

Maple League Executive Director Monthly Report

October 31, 2020



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Executive Director's Note:

October has been a month of activity but also reflection. We are halfway through a Fall semester that looks like no other in recent memory.

Students are learning and living in the middle of a global pandemic.

Faculty are navigating new and often unfamiliar platforms to meaningfully engage students while juggling research and domestic demands, stretching them to capacity.

Staff are working tirelessly to support the day-to-day functions of our universities under considerable duress and stress, often simultaneously juggling child care and caregiving.

Administrative leaders are navigating difficult challenges and asked to make impossible decisions with constantly evolving and often contradictory information.

People are tired. Now, more than ever, we need to exercise critical empathy.

What does it look like to practice *critical empathy*, the ability to occupy, appreciate, and responsibly interrogate the perspectives of others? How do we make space for collaborative, consultative spaces while also juggling the urgency of making sound and strategic decisions?

The good news: post-secondary institutions have trained us to do this kind of work.

In higher education we identify, wrestle with, and embrace complexity with our students and one another. The purpose of critical empathy is not to determine what that future must be, but to deploy the tools that we have to help us to face the unknown with an appreciation of the complexity of experience. The fundamental premise is that empathy demands respect for the difference of the Other, which means recognizing that no singular perspective can be universal. This recognition, in turn, necessitates dialogue as the means of making decisions together that help to shape our future.

As Paolo Freire argues, “no one can say a true word alone—nor can she say it for another in a prescriptive act which robs of their words” (*The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* 88). If we go into the future at all, we go together. This is a messy process, one that goes in circles, crams up

against contradictions and the impasses of differing worldviews, waits for the tide to turn and tries again.

If we truly commit to empathy, we cannot dictate where we will end up, for we cannot expect the Other to conform to us. We must always be willing to be broken open. Our relationship with each other and with the future is unruly.

Critical empathy means working hard in the midst of all that messiness. Critical hope is the momentum that impels us forward.

In this October report I hope you will see glimmers of critical empathy and critical hope – in the work we are doing with EDI, collaborative research, student-centred initiatives, and community-building projects. Colleagues across the Maple League – from students to staff, faculty to administrators – are exercising the hope muscle that keeps us on an optimistic course, even when we might see plenty of evidence that things don't work or don't work as quickly as we would like. This is hard work, and to erase the struggle is to fall into the trap of toxic positivity.

Like hope, empathy puts the self at risk, for to meet the other in conversation is to open the self to transformation. To stand *with* the other, to look at the world from the other's perspective, is to reorient the self in the known world, to see it anew. It is a privilege to go on this journey with colleagues across the four institutions – with all the messiness that journey entails. Discomfort is a sign of transformation: it is not a bug in the system, but rather the way forward.

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

I. Inter-Institutional Collaboration

Virtual Maple League Teaching and Learning Centre (V_MLTLC)

Throughout October, we engaged with faculty, staff, and students across the Maple League and supported teaching and learning in the following ways:

1. Better Together: Thursday 'Faculty Open Office Hours'; for faculty, facilitated by faculty
2. Better Together: Tuesday 'Student Hours'; for students, facilitated by students
3. October 4 Sisters in Spirit Vigil
4. MLTLC Book Club: *So you want to talk about race*
5. 3M National Teaching & Student Fellowship Mentoring Networks

Better Together: Thursday 'Faculty Open Office Hours'; for faculty, facilitated by faculty

Continuing from our September programming, we held 'Faculty Open Office Hours' throughout October where faculty and teaching staff from across the Maple League were invited to log-in and discuss the topic and how it relates to their teaching. Faculty and teaching staff from across our four institutions learned together on a range of topics:

Thursday, October 1: **Student Engagement: Discussion Board Success** facilitated by Dr. Rosemary Polegato (Mount Allison).

Thursday, October 8: **Experiential Learning: Using RIIPEN in Your Course** facilitated by Jennifer Lussier.

Thursday, October 15: **Building Communities around the Practice in Pedagogy: Meet the MLTLC** facilitated by members of the Maple League Teaching and Learning Committee.

Thursday, October 22: **How to design a Maple League Course: The Maple League Academic Committee** facilitated by Mark Adam (Acadia).

Thursday, October 29: **"Core" Curriculum: A Breathing Space to Decolonize Ourselves** facilitated by Dr. Cynthia Alexander (Acadia) and Elder Darlene Copeland.



Better Together: Tuesday ‘Student Hours’ for students, facilitated by students

On Tuesdays in September, all Maple League students were invited to Student Hours. These sessions were intended for a student audience and led by student leaders and student affairs professionals across the Maple League. Following the September focus on transitioning back to university, topics this month centred around student success, inclusion, and belonging.

V_ML TLC Student Open Office Hours

October 13th: 'BIPOC Student Affinity Group'



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Tuesday, October 6: **Indigenous Student Meet & Greet** facilitated by Lara Hartman (Acadia) and Kiara Bubar (Mount Allison)

Tuesday, October 13: **BIPOC Student Affinity Group** facilitated by Ivan Okello (Mount Allison)

Tuesday, October 20: **Inclusive Experiential Learning Opportunities and Accessible High Impact Practices** facilitated by RIIPEN

Tuesday, October 27: **First-Generation Student Meet & Greet** facilitated by Caitlin O'Connor and Ty Kingston (StFX)

“Mount Allison’s Diversity Educator, Ivan Okello, was generously available and created an open and welcoming space during the BIPOC student hour. During our enriching discussion, we went over salient upcoming BIPOC and EDI themed initiatives as well as shared mutual pandemic coping strategies and activities. We both noticed the efforts our respective communities were making to keep the students engaged and connected while social distancing. I look forward to future collaborations and thought-provoking discussion with more bright and optimistic colleagues, like Ivan, in the Maple League consortium as we continue to think, build and create innovative opportunities in the higher education context.”

*~ Tanisha Campell, ML Student Fellow & Participant in Student Hours:
BIPOC Student Affinity Group*

Sisters in Spirit

On October 4, members of the Maple League community joined together for a Sisters in Spirit Vigil. Annually, October 4th is a day to honour the lives of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Gender Diverse People, and look for opportunities to heal from this national tragedy. Participants joined the virtual vigil on this important day to honour those we have lost and to demand action so that this tragedy does not take any more Indigenous women, girls, or gender diverse people.



Speakers Lara Hartman and Elder Darlene Copeland shared stories, information and suggestions for moving forward to a better future for all. There was an open mic segment where participants shared their thoughts and commitments in relation to the vigil.

MLTLC Book Club: *So you want to talk about race*

This Fall semester we are hosting an inter-institutional book club focusing on anti-racist teaching and learning across the four campuses and beyond. The book selected is *So you want to talk about race* by Ijeoma Oluo. Over 40 participants, across three sittings, met twice in October to discuss questions such as:

- Is it really about race?
- What is racism?
- What if I talk about race wrong?
- Why am I always being told to “check my privilege”?
- What is intersectionality and why do I need it?

In addition to participants from the four Maple League Universities, we also have members joining from Dalhousie University, Mount Saint Vincent University, Students NS, and Arizona State University.



During the meetings on the week of October 19-23, Book Club participants were joined by guest facilitator Tari Ajadi. Tari is a Ph.D. candidate at Dalhousie University working on Black activism and coalition-building across Canada.

“It was such a pleasure to learn alongside the Maple League Book Club participants as they worked through chapters related to privilege and intersectionality. Participants were highly engaged and it was a welcome space for an external facilitator.”

~ Tari Ajadi

3M Mentoring Networks

Looking ahead to early 2021, we are strengthening our mentoring networks to bolster the quality and quantity of applications for both the 3M National Teaching Fellowship, and 3M National Student Fellowship, from across our four institutions. We have embedded institutional champions for both students and faculty, and are preparing to submit both student and faculty dossiers from each university. Applicants will work with embedded champions, as well as 3M recipients from across the Maple League, in order to submit high-quality and competitive dossiers. Throughout October, both sets of embedded champions met to discuss how we can create ecosystems of support for applicants across the Maple League.



	Acadia	Bishop's	Mount Allison	St. FX
Student Fellows:	Matt Lukeman	Katie Bibbs	Adam Christie	Angie Kolen
Faculty Fellows:	Jeff Banks	Jessica Riddell	Andrew Nurse	Angie Kolen

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Task Forces Meeting

On October 21 the Chairs, Co-Chairs, and members of the EDI Task Forces across four institutions had an introductory meeting. In this meeting, those present shared mandates, goals and strategies with one another to explore how working together might enhance the work they are doing on their individual campuses. They will help consult on the design of the Racial Justice Symposium hosted by Mount Allison (tentatively scheduled for February), support the new partnership with the National Dialogue Initiative on Inclusive Higher Education, and share challenges and opportunities in the future.



Communication Collaboration

As Maple League collaborations continue to grow across our institutions at every level, the communications teams have been a key resource for helping to promote Maple League initiatives and provide expert advice on how to design effective dissemination. Their main focus in October has been editing and creating a communications plan for the Maple League Presidents' Op-ed and Maple League Students' Op-ed about the return to campus Fall 2020. They also advise on how to effectively mobilize content on social media channels, are working on embedding links to Maple League initiatives on institutional websites, and are advising the Maple League team on how to mobilize content of the monthly and quarterly reports with flip books and other tools.

Maple League Athletics

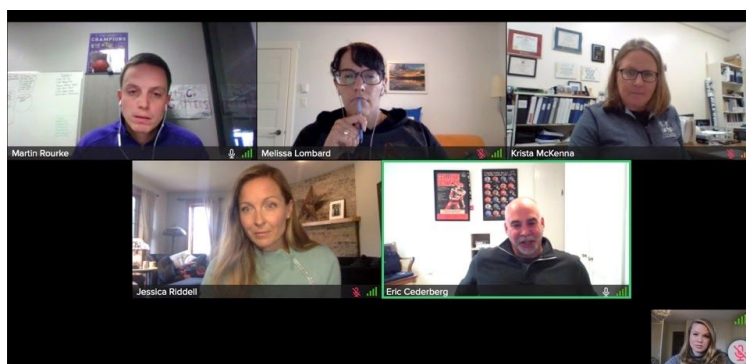
The Athletic Directors initiated a data sharing exercise for the four football programs over a year ago in order to benchmark various aspects of the student-athlete experience. Through this process they saw value in sharing data to identify areas to collaborate in order to enhance student success as well as attract and recruit extraordinary student athletes to the four Maple League universities. The Directors have worked alongside a Jarislowsky Research Fellow, Georges-Philippe Gadoury-Sansfacon on data sharing that compares GPAs, time to completion, graduation rates, levels of community engagement, and a number of data points to create a rich and multi-dimensional student-athlete profile.

We have developed a Maple League Student-athlete Profile Report (Appendix B) that focuses on:

- Academic Excellence
- Academic Success and Support
- Wellness and Mental Health
- Community Service Learning and Engagement
- Research on Resilience
- Student-Athlete Leadership



In October the Athletic Directors identified the value in including their sports information teams in conversations about branding the Maple League Student Athlete for recruitment and reputational purposes. This emerging collaboration has already yielded a number of ideas, including a Maple League Top 8 Student Athlete video series.



Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Grant Application

The Maple League is committed to supporting inter-institutional research collaborations. In October the four VP Academics and the Executive Director of the Maple League of Universities signed a letter of support for a SSHRC Connections Grant proposal led by Dr. Mary Sweatman at Acadia University titled “Seizing the moment: Exploring just and sustainable pandemic recovery through community-campus partnerships.” The project objectives address many of the needs and priorities of the Maple League of Universities and include researchers and collaborators from across the four institutions. This project also engages with the University of Regina and Community Campus Engage Canada in their outreach efforts. The project recognizes that the long-standing vulnerabilities that the pandemic has exposed in our rural communities will change how we work with our community partners. Together, we are committed to providing support for the outreach activities in this project proposal, as these efforts will contribute to our understanding and commitments to community-campus partnerships. We are committed to supporting Acadia University as the host institution for the Atlantic region and will mobilize our faculty and students to engage in these workshops as promoters, speakers, facilitators, hosts, and participants.

SSHRC  CRSH

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada

Winter 2021 Shared Courses

Faculty who are interested in opening their courses to Maple League students in Winter 2021 responded to a call for expressions of interest issued by the Maple League Academic Committee October 13th with a submission deadline of October 26. The Maple League academic deans will review the submissions for course equivalencies and then pass these along to the Maple League Academic Committee (made up of 2-3 faculty members per institution) to assess the course proposals. Decisions will be made November 6th and communicated to the faculty, academic deans, and registrars. The Memorandum Of Understanding signed by the Presidents on April 20, 2020 is a high level agreement that formalizes past practice; the policies and collective agreements at the host institution take precedence in any instance where clarity is needed. All Senate related issues – including residency – are governed by the individual institution where the student is enrolled.



Yixin Shen @EmilyShen0724 · 19h

Distance teaching brings us more possibilities at least I am one of the student benefit from it. Thanks to maple league, I can take course at Acadia University.

Neil Silcox - Crake Drama Fellow at Mount Allison University

Neil is an actor, director, and theatre-maker who's been working in Toronto for the past 15 years. Additionally he is a committed educator at Mount Allison and has been teaching and mentoring incredible young artists for more than a decade with a particular focus on bridging the gap between analog and digital connection.



In addition to Directing 'Everybody' by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins this Fall (Thursday Oct 29th, Friday, October 30th, Saturday October 31st) Neil is also offering "Connections" as an extracurricular across the Maple League.

Connections is a piece of online theatre that will be created from a collective of students from across all four Maple League Universities: Bishop's, St. Francis Xavier, Acadia, and Mount Allison. Working together online, the students will create an original piece of theatre that will be streamed around the world. Neil will encourage the students to work together to move past narrow ideas of what online theatre can be, blending performances in high tech virtual spaces with low-fi analogue methods. This is a piece about all the ways we come together to create an "us".

Everybody by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins



"Everybody by Obie-award-winning playwright Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' is a hilarious, heartbreaking, and thoroughly contemporary retelling of the Medieval morality play, Everyman. When Death comes a-calling for Everybody, our hero must desperately seek someone to accompany them to the afterlife - but time is running out. Featuring 21st-century reboots of archetypal characters like Time, Love, and Stuff, Everybody is a mystical, macabre, and moving reckoning with the deepest questions of our humanity."

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*Please be aware that 'Everybody' contains strong language, & addresses issues of racism, sex, & death.

Audition call for:

Connections

an Online Theatre Collective
created across four campuses

AUDITIONS.....Nov. 4TH - 7TH
REHEARSALS START.....Nov. 22ND
PERFORMANCES.....Feb. 4TH - 6TH

Book your audition slot at:
bit.ly/ConnectionsAudition



ACADIA UNIVERSITY | BISHOP'S UNIVERSITY | ST. FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY | Mount Allison University | MAPLE LEAGUE of UNIVERSITIES

II. External Engagement

Maple League Hosts: Truth, Reconciliation and Decolonizing Higher Education



On October 14, the Maple League Hosts monthly speaker series welcomed Dr. Pamela Toulouse as our guest. Dr. Toulouse, Full Professor of Education at Laurentian University, and Maple League Student Fellow Lara Hartman (Acadia University), discussed Truth, Reconciliation, and Decolonizing Higher Education. This event also featured a Q&A from the audience. You can watch the recording [here](#).

This session had 30 live attendees from Acadia University, Bishop's University, Mount Allison University, St. Francis Xavier University, British Columbia Institute of Technology, Dalhousie University, Red River College and the University of Prince Edward Island.

CBC The Sunday Magazine - The Power and Peril of Hope

On Sunday, October 25th, Maple League Executive Director Dr. Jessica Riddell, was a guest on The Sunday Magazine with Piya Chattopadhyay to discuss the power and peril of hope, and how critical hope has played a key role in both her research and her life.

The power and peril of hope

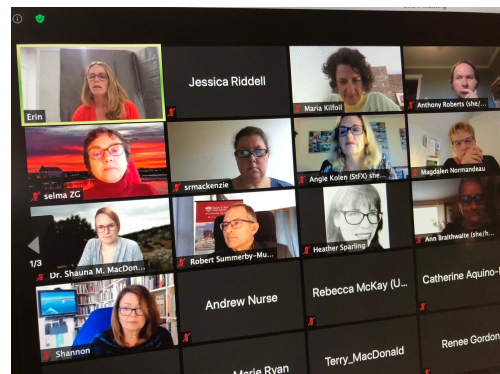
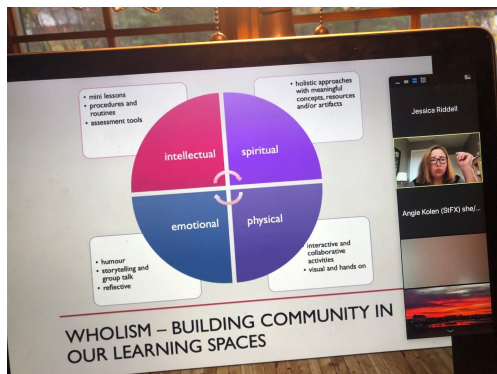
In dark times, hope can be a life raft. But hope can also set us up to be let down. In this hour, we explore both the benefits and the risks of hope, and how we can all "hope well" in the face of uncertainty and despair.

The Sunday Magazine | October 25



Atlantic Universities Teaching Showcase

On Saturday, October 24, St. Francis Xavier University hosted the annual AAU Teaching Showcase. This virtual showcase of teaching and learning excellence across the Atlantic provinces was organized by MLTLC Co-Chair Dr. Erin Austen, and MLTLC Member and Director of StFX's Teaching and Learning Centre, Dr. Angie Kolen. The theme "Build it and they will learn: The importance of community" was exemplified by our hosts and participants in breakout rooms and whole-group settings. Congratulations to StFX on this extraordinary event!



MacLean's Ranking

In the MacLean's Rankings released October 8th the Maple League proved to be leaders in quality undergraduate education in Canada. All four of the Maple League universities - Acadia, Bishop's, Mount Allison, and St. Francis Xavier - ranked the top seven overall and in the top five for student satisfaction ranking of primarily undergraduate schools in Canada. This ranking is proof that our model of education works and is deeply appreciated by our students.



Jessica Riddell @DrJRiddell

Congratulations to the @TheMapleLeague universities! The 4 schools took the top five spots for student satisfaction - and the 4 were in in top 7 spots for overall quality of undergrad education! Nice to see the immersive, individualized approach recognized <https://www.macleans.ca/education/university-rankings/canadas-best-primarily-undergraduate-universities-rankings-2021/> ...

Impressions
times people saw this Tweet on Twitter

5,432

Total engagements
times people interacted with this Tweet

385

UNSW Connection Seminars

Connections is a series of seminars at the University of New South Wales in Australia, facilitated by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Education Portfolio, that explores different aspects of learning and teaching. Dr. Jessica Riddell was invited as a special guest and subject matter expert, to discuss how the Bishop's University Online Learning and Technology Consultants project supported the COVID-19 transition to online learning, and the measured benefits.

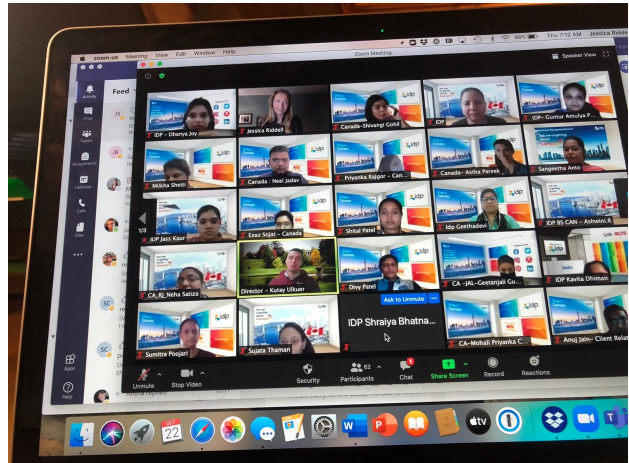
On October 6th, Dr. Riddell was joined by her co-leads on the OLTC project, Scott Stoddard (Manager of IT Client Services), and Georges-Phillippe Gadoury-Sansfaçon (Students' Representative Council Vice President of Academic Affairs) to discuss the value of students as partners and empathetic design. The audience was extremely engaged and the team made a case that true collaborations move us beyond transactional encounters and into spaces of profound transformation for students, faculty and institutions.



Recruitment Events

On October 22nd Kutay Ulkuer, Director of Recruitment, Admissions and Awards at Mount Allison University, and Dr. Jessica Riddell (Maple League Executive Director) presented virtually to the IDP India office (largest student recruitment agency in India) on the Maple League consortium and why it is beneficial for students.

Dan Seneker, Director of Student Recruitment and Retention at Bishop's University, took the lead on a Maple League Virtual Recruitment Initiative for the United Nations International School in NYC (UNIS). Dr. Jessica Riddell and the four Recruitment directors presented on October 21st and highlighted the value of studying at a Maple League institution.



AN EXTRAORDINARY WAY OF LEARNING

Why should you join this session?

- Hear from four of Canada's top undergraduate universities that together create the Maple League of Universities;
- Our universities are home to Canada's most satisfied students;
- We provide an extraordinary way of learning;
- Receive a high quality education that lets you stand out from the crowd.

www.mapleleague.ca

**Wednesday
October 21
@3:00 pm EST**

Zoom Meeting Details
Meeting ID: 842 2442 9463
Passcode: 166951

Riipen & RBC Future Launch Funding

We are pleased to announce that the RBC Future Launch program has renewed their funding to the four universities of \$80,000 to make Riipen's work-integrated learning software available at the four Maple League institutions.

At the core of our mission is the centrality of the student experience. By providing unique experiential learning opportunities such as those made possible through the Riipen platform, we equip our students with the skills necessary to enter the world ready for a rapidly changing job market.



This investment will allow our institutions to build more experiential and work-integrated learning into courses and provide support for faculty who want to incorporate industry projects and case studies more easily and directly into the curriculum. Experiential or capstone assignments can be posted to Riipen's marketplace of over 5,000 industry partners, and students will work on real-world projects to gain hands-on experience, demonstrate employable skills and network with employers.

HSBC Social Innovation Academy Partnership Challenge

The Maple League has been asked to partner with the HSBC Social Innovation Academy as a Social Purpose Organization (SPO) and create a design challenge for a team of HSBC Fellows to tackle in Winter 2021. Heather Carroll (Director of the V_MLTLC), Lauren Boulbee (Maple League Post-Graduate Fellow in Advancement and Communications) and Tiffany MacLennan (Maple League Research Fellow and Strategist) will work to come up with the three challenge proposals and present them to Dr. Jessica Riddell (Maple League Executive Director) and Cheralyn Chok for a final decision.



National Dialogues Partnership

The Maple League has committed, as a partner, to the National Dialogues and Action focusing on anti-Black racism and Black inclusion in Canadian higher education. We commit to ‘sharing experiences and ideas, exploring and learning best practices, and contributing to the formulation and implementation of concrete actions that resolutely reject anti-Black racism and drive meaningful, enduring Black inclusion within individual universities and colleges; the higher education sector, in general; and our communities.’ Our partnership with the Dialogues was signed by Executive Director Dr. Jessica Riddell and the VP Academics from our four institutions.

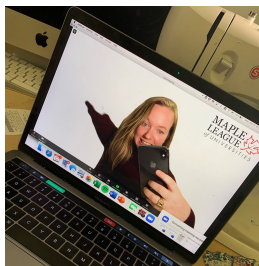
NATIONAL DIALOGUES AND ACTION FOR INCLUSIVE HIGHER EDUCATION AND COMMUNITIES OCTOBER 1 & 2, 2020

In addition to partnering with the National Dialogues, Maple League staff attended the two-day event in October. Dr. Jessica Riddell attended Dialogue 4: Inclusive Decision-Making Structures, Tiffany MacLennan attended Dialogue 9: Engaging Alumni and External Partners/Communities, and Heather Carroll attended Dialogue 5: Inclusive Teaching, Learning and Curricula.



BHER Canada Comeback Challenge Teams

We're very excited to have two teams of Maple League students participating in Business + Higher Education Roundtable's (BHER's) Canada Comeback Challenge. Through the Canada Comeback Challenge, BHER has created opportunities for post-secondary students to contribute to Canada's COVID-19 recovery while gaining valuable work-integrated learning (WIL) experience. Students from the Maple League campuses will be working on two challenges with Universities Canada. The first team is composed of Addy Strickland (St. FX), Tiffany MacLennan (ML/St. FX), Tanisha Campbell (BU), and Sally Cunningham (BU).



This team will be working on supporting equity, diversity, and inclusion in online environments. The second team is composed of Tanisha Campbell (BU), Sally Cunningham (BU), and Tiffany MacLennan (ML/St. FX). This team will be working on innovative ways to host and support academic opportunities in online environments. In the first phase, our student teams will be developing transformative project proposals in their respective challenges. If selected to move to phase two, our students will be provided funding to actualize their proposed projects with the organization hosting the challenge. We wish our students luck in this competition!

THE CHALLENGES MENTORS POST-SECONDARY FAQ

CANADA COMEBACK CHALLENGE

Canada's Comeback needs you.

The Canada Comeback Challenge is a way for students to connect with employers and mentors, build their networks, and add valuable experience to their resumes, all while contributing to Canada's COVID-19 recovery. Through a fun, skill-building national competition in an entirely online format, student teams will tackle real-world problems facing employers in Canada's public, private, and non-profit sectors and compete for a chance to pitch their ideas to an esteemed panel of judges.

III. The Maple League Team

Welcome to two new Maple League Student Fellows who joined the team in October: Nathaniel Benjamin (Mount Allison) and Adelaide Strickland (StFX).

Nathaniel Benjamin

Nathaniel is a 5th year student at Mount Allison University, studying Sociology. Nathaniel joins the team as a Maple League Student Fellow in Teaching, Learning & Athletics. His responsibilities include:

- Assist the Director, V_MLTLC in advancing Teaching and Learning initiatives relevant to equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging
- Create a resource scan of initiatives related to EDI across our four universities
- Research best practices for student-athlete success
- Work alongside Athletics Directors and staff to offer student perspectives on initiatives



Adelaide (Addy) Strickland

Addy is a 4th year student at St. Francis Xavier University, studying Development Studies and English. Addy joins the team as a Maple League Student Fellow in Student Leadership & Success. Her responsibilities include:

- Assist in cultivating the 3M NSF mentorship network for 2020-2021
- Participate in the creation of 3M “How to” handbooks for faculty and students
- Assist in matching 3M applicants to alumni mentors
- Act as a mentor for 3M applicants, and provide feedback on dossiers



Maple League Student Fellows



Throughout October, the team of Student Fellows have been working on various projects, and meeting weekly to build community, work together, and engage in professional development.

Lara Hartman (Acadia) hosted two major events for the Maple League in October: the Sisters in Spirit Vigil and Maple League Hosts. She is working closely with Tanisha Campbell (Bishop's) on communicating her Calls to Action to Decolonize our institutions.

Tanisha Campbell is working alongside Tiffany MacLennan on a High Impact Practice Spotlight Series. Through this series, Tanisha will be mobilizing knowledge around exceptional teaching practices happening by professors of the Maple League.

Sally Cunningham (Bishop's) is working with co-investigators who received Maple League funding (2019 - 2020 funding round) to develop Mid-Term Progress Reports; Sally will create a social media roll-out highlighting the innovative work the funding recipients have done. Sally is also working with Lauren Boulton preparing a weekly blog about our Communities of Practice.

Brendan MacNeil (Acadia) continues to work closely with Dr. Michael Sheppard to launch a Maple League Social Incubator, and has submitted a series of funding proposals this Fall semester as well as worked on a mentorship network for student entrepreneurs.

Frédérique Larouche (Bishop's) has played an instrumental role in producing Maple League branded digital content. Through editing digital content, she ensures MLTLC live sessions are accessible for diverse audiences on the Maple League Youtube Channel. Fred also helps the athletic directors create shareable graphics from their Student-Athlete Profile report.

Georges-Philippe Gadoury-Sansfaçon (Bishop's), in addition to co-presenting at the UNSW Connections Seminar with Dr. Jessica Riddell and Scott Stoddard on the OLTC project. He works with the Athletic Directors and Frédérique on the data sharing initiatives to highlight the value of the student-athlete across the Maple League.

Appendix A: OLTC Report

Project Description: In June 2020, Bishop’s University hired 23 university students as Online Learning and Technology Consultants (OLTCs) from all academic disciplines to help support faculty members prepare for Fall 2020.



Snapshot of Engagement:

- The students felt empowered and 100% of OLTCs reported feeling “engaged” to “highly engaged” in the process of designing the OLTC program
- They reported an increased capacity for critical thinking and critical empathy and 100% reported developing key Social and Emotional Skills (SES) that will equip them for success on the job market
- All OTCs reported that they have improved their social emotional skills (SES) development through the OLTC program
- 100% of OLTCs reported being a little to a lot more hopeful about Fall 2020 after their participation in the program
- They reported developing a greater knowledge and mastery in educational design and delivery. They revealed that their participation in the program allowed them to better understand the situation that faculty members faced before Fall 2020

EDI: The pilot OLTC program intentionally hired students across all years of study who identify as BIPOC, LGBTQ+, first-generation, international students, as well as student leaders, student-athletes, and students from all socioeconomic backgrounds; the premise was that the diversity of OLTCs made it more likely that courses would be built with empathy, student-centredness, and inclusivity.

Testimonials from Students:

“Engaging in a student as partners position allows for a brighter space for discussion and development without the worry of a power dynamic. The pandemic affected everybody and we, as students, must keep in mind that our professors are learning and growing along with us.”

“It has been a great addition to my life. I love my SWG and consider them good friends, I have become closer with multiple faculty, I have learned how to utilize Moodle for specific courses, and I have learned more about myself as a learner. I have enjoyed this job and think it was an amazing resource for faculty and an amazing experience for all the OLTCs”

“The OLTC program absolutely challenged my way of thinking and allowed for me to conceptualize different points of view. My SWG is made up of strong personalities and creative minds, so there was never a meeting that didn't involve compromising and discussions.”

Testimonials from Faculty:

"This [OLTC program] might be the most powerful tool in my toolbox this Fall."

"I highly recommend [the program] [...] and you'll find that they will really expand your mind in terms of what's possible in your classroom this fall and beyond."

"Be enthusiastic [about the Fall]. Don't be afraid to ask. Sometimes it doesn't seem feasible, then you realize that [...] we tend to limit ourselves in terms of what we know, but they know an awful lot more than we know, so don't be afraid to ask!"

Bishop's Blog [here](#). OLTC Website & Blog [here](#). Link to talk at UNSW [here](#).

*Note that the full report is available upon request.

Appendix B: Student-Athlete Profile

Academic Excellence

- There are 1140 student-athletes across the Maple League
- 94% of Maple League student-athletes are in good academic standing.
- The average Maple League Student-Athlete has a 73.4% GPA.
- More than a third of our student-athletes are above the Academic All-Canadian mark 80% mark.
- The number of Academic All-Canadians has increased by 30% over the last 5 years.
- Maple League student-athletes have a 93% course completion rate.

Academic Success & Support

- Across the Maple League, several initiatives are in place to help student-athletes make the most out of their academic potential:
 - Team study halls
 - Dedicated tutoring
 - Academic support
 - All teams monitor the academic progress of our athletes and there are strong support mechanisms to assist them.

Wellness & Mental Health

- Maple League students benefit from dedicated leadership development programs.
- There are also initiatives in place to ensure that our students are going through their university experience learning how to balance mental health and performance (academic and athletic).

Community Service Learning and engagement

- Across the Maple League, student-athletes engage in several hours of Community Service Learning and Engagement weekly.
- They are encouraged to multiply and diversify their volunteer help through contributing to several on and off-campus initiatives.

Research on Resilience

- Several research programs are in place to improve the various resources, services and methods of our Athletics departments.
- These research programs stem from the collaboration between Maple League researchers and students and the Athletics departments.

Student Athlete Leadership

- Student surveys results show student-athletes consistently take part in significantly higher engagement/interaction than the general student population.



Appendix C: Funding Spotlights

Maple League Mid-Term Progress Report

Accessibility as a Collective Practice

Co-Principal Investigators: Dr. Katie Aubrecht (St. FX, Sociology), Dr. Erin Austen (St. FX, Psychology)

Co-Investigators: Dr. Cynthia Bruce (Acadia, Education), Dr. Jane Dryden (Mount Allison, Philosophy)

Collaborator: Dr. Mary Ellen Donnan (Bishop's, Sociology)

The Maple League funded nine projects in 2019/2020 to promote and facilitate collaborative research, innovative teaching, spring and international field study programs, and travel amongst the four campuses. We are delighted to share, in a series called the Maple League Funding Spotlight, progress reports from these projects. We are particularly interested in the insights and impact these funded projects have had on their communities in the time of COVID.

We had a chance to sit down with Dr. Katie Aubrecht and her team to talk about their project and learn more about collaboration across the four universities.

JESSICA RIDDELL (EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE MAPLE LEAGUE): *The guiding question that animates all our Maple League collaborations is: "what can we do together that we cannot do on our own?" How does this resonate with the project you've undertaken?*

Katie: Our cross-institutional collaboration and collective work supported the development of an enriched interdisciplinary perspective on accessibility in postsecondary institutions. The project drew on our collective strengths, integrating conceptual and methodological insights from Sociology, Psychology, Education and Philosophy. Everyone brought valuable lived expertise to the project from their professional, educational, service and advocacy work.

Erin: Being able to connect on this research project with colleagues from our four ML institutions meant that we could look more broadly at accessibility within small, rural, primarily undergraduate postsecondary institutions and collect data (both qualitative and quantitative) that

will allow us to start to identify and share things that are working to improve and promote accessibility, and to identify common gaps in accessibility that may be more easy to address collectively than individually. Additionally, looking at all four institutions we can also begin to identify how provincial accessibility legislation may be impacting accessibility over and above federal accessibility legislation. Finally, being able to discuss accessibility with people outside of your own institution who are working in a comparable setting has been very beneficial.

Cynthia: Access is social and relational, and exploring it is a collaborative practice allows us to mobilize that relational framework as a way of bringing people together in work toward a well-defined collective understanding of what accessibility is and of what we can do together to enhance it on all campuses.

Jane: A lot of accessibility initiatives falter when accessibility champions either graduate or leave for other institutions, or end up being bogged down in other work. It can also seem like there's a steep uphill climb in terms of work to be done. By joining together the insights and expertise of people across the four campuses, we can get useful ideas for things that might work at our own campuses as well as gaining a sense of support and solidarity about the work of accessibility.

Mary Ellen: There are variations of contexts and regulatory environments between our four institutions which mean that we encounter different challenges at different times. Sharing data about these experiences and about the strategies by which they are resolved can help all of our institutions with effective, proactive, planning. The multi-disciplinary quality of our team similarly brings a wider array of skills and research perspectives to considering accessibility questions than what any single small university has.

JR: *How does your project benefit from working and learning in relationship-rich environments?*

Katie: Working in relationship with researchers and students from other disciplines and institutions creates exciting opportunities to think differently and creatively about issues and approaches, and experiment with new methods.

Erin: It has been relatively easy to gain momentum on this project and to start thinking about future collaborations. Even though some of us were meeting for the first time through this project, it was easy to connect.

Cynthia: Understandings of accessibility are often quite superficial, and working together allows us to deepen and enrich our understanding along with the understandings of our colleagues of what it means to be accessible on a university campus.

Mary Ellen: The opportunity to work with graduate and undergraduate research assistants from all of the institutions is an especially enriching opportunity for scholars in programs like my own which do not already have an established graduate program. There is tremendous enthusiasm and positive energy being generated around this project thanks to the opportunity to get to know each other and provide mutual support as we share ideas.

JR: *What kind of impact has your project had -- on your own work, on institutional cultures, or beyond the academy -- with your project?*

Katie: This project is laying the foundations for a larger team-based project that will examine accessibility at universities across Canada. The information we are collecting through surveys and interviews will help us understand changes being introduced in response to COVID-19, and capture student, faculty, and staff perceptions of these changes. Project findings will also address a significant knowledge gap related to accessibility in small rural undergraduate universities.

Erin: Our project is still ongoing, so this is difficult to say at this point, but so far we have identified limited academic resources on accessibility as it relates to post-secondary education (at least as available through traditional literature searches through our library holdings). We expect that the data we collect through surveys will allow us to identify what is working and what is not, and what accessibility champions on each campus believe is needed to improve accessibility. This data will be rich with information that we can use going forward at each institution and together as the Maple League of Universities. This data will likely also be valuable to postsecondary institutions outside of our region that are similar in size.

Cynthia: I think it has people thinking and talking about accessibility more broadly than they often do. We have engaged multiple stakeholders in a process that allows us to strengthen collective commitments to accessibility – it is everyone’s responsibility.

Jane: My own institution (Mount A) is currently doing a significant EDI survey, led by a Presidential task force. The fact that this research project is also going on in parallel is helping to keep disability and accessibility in view as priorities for EDI initiatives.

Mary Ellen: I am hopeful that gathering and disseminating our data will help raise the profile of key people who are dedicating their careers to making universities more accessible, while providing the opportunity for a larger portion of university communities to understand the benefits of campuses becoming more accessible. As Erin noted, we are just at the beginning, but it seems there is room for improvement and compiling the information about service gaps can help generate momentum to resolve those issues as quickly as possible.

JR: *Has the global pandemic affected your project and/or your understanding of collaboration? If so, why? If not, why?*

Katie: When universities closed, we continued to connect – working, but also listening and sharing struggles, survival strategies and humour. The pandemic highlighted qualities that are not always associated with ‘good’ research, but should be: persistence, empathy, patience, and kindness.

Erin: The pandemic delayed our ability to conduct interviews and delayed the release of our surveys on each campus. The ability to connect remotely, however, meant that our team could continue to collaborate.

Cynthia: I would say it has delayed the process of distributing surveys and engaging participants in interviews. There were initial pressures for us all related to a rapid shift to virtual course delivery, and we had to think carefully about the most helpful time to approach faculty, staff, and students to participate. However, it has also led us to think more substantively about accessibility in the now largely virtual environment.

Jane: The pandemic has made our project seem more urgent, but also presented challenges, such as navigating the difficulty of all the demands on our time & the difficulty of carving out clear time for work. All of this is multiplied when it means that multiple people have to find time for each other! However, it is also immensely gratifying to share experience of working during this strange time with the others on the team.

Mary Ellen: There were, indeed, delays but I also really benefited from the online meetings by which we are keeping the process going. I have been a fan of collaborative work for quite a while prior to this project but simultaneously developing the online skills required for distanced collaboration and for pandemic teaching accelerated in my literacy with the current technology. This could be really useful if and when more small, rural and Northern communities get the quality of web access which will allow north/south communications to happen instantly, with a lower carbon footprint and more affordably than by long distance traveling.

JR: *Can you share any advice to others who might be interested in collaborating across institutions?*

Katie: Supporting student leadership and peer-mentorship was a highlight of our project. Providing students with a scaffold to connect and engage with one another and the larger team builds their confidence and helps to foster a shared sense of community. We learned so much from the students and were continually impressed by their curiosity and all that they achieved.

Erin: Connect early and connect regularly. Leave room/time to discuss institutional practices (e.g., each institution had slightly different REB requirements, different start dates for classes).

Cynthia: The process of having PIs in the same university was really helpful from an organization perspective. I would suggest that keeping the team a manageable size is helpful. Also try to keep the project reasonably contained – it can be a great foundational piece of research for a larger project.

Jane: Doodle is great. Also, be sure to check in with team members about what forms of technology are more/less accessible to them.

Mary Ellen: There is an exciting synergy to working with colleagues from different disciplines as well as different institutions. It can ‘clear out the cobwebs’ and provide fresh perspective.

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?

Here is a brief description of the project:

The overarching goal of the project is to assess and improve accessibility within the university sector in Eastern Canada by generating evidence about current accessibility policy and practice

in Maple League Universities. The project involves a review of knowledge, policy and practice, with a focus on accessibility as collaborative practice. As part of this project, we will also conduct interviews and accessibility surveys with various stakeholders on each campus; one survey will be designed to include accessibility experts and/or champions, while another survey will be designed specifically for students. Information from the surveys will identify accessibility practices currently in use on each campus, as well as practices that are being considered. This data will also identify common accessibility needs that are not currently being met, as well as the tools or types of support needed to fill those gaps. The project will also capture perceptions of the potential impact of COVID-19 responses on accessibility. This information will be crucial in supporting knowledge and implementation of accessibility legislation in a new, dynamic and evolving context.



Dr. Katie Aubrecht



Dr. Erin Austen



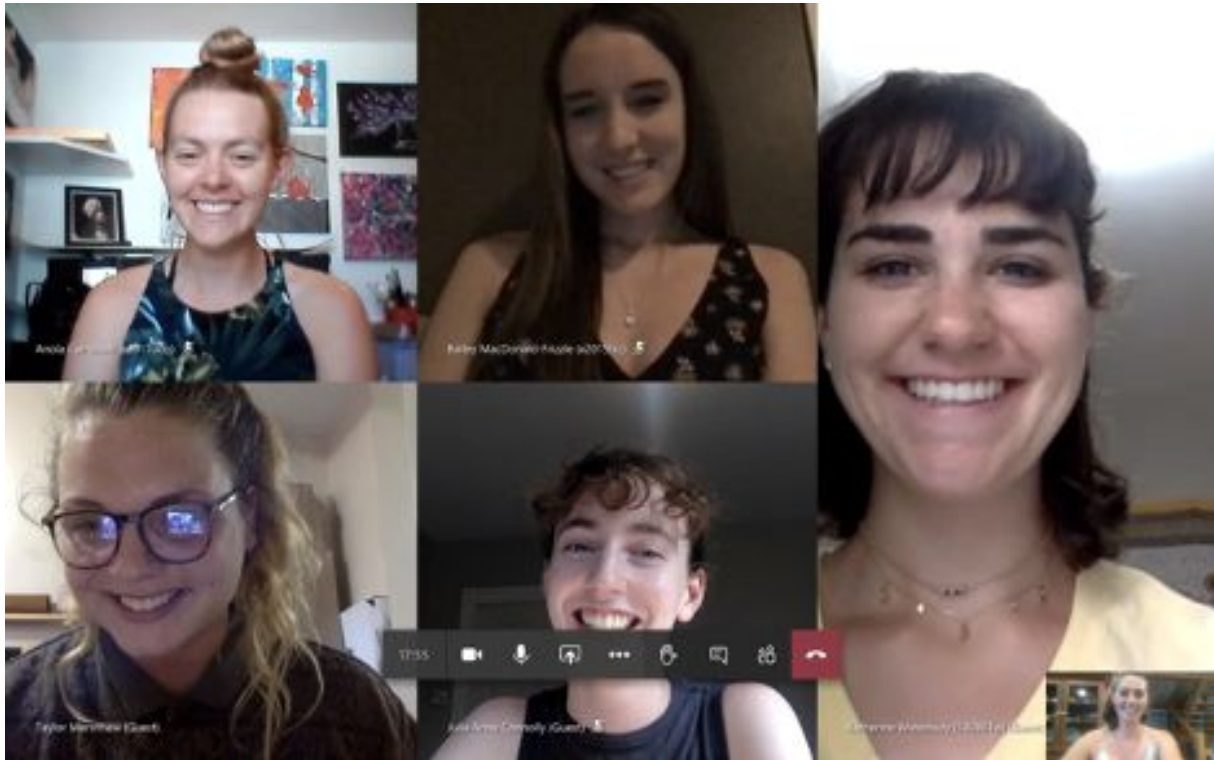
Dr. Cynthia Bruce



Dr. Jane Dryden



Dr. Mary Ellen Donan



Students from top left to bottom right: Anolia Campbell, Bailey Macdonald-Frizzle, Taylor Merrithew, Julia Anne Connolly, Katherine Waterbury



Seena Katayama



Tara Martin

Maple League Mid-Term Progress Report

Spring Institute in Arts & Health

Principal Investigator: Dr. Ann Fox (St. FX)

Dr. Catherine Morley (Acadia)

Ms. Paula Rockwell (Acadia)

Dr. Karen Brebner (St. FX)

Maïca Murphy (St. FX)

The Maple League funded nine projects in 2019/2020 to promote and facilitate collaborative research, innovative teaching, spring and international field study programs, and travel amongst the four campuses. We are delighted to share, in a series called the Maple League Funding Spotlight, progress reports from these projects. We are particularly interested in the insights and impact these funded projects have had on their communities in the time of COVID.

We had a chance to sit down with Maïca Murphy from St. Francis Xavier University to talk about their project and learn more about collaboration across the four universities.

JESSICA RIDDELL (EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE MAPLE LEAGUE): *The guiding question that animates all our Maple League collaborations is: "what can we do together that we cannot do on our own?" How does this resonate with the project you've undertaken?*

MAÏCA MURPHY (SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER): The spirit of the project we proposed is one wherein we want to contribute to community building and a spirit of gathering through arts and the fostering of better health outcomes within the Maple League community while simultaneously fostering professional relationships that foster academic research and progress in areas of Arts and Health. By bringing together academics from across the Maple League whose areas of research are likely to be distinct but nevertheless intersect on the topic of Arts and health, The institute was seen as a way to springboard further inquiry through leveraging potential collaborative partnerships.

JR: *How does your project benefit from working and learning in relationship-rich environments?*

MM: We are pleased to be able to collaborate with one another to build on the expertise found across different campuses in the Maple League. We are a collection of relatively small institutions, but we do not replicate one another's strengths, but instead complement. It allows researchers from across the Maple League to learn from one another and consider each other's approaches to academic projects with similar topical interests.

JR: *What kind of impact has your project had – on your own work, on institutional cultures, or beyond the academy – with your project?*

MM: Unfortunately, because the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that travel and gathering sizes have been heavily restricted, we have been unable to host the Arts and health Institute in May as planned. We have considered hosting a virtual event. However, because some sessions required hands-on participation, this is currently not possible.

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?

Here is a brief description of the project:

StFX, in partnership with Acadia University, had been planning to host a two-day Arts and Health Spring Institute focusing on three ways in which arts and health can be explored: 1) creative teaching activities, 2) research activities, and 3) community partnership opportunities. The Institute is conceived as a way to help facilitate and encourage energetic research discussions, dynamic collaborations, and discoveries in arts and health. It was originally thought that the institute should be held in the Spring at the end of the academic school year, as the end of the academic school year is a time where faculty transition from classroom teaching to intensive research and development, and therefore a time when centering and recharging is necessary for creative and intellectual work. The Institute will provide faculty with opportunities to workshop different forms of creative activities that promote health through arts-based teaching and learning.

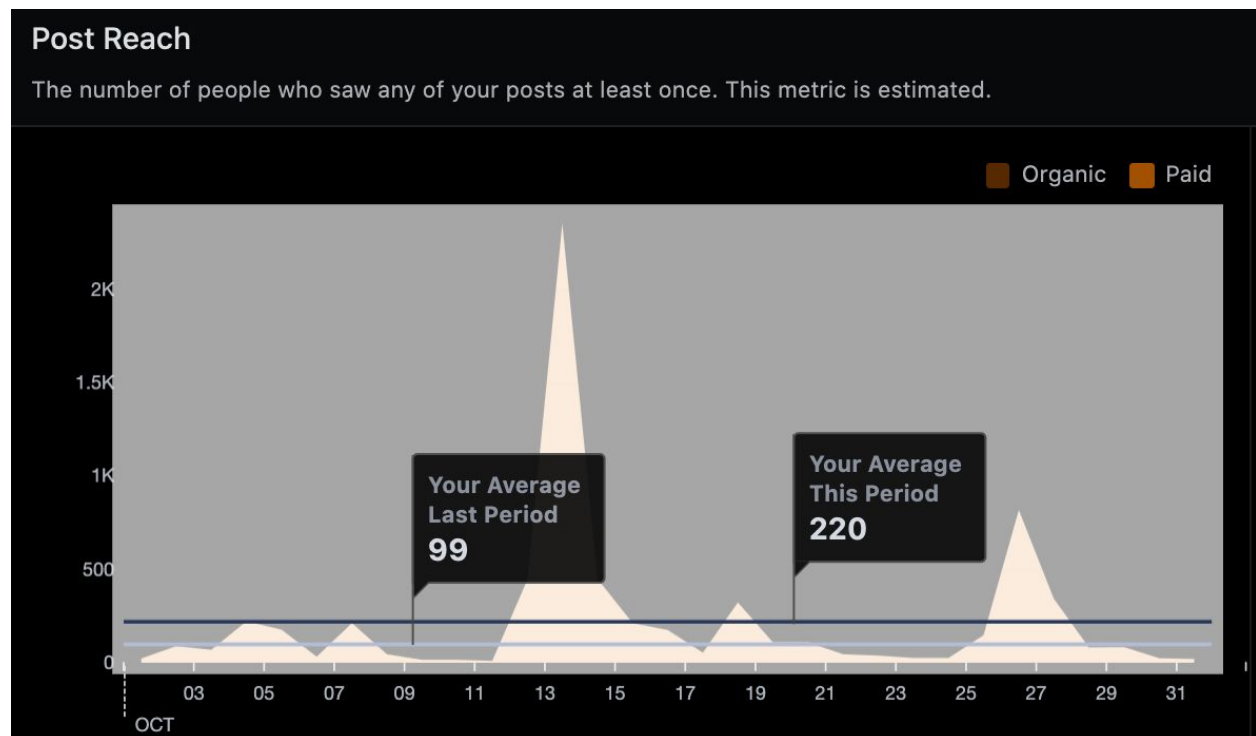
Appendix D: Communications

Social Media Insights

Facebook

Of particular note, this month is the total average post reach of the content we have been sharing. Over the month of October our total average reach (total number of people who saw our posts) was 5,038 people. This number is larger than our number of followers which means that our content is being shared to a wider audience which is promising for the growth of the Maple League. **Maple League followers believe our content is worth sharing.**

Below is a graph showing our average reach per day which has also increased from last month.



Twitter

The Maple League Twitter is a platform where there is consistently continued growth. Not only is our following a very **loyal and engaged** one, but we organically gained **51 new followers** this month. We had **52.7K impressions** (times our tweets are seen) this month which translates to great exposure for the Maple League. We also had **284 likes** this month. This not only means again an increase in exposure but confirms the loyalty and engagement of our followers.

Tweets

27 ↑ 22.7%



Followers

1,289 ↑ 41



Top media Tweet earned 2,762 impressions

Tomorrow, Oct 14 at 11 ET/noon AT, join us
for Maple League Hosts:

Dr. Pamela Toulouse @LaurentianU and ML
Student Fellow Lara Hartman @AcadiaU
will discuss Truth, Reconciliation, and
Decolonizing Higher Education.

This event is open to all. Join here:

bluejeans.com/8198229605

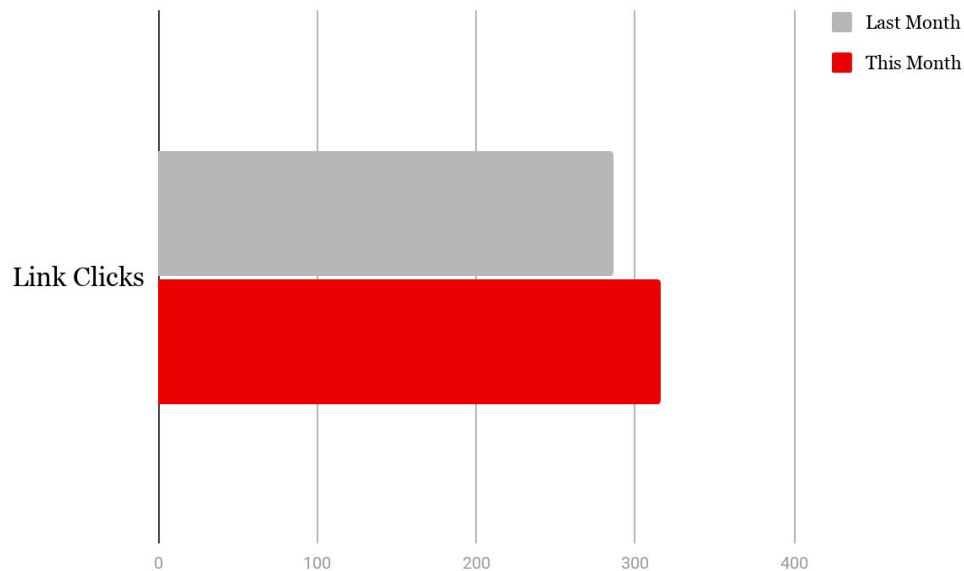
pic.twitter.com/qYQw3IkKDr



🔄 11 ❤️ 18

Instagram

Instagram has been a consistent channel with an **average reach per post of 400 people**. Followers often repost content to their story (which allows it to be seen by all of their friends for 24 hours). During these occurrences more traffic is driven to the Maple League account, increasing the number of followers.



We are seeing consistent growth across this social media platform, which is notable because it is usually difficult for organizations to see **continual growth across all platforms**. One of the most significant data points is the growth in link clicks (shown above). Link views have grown significantly this month from **286 to 316**. This is significant because it confirms that we have a very loyal and engaged following; **followers are taking an interest** in Maple League content and making the effort to visit our profile, click on the link, and engage with our story.

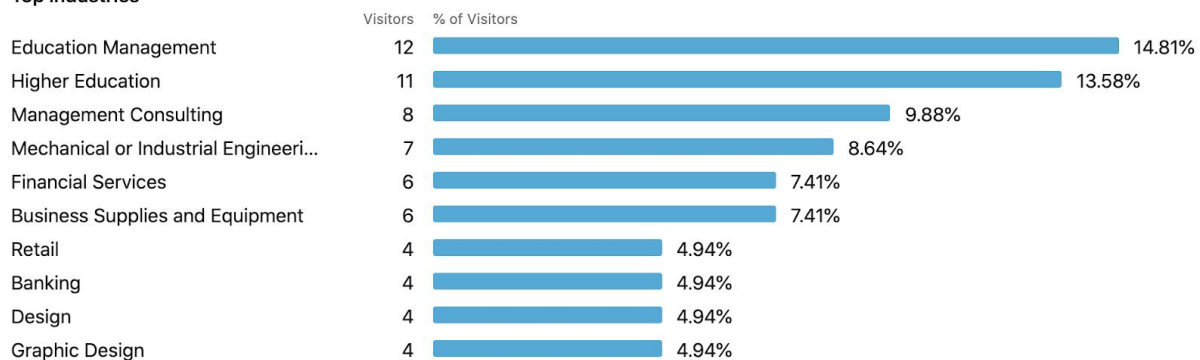
LinkedIn

Since focusing efforts on this platform (**April 24th, 2020 - present**) we have seen significant follower growth, engagements and impressions. LinkedIn is a channel that can often be very difficult to see organic (unpaid) growth. Not only have we accomplished significant organic growth, our **engagement rate average for September is 7.87%**, which is **extremely high**, as anything over 2% for LinkedIn is considered very good. Another noteworthy metric this month is the increase in **15 new followers for a total of 191**.

Visitor demographics ⓘ

Time range: Oct 1, 2020 - Oct 31, 2020 ▼ Data for: Industry ▼

Top industries



Interestingly, we were viewed most this month by business development professionals which indicates the **Maple League is doing innovative work that is drawing the attention of professionals who specialize in pursuing strategic opportunities**.

Visitor demographics ⓘ

Time range: Oct 1, 2020 - Oct 31, 2020 ▼ Data for: Job function ▼

Top job functions

