

## **Maple League of Universities Monthly Report**

**November 30, 2022**



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### Executive Director's Note:

“I am still learning –  
how to take joy in all the people I am,  
how to use all my selves in the service of what I believe,  
how to accept when I fail and rejoice when I succeed.”  
— Audre Lorde

I have been thinking a lot of about value and how we measure it recently. As we move into the next phase of the Maple League as an academic consortium, we have been having more and more conversations about what do we value and how do we know we are having an impact? When my term as Executive Director ends June 30, 2023, how will I know if I leave the consortium better or worse off for my participation? In this time of transition and succession, I have been thinking about how we value things in the academy and the systems we have put in place to measure them.

The systems we design and deploy to measure something's value – of people, programs, plans – fundamentally shapes the organizational systems. Terms like “data-driven innovation,” “benchmarking,” “academic analytics” and “dashboards” are increasingly prevalent in discussions about what and how we do things. KPIs (key performance indicators), ROIs (return on investment), QA (quality assurance) are all tools various sectors use as assessment. Ostensibly, performance metrics can measure the efficacy of strategic plan at the macrocosm level all the way down to the microcosm of a classroom teaching strategy.

Measuring what we do as we go is essential to transformative processes; whether they contribute to a culture of accountability and fiscal responsibility or inform evidence-based policies designed to improve results, assessment is fundamental to learning.

And yet. Metrics expose tensions between what we say and what we actually do.

What happens when we cannot measure the impact of our efforts? What happens when we do not have adequate tools to meaningfully assess how and what we learn and lead? And, most dangerously, what happens when we use faulty metrics to make decisions about how to fund programs or institutions?

I have struggled to capture ways of sharing the ineffable. The transformative, often invisible, but nevertheless deep shift to mindsets, perspectives, and behaviours are palpable and yet nearly impossible to measure with any degree of accuracy with our current instruments.

Indeed, once we start to measure things, we often encounter complexity and confusion just as we strive for clarity and pattern. Indeed, the “Richardson effect” is paradox whereby the more accurately you try to measure some things, the more complex they become. The more closely you measure the coast of Britain, for example, the longer it gets.

As Physicist James Bridle summarizes: “Instead of resolving into order and clarity, ever-closer examination reveals only more, and more splendid, detail and variation” (*Ways of Being: Animals, Plants, Machines: The Search for a Planetary Intelligence*, 2022. p. 102).

Percy Bysshe Shelley, in *Prometheus Unbound*, writes: “The deep truth is imageless.” For Shelley, acknowledging that something is unknowable doesn’t make the pursuit of knowledge futile; rather, the value lies in the struggle itself, and is what makes us “good, great and joyous, beautiful and free” (Epilogue).

Physicist, philosophers, and poets are all fascinated with the same principle that “the truth is always stranger, more lively and more expansive than anything we can compute” (Bridle, p. 101).

One of the most powerful elements of the Maple League is that, at its heart, it is a research question. It is a curiosity-driven approach that asks, can universities re-wire mindsets and perspectives and behaviours to collaborate? Can we be better together? Where and how does innovation flourish, and can we design more intentional systems to support it?

The strength too of the Maple League is that we live in these questions, and we ask them at every table. Questions free us from the tyranny of being right and moves us into spaces where we can get it right – whatever right might resemble. German poet Rainer Maria Rilke urges us to live in the questions for which we do not have the answers:

"Don't search for the answers, which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer" (*Letters To A Young Poet*).

I hope that these reports capture glimpses of the ineffable – of the transformation of humans helping others slow down when things get urgent in order to surface the systems. Together, when we have the space to pause, we are often able to practice divergent thinking to see the shape of complex problems more clearly. These colleagues and clusters have built intentional communities of trust where together we are willing to unlearn and re-learn by living in the questions. This is difficult and complex work that, more often than not, surfaces uncomfortable truths or broken systems; staying with the trouble is hard work, but doing it together can help us rumble through the discomfort into new spaces where we can re-imagine authority and expertise that is more inclusive, more diverse, and more equitable. Working between and across four systems allows us to see the similarities – and also the differences, so that by taking a systems approach, we can create a rising tide that raises all four of our boats.

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

## I. Extraordinary Student Experiences

### **The Path Wraps Up Its Third Successful Cohort**

158 students from Maple League Universities across four academic courses, including five co-curricular students from Mt. A, participated this semester.

A new course pilot begins at Acadia for winter 2023:

BUSI 3913 Venture Exploration is a special topics course open to *any* Acadia student who is working on a business. 10 students will be selected, receiving \$1,000 each and going through The Path's Tier Three program focusing on sales and growth. Over 35 students applied.

The Path has developed partnerships with Volta Labs and the Centre for Women in Business in Halifax. This will directly support tech and women student founders, respectively. Each organization also provides The Path access to their network of mentors, thought leaders, and facilitators, benefiting all students.

Pitch Your Path is coming up on December 7<sup>th</sup>, from 3 pm – 5:30 pm AST. Keynote speaker Tukan Das, CEO LeadSift, will share his entrepreneurial story from 4:45 pm – 5:15 pm.

Judges for Pitch Your Path are:

Charlotte Murray – Chief Coaching Officer, PropellICT

Dan Doiron – Professor of Management, UNB;

Co-founder, Axis Incubator

Leslie Magee – Investor, East Valley Ventures

Tamasha Fernando – Program Lead, Centre for Women in Business

Jason Turner – Senior Project Manager, Saint Mary's University Entrepreneurship Centre

Join on Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>, 3:00 pm – 5:30 pm AST [here](#).

As always, find out more: @thepath\_mapleleague on Instagram

(Featured right: Acadia alumni entrepreneur Martin Suter meeting with The Path participant Blake Steeve's during the "Meet the pros" mentoring event November 16th)



### **Third OLTC Cohort Now Helping Faculty Design Winter Courses!**

Our third cohort of OLTCs have recently finished their five weeks of intensive training and are now working with faculty on winter courses!

We are pleased to announce that the OLTCs are currently helping professors develop 25 courses across various departments, which will be up and running in January. Their expertise in technology, pedagogical practices and inclusivity are informing this design process.

On Sunday, November 13, the OLTCs presented their final capstones to the Faculty Member Mentors (FMMs) with whom they were paired for the training period. During the two-and-a-half-hour call, our consultants presented the courses they helped design, reflected on what they learned, and discussed their plans for the coming months.

If you are interested in working with our consultants, email [oltc@ubishops.ca](mailto:oltc@ubishops.ca).

Here's a testimonials from one of our Faculty Mentors:

I began working with the OLTC program at the beginning of the pandemic. With no previous experience teaching online, I was in desperate need of help. The students enrolled in this program gave me that and much more. In addition to meeting all my technological needs, they became collaborators in the development of an online pedagogy consistent with my own values as a teacher. My work with the OLTC transformed pandemic teaching from a series of stopgap emergency measures into an engaging adventure the benefits of which I'm still registering.

*~ Dr. James Crooks, professor of philosophy, Bishop's University*

**Maple League Supported Indigenous Field School in Belize Prepares for 2nd Cohort**

The Maple League supported initiative titled Nation to Nation: Building Indigenous Knowledge Across International Borders is continuing to prepare for the 2<sup>nd</sup> cohort of Indigenous students to travel to Belize in May 2023.

For November, lead organizers met weekly on Wednesday mornings to plan and prepare for the 2023 program. Some key items:

- New Exchange Advisors at Acadia, St. FX and Bishops have joined the team of program administrators. They were introduced to everyone this month.
- Held a virtual information session on Teams on November 23<sup>rd</sup> for all interested students. It was recorded and will be available for students who were not able to attend.
- The webpage for this program has now been updated on the ML website with all of the important information for 2023.
- The application period for students is December 1 2022-January 6 2023. One application form was created for all applicants this year to streamline and simplify the process.

**MAPLE LEAGUE** of UNIVERSITIES | A MAPLE LEAGUE SUPPORTED INITIATIVE

**BELIZE FIELD SCHOOL SPRING 2023**

**Nation to Nation: Building Indigenous Knowledge Across International Borders**

May 3-5, 2023 Pre-Departure Gathering  
May 6-20, 2023 Field School in Belize

**For Indigenous Students**

For more information and to apply: [mapleleague.ca](http://mapleleague.ca)

Global Skills Opportunity | Canada | Global Skills Opportunity is funded by the Government of Canada's Outbound Student Mobility Pilot Program.

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY | UNIVERSITÉ BISHOP'S UNIVERSITY | MountAllison UNIVERSITY | ACADIA UNIVERSITY

**The 3M Mentoring Network is Active!**

On November 16, Dr. Jessica Riddell hosted an online info session for students interested in submitting a dossier to the 3M National Student Fellowship. This session was designed to introduce them to the award and all its experiential benefits and also to answer their questions about the submission process. We had an amazing turnout and many students expressed their interest in joining the adventure!



Our Student Mentors (Katie Bibbs at BU, Erin Austen at St. FX, Shelly Colette at Mt. A, and Matt Lukeman, James Sanford and Laura Robinson at Acadia) are keeping track of all the potential nominees at their institution and setting up connections with mentors—students who have won the award in the past—to offer feedback and guidance. We currently have 14 potential nominees in the loop; our Student Mentors stay in contact with them to ensure they have all the tools they need to get started with their dossier.

**Shakesperience 2023 Is Officially Confirmed**



Shakesperience (ENG225) is a one-week, 3-credit course taken during the spring semester in June. During this week, students (as well as students of life), travel to the renowned Stratford Theatre Festival in Stratford, Ontario to see five plays, participate in workshops and backstage tours, and have discussions with directors, actors, and writers.

This event is open to students from the Maple League and to staff, alumni, and faculty as well! The course will take place from June 26 to July 1, 2023, and participants will have the pleasure to see productions of *King Lear*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Richard II*, *Rent*, and *Spamalot* (a musical based on Monty Python!) More details can be found [here](#).

## II. Faculty and Staff Engagement

### Better Together Works Toward Etuaptmumk



The Mi'gmaq word for:

*“the gift of multiple perspectives”*

The penultimate session in the Fall '22 season of Better Together featured Mount Allison Assistant Professor and Mi'kmak leader Marsha Vicaire in a talk titled *Etuaptmumk in a Time of Reconciliation*.

This very personal and passionate session shared a deep and nuanced understanding of the Mi'kmak concept of 'two-eyed seeing' and an inspiring call to engage in etuaptmumk as a form of reconciliation.

*A genuinely rich and engaging exploration of paths in reconciling history and envisioning new futures. Also, the event was run with kindness and care.*

*~ Alfredo Ferreira, UBC*

**Six Maple League Faculty Members Submit 3M Faculty Dossiers**

This year saw a last-minute shift in deadlines for applications for the 3M National Teaching Fellowship. With only six weeks’ notice, the STLHE announced that instead of the usual January 31st deadline, applications would now be due on November 15th. Fortunately, the Maple League has designed a long-term cultivation cycle that helps steward dossiers from each of the four ML campuses; this means dossiers have been already under development for months and even years, so an otherwise disruptive shift in timeline this year was easy to manage.

University	Rank	Last Year	Student Awards	Student/Faculty Ratio	Faculty Awards ▲
Bishop's	*5	12	*6	12	1
UPEI	8	7	*4	4	2
Mount Allison	1	2	2	3	3
Acadia	*5	5	*6	6	4
St. Francis Xavier	7	*9	*4	8	5

This process of assembling these dossiers is among the most important tasks we undertake through the Maple League. It is difficult, vulnerable, and personal work that cannot be automated or systematized – it requires personal interaction and trust built over many months and years. We believe firmly in the value of this deep self-reflection to develop individuals' understanding of their own strengths; this kind of critical reflection and curating evidence of impact helps them chart their futures as educational leaders in their institutions and beyond.

This value is reflected in how outsiders evaluate our campuses, too. For example, “Faculty Awards” plays a large part in how Macleans develops their [university rankings](#), and it’s telling that the Maple League’s strong showing this year in this category aligns with the intensive and episodic work we do in mentoring faculty through the Royal Society of Canada (RSC) and other external awards and fellowships.

The Maple League supported **six faculty members from all four universities** submit dossiers this year, a record number in the history of the Maple League 3M mentoring network. The level of support available included mentoring, coaching, reviewing, writing letters to copy-editing, formatting and graphic design. We are so proud of these educational leaders!

**Maple League Fall Book Club Approaches the Finish Line**

The Fall Book Club’s reading of *Inclusive Teaching: Strategies for Promoting Equity in the College Classroom* has been a great success, with teachers inspired by the practical, actionable advice from authors Viji Sathy and Kelly A. Hogan.

As one book club comes to a close, we have opened a survey to help us select the reading for the Winter Book Club. A full list of the shortlisted books is available [here](#), and the selection survey can be found [here](#).

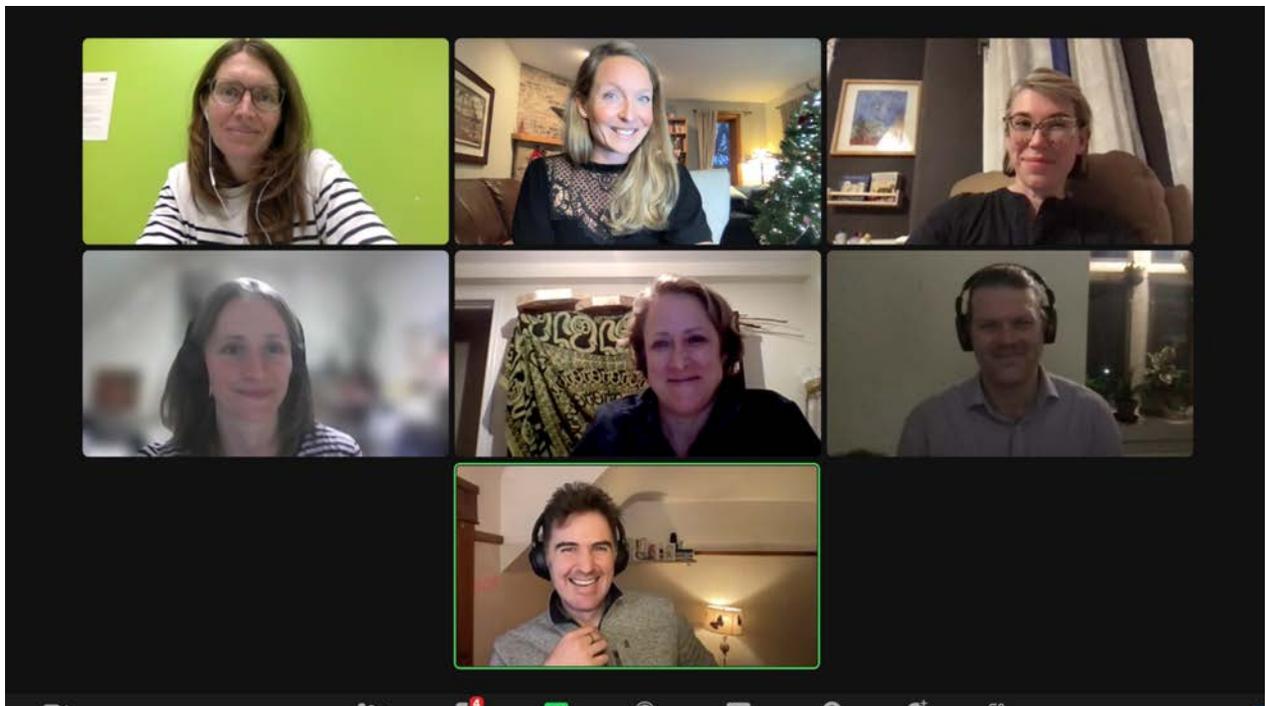


**Micro-Certificate Cohort Paired with Mentors from the MLTLC**

In November the members of the 22/23 cohort of the Maple League Micro-Certificate in Teaching and Learning each set a Capstone project that they will work on over the course of the whole year. Working with the Maple League Teaching and Learning Committee, we worked to pair each member of the cohort with a mentor to help them develop their capstones and continue to weave their ongoing research on Teaching and Learning more deeply into it!



This Micro Certificate in Teaching and Learning cohort workshops their projects in regular ateliers, including one delivered by Dr. Jessica Riddell on November 28 on how to design and develop teaching dossiers. In this session Jessica worked with micro certificate participants on audience, teaching philosophies, and the stylistic conventions of a dossier for various purposes: job market, renewal, periodic evaluation, promotion, tenure, internal awards, external fellowships. However, she also pointed to the importance of critical self reflection as a tenet of scholarly teaching, and shared research where engaging in critical reflective practice makes you a better educator, with more student engagement and higher learning outcomes.



The micro-certificate pairs participants with faculty mentors from the four Maple League universities to help them develop their capstone project. Dr. Riddell is mentoring five mentees in this cohort and will work with them one-on-one and in small groups to develop teaching dossiers and portfolios in the next six months,

### **III. External Engagement**

#### **Maple League Hosts: Dr. Shannon Murray**

The second of our Maple League Hosts sessions for the Fall Term featured the 2022 Winner of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education’s Lifetime Achievement Award, Dr. Shannon Murray. This session saw our largest registration ever for Better Together, with over 190 faculty, staff, and students from across Canada and around the world. This interactive workshop on Ungrading was very well received, with terrific Q&A and a lively chat where faculty shared ideas and resources.

These are fantastic! I appreciated the breakout groups and the discussions I had with faculty from different departments or universities that I wouldn't have ran into otherwise. Having opportunities to connect like this makes me feel much more a part of a community than I did before I started to attend these.

~ Anonymous Attendee of Dr. Murray’s Session

#### **New Maple League Financial and Operations Committee Has First Meeting**

As a part of the new governance structure, a new Financial and Operations Oversight Committee has been formed to help operationalize this complex academic consortium. This group is made up of visionary VPs from each of the four schools. The committee is chaired by the Chair of the new governing board Dr. Jeff Hennessy (VP Academic and Provost at Mount Allison), and its members include Mark Bishop (Registrar at Acadia), Isabelle Goyette (VP Finance and Administration at Bishop’s), Courtney Pringle-Carver (VP Academic at Mount Allison), and Elizabeth Yeo (VP Students at St.FX). This group will be responsible for the review of internal finances, the signing of external agreements, the signing of Maple League contracts, and the search and selection of the new Executive Director.

#### **New Maple League Governance Press Release Featured in Academica Top Ten**

News of our new governing board and its purpose were made public this month with a press release featured in Academica Top Ten. To read the release on our website, click [here](#).



## **Call for Expressions of Interest for New Executive Director Sent Out November 30**

This is an exciting time in the evolution of the Maple League of universities.

The four university presidents believe that this inter-institutional collaboration is a strategic priority for each of their institutions and that working together will continue to enhance the quality, innovation, and sustainability of their respective universities.

In light of the many achievements of the Maple League since 2018, the four university presidents have designed a new governance model that will enable this academic consortium to continue to grow and become more deeply ingrained in the four institutions.

On the heels of national and international achievements, Dr. Jessica Riddell finishes her five-year term as Executive Director of the Maple League on June 30, 2023; the governing board is now initiating a search process for a new Executive Director in November 2022. Dr. Jeff Hennessy, the new Chair of the Governing Board, states, “We are so grateful to Dr. Riddell for her tremendous leadership as the Executive Director of the Maple League. Under her direction, our consortium grew from a beautiful idea to a thriving, collaborative community of scholars, students, and staff. We would not be where we are today without Jessica’s leadership and vision, and we are excited to see what new spaces we can grow into with these new structures and renewed vision.”

Dr. Riddell reflects, “This is an incredible opportunity for someone seeking to make real and authentic change to the post-secondary education sector. The privilege of seeing the inside of four institutions provided deep insights into how policies, systems, and structures operate and how they inform, shape, and reflect deep cultures. I have benefitted from a master class in policy development and implementation, governance, funding structures, and strategic planning. The experience has offered me a nuts-and-bolts understanding of systems – and constraints – as well as a greater understanding of how universities are striving to fulfill their mandate to contribute to the broader society.”

As the only academic consortium in Canada, the Maple League is proud to lead conversations on quality undergraduate education. Each institution is dedicated to graduating highly employable and deeply ethical individuals. The Maple League provides collaborative and innovative opportunities to students, faculty, and staff, which enhances resilience, engagement, and civic engagement.

***Job description: Executive Director of the Maple League of Universities***

The Executive Director shall be responsible for the following:

- Champion the various initiatives amongst Maple League schools related to teaching, research, educational leadership, and student recruitment with a particular focus on enhancing the academic reputation of the four universities
- Work with the Academic Vice-Presidents/Provosts to set Maple League strategy and objectives, with the goal of developing a 5-year strategic plan with actionable initiatives and metrics to measure their impact
- Determine and secure budgets
- Report quarterly and annually on the financial status of the Maple League
- Identify external funding opportunities – government, foundations, private philanthropy – and work with the Governing Board, senior academic leaders, and Advancement Offices to design external funding proposals
- Identify Committee members including Chairs on a bi-annual rotation
- Direct the promotion of the Maple League brand
- Oversee the process of major communications, including the website and social media channels
- Work closely with the various communities of practice – including the Academic Committee, Branding and Recruitment, Student Affairs, Research, Registrars, and the Student Advisory Committee – to implement the Maple League strategic plan
- Allocate funding envelopes (grants, funds) to committees as determined by the budget
- Promote and maintain member institution cooperation and project integration
- Facilitate town halls, community-wide consultations, and focus groups and conduct annual visits to University Senates in support of various initiatives identified as priority areas in the strategic plan
- Support logistics and planning for Maple League events
- When appropriate, engage in public-facing activities and projects (e.g. OpEds, public scholarship, keynote speaking events, etc.) arguing for the value of the Maple League model (liberal education, student-focussed, primarily undergraduate universities)
- Support VPs Research at the four institutions to support research collaborations amongst faculty and administrative leaders at Maple League universities
- Lead the Virtual Maple League Teaching and Learning Centre to support excellence in undergraduate teaching