, 2009; Roxå et al., 2011). We've taken a social networks approach to higher education in its many forms and professional practices, which has started to have impact at the institutional, consortia, and national levels.

The Maple League is fueled by a wonderful group of leaders and volunteers who chair the three robust and active committees: Anna Redden, Maple League Research Committee; Mark Adam, Maple League Academic Committee; Toni Roberts and Erin Austen, Maple League Teaching and Learning Committee. These leaders, in addition to the generous project leads across a wide range of initiatives, act as 'social architects and orchestrators' in 'developing individual support and effective social networks' that serve to promote mentorship, learning, and engagement (Hannah & Lester 2009).

These leaders encourage change at the institutional level and across the Maple League as we seek to move beyond the "way it has always been" into new spaces where universities can be on the frontline of social and economic renewal, research and innovation, and preparing our graduates for complex social change. We have been open to doing things differently, whether that is sharing courses across universities, investing in inclusive high-impact practices, leading conversations in quality undergraduate education, and creating virtual spaces that foster innovation, not just at individual institutions, but across the post-secondary sector.

The key to our success, now and in the future, is alignment: we identify an opportunity or challenge, consult current research and good practices to glean insights, design programs adapted to our particular institutional contexts, assess the impact, and share these lessons with others. This approach enables the Maple League to be nimble, responsive, and adaptive in a time of tremendous upheaval in the Post-Secondary Education Sector.

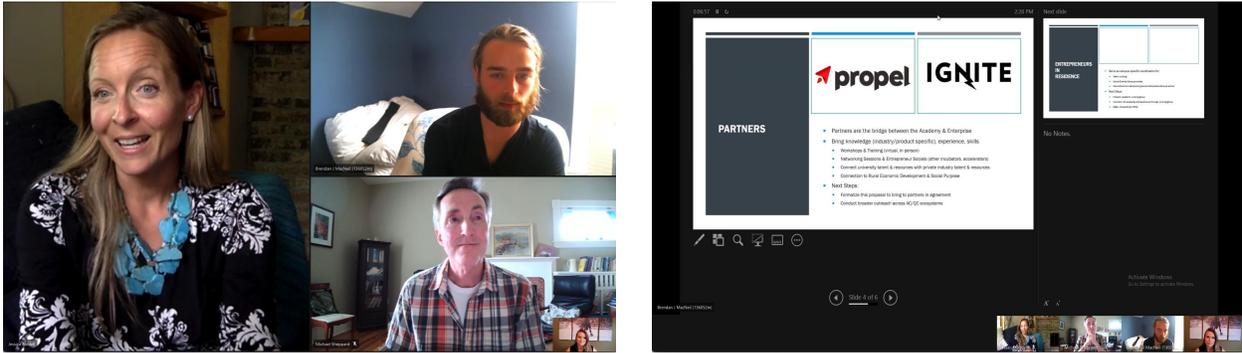
Moving forward, a fundamental question we must ask is, how can we design post-COVID universities that are more just, equitable, and future-facing? The answer is complex and multi-pronged, but the values are fundamental. I am incredibly proud of what we've accomplished this month and this year, and look forward to moving together into the summer and beyond with such inspiring colleagues and thought partners – from staff to students, faculty to administrators, alumni, and community partners. We truly are better together.

~ Dr. Jessica Riddell, Executive Director, Maple League of Universities

I. Extraordinary Student Experiences

The PATH Project Nears Launch Across the Maple League

The Path has entered its final stage of production prior to launch: creating our virtual platform. This will host all of our resources that student entrepreneurs have access to, from connecting with alumni, industry partners, and viewing and sharing each other's projects. The website will be the hub of our network, enabling students to gain knowledge and skills through Lean Stack Academy, form connections within our network, and ultimately, have a shared space for entrepreneurship and the virtual development of their enterprises. We are working to continue reaching out and growing the number of partners and student entrepreneurs we have contributing to and participating in the network for members to have access to prior to our Fall Launch, 2021.



Maple League Fellows End of Term Reflections

The Maple League Student Fellows finished their respective terms on April 30th, concluding their fellowships for the academic year. For the Fellows, this included writing transition documents for their projects, submitting a year-end impact report, as well as engaging in individualized exit interviews to help reflect on the learning and transformative experiences of the past year. The fellows have contributed in many ways to both their campus communities as well as the Maple League as an interconnected hub of communities. Their final impact report will be published, accompanied by a spotlight blog series in June. Watch for their testimonials on our channels soon!



II. Faculty and Staff Engagement

Maple League Research

Maple League Canadian Research Chairs Meet to Strengthen and Build Relationships

On Wednesday May 19, nine of the thirteen Canada Research Chairs (CRC) from the four Maple League Universities gathered virtually for the first time to network, share experiences, and build relationships. They were joined by the research administrators of the four institutions in a lively and stimulating discussion on a range of issues from researching in a pandemic to possible cross-institutional collaboration.

At the opening of the meeting, Dr. Anna Redden, Dean of Research and Graduate Studies at Acadia University and Chair of the Maple League Research Committee, spoke to the group and stressed that Maple League universities with five CRCs or fewer were uniquely positioned to cross-mentor and support their chairs. Bringing together the new Chairs with some of the veterans provides an opportunity to exchange ideas and support CRCs at our individual universities.

The newly formed Maple League CRC Network, which represents a broad range of research activities across the faculties, noted the benefits of meeting on a regular basis (two or three times a year) and to focus each gathering on specific issues, so that both opportunities (e.g. collaborative grant applications) and challenges



could be addressed in a timely and meaningful manner. There was also discussion about bringing the research staff from the Maple League universities together to share and discuss practices and support mechanisms for CRCs and other faculty. Among topics discussed was the importance of cross-campus education to better inform students and faculty about the unique and specific role of Canada Research Chairs in building research strength and capacity.

Dr. Mary Sweatman Represents Atlantic Region in CCEC Event

Dr. Mary Sweatman (Acadia) is leading a Maple League supported SSHRC funded project that supports community-campus partnerships. The Seizing the Moment project (may 25 - 26, 2021) hosted by the [Community Engagement and Research Centre](#) at the University of Regina and [Community Campus Engage Canada](#) (CCEC) with support from a number of Maple League faculty, including Dr. Sweatman, Dr. Fox (MtA), and Dr. Cash (St. FX)). CCEC supports community-driven collaboration with post-secondary institutions through an extensive network and knowledge-sharing community across Canada.



This past year the pandemic exposed long-standing vulnerabilities for many non-profit organizations and marginalized populations. As organizations work to deliver essential services with inadequate resources, the pandemic has also prompted a renewed commitment by universities and colleges to work with their communities to identify research priorities that effectively respond to local challenges and opportunities.

The Seizing the Moment project involves several knowledge-exchange and networking activities to deepen understanding of pandemic impacts in communities and inspire community-campus partnerships for collaborative paths forward. This project will include activities such as the event that occurred in May, a Summer/Fall series of post-workshop discussion sessions, and a [project web page](#).

Dr. David Bruce Shares CCV Knowledge Across the Maple League

Dr. David Bruce, Director of Research Grants at St. Francis Xavier, held three workshops on the Canadian Common CV (CCV) for Maple League faculty and research teams this month. These webinars covered all aspects of how the CCV is set-up and used, with particular attention paid to how best to maximize each part of the CCV as part of a grant application.

These webinars provided useful and timely advice to all, as aspects of the program continue to evolve and change over time. Participants who already had a CCV in the system were also able to send their CCV to Dr. Bruce before or after the workshop for review, in order to identify items that are missing and/or that could be added, changed, expanded, to give participants an advantage in their submissions.

CCV Workshops
Tips to best maximize each part of the CCV as part of a grant application and more!



Dr. David Bruce
 Director of Research Grants

High Impact Practices Report Released

As four primarily undergraduate liberal arts institutions, teaching across the Maple League is one of our greatest strengths. However, teaching is fundamentally a scholarly endeavour supported by research, theoretical design principles, and evidence-based approaches. High Impact Practices (HIPs) represents a huge body of research about transformative learning. In a recent research project steered by Dr. Jessica Riddell, two Maple League Student Fellows, Tiffany and Tanisha, completed a year-long research project on High Impact Practices across the Maple League, interviewing dozens of faculty members on their perspectives on innovative teaching experiences. Through these conversations, we heard exciting and inspiring stories of teaching HIPs at the Maple League – stories that should be shared and celebrated. The High-Impact Practice Visibility Project was created to share what teaching at the Maple League looks like to celebrate and mobilize our teaching practices and inspire others to integrate HIPs into their classrooms. The spotlight series has been rolling out all term, and the launch of the report offers an expansive and inspiring document that yields rich insights into what makes the four universities in the Maple League leaders in quality undergraduate education in Canada and beyond. This report will be shared widely via our website soon!

Acadia University Hosts a Fundraising A.I. Forum

This event, shared across the Maple League alumni and advancement teams, was organized by Dr. Greg Lee, Assistant Professor in the Jodrey School of Computer Science at Acadia University and Lead Data Scientist at Fundmetric, and served as a collaborative discussion about the most innovative solutions nonprofits can use to overcome the barriers of Artificial Intelligence (A.I.).



LIKE NOWHERE ELSE

The Fundraising A.I. Forum gave nonprofit leaders access to the latest technology and repositioned the nonprofit sector from being under-served to first in line to access experts. Framed from the outset on the ethics and digital challenges faced by nonprofits, Acadia University and Fundmetric brought together leaders in planned giving, major gifts, donor retention, donor experience and A.I. adoption experts for an unforgettable experience. All sessions were transcended by an emphasis on diversity and inclusion and how they serve as a tenant of anti-bias both for machine learning and beyond.

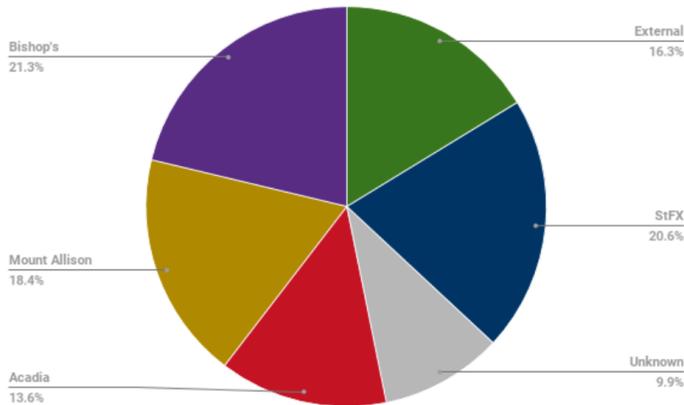
Anniversary of the Virtual Maple League Teaching and Learning Centre (V_MLTLC)

In May 2020 the Maple League received a one-year funding envelope from the McConnell Foundation to support the creation of a collaborative infrastructure that would help us build a stronger community post-COVID. The V_MLTLC officially launched June 1, 2020 and provided a virtual hub of curated and specially created resources tailored to the institutional model shared by the four Maple League universities, which includes a focus on small classes, experiential learning and extra-curricular engagement, community-based learning, and relationship-rich learning environments. The V_MLTLC is a grassroots, faculty-led virtual space that supports faculty and staff as they prepare for the design and delivery of courses in the 21st-century. In honour of the anniversary of the V_MLTLC, we have created a snapshot of the tremendous impact this space had on our communities over the last year. See impact on the next page:

**VIRTUAL MAPLE LEAGUE
TEACHING AND LEARNING CENTRE**

June 2020 - March 2021 accomplishments at a glance

Engaging faculty, staff and students from:



External participants
joining from

46 Colleges & Universities

- Amherst College
- Arizona State University
- British Columbia Institute of Technology
- Brock University
- Cape Breton University
- Carleton University
- Concordia University
- Dalhousie University
- Dawson College
- Fanshawe College
- Harvard University
- Indiana University
- Laurentian University
- Loyola University Chicago
- Manchester Metropolitan University
- McGill University
- Mount Saint Vincent University
- Memorial University of Newfoundland
- Nipissing University
- Northern Illinois University
- Northern Ontario School of Medicine
- Nova Scotia Community College
- OCAD University

588
unique participants

48
book club meetings with
over 120 registrants

75
teaching and learning webinars

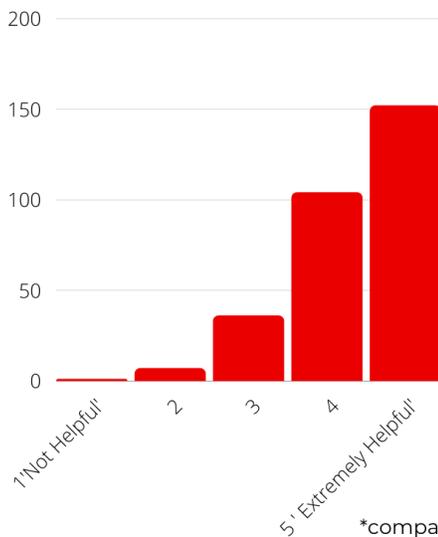
2,000+
asynchronous views

4
3M National Student
Fellowship recipients in 2020*

3
3M National Student
Fellowship recipients in 2021*

2
3M National Teaching
Fellowship recipients in 2021**

When asked in a post-session survey, **85.3%** of respondents said our pedagogical support webinar series session was 'very' or 'extremely' helpful.



*compared to 4 recipients from the Maple League from 2012-2019
**compared to 11 recipients from the Maple League from 1986-2020

- Queen's University
- Red Deer College
- Red River College
- Saint Mary's University
- Thompson Rivers University
- Université Laval
- University of Alberta
- University of British Columbia
- University of Exeter
- University of King's College
- University of Leeds
- University of Lethbridge
- University of Manitoba
- University of Maryland
- University of Northern British Columbia
- University of Prince Edward Island
- University of Toronto
- University of Vermont
- University of Waterloo
- University of Windsor
- Weihestephan-Triesdorf University
- Yale University
- York University



III. External Engagement

Maple League International Teams Collaborate on Outbound Student Mobility

Members of the international offices across the Maple League are collaborating on a joint proposal to Universities Canada in an effort to bolster Outbound Student Mobility across the Maple League and develop a program around the intersection of international themes and Indigenization. The group is comprised of Anthony Adey (Director of Student Recruitment at Acadia University), Michael Holmes (International Admissions and Exchange Program Officer at Acadia University), Annick Corbeil (Manager of Student Life at Bishop’s University), Robin Walker (International Programs Coordinator at Mount Allison University), and Larissa Strong (Director of Internationalization at StFX University), with Mark Adam (Chair of the Maple League Academic Committee) acting in an advisory capacity regarding Maple League Courses.



Better Together Series Hosts CEWIL to Support External Funding for Curricular Learning

On Thursday, May 27, the Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning (CEWIL) Canada team shared a Maple League supported presentation about their new call for proposals for its Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) Innovation Hub (iHub). The CEWIL iHub is funded in part by the Government of Canada’s Innovative Work-Integrated Learning Initiative (I-WIL). CEWIL’s mission is to build the capacity to develop future-ready students through quality work-integrated learning. The CEWIL iHub will operate as a centre of expertise that provides grant-based funding to enable and promote curricular work-integrated learning (WIL). This funding prioritizes the following types of WIL: Applied Research (Industry) Projects, Entrepreneurial WIL, Field Placements and Service Learning (Community-based Learning). As one of the core goals of the program is expanding access to WIL, a minimum of 20% of the funded iHUB opportunities will be for under-represented students. Visit the [website](#) for more information, including the applicant guide, FAQs and budget template. Proposals will be accepted until June 15, 2021 at 11:59 PM EDT.

Maple League OLTC Phase II Progress

The month of May has been dedicated to the early stages of rolling out the externally funded (BHER) OLTC Program Phase II, and things are well underway across the Maple League.

Specifically we have:

- Recruited OLTCs (students from the Bishop's Phase I) to reflect on lessons learned since the program's inception June 2020. The senior OLTCs are steering the following projects:
 - Consolidating and sorting needs assessments for each department,
 - Creating blog posts about the learning journeys
 - Recommending logistical changes to improve the OLTC program,
 - Helping enhance forms, registration process, hour reporting, data hosting and analytics, project leaders, accountability etc.
- Connected with the six returning Bishop's OLTCs
- Started to centralize all resources from the pilot for use in the expansion;
- Trained new project leaders with a shared vision between the OLTC program and the Virtual Maple League Teaching and Learning Centre;
- Facilitated consultations from key stakeholder across the Maple League

As part of the Business Higher Education Round Table (BHER) funding, the Maple League is able to expand the team for the 2021-2022 year. Over the coming year the Maple League will benefit from people within the Maple League and beyond to help us think about strategy and advancement, faculty engagement, program management, and program coordination for the Maple League OLTC Phase II. We will benefit from diverse perspectives to support strategy and design thinking, Maple League courses, teaching and learning credentials/certificates, and the research and stewardship of new projects across the Maple League. We had many enthusiastic and qualified people inquire about opportunities to work at the Maple League, many noting that we offer flex hours and the chance to work from home, career development focused on future job readiness and the joy quotient that comes with working on innovative and emerging projects. Specific hires and details regarding their roles will be announced in the coming months on our channels so stay tuned!

Appendix A: Social Media Update

This month we had more consistent posting which led to high engagement and interaction numbers across channels. Below is impression growth on our LinkedIn as well as the top tweets for the month celebrating our student fellows and the Bishop’s OLTC Pilot Program.

Top Tweet earned 6,706 impressions

Congrats to our wonderful student fellows who are graduating today!

Lara Hartman (@acadiau), Brendan MacNeil (@acadiau) & Addy Strickland (@stfxuniversity) have been valuable thought partners during their time with us & we wish them the best in their post-grad endeavours! pic.twitter.com/y7wQHrxS9z



3 replies 25 likes

[View Tweet activity](#)

[View all Tweet activity](#)

Top media Tweet earned 2,254 impressions

The @UBishops Online Learning & Technology Consultants project provided students with key WIL experiences where they supported professors in designing & delivering extraordinary 21st-century undergraduate.

When asked about the BU OLTC program Dr. @HeatherLawford had this to say: pic.twitter.com/1ZHywvRnE6

"The [OLTC program] was the most powerful tool in my toolbox Fall [2020]. I highly recommend [the program] and you'll find that the [OLTCs] will really expand your mind in terms of what's possible in your classroom this fall and beyond."



1 reply 9 likes

[View Tweet activity](#)

[View all Tweet activity](#)



3.6K ▲ 101%

Post impressions

4 ▲ 300%

Custom button clicks

Appendix B: Maple League Canadian Research Chairs (CRC) Profiles

Dr. Katie Aubrecht, St. Francis Xavier University Tier 2 – Health Equity and Social Justice

Dr. Katie Aubrecht is Canada Research Chair Tier II Health Equity and Social Justice and Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia, where she supervises students and teaches courses in the areas of mental health and society, disability and culture, race and identity, social theory, and social policy.



Dr. Aubrecht’s CRC research program uses an intersectional approach informed by sociological, disability studies, gerontological, and participatory, decolonizing and arts-informed theories and qualitative research methods to map and analyze marginality, mental health, and resilience across the life span. The overall purpose of this research is to generate new knowledge to enhance the quality of mental health care, and the self-perceived mental health and wellness, of diverse populations living in rural communities, with a focus on Atlantic Canada. This program is supported by the Spatializing Care: Intersectional Disability Studies Lab. As Scientific Director of the Spatializing Care Lab, Dr. Aubrecht has developed a participatory arts-informed health research infrastructure to promote and enhance meaningful and ethical community engaged research that bridges medical, social, and cultural approaches to mental health care. The lab models accessible and inclusive research practice, training, and mentorship.

Dr. Aubrecht is a Women in Media Fellow, Brian Mulroney Institute of Government Resident Fellow, and an alumnus of the inaugural cohort of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Institute of Health Services and Policy Research (IHSPR) Health System Impact (HSI) Fellows. She is Chair of the Policy Domain Area Committee of the Canadian Accessibility Network, and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Science Lead and Associate Scientist with the Maritime Strategy for Patient Oriented Research (SPOR) SUPPORT Unit. Dr. Aubrecht is also a CIHR IHSPR Institute Advisory Board Member and has served as Board Director with Mental Health Research Canada, President and Executive Board Member of the Canadian Disability Studies Association, and Board Director with Eviance: Canadian Centre on Disability Studies.

She is co-editor of the book *The Aging-Disability Nexus* (2020) and has published in journals such as *International Journal of Health Policy & Management*, *Healthcare Policy: Health Services, Management and Policy*, *Review of Disability Studies: An International Journal*, *Intersectionalities: A Global Journal of Social Work Analysis, Research, Polity and Practice*, and *Studies in Social Justice*. Additional information: www.katieaubrecht.ca

Dr. Jonathan Langdon

Tier 2 - Sustainability and Social Change Leadership

Translocal learning is an approach to solving complex global challenges, such as climate change or poverty. It takes place when social movements and groups at the local level learn from each other and share their knowledge with other like-minded groups. Dr. Langdon is looking at how translocal learning spaces are effecting change as people around the globe work to tackle the sustainability challenges that confront them. Langdon and his research team hope that documenting this ongoing horizontal learning will help them understand how social movements learn from one another without losing sight of the particularities of their own struggles. Their findings will also help us understand how sustainability efforts at the local level can confront climate change and other complex challenges.



The Translocal learning network that has emerged from Dr. Langdon's work has had several impacts that are already emerging. First, effective new strategies to content with challenges have been documented through the engagement of this network. For instance, during the ongoing COVID crisis, movements in different parts of Africa, as well as in North American brought their experiences of organizing during lockdowns and social distancing together and inspired each other with new ways to keep their movement momentum. Second, the increase in solidarity where members have deepened their understanding of how complex challenges like climate change and COVID are affecting others, has been well documented. Finally, the use of online technology in this chair has further helped this network to weather these challenges through mutual support.