

Maple League of Universities Quarterly Report
July 1, 2021 - September 30, 2021



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Executive Director's Note:

The last three months have been a period of growth, reflection, and future-facing planning. Indeed, the summer was a period where a number of projects came to fruition.

For example, several faculty-led projects were funded through CEWIL (Co-operative, Experiential, Work-Integrated Learning), including two Maple League specific projects. 18 projects supported by the Maple League were awarded funding, with varying levels of consortium support in grant design and submission. Two Maple League collaborative projects – The Path and the OLTC curricular initiative – received CEWIL grants for a total of \$400,000. The Path, an Acadia-led initiative, builds capacities for student entrepreneurs across the four campuses, and the OLTC project - jointly led by Mt.A with support from the consortium - creates innovative work-integrated learning experiences where students are partners in the pedagogical and technological design of classrooms.

The CEWIL grants are remarkable because they are “direct benefit”. This model of grants has the potential to make high-impact practices more accessible for first-generation and BIPOC students: this funding helps cover tuition rebates, provides access to technology, offers money for childcare, and helps to defray transportation costs. Direct benefit to students under these categories helps dismantle WIL barriers for historically excluded groups.

Furthermore, Maple League projects have started to emerge from communities of practice: these groups (drawn from diverse disciplines and professional practices) have built trusting and collaborative relationships; many of these groups have been inspired to share best practices, tackle wicked problems, and even create joint proposals for external funding. The International Offices, for example, created a joint proposal related to decolonizing education abroad. We look forward to sharing this project and other exciting initiatives as they emerge.

This quarter we have also been attentive to the growing pains of a consortium that only a few years ago was a great idea but didn't operate in practice. In a few short years, we've grown the Maple League across many spheres. We can now say, with grounded confidence, that together we have positioned ourselves as leaders in conversations around quality undergraduate education. As we look forward, strategic visioning for 2021 and beyond has been front of mind. We've engaged a number of diverse thought partners – via in-person and virtual consultation spaces – to think about who we are and who we want to *be*.

This is an exciting time, and we are undertaking a strategic visioning process with a curiosity-driven approach that values learning over knowing, privileges process over product, and keeps us open to new ideas and new ways of learning and knowing. As an academic consortium, this work is informed by research drawn from diverse philosophers, scholars, and leaders. Minouche Shafik (Director of the London School of Economics), reflects:

“In the past, jobs were about muscles, now they’re about brains, but in the future, they’ll be about the heart.”

Heart is a recurring theme in the literature on educational leadership. Parker Palmer, the influential philosopher and higher education guru, titled his highly influential book *The Heart of Higher Education*. Brene Brown, in her popular series *Daring to Lead*, says this:

“When we imprison the heart, we kill courage. In the same way that we depend on our physical heart to pump life-giving blood to every part of our body, we depend on our emotional heart to keep vulnerability coursing through the veins of courage and to engage in all the behaviours we talk about being necessary for good work: Trust, innovation, creativity, accountability.”

Indeed, at the core of my educational leadership is the idea that the **heart and mind** are inextricably bound in the pursuit of knowledge – both in its acquisition and creation. This is messy, transformative work that necessitates the courage and vulnerability to say “I don’t know.” Indeed, the research on leadership bears this out. As Brene Brown remarks,

“the best, most transformational leaders do not have answers, they have just stunning, I mean, breath-taking questions. That’s where their strategic thinking capacity is revealed, that’s where their ability to work and understand and break apart conceptually complex ideas shines.”

As we move into the fall, we carry the words of Einstein with us. He said, “If I had an hour to solve a problem, I’d spend 55 minutes defining the problem and five minutes solving it.” In the next few months, we will continue to invest in problem identification and definition in order to tackle “wicked problems” in higher education and in our broader society. We do this by being proactive and strategic, designing systems that will enable us to be thoughtful and decisive, bold and courageous. Above all, we engage in this work collaboratively with an open heart and the vulnerability to be learners.

Here’s to being brave and kind together.

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

I. Extraordinary Student Experiences

OLTC Program Expansion

The OLTC Program provides full-time summer employment to 16 students

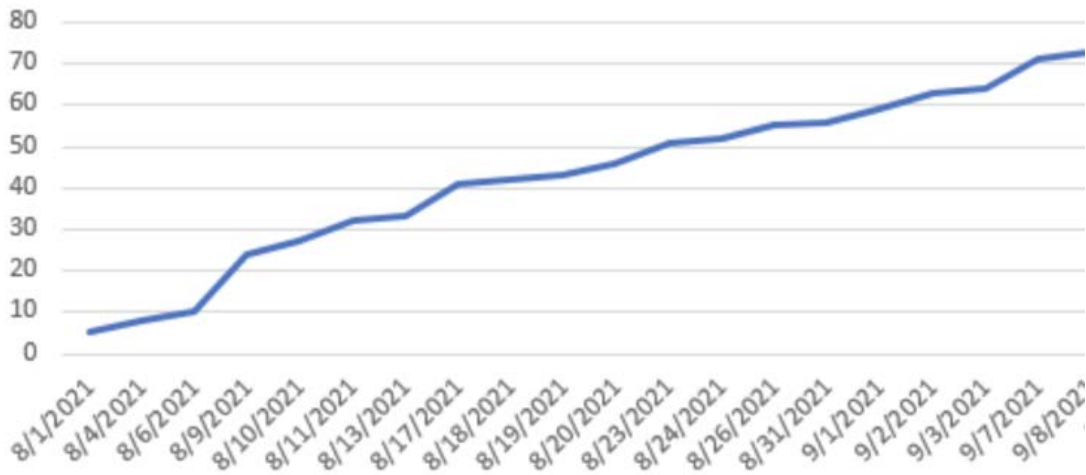
We designed and delivered an intensive two-week OLTC Orientation for our new cohort of 13 OLTCs (July 23- August 6, 2021). Through a variety of synchronous sessions, guided and self-guided asynchronous modules, hands-on workshops, and group work with faculty mentors, these OLTCs developed key transferable skills in the following areas:

- Accessibility
- Course Planning
- Creative Commons & Copyright
- Critical Empathy
- Critical Reflective Practice
- Culturally Responsive Pedagogies
- Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion in the Classroom
- Formative and Summative Assessment
- High-Impact Practices
- Hopeful Pedagogy
- Learning-Centered Syllabi
- Live and Pre-recorded Lecture Capture
- LMS and other edu-technologies
- Resilient Pedagogy
- Universal Design for Learning
- And more!



OLTCs Support 70 faculty and over 100 Courses in August

Following their Orientation, OLTCs across the four institutions have been hard at work supporting faculty for their Fall 2021 Courses. To date, OLTCs have supported and continue to work with **70 course instructors** to support **123 courses**.



OLTC program launches a new website to enhance faculty outreach

The OLTC Communications Fellow—Emma Trumble—has been redesigning the website so that we have a centralized virtual space to share our work and so that the program can serve each of the universities (with individualized sign-up forms to make it easy for course instructors to work with OLTCs at their institution).



Home Acadia Bishop's Mount Allison St. FX How Can We Help? Meet the group History Maple League Blog Resources



The Path Secures \$230,000 from CEWIL to Support Student Entrepreneurs

The Path has been preparing for their fall launch this quarter, with director Dr. Michael Sheppard (Acadia) and Student Manager Brendan MacNeil (recent Acadia grad) leading the charge.

Funding from the Maple

League will enable the support of up to 25 additional non-curricular entrepreneurs regardless of program or level of experience. Recruitment has begun the past two weeks with a Launch event featuring a panel on entrepreneurship on

September 15th which can be viewed [here](#). The deadline to apply is September 24th and students can join by signing up [here](#) or by enrolling in an entrepreneurship course at their university.



Funding through CEWIL Canada totalling \$230k will support an additional 150 curricular student entrepreneurs fall semester across the Maple League. The courses included will be those running this fall at Bishop's and Acadia, with hopes for additional funding for next semester to support courses running at all four schools. A key focus of this funding is an \$800 stipend per student for working on their startup, and \$40,000 for events & professional fees, attending workshops, panels, and a final pitch-day for entrepreneurs at the end of the semester.

Student Entrepreneurs In Residence have been recruited and begun working to support entrepreneurship at three of the four schools: Mika Rohac (BBA-Finance, Bishops), Hunter Gibbons (BBA, Mt. A), and Brogan O'Brian (BBA-Entrepreneurship, Acadia). EIRs play an important role of peer mentors to student entrepreneurs and assist in programming and promotions for the incubator.

The Path has also finalized its key partnerships with the Dobson-Lagasse-Entrepreneurship Centre (Bishops), Acadia Entrepreneurship Centre (Acadia), and Discoverbox (St. FX). These key partners will provide programming and additional support for student entrepreneurs. Lastly, The Path has partnered with PropellCT to provide students with the opportunity to participate in a larger accelerator program upon graduation from university.

Maple League Courses Have New Systems in Place for Future Scaling

With online teaching the norm, last year was a great opportunity to learn about how shared courses work best, and the systems needed to support them. The 2021-2022 school year saw a large shift back into classrooms, and a corresponding contraction in the number of courses that can be offered across the Maple League – but the courses which were offered are strong exemplars of the innovative, rewarding courses that are well suited to be shared across the Maple League:

We connected 34 students with the opportunity to find new colleagues, new mentors, and new ideas from other campuses!

Faculty Excellence Lead Neil Silcox and Strategy and Advancement Lead Lauren Boulton have also been meeting regularly with the

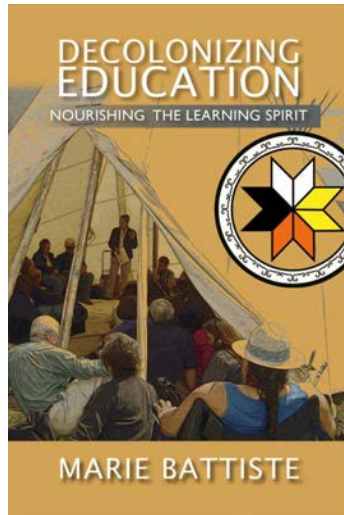
Registrars and the Maple League Academic Committee to develop new systems and tools to simplify the process of offering Maple League Shared Courses.

FAQs for students and faculty were updated, automated systems are being explored for collecting information on new courses, new frameworks for promoting courses are being developed, and timelines have been rearranged to both lessen workloads and improve engagement.



II. Faculty and Staff Engagement

V_MLTLC Offers Robust Professional Development Opportunities for Faculty and Staff



The Maple League Book Club Launches its Fall Season with 61 Participants

Faculty, staff, and students from across the Maple League and beyond gathered virtually to start reading Marie Battiste’s Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the Learning Spirit. Divided into five sections of 10-14 participants each, these groups will meet bi-weekly to support and challenge one another, and to imagine new, better ways to teach our students.

The Better Together builds on summer success with an exciting Fall Season



August saw the launch of the Better Together Summer Season, with four online sessions sharing wisdom from professors and students, part-time faculty and outside artists. Feedback on these sessions was terrific, with one anonymous respondent saying,

“These sessions show the vast variety of people, interests and experiences of the Maple League, and give hope for the things we can do and where we can go in the future.”

~ Anonymous Better Together Feedback

The fall season will continue this work, with six invigorating, critically hopeful sessions:

- September 23rd - *Educating for Compassionate Communities of Interdependence* (Mary Sweatman, Gabrielle Donnelly, and John Colton – Acadia)
- October 7th - *Goofball Pedagogy: Authentic Teaching for Authentic Learning* (Courtney Plante – Bishop’s)
- October 21st - *EDID in Teaching and Learning* (Toni Roberts – MTA)
- November 4th - *Innovative Engagement: 21st Century Lecturing Tools & Strategies* (Donna Trembinski & Russell Wyeth – StFX)
- November 18th - *Maple League Hosts: Socially-Just Pedagogy & the Future of Universities* (David Horsnby – Carleton’s VP Teaching & Learning)

BETTER TOGETHER		
   Sep. 23 EDUCATING FOR COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES OF INTERDEPENDENCE	 Oct. 7 GOOFBALL PEDAGOGY: AUTHENTIC TEACHING FOR AUTHENTIC LEARNING	 Oct. 21 E.D.I.D. IN TEACHING & LEARNING
  Nov. 4 INNOVATIVE ENGAGEMENT: 21ST CENTURY LECTURING TOOLS & STRATEGIES	 Nov. 18 MAPLE LEAGUE HOSTS: SOCIALLY-JUST PEDAGOGY & THE FUTURE OF UNIVERSITIES	  Dec. 2 ACCESSIBILITY AS COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE

- December 2nd - *Accessibility as Collaborative Practice* (Katie Aubrecht & Erin Austen – StFX, Mary Ellen Donnan – Bishop’s, Jane Dryden – MTA, and Cynthia Bruce – formerly of Acadia)

These sessions will once again prove that we really are better together.

“[Better Together is] the perfect antidote to this long pandemic!”

~ *Anonymous Better Together Feedback*

The Maple League Micro-Certificate in Teaching and Learning Welcomes its First Cohort

After almost a year in development, the Maple League Teaching and Learning Committee launched the Micro-Certificate in Teaching and Learning. The first cohort is a group of diverse, dynamic group of educators from across the Maple League.

Participants teach Nursing, English, Development Studies, Music, Candida Studies, and more. They include full professors, first-time university teachers, and every step in between. This wide range of experience and expertise will help foster challenging fruitful conversation, and innovative new ideas and strategies. We're confident these educational leaders will be champions for innovative and inclusive pedagogies far into the future.



Executive Director Engages Thought Partners Across the Maple League

Maple League Executive Director Jessica Riddell has engaged a number of partners in a strategic visioning exercise. She visited Mount Allison July 23-26 and from August 3-6 she embarked on an Acadia University tour: gathering together small groups of thought partners, coordinating one-on-one meetings, and hosting group strategic visioning sessions was challenging due to pandemic protocols but the value of the conversations (masked, physically distanced, out of doors if possible) were immeasurable.



The overarching goals of the 2021 campus tours were:

1. Sustain, maintain, and build relationships with key stakeholders and change-makers on campus.
2. Identify, understand, and workshop some wicked problems
3. Consult and co-design a strategic direction for the Maple League so that we can build a strategic plan that lives in our communities
4. Introduce the Maple League to new thought partners, and inspire longer-term thought partners may have been engaged in creative problem solving: combining fresh eyes and experience can open up new approaches.

The Maple League campus tours engaged thought partners with diverse and refreshing perspectives on wicked problems that require collaboration to tackle. The virtual visioning sessions will continue into the fall with special sessions for Bishop's and St FX, as well as within and across our 16 communities of practice and three ML committees.

Maple League Research Committee (MLRC) Builds Capacities for Research Across the Four Universities

Maple League becomes the first consortium member of Research Impact Canada (RIC)

The Maple League is set to become the first consortium for membership with Canada's knowledge mobilization network, Research Impact Canada. Consortium status will provide significant savings on annual RIC membership fees. The membership submission packages are extensive and will be prepared and submitted in the coming weeks.



RIC is a pan-Canadian network of universities with a mandate to maximize the impact of university research on society by supporting knowledge brokers and by demonstrating to relevant stakeholders and the public the positive impacts of mobilizing knowledge. RIC aims to develop institutional capacities to support knowledge mobilization by developing and sharing knowledge mobilization best practices, services and tools for public engagement. These services benefit grant applications, research partnerships, and fosters engaged teaching and learning (i.e., community service learning, work enabled learning, internships).

Maple League membership in the RIC will allow all four universities to participate more fully in the federal government's inclusive innovation agenda which increasingly requires knowledge mobilization plans and associated impact statements in preparing federal research funding proposals.

“Through ResearchImpact, universities are using knowledge mobilization to generate socially useful research and to provide it to decision-makers, policy-makers, and practitioners, in collaboration with community, industry, and government partners.”

Beyond Citations, Conference Board of Canada (2016)

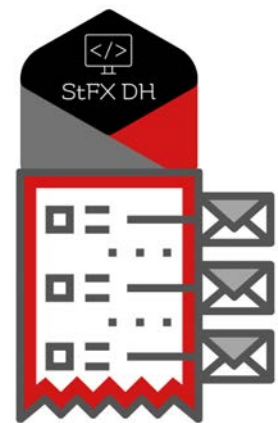
MLRC applies for joint membership with the Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS)

All four Maple League universities are collaborating on an application for a cost-reduced joint membership with the Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS), commencing January 2022. CAGS was founded in 1962 to promote graduate education and university research through webinars and meetings, publications, conferences, mentorship, dissertation awards and advocacy. The Association brings together Canadian universities with graduate programs and the three federal research-granting agencies, as well as other institutions and organizations having an interest in graduate studies. The CAGS mission is to provide leadership, foster community, and promote collaboration to advance excellence in graduate education, research and scholarship.

Atlantic Digital Humanities Listserv is made Available across the Maple League

The Atlantic-DH listserv is a welcoming community where news, announcements, and questions about goings-on related to digital humanities in Atlantic Canada are shared. This listserv is hosted by Dr. Laura Estill, Canada Research Chair in Digital Humanities and Director of the St. Francis Xavier University Digital Humanities Centre.

What is digital humanities? There have been entire books written about this question—and you can keep refreshing the website whatisdigitalhumanities.com to see a range of definitions. In brief, digital humanities is the application of digital tools and resources to research and teach the humanities and related disciplines. This listserv is open to interested faculty, staff, students, and community members. Dr. Estill cordially invites Maple League teachers, researchers, and students to join this listserv. To sign up, follow the directions [here](#). Questions? Contact digitalhumanities@stfx.ca.



MLRC sets goals to nominate Researchers for the Royal Society of Canada

The Research Committee continues to make progress towards the nominations of outstanding researchers and scholars for membership (Fellow and College) with the Royal Society of Canada, with submissions due by 1 December.

MLRC provides professional development with CCV workshops

Dr. David Bruce, Director of Research Grants at St. Francis Xavier, held two workshops on the Canadian Common CV (CCV) for Maple League faculty and research teams in July. 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

III. External Engagement

Maple League Hosts: Critical Hope for the Future of Universities



Our summer Maple League Hosts event featured an inspiring, interactive workshop *Critical Hope: Reflection to Practice* from hosts of the [Wyrd Words Podcast](#) and co-authors of the upcoming book *Shakespeare's Guide to Critical Hope and Empathy*, Shannon

Murray (UPEI), Lisa Dickson (UNBC), and the Maple League's own Executive Director, Jessica Riddell (Bishop's).

This fall's Better Together season will be headlined by Carleton University's Associate Vice President (Teaching & Learning), David Hornsby and his lecture *Socially-Just Pedagogy & the Future of Universities*. Clear room on your calendar on Thursday, November 18th at 11 (ET)/ Noon (AT) for this unique opportunity.

Maple League Executive Director Engages External Partners in Conversations about Quality Education

Executive Director is the Plenary Speaker for Teaching retreat at Champlain College

Dr. Riddell was the keynote speaker for faculty and teaching staff at Champlain College on August 18. Beaming in remotely from her cottage in NB, Dr. Riddell addressed faculty and staff (who joined in person in Centennial Theatre and virtually) on the value of critical hope in the design and delivery of courses.

Maple League is Featured in MAPLE Business Council Publication on Innovations in Higher Education

Maple League Executive Director, Dr. Jessica Riddell, published an article in the August MAPLE Business Council newsletter. [Her article](#) talks about Tackling Wicked Problems in Higher Education via Maple League collaborations. The article has been amply shared across both MAPLE Business Council channels as well as Maple League channels and has reached over 8,000 readers across social media platforms.

Dr. Riddell Delivered International Talk About Shakespeare and Wicked Problems

As a Fellow of a new UK-based start-up called the Garden (a Netflix-style streaming platform that engages scholars in conversation with life-learners across the world), Dr. Jessica Riddell gave a talk on September 30 about Shakespeare and how his plays are a guide to solving today's wicked problems.



CityStudio Seeks Partnership with Maple League on University-Town Engagement

On September 20, Dr. Jessica Riddell and the Maple League team had an introductory meeting with CityStudio. CityStudio is a locally adaptive partnership model that enables municipalities and academic institutions to collaborate effectively and efficiently to make local communities more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

The Maple League's value of community engagement and global citizenship is closely aligned with the CityStudio model as it is a unique hands-on learning experience for students and uses collaboration as a way to work towards a more just and civil society.



Maple League Builds Capacities for Attracting External Funding

The Maple League has attracted a great deal of attention nationally in the past year, and the consortium is increasingly being recognized as a leader in conversations around quality undergraduate education. One of the metrics of this success is the ability to secure external funding for various projects and initiatives across departments and sectors. As we start to see the success of our efforts, we have engaged in strategic planning with the help of the four VPs Finance. The Maple League is committed to accountability and transparency in all aspects of the inter-institutional collaboration, and reports activity monthly, quarterly, and annually. The budgets and detailed transactions are reported quarterly and annually. As we grow our brand recognition and reputation as leaders in quality education, a strategic framework for funding has emerged. There are four categories of funding:

1. **Maple League Membership fees:** Each university contributes membership fees annually (this is a five-year agreement, 2018 - 2023).
2. **Maple League Direct External Funding:** this funding goes into the restricted ML account housed at BU and is administered by BU Business Office. This category of funding includes funding from foundations for operations (we received a start-up grant from McConnell 2015 - 2018) as well as funding from foundations for specific projects. The ML reports monthly to BHER and the VP Academics on funding envelopes for OLTC and the MLTLC. Furthermore, the funding for employing students and other consultants goes through this account, with consulting contracts signed by a representative of the VPs Academic Council or the Maple League Presidents Council and the Executive Director.
 - a. The Maple League received \$100,000 from McConnell for a Virtual Maple League Teaching Learning Centre (June 1, 2020 - May 1, 2021).
 - b. The consortium also secured funding from Business-Higher Education Round Table (BHER) \$170,000 to support the OLTC expansion project (March 30, 2020 - April 1, 2021).
3. **Maple League Supported External Funding:** *This model of funding goes directly to the university as is administered through institutions like research and other funding; project leads are responsible for reporting.
 - a. CEWIL funding: several projects were supported by the Maple League but submitted by faculty and staff who have their own accounts and reporting.
 - b. Universities Canada: The International Offices collaborated on a Universities Canada grant. This is a collaborative grant that came out of the community of practice led by Larissa Strong at St FX and will be administered by the project leads.

- c. Canada Summer Jobs: three of the four schools received CSJ funding for student OLTCs this summer, working with the IT departments on employment. These contracts are now ending.
4. **Maple League Indirect External Funding**: Money goes directly from one funder to the partner organization. So, for example, the Maple League has been given access to RIIPEN, an experiential learning platform and North America's largest platform for connecting universities, students, and partner organizations. While the annual institutional membership fees are \$20,000, RIIPEN and RBC created a joint agreement to fund all four Maple League universities for the past three years. The Maple League has benefitted from \$240,000 worth of access to this platform, which has been funded by RBC Futures Launch.

Maple League Transparency and Accountability Continues to be a Key Priority

The Maple League is committed to values of transparency, accountability, and reputational integrity, which means that reporting and communications is of paramount priority. Funded projects have bi-weekly and monthly reporting to both the external funders and to the VP Academics and/or the Maple League Presidents Council. Furthermore, the Maple League releases Monthly Reports, Quarterly Reports, and Annual reports to many partners and stakeholders, including the Maple League Presidents Council, the 16 communities of practice, the three ML committees (Research, Academic, and TLC), and the reports are also posted on the Maple League website, circulated on social media, and sent to strategic external partners.

For more information, or to view the archived reports, please visit the following [link](#).