

Maple League of Universities Year-End Report

July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021



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Executive Director's Note:

“Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans.

John Lennon, “Beautiful Boy” (1980)

This lyric keeps popping up on my news feeds, social media platforms, and playlists. At first, I smiled wryly. “If you only knew, John.” And then I started to think about what this means beyond a snappy meme or a clever tweet. Upon further reflection, I believe this lyric resonates with the cultural *zeitgeist* – the “spirit of the times” – as we grapple with what has just happened to our “best laid plans” (to quote another poet) in the past 18 months.

As we find ourselves in the final throes of a global pandemic, John Lennon’s lyric illuminates the importance of vision (over plans), mission (over metrics), and values (over deadlines). Don’t get me wrong: a strategic plan is a great road map, metrics are helpful signposts, and deadlines ensure we arrive on time.

Until the road becomes unfamiliar.
Until the path is uncharted.
Until time is no longer ours to control.

Over the past year hope has sometimes been hard to locate – and plans have been even harder to make. As Renecca Solnit writes,

“Hope calls for action; action is impossible without hope. At the beginning of his massive 1930s treatise on hope, the German philosopher Ernst Bloch wrote, ‘The work of this emotion requires people who throw themselves actively into what is becoming, to which they themselves belong.’ To hope is to give yourself to the future, and that commitment to the future makes the present inhabitable.” (*Hope in the Dark*, 2004).

Our hope has been tested because our future plans were cancelled – almost overnight. We were left with a present – according to Solnit – that might be untenable thanks to the significant disruption to our plans, actions, and strategic directions.

At the same time, hope has also propelled us into the future and asked us to imagine a different world. As we present the Year-End Report (2020 – 2021) and reflect on the past year, turning this philosophical lens back on ourselves helps to illuminate what we’ve done while making space for what we’ve lost and what we’ve learned.

When I review the five-year strategic plan for the Maple League (2018 – 2023), I see that our “best laid plans of mice and men [sic]” are grounded in hope: hope that collaboration takes us farther than competition; hope that a student-centred approach creates more inclusive and diverse learning spaces; hope that sharing research advances our thinking; and hope that we have the courage to think and see differently.

The Maple League is – at its heart – founded on the belief that together we can move beyond the “way it has always been” into new spaces where universities can be on the frontline of social and economic renewal.

Our vision, mission, and values have been tested – and have endured. Because we led with values – collaboration, student experiences, resilience, and community engagement with global citizenship – we fulfilled (and in many cases exceeded) the goals we designed in our plans, metrics, and deadlines. This year,

- We secured \$481, 852 in external funding from five different funding sources.
- We supported \$30,000+ in Tri-Council funding with two successful SSHRC grants.
- We applied for \$1+ million in external funding from institutes and think tanks.
- We facilitated two successful nominations for 3M National Teaching Fellows.
- We mentored three successful 3M National Student Fellows.
- We built a Virtual Maple League Teaching and Learning Centre, with 582 participants from 46 universities and colleges.
- We stewarded 15 communities of practice and inter-connected hubs

At a time where a number of organizations hunkered down to weather the storm, we have opened ourselves up to doing things differently, whether that is sharing courses across universities, investing in inclusive high impact practices, leading conversations in quality undergraduate education, and creating virtual spaces that foster innovation not just at individual institutions but across the post-secondary sector.

We’ve accomplished a lot, but we’ve learned more – about ourselves, each other, and what is possible when we are busy making other plans.

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

I. Extraordinary Student Experiences

Building Capacities for Student Leadership

In April, the Maple League of Universities announced that three students from the four universities were selected as recipients of the 2021 3M National Student Fellowship. This fellowship recognizes ten students across Canada who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in their lives and at their post-secondary institution.

Leah Creaser created a first-year biology lab incorporating Mi'kmaq Traditional Knowledge as a research topic and ensures that the campus is an open inclusive space for all Indigenous students to feel safe (read more [here](#)). Georges-Philippe Gadoury-Sansfaçon, Chancellor's Scholar graduating with Applied Psychology and Mathematics at Bishop's and a member of 2020 - 2021 design team for the Online Learning and Technology Consultants (OLTC) program. He is passionate about building spaces for students to be partners in the design and delivery of a 21st-century liberal education (read more [here](#)). Devon Parris was recognized for outstanding leadership, including designing a project called the "[Anti-Racist Film Review](#)"—a film review site that analyzes anti-racist discourse within film while critiquing superficial, exploitive, and misrepresentations of contemporary racism (read more [here](#)).



Maple League 3M Support Program

Students and faculty benefit from the Maple League 3M Fellows Support Program. This program includes the following:

- **'How To' Handbooks** that include excerpts from successful dossiers, tips and advice, and guidance on structure and critical reflective practice that constitutes a successful dossier
- A network of **institutional champions** to help identify and support nominations (both faculty and students)
- **3M mentorship network**: 3M faculty and 3M students from Maple League universities who have volunteered to work with nominators and nominees in the compilation of dossiers
- **Administrative support** in compiling dossiers, collecting reference letters, and copy-editing

- **Webinars** and on-demand **digital resources** (such as [Teaching Dossiers Q&A with a 3M Teaching Fellow](#))

Designing Transformative Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) Opportunities

OLTC Program

The Bishop’s University pilot project, launched in June 2020, hired 23 undergraduate students to help faculty prepare for Fall 2020 as OLTCs. They were trained in educational technology and pedagogy, with a particular focus on supporting high impact practices, accessibility and accommodations, and authentic learning environments. The OLTC program goals are threefold:

1. Offer individualized support for faculty to enhance student learning experiences (through engagement, community-building, and transformative learning) in person and remotely
2. Provide students with work-integrated learning (WIL) experiences and future-facing skill development (digital literacy, design thinking, creative problem solving, emotional and social intelligence)
3. Help re-imagine a 21st-century liberal education that engages students as key collaborators in the co-design of their university experience.

The OLTC program is now expanding across the Maple League campus in Phase II (2021 - 2022) thanks to funding from Business Higher Education Round Table. The OLTC program provides opportunities for students to develop key transferable skills, such as teamwork, leadership, analytical skills, written and verbal communication, and knowledge mobilization.

The benefits of these skills reach far beyond the student employee; they have large impacts on the institution, the higher education sector, and the communities within which these universities are embedded.

Maple League Student Fellows Program

The Maple League Fellows Program - with four post-graduate fellows and 12 student fellows from across the four universities - provided transformative work integrated learning opportunities, professional development modules and mentorship focused on future-facing competencies:

- ***Social & emotional skills (SES)***
- ***Digital literacy & Technology-supported problem solving***



- *Design Thinking*
- *Strategic Visioning & Planning*
- *Project & Change Management*
- *Communications & Corporate Stewardship*

Leading Undergraduate Research

Research on High Impact Practices and Inclusion

In 2020 – 2021, Dr. Jessica Riddell and Tiffany MacLennan (Maple League Research Fellow) designed a multi-pronged research project that assesses High Impact Practices (HIPs) across the Maple League universities; they designed a HIP spotlight project, presented on national panels, delivered papers at international conferences, facilitated professional development workshops, and published (one book



chapter and one peer-reviewed article are forthcoming). High-impact practices (HIPs) have a significant and positive impact on students’ deeper learning and aids in the development of intellectual and practical skills, civic responsibility, and richer understanding of different cultures around them (Kuh 2008). However, HIPs are often concentrated in business and science degrees, leaving a critical gap in scholarship related to HIPs and liberal education. The Knowledge Mobilization component launched on the Maple League [website](#) in June 2021.

Supporting Maple League Student Athletes

The four Maple League universities have a strong commitment to fostering growth in the various spheres of their students’ lives. Maple League student-athletes benefit from supporting programs that empower our future graduates. Academic excellence, leadership, and community service learning are central to our approach to 21st-century education. In April, the Maple League released two videos co-created by the four athletic departments; these videos featured student-athletes who shared how being a student-athlete shaped their university experience for the better. To view Part 1 of the video series click [here](#). To view Part 2 of the video series click [here](#).



Securing External Funding for Extraordinary Student Experiences

RIIPEN and RBC Extend \$80,000 Funding to Support Student-centred Experiential Learning

Riipen Founder Dana Stephenson connected with Dr. Jessica Riddell and the OLTC team several times this spring to explore how RIIPEN might support transformative work-integrated learning initiatives across the Maple League. Dana submitted an extension of a funding proposal to RBC to continue to fund the consortium's access to this platform, the largest marketplace in North America for experiential learning and Post-Secondary Institutions. This will mark the third year of funding for access to the platform, with a \$240,000 monetary value that supports students and faculty engage in experiential and work integrated learning through local and national networks.

Business + Higher Education Roundtable (BHER) Gives Maple League \$170,000

Business + Higher Education Roundtable (BHER) has recognized the Maple League of Universities as an industry partner and committed \$170,000 to scale the OLTC (Online Learning and Technology Consultants) program across the four Maple League campuses. While still in the early stages of the program expansion, the Maple League has made significant progress on program design and delivery and seeks to provide 130+ WILs for students this coming year.

Maple League Alumnus Donates Over \$2,000 to Maple League Students

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 David's generosity to support the Maple League Student Fellows Program.

Federal Government Awards \$31,470 to the Maple League Student Leadership Program

The Maple League received \$31,470 through the Canada Summer Jobs program for summer 2021 (we are still awaiting a funding decision from one of the four universities). This federal fund supports youth employment opportunities. The Maple League aims to provide students with meaningful work-integrated learning (WIL) and professional development opportunities to ensure that students have future-facing skills to be engaged citizens and navigate a rapidly shifting 21st-century job sector. The Maple League works with universities as industry partners; together we create hubs of connectivity to shape the landscape of undergraduate education with students as thought leaders and collaborators.

Faculty Across the Maple League Apply for \$450,000+ to Fund Student Experiences (CEWIL)

In May, the Maple League hosted the Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning (CEWIL) Canada team: strategic leads at CEWIL created a Maple League focussed session about their new call for proposals for its Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) Innovation Hub (iHub). The session was very well attended and has already had a significant impact, identifying and supporting several applications across the four universities. A significant number of proposals were submitted by the June 15th funding deadline. The projects submitted came from each of the four schools and are a great example of the outstanding teaching and innovation that happens at Maple League universities.

The Maple League Applied for \$669,848.777 of Funding through Future Skills

External funding for projects was one of our main foci this year, and the Maple League applied for a **total of \$669,848.777** to the Future Skills Centre calls for funding. This was a culmination of two different projects submitted to the funding round at Future Skills Centre called “Shock-Proofing the Future of Work: Skills Innovation Challenge”.

In July 2020, with the assistance of Dr. Jessica Riddell, Dr. Michael Sheppard (faculty member at Acadia University and Professor of Entrepreneurship) and Brendan MacNeil (Student Coordinator and Canada Summer Jobs Intern for the social incubator) submitted an application to the **Future Skills Centre for a total of \$189,848.777 to fund The PATH (Social Innovation Incubator)**.

In August 2020, under the supervision of Dr. Jessica Riddell, Lauren Boulbee (Maple League Post-Graduate Fellow in Advancement and Communications) and Tiffany MacLennan (Maple League Research Fellow and Strategist) and Heather Carroll (former Director of the V_MLTLIC), submitted two funding proposals to both **Future Skills Centre (\$480,000)** for the Maple League expansion of the Online Learning and Technology Consultants (OLTCs) program.

While these proposals were not awarded funds in this round of competition, the submissions were met with enthusiasm and support from the adjudicators, and we received helpful advice that will benefit us in the next round of funding. Every time we submit a high quality project for external funding, we are not merely doing so to secure external funds: there is also an element of advocacy to these efforts. Every submission highlights the active and dynamic nature of this consortium, raises awareness of our inter-institutional collaborations, and makes the case to funders to adjust their submission criteria and eligibility to recognize and value innovative collaborative endeavours.

II. Faculty and Staff Engagement

Two Maple League Professors Awarded Highest Educational Leadership Honour in PSE Through the 3M National Teaching Fellowship

Two Maple League professors have been recognized for their contribution to higher education in Canada as 3M National Teaching Fellows, the highest recognition for teaching excellence and educational leadership in Canada in higher education.

Dr. Martin-Brûlé, from Bishop's University's Department of Politics and International Studies, works closely with students in concrete research and experiential learning opportunities, notably through initiating the annual Quebec Undergraduate Security Conference (QUSC).



“What an honour to receive the 3M National Teaching Fellowship and to join this community of inspiring professors! I am most grateful for the support of the Jarislowsky Chair and Maple League in stewarding this process,” notes Dr. Martin-Brûlé.

Dr. Andrew Wilson, Associate Professor of [Religious Studies](#) at Mount Allison University has also been named a 3M National Teaching Fellow. The award, created by the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STHLE) in 1986, recognizes exceptional teachers in higher education across the country. Ten recipients are named each year.

“I’m honoured and humbled to be named as a 3M Teaching Fellow and join this exciting national network,” says Wilson. *“I believe education is at its best when grounded within the community. It is from here that learning can most effectively provide deeply rooted, authentic and long-lasting change.”*

We would like to thank members of the 3M Faculty Mentors program, led by Dr. Jessica Riddell with the support of the Maple League Teaching and Learning Committee (MLTLC), who helped to steward a number of faculty through various stages of the application and submission process.

Read more about Dr. Martin-Brûlé [here](#).

Read more about Dr. Andrew Wilson [here](#).

Maple League Teaching & Learning Centre Creates Interconnected Hubs

The Virtual Maple League Teaching and Learning Centre (V_MLTLC) is a grassroots, faculty-led virtual space that supports faculty and staff as they prepare for the design and delivery of courses in the 21st-century. Since the launch of the V_MLTLC on June 1, 2020, this space has had tremendous impact on our communities over the last year including:

- **588** participants
- External participants from **46** colleges and universities
- **48** book club meetings with **120** registrants
- **75** teaching and learning webinars
- **2,000+** asynchronous views
- **Seven 3M National Student Fellows** over 2020 and 2021
- **Two 3M National Teaching Fellows** in 2021

Maple League Teaching & Learning Committee Gather for a Week-Long Strategic Retreat

The Maple League Teaching and Learning Committee hosted a strategic visioning retreat June 14-18, 2021. Synchronous sessions focused on topics such as:

- Strategic vision and alignment with robust programming
- Micro-Certificate or faculty credential in teaching and learning
- High Impact practices and inclusive pedagogies
- Connecting communities through research and teaching clusters
- SoTL project on the impact of the V_MLTLC

The conversations were lively and rich in both reflection (what have we *done*) and in future-facing directions (who do we want *to be*). While the four Maple League universities do not have “bricks and mortar” teaching and learning centers, the pandemic has inspired new ways of thinking about support beyond the dated concept of a “centre” and moving into high-impact spaces like innovative hubs and interconnected networks. The Virtual Maple League



Teaching and Learning Centre (V_MLTLC) is a dynamic “hub”; this diverse social network energizes cross-connections, improves knowledge sharing and mobilization, and enhances learning across grassroots microcultures. The V_MLTLC takes a “social networks” approach to educational development. We can grow in new ways in 2021 and beyond, especially with Neil Silcox joining the Maple League as the Faculty Excellence Lead ([see ML Team, Section IV](#)).

The Maple League Research Committee Builds Key Research Capacities & Connections

The Maple League Research Committee has been active in identifying challenges and opportunities for researchers at small, primarily undergraduate institutions. These include:

Building Membership with the Royal Society of Canada

At the April 30th meeting of the Maple League Research Committee, there was strong support for establishing a Royal Society of Canada (RSC) College / Fellow Maple League Nomination Committee to coordinate nominations from the four Maple League universities. RSC alumni and others will be invited to join the committee, which will be led by Dr David Hornidge, a current RSC College member from Mount Allison University.

Expanding HQP opportunities via MUN’s Ph.D. program

The Maple League Research Committee invited Dr. Aimée Surprenant, Memorial University’s Associate VP (Academic) and Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, to its 4th June meeting to discuss opportunities for faculty from the Maple League to be primary supervisors of graduate students enrolled in various Ph.D. programs at MUN. A highly successful partnership with St.FX already exists and has provided numerous benefits to faculty, including enhanced HQP training records for competitive grant applications. In addition to the HQP training and related research productivity opportunities, the arrangement involves cost-effective sharing of student stipends and access to MUN’s professional development training programs. Future planning will focus on MOU development/renewal between MUN and the Maple League universities.

Maple League Highlights Research with a Series of Canadian Research Chair (CRC) Profiles

Research is a foundational element of a quality undergraduate education. The Canada Research Chairs (CRC) Program is a part of the Government of Canada’s National Strategy to make Canada one of the world’s top countries in research and development. In order to attract and retain the country’s best researchers, the Government of Canada commits approximately three million dollars a year to ensure that post-secondary institutions across Canada have diverse academic researchers and training excellence. The Research Committee has created a spotlight series on the CRCs across the Maple League. We will share this series with our communities via our website blog in the coming weeks.



Maple League Canadian Research Chairs Meet to Strengthen and Build Relationships

On May 19, nine of the thirteen Canada Research Chairs (CRC) from the four Maple League Universities gathered virtually for the first time to network, share experiences, and build relationships. The newly formed Maple League CRC Network, which represents a broad range of research activities across the faculties, noted the benefits of meeting on a regular basis (two or three times a year) and focusing each gathering on specific issues so that both opportunities (e.g. collaborative grant applications) and challenges could be addressed in a timely and meaningful manner. Among the topics discussed was the importance of cross-campus education to better inform students and faculty about the unique and specific role of Canada Research Chairs in building research strength and capacity.

SSHRC Partnerships and Connection Grants

The Maple League has been approached by a number of universities and principal investigators interested in partnering with the four universities on large SSHRC Connection Grants. Projects under development include the value of the liberal arts, and another on student retention, equity and student success. This comes on the heels of the successful SSHRC Connections Grant for Knowledge Mobilization, led by Drs. Suzanne Hood and Heather Lawford at BU, and a SSHRC Connections Grant proposal led by Dr. Mary Sweatman (Acadia University) “Seizing the moment: Exploring just and sustainable pandemic recovery through community-campus partnerships.” This uptick in research collaborations is evidence of this consortium’s reputation as a leader in research around quality undergraduate education in Canada and around the world.

Dr. David Bruce Shares CCV Knowledge Across the Maple League

Dr. David Bruce, Director of Research Grants at St. Francis Xavier, held **twelve workshops** on the Canadian Common CV (CCV) for Maple League faculty and research teams in May. These webinars covered all aspects of how the CCV is set up and used, with particular attention paid to how best to maximize each part of the CCV as part of a grant application. These webinars provided useful and timely advice to all, as aspects of the program continue to evolve and change over time. Participants who already had a CCV in the system were also able to send their CCV to Dr. Bruce before or after the workshop for review, in order to identify items that are missing and/or that could be added, changed, expanded, to give participants an advantage in their submissions.



Maple League Book Launch & Research Reception

The [Maple League Virtual Book Launch](#) celebrates the scholarship and contributions of faculty. Virtual spaces provide us with an opportunity to come together in new ways to celebrate research achievements. The multimedia book launch showcases author interviews and links to their books while offering a toast to their accomplishments. The event will take place on December 1st, and is hosted by the Maple League and the Centre for Early Modern Visual Culture at Mount Allison University. We hope to make this an annual and include publications in addition to books. Please send comments or requests to Dr. Lauren Beck (lbeck@mta.ca).

Maple League Academic Committee (MLAC) Facilitates Grassroots Conversations About Collaboration

This year, the Academic Committee has focussed on the continued administration of the Maple League course uptake in support of the MOU between the universities, including a number of ways to support students and faculty in collaborative, academically-rich spaces. The MLAC designed timelines, calls, and approval processes for Maple League-supported courses (through the MOU of the four universities). The MLAC is exploring ideas for how the Maple League can support new initiatives, interesting course themes, and vehicles for more collaboration, while navigating (and being sensitive to) the various issues of employment and institution differences.

There has been progress on many fronts, including:

- Continued discussion about the understanding of the Maple League in each university and the engagement differences within those universities of the course opportunities;
- A new position - Maple League Faculty Excellence Lead - who will spend dedicated time facilitating the ongoing administration of new MOU supported courses as well as helping codify and build systems for the universities to understand structures and administrative paths unique to each institution to help professors and administrators confidently pursue the Maple League opportunities in teaching and collaboration;
- The committee is working in smaller working groups to facilitate “ideas”, structural processes, clusters of collaboration, and more.

Spring and Summer courses were offered across the Maple League in 2020. **12 Maple League Shared Courses** were offered over the **Fall 2020 and Winter 2021** semesters. **Maple League Shared Courses offered in the upcoming Fall 2021 term include:** Directed Readings in Latin (Mt. A), An Introduction to Theology (Acadia), The Business of Aviation (Mt. A), Arts and Culture Marketing (Mt. A), and a Social Sciences course on Educational Technology and Applied Research (Mt. A).

Dynamic Communities of Practice Flourish Across the Maple League

In 2021 we focused on sustainability and spent significant time building communities of practice and facilitating strategic visioning. The fundamental premise is that the Maple League should not be “one more thing” on peoples’ overloaded desks, but instead help support, advance, or make delightful the work people are already doing.

There are **three Maple League Committees**:

1. The Maple League Research Committee
2. The Maple League Academic Committee
3. The Maple League Teaching and Learning Committee

Several of the communities of practice have identified their own mandate, membership, and roles: these include project discussions, sharing good/best practices, support (jokingly referred to at some tables as “therapy,” signalling value in diverse ecosystems to foster resilience), and/or advisory capacities for external projects/programs/grants. There are 2-3 representatives from each university that sit on these committees and attend monthly meetings.

The chairs of our **three committees** (*featured below*), Dr. Erin Austen (StFX) and Toni Roberts (Mt. A) co-chairs of the Maple League Teaching and Learning Committee (MLTLC), Mark Adam (Acadia) the Maple League Academic Committee (MLAC) and Dr. Anna Redden (Acadia) the Maple League Research Committee (MLRC) met quarterly throughout the year to share their progress and strategic visions.

In addition to our three committees, our **stakeholder groups have grown over the last year (from nine to twelve)** as people recognize the value of connecting. These stakeholders include:

- Presidents Council
- Union Presidents
- VP Academics
- Student Affairs
- Academic Deans
- Registrars
- IT Directors
- Athletics Directors
- Communications Directors
- International Directors
- Recruitment Directors
- University Librarians



III. External Engagement

The Maple League Facilitates Shared Events in Virtual Spaces

October 4: Sisters in Spirit organized by Acadia University & Maple League Indigenous Student Fellow Lara Hartman

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 to look for opportunities to heal from this national tragedy. 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.



October 24: AAU Teaching Showcase hosted by St. Francis Xavier University

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.

February 9-11: Mount Allison's Racial Justice Symposium

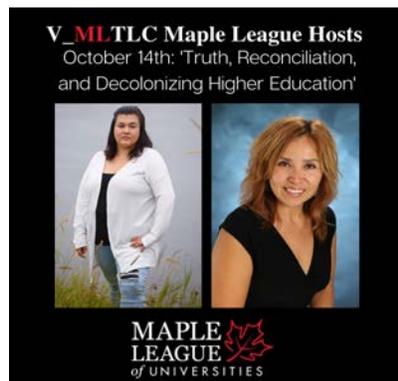


In recognition of the International Decade for People of African Descent, 2015–2024, Mount Allison University hosted the first-ever [Racial Justice Symposium](#) in partnership with the Maple League of Universities. From February 9-11, members of the Maple League of Universities, alongside community members, joined for three days of virtual panels and keynotes to learn about four major themes related to post-secondary education: Student Development, Social Justice, Recognition, and Discrimination. We would like to recognize Ivan Okello,

Black Student Advisor and Diversity Educator at Mount Allison University, for his tireless work to ensure the success of this event.

Maple League Hosts National and International Experts on Undergraduate Education

Our Maple League Hosts series brings together national and international teaching and learning leaders alongside an international audience to discuss themes relevant to teaching and learning and post-secondary education. Over the year we ran seven Maple League Host sessions that ranged in topics. All Maple League Host sessions can be found on [our Youtube channel](#).



Recruitment Teams Share the Maple League Model of Education Internationally

In 2020 - 2021 the Maple League was identified by academic advisors and guidance counsellors across Canada and around the world as leaders in quality undergraduate education. Recruitment teams from each of the four universities worked together to travel (virtually) to campuses from Ontario to India. This trend is expected to continue as the Maple League receives new invitations for collaborative recruitment events. The Maple League recruitment teams are eager to collaborate in virtual spaces to recruit a new cohort of students and share our model of an extraordinary 21st-century liberal education.

**The Maple League “Makes the News” as a Model of Quality Undergraduate Education
*Maple League Universities Rank in MacLean’s Top Five for Student Satisfaction***

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 evidence that our model of education works and is deeply appreciated by our students.**

OLTCs in the Media

Georges-Philippe Gadoury-Sansfaçon was awarded the 3M National Student Fellow Award for his role as an original Program Coordinator of the Online Learning and Technology Consultants (OLTC) program. This garnered significant media attention and Georges-Philippe and the OLTC program were featured in [laTribune](#), and [EstriePlus](#), following the 3M announcement. We could not be more proud of the work Georges-Philippe has done building communities of learners and leaders who more fully grasp the ambiguity of advocacy through his guidance and facilitation. He has transformed not just Bishop’s University but also higher education in Canada through his national and international engagement.

Jessica Riddell appears on 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, leadership, and her life. Listen [here](#).

Visiting Speaker Series Promotes the Value of a 21st century Liberal Education

Dr. Jessica Riddell was a keynote speaker at a number of universities this year, including Simon Fraser, University of New Brunswick, Maple League schools, and Australian PSE. She was invited as an expert panelist for national organizations (e.g. Society of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education). Her plenary talks focussed on aspects of quality undergraduate education through the lens of her work with Maple League universities. Topics ranged from students’ well-being, critical and pedagogical approaches to resilience, 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.



Public Scholarship Engages larger audiences in the role universities play in civil society

The Maple League gives us opportunities to think about how to bridge the divide between higher education institutions and the communities we serve. [According to researchers](#), universities play a significant role in mitigating authoritarian preferences and attitudes. Dr. Jessica Riddell was recognized this year for her work as a longstanding columnist for *University Affairs* with a National Magazine Award. She is an active public intellectual, writing OpEds and thought pieces and as an invited speaker. A piece titled “Poet Amanda Gorman's take on love as legacy points to youth's power to shape future generations” was published in *The Conversation* on January 26th. Read her article [here](#).

Students as Partners Interviews and Spotlights

We must raise awareness and perceptions of value about the Maple League model of university. Dr. Riddell participated in a number of spotlights, interviews, and podcasts that don’t just *tell* the story but *show* it in meaningful ways. One example is an interview she hosted called *Designing for Transformative Learning in COVID and Beyond Through Student Partnerships* with Sufia Langevin



(Joan Stadelman Student Success Fellow at Bishop’s University) that discussed messy, process-driven and co-designed experiences. Read about the rich, transformative process that is Student as Partners work [here](#).

Organized Academic Interview



Dr. Jessica Riddell was also featured on *The Organized Academic* in April in an interview with Dr. Elizabeth Wells (Mount Allison University). In the interview, Jessica speaks about holistic alignment, the importance of challenging “productivity” in the neoliberal narratives in favour of a more generative approach, the importance of adaptive organizational systems, balancing work

and family, and a final piece of advice for those starting or struggling to find balance in an unbalanced world. Read (or watch) the interview [here](#).

External Partners Seek Out the Maple League to Collaborate

The Maple League continues to be seen as leaders in higher education and as such has received an increase in request for partnerships. Some examples from this year include:

- ***HSBC Social Innovation Academy Partnership:*** The Maple League was approached by the coordinator of this program to partner with them and consult on their design challenges
- ***MAPLE Business Council Seeks Cross-Border Collaboration with the Maple League:*** The MAPLE Business Council fosters the economic ties between Canada and the United States. They are interested in expanding their academic and east-coast partnerships specifically around extraordinary learning experiences, technology, and storytelling.
- ***Business + Higher Education Roundtable Engages the Maple League as a Thought Partner:*** After granting the Maple League \$170,000 to expand the OTLC Program across the Maple League, Business + Higher Education Roundtable (BHER) continues to connect on innovative WIL experiences and high impact practices are part of BHER's larger research and development activities
- ***RIIPEN Extends RBC Funding to Support Student-centred Experiential Learning:*** Riipen Founder Dana Stephenson connected with Dr. Jessica Riddell and the OLTC team are exploring how RIIPEN can support transformative work-integrated learning initiatives across the Maple League.
- ***HESA Engages the Maple League as Thought Partners on Student Assessment:*** [Higher Education Strategy Associates \(HESA\)](#) is conducting a review of student feedback in evaluations across the Canadian higher education landscape. As a part of this review, they have engaged the Maple League on the Bishop's OLTC Pilot Program in conversations about alternative and meaningful ways to incorporate student feedback.
- ***Conference Board of Canada Engages with the Maple League on Social & Emotional Skills:*** Michael Burt (Vice President at Conference Board of Canada) reached out the Maple League as an identified key thought leader to understand how inclusive and equity-focused leaders are tackling calls for more inclusive, anti-racist work environments. Dr. Riddell was asked to sit on their Social and Emotional Skills Research Advisory Council to help guide national conversations about social and emotional skills and practice inclusivity in higher education and beyond.

Maple League Incorporates to Attract Federal Funding Opportunities

The Maple League Foundation was established this year. This Foundation has been set up to make the consortium eligible for Federal funding. This funding that we would otherwise be ineligible for as provincial post-secondary institutions (PSIs) that are funded provincially. Maple League of Universities Foundation is federally incorporated with a business number and an official named certificate. With the incorporation, we have a corporate registry and official seal (featured to the right), which are all requirements under the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act (NFP Act). We will build on existing relationships with external partners, including

- **ICTC** Information and Communications Technology Council *Government of Canada's Sector Council Program
- **BHER** (Business Higher Education Round Table)
- **CEWIL** (Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning) Canada



The Maple League is also trademarked in both Canada and the US. All regular funding from foundations and other philanthropic-related activities continue to go through regular institutional channels.

IV. ML Team

Dr. Jessica Riddell, Executive Director

Dr. Riddell is the Executive Director of the Maple League of Universities (July 1, 2018 - present). As Full Professor (Early Modern Drama) in the English Department at Bishop's, Dr. Riddell is an active researcher, educator, and leader. She sits on the Board of Governors and Senate in addition to her active membership on several committees, working groups, and task-forces across the institution. In Winter 2021 she taught two courses: EG321 Milton's Guide to Wicked Problems (that took a deep dive into *Paradise Lost* in the light of a global pandemic) and ENG224 Shakespeare and Critical Hope (a course that explores how Shakespeare helps us develop capacity for critical empathy and critical hope). An author of several articles, OpEds, and chapters, her book, *Shakespeare's Guide to Critical Hope* (University of Toronto Press, 2021) is forthcoming this fall.



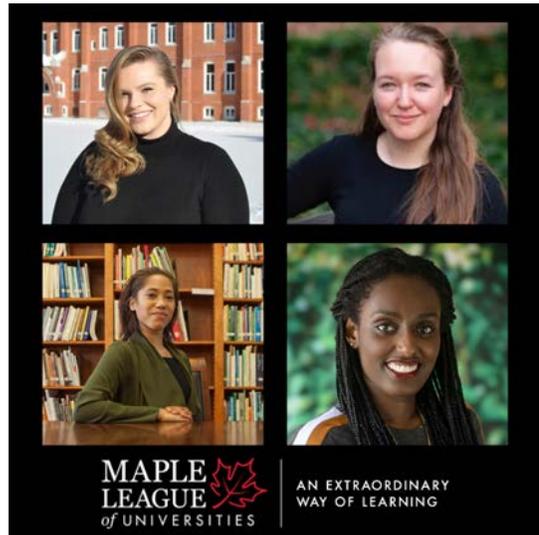
Dr. Riddell also holds the Stephen A. Jarislowsky Chair of Undergraduate Teaching Excellence (2017 - present). The chairship encourages change at the institutional level and across the Maple League as universities take the lead on social and economic renewal. She researches inclusive high impact practices, leads conversations in quality undergraduate education nationally, and creates virtual spaces that foster innovation not just at individual institutions but across PSE.

As Executive Director Dr. Riddell is responsible for translating a bold academic vision of inter-institutional collaborations into high-impact initiatives, including those related to academic programming, research and innovation, teaching and learning, and educational leadership. The ED builds relationship-rich environments with internal and external stakeholders and partners to implement the Maple League strategic vision. The ED oversees complex strategic planning, identifies external funding opportunities, manages budgets and allocates funds, and supports logistics and planning for Maple League curricular and co-curricular programming. This work also requires the ED to engage with other sectors, including industry, community agencies, think tanks, and government. Under the leadership of the ED the consortium coordinates research clusters and collaborations, experiential and work-integrated learning, supports inclusive pedagogies and high impact practices, and designs programming to enhance excellence in undergraduate education across the four universities.

Dr. Riddell has stewarded a number of signature initiatives – including a Maple League Social Innovation Incubator, a Maple League Resilience and Retention Project, transformative WIL through the OLTC project, and a series of EDI-focused programs – position the Maple League universities as leaders in conversations around quality undergraduate education in Canada and internationally. She was also active in mentoring the Maple League Post-Graduate Fellows, Student Fellows, and in training the new full-time members of the ML team.

2020-2021 Postgraduate Fellows

This year the Maple League hosted a post-graduate fellows program. The addition of these fellows provided great value to the Maple League and allowed us to accomplish more with them than we could have on our own. Fellows worked in advancement and communications, research, retention, and governance. Thank you to our 2020-2021 post-graduate fellows!



2020-2021 Maple League Student Fellows

Over the 2020-2021 Academic year the Maple League benefited from eight student fellows. Their roles were diverse, and included research, decolonization, social innovation, digital design, knowledge mobilization, community building, teaching and learning, and student success and leadership. Thank you to our 2020-2021 student fellows!



New Team Members

Lauren Boulton

From her position as a student fellow, to her post-graduate fellowship, to her current roles, Lauren has signed with the Maple League for a third year in a new role. Lauren Boulton is a 2020 graduate of Bishop's University with a BBA in Marketing and Entrepreneurship, with a minor in Communications and Digital Culture. Currently, Lauren is the Strategy and Advancement Lead for the Maple League, and the Project Manager for the Online Learning and Technology Consultants (OLTC) Program.



As the Strategy and Advancement Lead, her strong interpersonal skills, combined with her competencies in strategic and design thinking, ensure she is able to confidently steward the Maple League brand and key initiatives. In this position, she identifies potential funding opportunities and designs a strategic plan to execute successful partnerships. As an active member of the Maple League strategic planning team, Lauren is also responsible for supporting Maple League communications by ensuring that all plans are aligned with the Maple League focus statement and key messaging. She is a strong brand ambassador for the Maple League and supports networking initiatives with students, alumni and donors. Lauren's role as Strategy and Advancement Lead also includes talent development with Maple League consultants, relationship management with all active committees and communities of practice within the Maple League, and the preparation of all executive review materials such as the monthly, quarterly and year-end reports, which also include regular financial reporting to ensure prioritization of programs and budget.

In her role as OLTC Project Manager, Lauren maintains a high-level overview of the progress of the program and its potential future growth. This includes institutional planning, building governance and structures for the program and helping with the administration of hiring and job performance assessment. Lauren is also responsible for communications, grant/funding applications, as well as reporting and data analytics. Additionally, as the OLTC Project Manager, she manages a detailed schedule to keep the program on track, identify early warning indicators, and provides direction for early resolution of risks, issues and a clear escalation path for program participants to ensure the program is a success that can be scaled across Canada.

Matthew Dunleavy

Matthew Dunleavy is joining the Maple League as the OLTC Program Director. Matthew has most recently spent time as a SSHRC Doctoral Fellow in Victorian Literature and Course Director with the Department of English at York University, has worked with the Teaching Commons at the same institution, and is currently the President of the Board of Directors of Learning Essentials for Adults in Durham Region (LEADR)—a charitable non-profit organization dedicated to providing tutoring for adults in basic literacy, numeracy, and digital skills. After the success of the OLTC pilot program at Bishop’s University in 2020-21, Matthew is responsible for overseeing the expansion of the program across the four Maple League Universities during the 2021-22 academic year. Using the Bishop’s pilot as a template, Matthew will ensure that students and faculty at all Maple League Universities enrolled in the program have a consistent, engaging and essential experience in their work-integrated learning (WIL) or micro-WIL experiences. As the OLTC Program Director, Matthew will create and support avenues for transformative experiences for students, faculty, and other stakeholders to be living proof of the radical potential in Canadian Universities when we embrace new models of learning and mentorship. Reporting to the Executive Director, Dr. Jessica Riddell, and working alongside Project Manager, Lauren Boulton, Matthew aims to further place the Maple League of Universities at the centre of transforming undergraduate education in Canada (and beyond), envisioning a new liberal education with students engaged as key-collaborators in their own education and university experience.



"I am honoured to have the responsibility of directing the expansion of the OLTC this year. The Bishop's pilot showed the radical potential for reimagining students as collaborators of their university experience and new models of work-integrated learning. I look forward to examining and developing ways in which this program can grow and adapt to the needs of other students, institutions, and partners. The support of BHER allows us to expand these opportunities and make WILs and micro-WILs available to more students across four campuses and three provinces!"

~ Matthew Dunleavy, Program Director

Neil Silcox

Taking on the role of Faculty Excellence Lead, Neil Silcox is excited to be a part of the Maple League. Neil is a theatre educator, as well as an actor and director, and also specializes in facilitating meaningful, actionable conversations about teaching and learning. His company, the [Canadian Theatre Educators' Conference](#), has brought together hundreds of post-secondary theatre teachers from across Canada and around the world (both in-person and IRL) to envision new theatre pedagogies which



prioritize student wellbeing. As Faculty Excellence Lead, Neil will be spearheading the Teaching & Learning Micro-Certificate Program, where teachers can come together to elevate one another's practice, and collaborate to create new pedagogies for 21st-century liberal education. Neil will also be working on Maple League Courses; both to smooth out the navigation of administrative hurdles, and to increase uptake from both faculty and students. Finally, Neil will work to build strong reciprocal relationships between campuses on an individual, program, and faculty level. He will be organizing and leading the Maple League Book Club and Better Together series, as well as other opportunities to nurture scintillating conversations between teachers. Reporting to Executive Director Dr. Jessica Riddell, and working alongside Project Manager Lauren Boulton, Neil is thrilled to be strengthening inter-institutional relationships and supporting and empowering faculty.

The Maple League was vital to my success and survival in Covid-era teaching. I connected with peers and resources that helped me and my students to thrive — despite the pandemic.

I'm so excited to come onboard as Faculty Excellence Lead and am eager to bring together incredible teachers to build stronger communities and help discover new pedagogies for a brave new world.

~ Neil Silcox, Maple League Faculty Excellence Lead