

**Maple League of Universities Monthly Report**  
**March 31, 2021**



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## Executive Director's Note:

March is an interstitial space between seasons in the calendar year. For those of us in the Northern Hemisphere, it is a month of snowstorms and spring thaws, of wildly unpredictable temperatures and unstable weather systems.

In the academy, it is also a time where deadlines loom and the term starts to take on a certain urgency as we move to the final stretch of exams and the wrap-up of the academic year. This is a period of beginnings and endings; now more than ever, it is also a time to look back in order to move forward into a space of new possibilities of what a post-COVID world might look like.

We have been working hard on many levels and across multiple communities of practice to ask – with curiosity, imaginative energy, and wonder – how we might enact change for the better.

In order to initiate change, we must deconstruct the narrative of a “monolithic institution” and understand that power – through a Foucauldian lens – is dispersed, local, “*embodied* and *enacted* rather than possessed, *discursive* rather than purely coercive, and *constitutes agents* rather than being deployed by them” (Gaventa 2003, 1, emphasis added). In order to change the institution, we must change ourselves. This requires a shift in thinking away from the sphere of epistemology (i.e. knowledge) into the sphere of ontology (i.e. identity). It is breathtakingly simple, and yet incredibly challenging: since – according to Foucault – we are the system, we have to change in order to change the system.

*We've focussed on a few key pillars:*

### 1. More Research

- support and engage in scholarly perspectives on educational leadership, high impact practices, retention with our post-graduate fellows
- encourage data collection and research on educational leadership, transformative learning, and innovation across our communities of practice
- explore and support initiatives related to disciplinary pedagogy, including support for scholarly approaches (and dissemination) of disciplinary pedagogy through our V\_MLTLC programming

### 2. More Support

- Design mentorship networks whereby senior faculty can benefit from younger generations and vice versa
- Create networks for emerging leaders (e.g. early-career faculty, students, etc), affinity groups, and diverse eco-systems

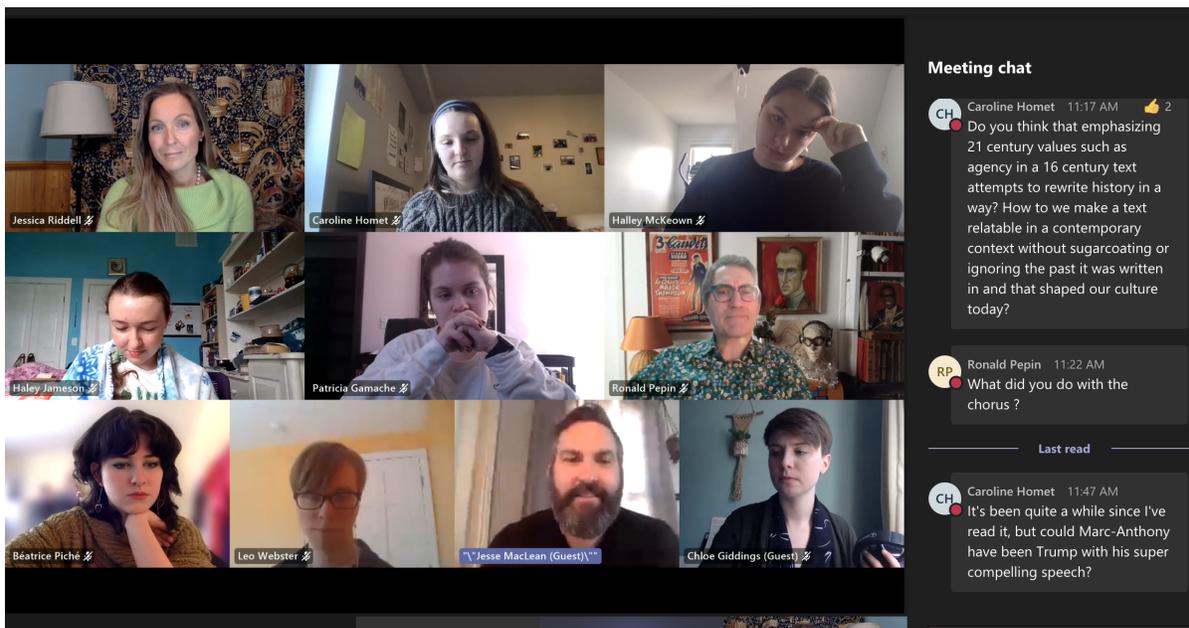
- Facilitate conversations about power and privilege in our classrooms, meetings, communities of practice, workshops, and other programming

### 3. More Conversations

- Explore *sustainability in its various forms*
- Facilitate conversations across platforms like Teams to operationalize networks
- Build stronger community connections via interdisciplinarity and networks of friendship (how are we cross-pollinating the networks across groups and perspectives )
- Engage students in all these conversations

We invite you to look through the March report and find places and spaces that resonate with your own work. The days ahead are getting longer, the sun is shining brighter, and the work ahead is both hopeful and daunting. Together we can help amplify, commiserate, and celebrate these points on our messy journeys. Happy March, everyone.

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

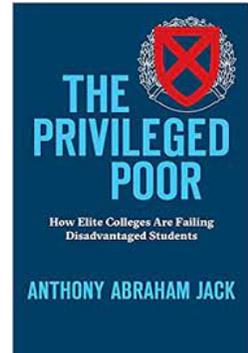


*A snapshot of ENG224 Shakespeare and Critical Hope with guest speaker Jesse Maclean (artistic director, Shakespeare by the Sea) to help the class navigate these uncertain times and move into the post-COVID world by looking into the past in order to renovate the present and innovate the future*

## I. Extraordinary Student Experiences

### Book Club Co-Facilitation

Throughout March, Maple League Student Fellows have co-facilitated this semester's Book Club, reading *The Privileged Poor* by Anthony Abraham Jack. Over 70 participants met twice this month to examine issues of class, race, access and inclusion in higher education. These discussions were co-facilitated by Nathaniel Benjamin (Mount Allison), Tanisha Campbell (Bishop's), Tiffany MacLennan (StFX Alumna, Maple League) and Heather Carroll (Maple League). The discussions throughout March focused on student and faculty relationships and institutional policies that foster exclusion.



I have enjoyed the co-facilitation of the book “The Privileged Poor” with Heather Carroll. Being in a leadership role amongst a demographic of people that includes fellow students, staff members, and faculty of the Atlantic universities has allowed me to develop essential communication skills with older people and people of power. Furthermore, making it a relatable and extremely comfortable environment for everyone to speak genuinely and confidently about the issues of race.

~ *Nathaniel Benjamin*

I am a first-generation student studying in my fourth year at Bishop's University's Modern Languages program. As a facilitator at the Maple League Book Club, creating brave and safe spaces to discuss race in the higher institutional context is something that I am proud and eager to share with our community. During our meaningful discussions, I can appreciate the spectrum of experiences people have had throughout their academic journeys. My hope is that this opportunity of sharing and learning will do more than just spread awareness, disseminating and instigating understanding followed closely by meaningful action and changes would be the most ideal outcome.

~ *Tanisha Campbell*

As a former student leader, I participated in many conversations about the holistic student experience – from overarching student life to picking apart lines in academic policies. A gap in these projects and discussions has been student facilitation. Students often participate in conversations on topics like those covered in *The Privileged Poor*, but they usually are not asked to co-facilitate sessions. While I'm a recent graduate, not currently a student, it has still been great to connect themes from the book with my experiences as a first-generation, low-income student during the Friday book club session, which is primarily faculty. I look forward to the progression of conversations and action on complex topics like race, class status, and their effects on the Maple League universities' student experience.

~ *Tiffany MacLennan*

The facilitators of the Book Club have been accepted to write a case study on their work for the International Journal for Student as Partners (IJSaP) Special Section: Partnership in Fostering Socially-Just Pedagogies. This piece is expected to be published in August 2021. They are looking forward to participating in co-creating undergraduate research together and to sharing their work with a wider audience.

**V\_MLTLC Book Club Facilitators**

Nathaniel Benjamin    Tanisha Campbell    Heather Carroll    Tiffany MacLennan

**MAPLE LEAGUE**  
of UNIVERSITIES

AN EXTRAORDINARY  
WAY OF LEARNING

### Canada Comeback Challenge: Business + Higher Education Roundtable

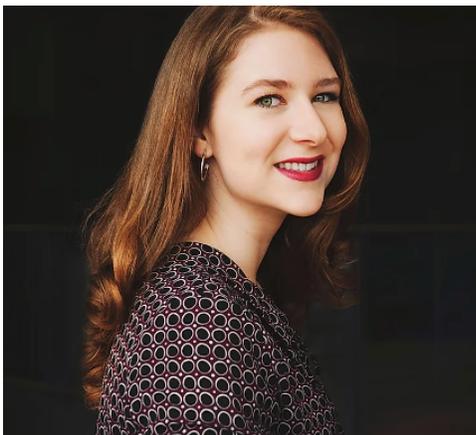
The two Maple League Teams participating in the Canada Comeback Challenge, unfortunately, did not make it to the Top 10. The Maple League participants, Addy, Sally, Tanisha, and Tiffany, produced two project pitches:

1. Fostering diversity in online environments
2. Promoting cybersecurity in the post-secondary sector.

Here is what some of our students had to say about participating in the Canada Comeback Challenge:

As a Development Studies student, the C3 challenge provided me with an opportunity to develop skills in business strategy and marketing that fall outside of the scope of my academics. Through the management of the project, I learned how to work with teammates in virtual environments across various time zones – a skill that will be valuable upon graduation from StFX University.

*~ Addy Strickland*



The C3 challenge provided a unique opportunity to solve a challenge impacting those not only from our university community but nationwide. Through the Maple League, I was able to work with students from universities in different provinces, deepening my knowledge about the similarities between Bishop's and StFX, and how some challenges are specific to the context of the institution.

*~ Sally Cunningham*

## Spring/Summer Courses

The Maple League of Universities is jointly promoting the individual institutions' Spring/Summer course offerings. Students across the Maple League are able to take Spring/Summer courses through a letter of permission (LOP) as they would any course at any other institution than their home institution and pay course tuition to the respective host institution.

The Registration process for Spring/Summer courses is as follows:

1. Consult member university Academic Calendars, Timetables and Sessional Dates.
2. Fill in the [Maple League Visiting Student Application Form](#) and send it to your home university once completed.
3. Upon completion of the course, students must request final transcripts to be sent to their home university. Normally, grades will be transferred according to respective home university policies.

For more information visit [our website](#).

One of the courses being featured this Spring includes Dr. K.A. (Sandy) MacIver's course *Leadership Through Relationships*. To learn more about this course read the description below and watch this [video](#).

### **LEADERSHIP THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS (UNST 4991 - Z (3 CR))**

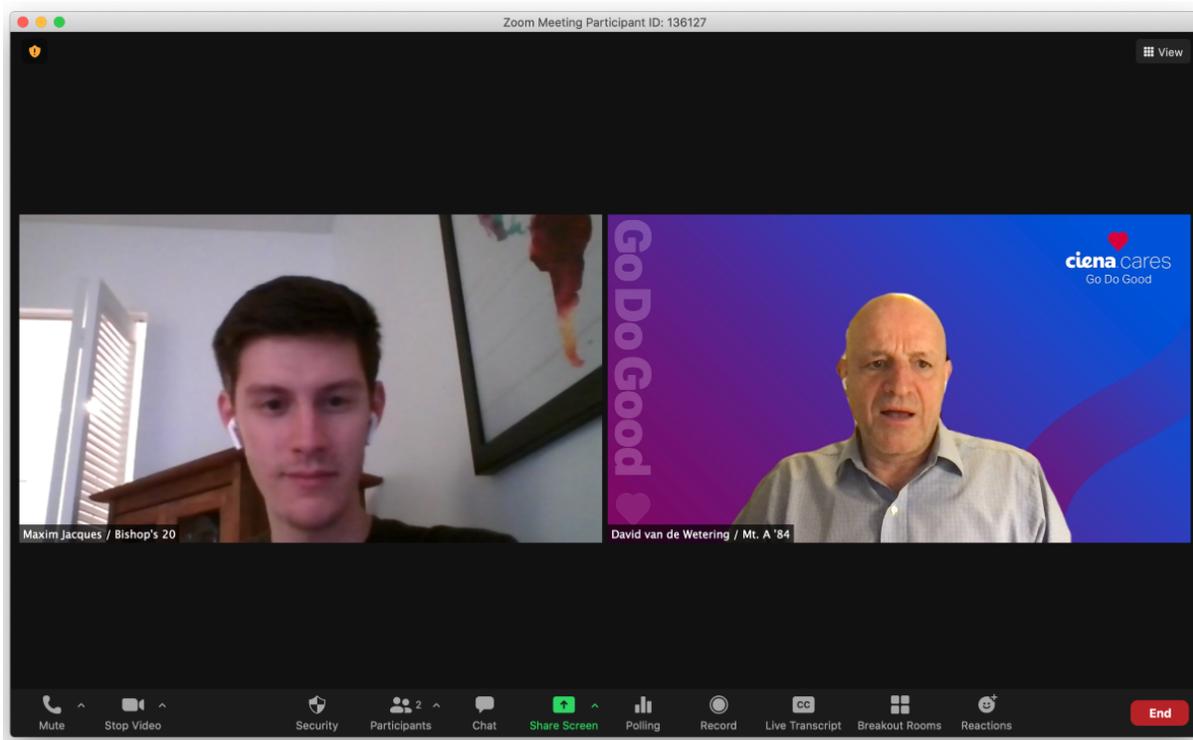
Prerequisites: Third-year standing; or permission of the instructor.

This course focuses on giving students the knowledge and skills they need to be effective leaders, whether at university or in their lives and careers after university. Students will read about and repeatedly practice concepts and skills that are necessary to influence, involve, and inspire others. These skills are all learned in partnership with others. One of the keys to the experiential learning process used in this course is active reflection, in groups and individually. Active involvement in continual in-class activities and in a team project are other mandatory elements of the course.

For faculty offering Spring/Summer courses, if you would like your course featured on Maple League social media channels, please contact [director@mapleleague.ca](mailto:director@mapleleague.ca) and [lboulbee15@ubishops.ca](mailto:lboulbee15@ubishops.ca).

## Maple League Alumni Funding Spotlight

Connecting people from different disciplines and backgrounds – to create new communities and strengthen existing ones – is one of the foundational strengths of the Maple League. Malcolm Boyle (Bishop's, '78), an advocate of the JUMP program, connected David Van De Wetering (Mount Allison, '84), to the Maple League through the Halifax meeting of the JUMP program, and as a result, David is the first alumni from a Maple League school to direct funds to the Maple League. The Maple League was fortunate enough to benefit from the generosity of David, who has chosen to donate funds to the Maple League Student Fellows Program. He has also granted us an interview, which can be found in [Appendix A](#) of this report.



*(Above: David Van De Wetering & Bishop's Alumni Maxim Jacques during a Mentoring Session)*

## II. Faculty and Staff Engagement

### Virtual Maple League Teaching and Learning Centre (V\_MLTLC)

#### Welcome To My Online Classroom



In March we concluded the Welcome To My Online Classroom series. This series ran from November to March and featured the steps and missteps of teaching online in the midst of a pandemic. Professors took us on a tour of their virtual classroom and talked about what works (and what didn't) in an online platform from their experience this year.

To view highlights from this series, click [here](#) to see the Welcome To My Online Classroom YouTube playlist.

On Thursday, March 18, participants joined **Statistics for Business** with Dr. Arshad Taseen (Bishop's).

In courses that are quantitative in nature, emphasis is on skill-building and learning. Expertise is developed by practice – applying the principles repeatedly to different scenarios. Teachers use a variety of techniques to present these principles to help master the skills. In online courses, the absence of exchange in body language between students and teachers presents extra problems. Most students prefer to keep their camera off leaving the teacher to stare at the circles on the screen, wondering if everyone understood the concept. Here I created a visual-interactive book with my notes, PowerPoint animations, interactive apps, and my light-board videos of problem-solving as a SCORM package that allows students to use and repeatedly watch or play with it to understand the statistical concepts in a way they think they learn best. I will show what I learnt from the previous semester and how I corrected them for the current semester. I am using Moodle as the main platform to deliver the course; what features seem cool but hinder student focus. Also, show how the use of SCORM packages help deliver conceptual material and use of Klose quiz for problem-solving during group work in Microsoft Teams.

*~ Dr. Arshad Taseen*

**Better Together: Maple League Teaching Support**

In March, we hosted two Better Together: Maple League Teaching Support sessions. This series has connected students, staff, and faculty across the Maple League to share ideas and successes related to teaching and learning. To view highlights from this series, click [here](#).

**Thursday, March 4: Open Educational Resources (OERs) at the Maple League.** Elizabeth Stregger (Librarian, MtA), Siobhan Lacey (Student, StFX), Dr. David Webster (Professor, Bishop’s), Dr. Conor Vibert (Professor, Acadia) discussed their experiences with creating, adopting, and advocating for Open Educational Resources (OERs) and their vision for the future of OERs at the four Maple League Universities. During this session, the Maple League’s **Open Education Community of Practice** was announced. The aim of the OE Community of Practice is to bring together ideas and resources to bolster OER adoption at the Maple League Universities. To join this community, sign up [here](#).



**Thursday, March 25: The Participatory Professor.** Join Dr. Gabrielle Donnelly (Acadia) as she shares her experience of shifting the course Group Facilitation and the Art of Gathering to an online format and how she is supporting students in building skills and capacities to host generative, equitable, and culturally responsive online spaces for each other and community partners. Before teaching at Acadia, Dr. Donnelly spent a decade working as a professional facilitator. During this session, we’ll explore what works well (and what doesn’t!) around the intersections of facilitation and teaching in online contexts.



### III. External Engagement

#### Maple League Hosts

On Thursday, March 11, we presented the March **Maple League Hosts: Students as Partners in Open Educational Resource Creation: A Discussion and Workshop.**

#### V\_MLTLTC Maple League Hosts

March 11th: 'Students as Partners in OER Creation: A Discussion and Workshop'



Participants joined Kim Mears (University of Prince Edward Island), Meghan Landry (St. Francis Xavier University), and Tiffany MacLennan (Maple League of Universities) to discuss how creating and adapting open educational resources (OERs) can be a great opportunity to work directly with students as partners. The discussion encompassed how and why to have students as partners, the benefits of OER partnerships to both faculty and students and participants heard from Kim about successful student partnerships at UPEI. The session concluded in a workshop where participants made a framework to integrate student-partner open assignments into their classroom. To access the Students as Partners in OER Creation workbook, click [here](#).

#### Recruitment Events

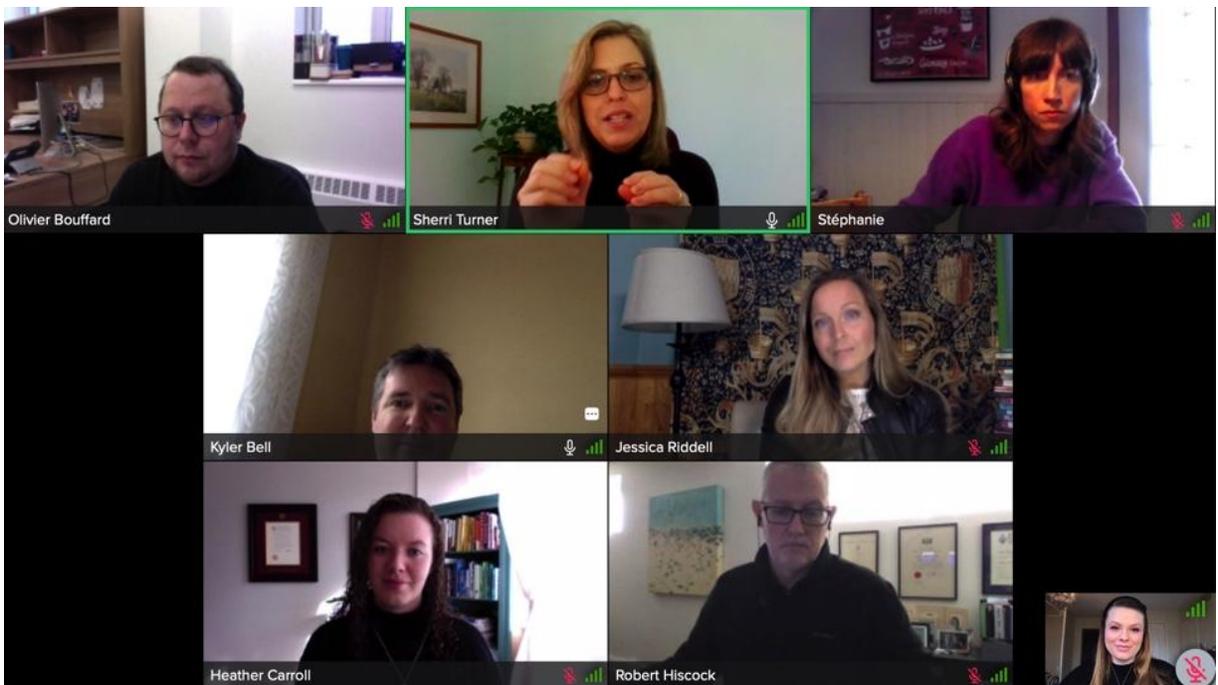
The Maple League is also starting to get invitations from schools for our participation in virtual recruitment events. Most recently, the Maple League did a presentation/Q&A at Hillfield Strathallan College on February 24th about the value of each institution and the Maple League as a consortium. The event was a great success, and because of that, the Maple League recruitment teams have been invited back to do a presentation for their grade elevens on March 22.



Hillfield Strathallan College  
Learn with Joy. Live with Purpose.

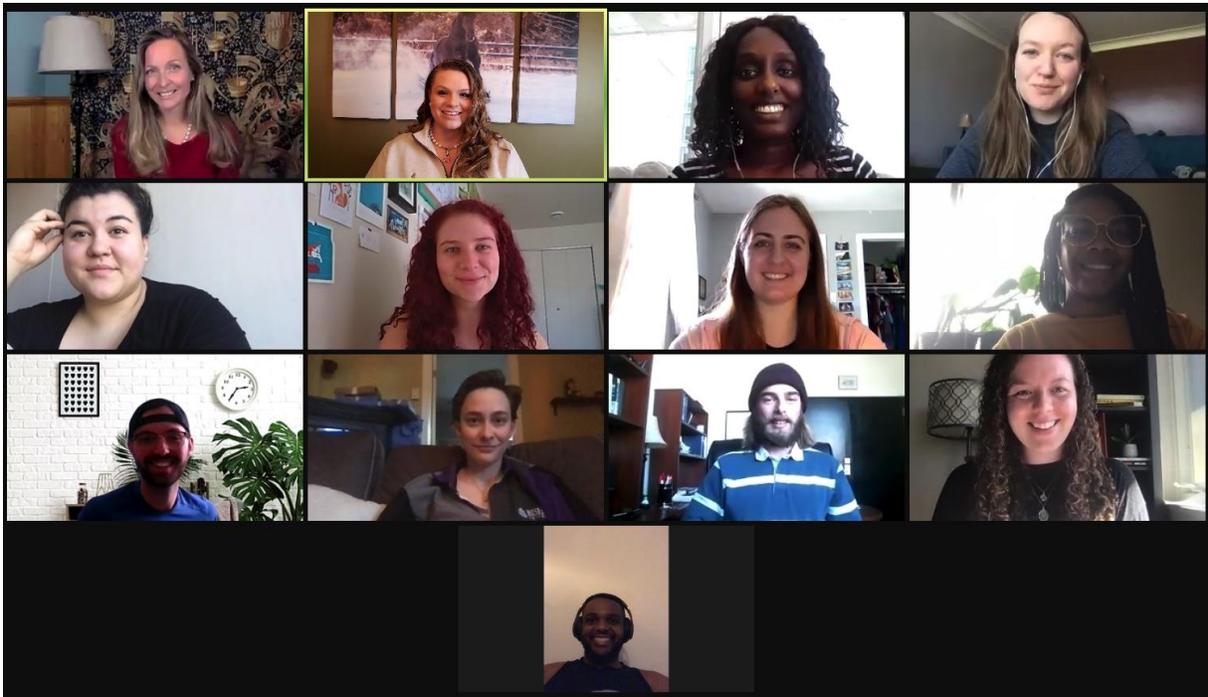
## Upcoming Maple League Communication Projects

After such a defining year for the Maple League, we are eager to tell our story and share the ways in which our two guiding questions: *What can we do together that we cannot do on our own?* and, *How does working together enhance what we already do on our own individual campuses?*, allowed us to accelerate our strategic plan and remain innovative leaders in higher education. In a year when everything was socially distanced we were reminded how important relationships are, whether in the classroom or with our various communities of practice. Lauren Boulton (Advancement and Communications Post-Graduate Fellow), Jessica Riddell (Executive Director) and the Communications Directors are collaborating on a supporting, values-based story, focused on the various institutional innovations that allowed us to strengthen our role as leaders in conversations about quality undergraduate education in Canada and globally.



### IV. ML Team

The Maple League Student Fellows are finishing their term on April 30th and starting to think about wrapping up their fellowships for the year. For the Fellows, this will include finishing or writing transition documents for their projects, along with the submission of a year-end impact report, as well as an exit interview. The fellows have contributed in many ways to both their campus communities as well as the Maple League throughout this academic year.



## **Appendix A: David Van De Wetering Interview**

### ***Feature Interview with David Van De Wetering:***

**1. *Tell me about your experience at a Maple League school.***

Mount Allison, like each of the Maple League schools, promised and delivered on the full University experience at a truly personal and one on one level. Believe it might have changed but I never ever had a student number and was able to bite off as much as I could chew on so many fronts. They say the world is your oyster, but starting off at a small liberal arts school, really helps make it happen.

**2. *What inspired you to donate to the Maple League?***

In the same way, you never buy a product or service from a company, you buy it from a person. In my case Malcolm Boyle, Bishop's '78, as part of the earlier version of the Mentoring Program, Halifax Jump introduced me to the Maple League University I knew the least. In a nutshell, almost like COVID, you get infected by a person's passion who invites you to an information session, and you see how these four schools are helping each other deliver a world-class liberal arts education.

**3. *What value do you see in giving to the Maple League Student Fellows program?***

As anthropologist Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world: indeed, it's the only thing that ever has". I believe Students Fellows can, with a little bit of help, embody and act upon small actions that will make our world better.

**4. *What is something you have learned outside of the classroom or through experiential learning that you still use or refer to today?***

The power of volunteerism was taught to me by a fellow volunteer very early in my life, and I am convinced it has been a catalyst for a lot of personal development and success I have been fortunate to achieve. My employer, Ciena understands and puts its money on the table, by creating CienaCares, encouraging myself and all of my colleagues to Go Do Good. Ciena's CienaCares program actually adds dollars to My Giving Account each time I log some time, which enabled me to donate four approximately equal tranches to each Maple League University.

**5. *If you could give your 20-year-old self a piece of advice what would it be and why?***

When you boil it down, it is never money but time you will lack, so always find the time, the money will work itself out.

**Appendix B: Social Media Update**

Some key communications metrics this month include growth of our LinkedIn account and substantial impressions on Twitter. Loomly also continues to be a valuable asset for the Maple League allowing us to post consistently and recognize important national days.

Twitter:

**Top Tweet** earned 5,084 impressions

Join us tomorrow at 11 am ET, Noon AT as Dr. Conor Vibert (@AcadiaU), Dr. David Webster (@UBishops), Elizabeth Stregger (@MountAllison) and Siobhan Lacey (@stfxuniversity) discuss their perspectives on Open Educational Resources at the ML!

Join here: [bluejeans.com/8198229605](https://bluejeans.com/8198229605)  
[pic.twitter.com/70Pcg3Vqpf](https://pic.twitter.com/70Pcg3Vqpf)



3 10

View Tweet activity

View all Tweet activity

**Top media Tweet** earned 3,735 impressions

Join us tomorrow at 11am ET, Noon AT for Maple League Hosts: Students as Partners in Open Educational Resource Creation: A Discussion and Workshop

Join Kim Mears @UPEI, Meghan Landry @stfxuniversity, and Tiffany MacLennan.

See you there! Join by clicking [bluejeans.com/8198229605](https://bluejeans.com/8198229605)  
[pic.twitter.com/isbvOby1U2](https://pic.twitter.com/isbvOby1U2)



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LinkedIn:

17

Unique visitors

▲ 30%

1.7K

Post impressions

▲ 40%