

Maple League of Universities Monthly Report

April 30, 2022



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Executive Director's Note:

Modernist poet T.S. Eliot calls April the “cruellest month” (*The Wasteland*). While he was writing about a very different world (and writing the poem as he recovered from the Spanish Flu in 1918), April remains a challenging month for even the sturdiest of souls. The weather and the work can be daunting: sunshine and snow in equal measure animate a period that also marks the end of the academic year. As the world around us awakens from a long winter nap, I am reminded of a podcast from the Maple League Award-Winning Educators series we recorded this winter. As part of this series, I interviewed Dr. Juan Carlos López, a soil microbiologist at Acadia University. In his research, he studies how a particular type of fungi helps trees talk to one another, and he showed this as both an incredible metaphor for classrooms but also the interconnectedness of the Maple League universities.

Dr. López explains his work this way: “good fungi, the ones that help the trees grow, form a symbiosis in the roots of the trees, and then they are able to capture nutrients and other things that the tree could not capture itself. And the tree has to give up something, to the fungi so that the fungi grows... This is a very intimate relationship between plants and these fungi where chemical cues go from one tree to the other via the micro-system of fungi.” In other words, if we think about the Maple League as the fungi and the institutions as the trees, the consortium creates an interconnected network for the universities to communicate and flourish. Each party in the relationship gives something but they also benefit. The fungi are small, often invisible, but powerful by connecting the trees together to create a forest that is resilient and healthy. These underground networks are essential but often invisible – or at the very least overlooked when the lofty trees reach for the sunshine. And yet they are fundamental to surviving and thriving in the broader eco-system.

We’ve seen a number of tantalizing clues that the consortium (as the connector) is helping our universities (the trees) flourish: four out of ten 3M National Student Fellows in 2022 are from Maple League Universities. All four universities have a record-breaking number of applications for incoming students. And we’ve seen projects like the Decolonizing Education Abroad project flourish as they welcome their first cohort of indigenous students and elders. Causation and correlation are often hard to disentangle; however, if we trust in the fungi to do its work, determining cause versus effect is less interesting than the processes of growth and regeneration we can see unfold at systemic levels.

Here's to spring and the unsung heroes (like fungi) that connect us all in a resilient eco-system, enabling each of us to grow and flourish better together.

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

I. Extraordinary Student Experiences

Four Maple League Students are 2022 Recipients of the 3M National Student Fellow Award

It is a privilege to report that all the Maple League universities were represented in the 2022 3M National Student Fellow competition. **One student from each of the four universities** was awarded this prestigious fellowship, the highest national recognition of student educational leadership in Canada.

While ~13,400 students are shared amongst our four universities - in the pool of the 1.1 million students enrolled in Canadian PSE - we carved out 40% of the spots for student leadership. Only 10 fellows are recognized each year.

This year we identified 48 students in our cultivation cycle and successfully steered 21 students through to submission. They were given one-on-one mentorship, live info sessions, handbooks, email templates, support for nominators, videos, editing help, financial support for transcripts, help for VPs of Student Affairs with student letters, and other resources designed and delivered through the Maple League.

All four recipients this year went through the Maple League mentorship program. This program has an established record of excellence:

- In the first year of the ML 3M support program, we had four out of ten students from three of the Maple League universities (2020).
- In 2021 we had three of the 10 spots go to Maple League students.
- In 2022 we have four students from all four universities.

This is a consistent metric that reflects the work of our institutional champions and consortium approach to this award. Congratulations to the winners who are extraordinary students and models of a 21st-century liberal education:

[Olivia Stevenson \(Acadia\)](#) as a certified 200-hour yoga instructor, has lived the impact that mindfulness can have on mental and physical wellbeing, and through the development of yoga and mindfulness classes that she hosts on campus, she has had the opportunity to share this with fellow peers, faculty, and community members.

[Sufia Langevin \(BU\)](#) recognizing the unique position that students occupy in a university, she has dedicated her time to student advocacy, serving as the Vice President of Academic Affairs of the Students' Representative Council this past year as well the co-chair of the Joint Senate and Board Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for the past two years.

[Oorja Gonepavaram \(Mt A\)](#) is a fourth-year International Student at Mount Allison University from India, pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Commerce and minoring in Economics and Japanese Studies. She believes in utilizing the academic platform to create space for marginalized groups that she is a part of.

[Ben Boudreau \(StFX\)](#) has developed an extensive network of student and community connections through his involvement in the Human Kinetics/Sport Management Program and the Schwartz School of Business. This includes but is not limited to his own business "St. FX Boxes" where he created a "Pay it Forward" bursary, and being an OLTC Student Champion.

Also a special thanks to our institutional champions, Angie Kolen (StFX), Adam Christie (Mt A), Katie Bibbs (BU), and Matt Lukeman (Acadia) as well as the Maple League Team Matthew Dunleavy, Neil Silcox, and Lauren Boulton.

This is a wonderful example of how we are better together!

3M National Student Fellows 2022

<p>Olivia Grace Stevenson</p>  <p>Acadia University</p>	<p>Sufia Langevin</p>  <p>Bishop's University</p>
<p>Oorja Gonepavaram</p>  <p>Mount Allison University</p>	<p>Ben Tyler Boudreau</p>  <p>St. Francis Xavier University</p>




The Convergence of Four Terms Worth of Maple League Courses

We are at a unique crossroads moment for Maple League Courses where four terms worth of work is being undertaken at once. The Winter 2022 courses have just finished, and the Registrars are working to ensure that marks and credits are transferred from Host to Home institutions. Meanwhile, the Faculty Excellence Lead is connecting with faculty and students who took part in Maple League courses to tease out the lessons that can be learned from this challenging term.

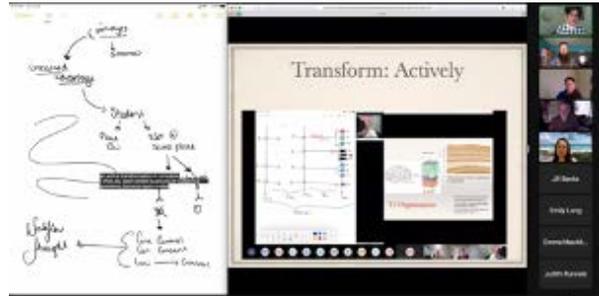
Alongside this, we are in the midst of promoting Spring and Summer courses across the Maple League. We put a call out to all Maple League faculty who were offering courses during the spring and summer terms, inviting them to share information with us so that we could amplify it and increase their outreach. 23 Faculty reached out with details for 30 spring and summer courses. We built a [dedicated page on the website](#) to promote all the spring and summer offerings across the Maple League (and clarify processes for interested students), and we created [a virtual booklet](#) with all the information on the courses we were asked to highlight. Finally, we launched a social media campaign over the Month of April, where four times per week we [highlighted exciting courses](#).

<p>ML Spring & Summer 2022</p>  <p>FRE 122: Atelier de conversation multiniveau 1</p> <p>Instructor: Caroline Dault Dates: May 9 to 27 (M,Tu,W,Th 9am-12pm) Format: In Person (Sherbrooke) Host: Bishop's</p> <p>mapleleague.ca/spring-summer</p> 	<p>ML Spring & Summer 2022</p>  <p>ART 259: Introductory Filmmaking</p> <p>Instructor: Antoinette Karuna Dates: May 2 to June 28 Format: Synchronous, Online Host: St. Francis Xavier</p> <p>mapleleague.ca/spring-summer</p> 	<p>ML Spring & Summer 2022</p>  <p>DRAM1001: Introduction to Screen Studies</p> <p>Instructor: Sarah Fanning Dates: May 2 to June 17 Format: Asynchronous, Online Host: Mount Allison</p> <p>mapleleague.ca/spring-summer</p> 
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Finally, the Maple League Shared Courses for Fall 2022 & Winter 2023 are on the cusp of being open to students from across the Maple League. Some last-minute additions to the lineup of shared courses bring the total courses for 2022/2023 to 10. Notably, four of these courses came from a collaboration between Acadia’s School of Nutrition and Dietetics and StFX’s Human Nutrition program. We’re excited about this model of collegial collaboration between departments and hope it will serve as a guide for growing the Maple League Shared Courses in substantial, sustainable ways.

PETAL Workshop Series Continues

In April, students across the Maple League joined four Pedagogy, Edu-Technology, and Learning (PETAL) workshops. On, April 14th, Dr. Jasmeen Sidhu (Bishop's) gave students an inside look at her classroom and how she embraces alternative assessments to drive student success. At the end of the month, on April 28th, Dr. Jessica Riddell facilitated conversations about Critical Empathy and how we can create a Hope University; this is part of one of Dr. Riddell's current research projects. April also saw sessions on Learner-Centered Syllabi (April 14th), and Formative and Summative Assessment, with Program Director, Matthew Dunleavy.



Registration is still open for the final four Maple League PETAL workshops. From March-May, the OLTC Program is offering a series of free, virtual work-integrated learning (WIL) workshops. Once completed, students will receive a PETAL badge for the specific topic.



The Micro-WIL experiences contain two parts: 1) a short workshop/training session on a given topic, and 2) a challenge/project. First students are introduced and trained on a given topic/area and then they use their new training and experience as students to complete their challenge.

When students complete four or more workshops (of their choice) they will receive a PETAL Record of Completion. These sessions run every Thursday at 9:00 am ET / 10:00 am AT covering the following topics:

- Understanding Your Privilege (and What To Do With It) — May 5th
- Visual Syllabi — May 12th
- Educational Technologies and Learning Management Systems — May 19th
- Accessibility — May 26th

Spaces are limited, so sign up today! All registration links and session details can be found on our [website](#).

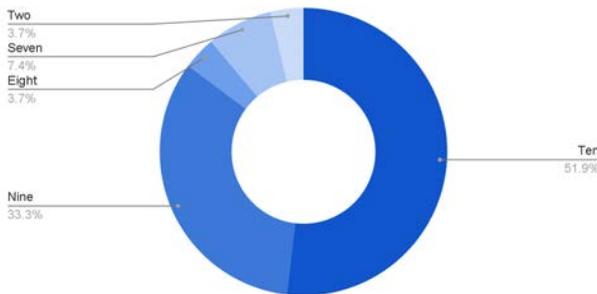
II. Faculty and Staff Engagement

Better Together Winter Wraps with Two Inspiring Sessions

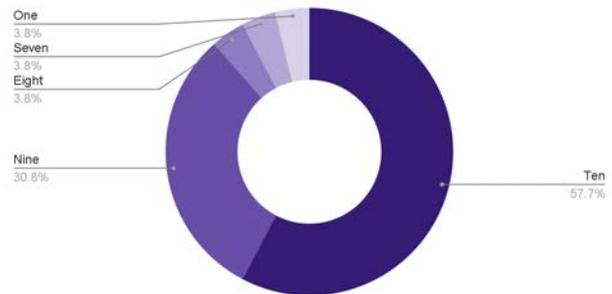
April saw the final two sessions of the Better Together season – *Slowly but Surely: Inclusiveness in Stem and Beyond* with Dr. Juan Carlos López, and *Maple League Pedagogy Panel: Award-Winning Educators from Across the ML*, hosted by Executive Director Dr. Jessica Riddell. These two sessions bring the total number of Better Together audience to over 250, which includes 164 unique participants from across the Maple League and from 59 institutions beyond the Maple League.

Feedback for the winter season was overwhelmingly positive. When asked “How would you rate the quality of the session?” the average rating was 9.1/10, and when asked “How likely are you to attend another Better Together session?” the average rating was 9.2/10. In both cases, the majority of respondents responded with a full 10/10.

How would you rate the quality of the Better Together session? (1-10)



How likely are you to attend another Better Together session? (1-10)



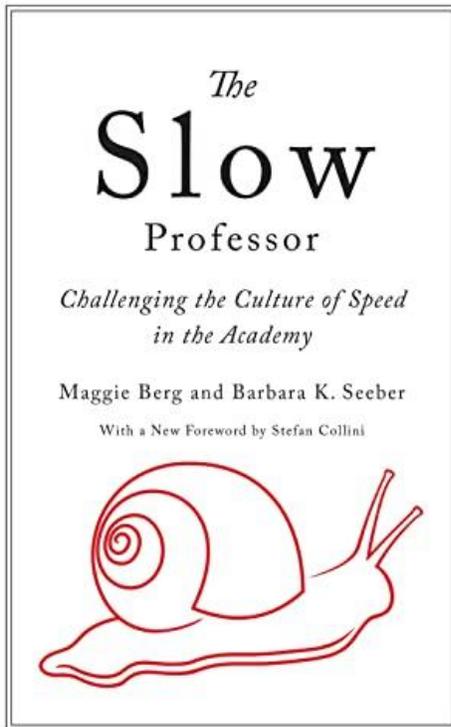
Thanks for making attendance widely available to people. It really is fun to interact with colleagues across Canada and internationally.

~ Attendee of “Ethical Principles for University Teaching”

One of the few online meetings that doesn't leave you feeling screened-out, the Better Together series has cracked the code of virtual presentations. Coupled with the enlightening content being presented, these sessions are a must-attend!

~Attendee of “COVID, Networks and Significant Conversations”

Launch of Spring Book Club - *The Slow Professor*



Building on the success of the fall- and winter-term book clubs, we are launching our first-ever *spring* book club. This shorter, warm-weather book club will offer faculty and staff from the Maple League and beyond the opportunity to carve out time for reflection, discussion, and community-building as they are reflecting on the successes and challenges of the past year, and start to dream and scheme for when teaching starts again in the fall.

In four sessions over six weeks, we will be reading *The Slow Professor* by Maggie Berg and Barbara K. Seeber, which was much-requested throughout the fall and winter Book Clubs. While past book clubs have largely been about reconsidering how we take care of our students and ensure they thrive, our book club participants are eager for springtime conversations about how to take care of themselves and ensure that we work in sustainable and fulfilling ways.

Launch of EduPortal at Bishop's University

The launch of The Living Cultural Heritage EduPortal Project occurred on April 20th at Bishop's University. The EduPortal project is an online learning platform seeking to educate people from across Canada and the world with lessons and information capsules on cultures and topics from both the past and present, made by students at Bishop's University under the supervision of Dr. Radloff and Dean Murray.

For more information or questions, don't hesitate to contact us via email atclassicseduportal@outlook.com.



III. External Engagement

OLTC Program Heads to the STLHE Annual Conference

From June 7-10, Matthew Dunleavy, Dr. Jessica Riddell, and Georges-Philippe Gadoury-Sansfaçon will be at the 40th Annual STLHE Conference in Ottawa to host a bilingual presentation on the OLTC Program from 2020-22. Fitting the conference theme of “**Reconnecting and Reconstructing: Perspectives on Teaching and Learning**,” in their presentation—“*Pandemic Pedagogy in Practice: Emergency Remote Teaching with Students as Co-designers*”—they share the journey of the OLTC program as it has grown and been adapted over the past two years.



BHER Final Report Submitted

The OLTC Program Director and Project Manager submitted a final report to our external funders—Business + Higher Educational Roundtable (BHER). This report illustrated the innovative pathways created to support work-integrated learning through the OLTC Program and highlighted which students were able to take part in these WIL experiences, amongst other successes.

An unsolicited testimonial provided to us this month about the OLTC program can be seen below:

My name is Morgan Quinn and I am a contract faculty prof in both Sports Studies and Sociology. This note is to support the funding of OLTC as a valued program. Since the inception of the pandemic, I have been fortunate enough to benefit from the excellent expertise and professionalism from those students of OLTC assigned to me. Being a technological dinosaur, their very thorough knowledge has allowed me to prepare properly to teach online. Specifically, they contribute to the setting up of my Moodle page (considerable), as well as creating group channels on Teams. Their assistance has been invaluable and I trust I am one of many that speak highly of the OLTC incentive. Therefore, please do add my name to those in support of the program and trust it will continue as a needed element to properly prepare for our students.

~ Morgan W. Quinn, Bishop's University

Executive Director Returns to *The Garden* to Talk About Shakespeare and Love

Dr. Jessica Riddell presented her talk titled “Does love get better with age?” at [The Garden](#) on April 27th. The Garden is a Netflix-style streaming platform that engages internationally-recognized scholars about their research and puts them in conversation with a “community of the curious” across the globe. Dr. Riddell shared her research on how love gets better with age in Shakespeare’s works: the star-crossed lovers are cautionary tales that expose the disastrous disease of toxic love, but that there are pro-aging antidotes in that educate us on enduring and deep (distinctly middle-aged) love. Her talk will be available [on-demand](#) soon.

