

Maple League of Universities Monthly Report

July 31, 2021



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Executive Director's Note:

Former US Secretary of State George Shultz once drew a distinction between “problems you can solve and problems you can only work at.”

These two types of problems have names: they are tame or wicked.

Wicked problems are messy, confusing, unstable, ill-structured, and ambiguous.

The Maple League was originally created to solve a wicked problem.

The wicked problem was the lack of awareness, understanding, and value of our model (of small, primarily undergraduate, rural and residential university) within the landscape of higher education in Canada and beyond. If we deliver a high-quality undergraduate education, why don't we have lineups of incoming students?

The four universities understood that together we could amplify our voices in order to raise the profile of our four universities on national and international levels. This would, in turn, help us secure external funding from the federal government, challenge ourselves to improve the quality of undergraduate education we deliver, and attract prospective students.

We've been using the following design principles to guide the new strategic visioning process this summer, which has helped illuminate some of the challenges and opportunities we face”

1. “A wicked problem is a problem that is difficult or impossible to solve because of incomplete, contradictory, and changing requirements that are often difficult to recognize.” In other words – it is big and messy and hard to even get into focus because the edges are blurry, and the shape is constantly changing
2. A wicked problem “refers to an idea or problem that cannot be fixed, where there is no single solution to the problem”

This is a hard one for those of us who identify as “fixers” because there is no singular approach or narrow intervention. Instead, deep and meaningful impact can only be brought about when it is multi-pronged, distributed, localized, grassroots with (and this is crucial) high level support.

This means fostering integrated hubs and convergences across disciplinary and professional lines. We need a LOT of humans with different perspectives and experiences and expertise working collaboratively – including rethinking what counts as expertise and authority outside of traditional paradigms and structures. There are very few organizations who take this approach because co-design is MESSY and HARD and demands that we BREAK OPEN in order to transform.

3. "Wicked" denotes resistance to resolution, rather than evil. As a Shakespearean, I love this formulation of "wicked". In act 4 of Macbeth the 2nd Witch says "By the pricking of my thumbs, Something wicked this way comes." *Macbeth* (as a play and character) presents us with the wicked problem of power and authority; by giving us the shape of the wicked problem Shakespeare helps us navigate our own current political landscapes at home and abroad.

4. Wicked problems are also characterized as having "[social complexity](#) [which] means that it has no determinable stopping point".

This means we are never going to get to a point where we can say, "we've got it!" Instead, hope lies in the "ethical quality of the struggle" (cf. Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*). Tackling wicked problems demands that work is ongoing and progress is often really hard to see – especially in the shorter term. When tackling wicked problems, we have to appreciate that change takes time, but that the HOPE lies in appreciating the complexity of the struggle.

5. And if those four design principles aren't challenging enough, wicked problems beget MORE wicked problems: because of complex [interdependencies](#), the effort to solve one aspect of a wicked problem may reveal or create other problems."

Above all though, a wicked problem does not mean an insurmountable problem. Wicked problems are ones that keep you up at night and also get you out of bed in the morning. As we move into a new phase of this consortium, our wicked problems include how to grow sustainably, how to build systems that are inclusive and flexible, and how do we have the best impact to fulfill our mission - which is to raise the bar on quality undergraduate education in Canada and beyond. In doing so, we raise the profile of our four schools as models of transformative education in the 21st century.

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

I. Extraordinary Student Experiences

OLTC Program Provides Students with Future Facing Skills

The expansion of the OLTC Program across the Maple League is well underway. The month of July has been dedicated to hiring and beginning the training for the new cohort of OTLCs, while simultaneously coordinating with the recently onboarded Design Teams on how best to enroll Course Instructors into the program in early August.

Design Team Champions:

Part of the success of the Bishop’s OLTC pilot was the inclusion of three unique and equal voices—faculty, IT, and student—in the design and execution of the program. As we expand the program across the four institutions, maintaining this space for localized co-design remains a priority. While we have centralized the program coordination, management, and training, design teams at each institution are central to ensuring its success and that the program meets the needs of faculty, staff, and students.

The Design Team Champions that have signed on to the program are as follows:

Bishop’s University

<i>Faculty Champion</i>	<i>IT Champion</i>	<i>Student Champion</i>
Dr. Jasmeen Sidhu	Shahn Nadeau	Cécilia Alain

Mount Allison University

<i>Faculty Champion</i>	<i>IT Champion</i>	<i>Student Champion</i>
Dr. Susie Andrews	Toni Roberts	Denise Loar

St. Francis Xavier University

<i>Faculty Champion</i>	<i>IT Champion</i>	<i>Student Champion</i>
Dr. Denton Anthony	Dr. Matea Drljepan	Ben Boudreau

Orientation:

After a search across the four universities, on July 26th, 2021 we began the orientation for our new cohort of thirteen OLTCs. This full-time, two-week orientation provides the OLTCs with foundational training in pedagogy and edu-technology to be prepared to work as partners with faculty on their campus.

Throughout a variety of synchronous sessions, guides and self-guided asynchronous modules, hands-on workshops, and group work with a faculty mentor, these OLTCs will cover the following and develop other key transferable skills:

- Accessibility
- Course Planning
- Creative Commons & Copyright
- Critical Empathy
- Critical Reflective Practice
- Culturally Responsive Pedagogies
- Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion in the Classroom
- Formative and Summative Assessment
- High-Impact Practices
- Hopeful Pedagogy
- Learning-Centered Syllabi
- Live and Pre-recorded Lecture Capture
- LMS and other edu-technologies
- Resilient Pedagogy
- Universal Design for Learning
- And more!



OLTC Consulting Fellows

Continuing in the spirit of Students-as-Partners, thanks to the funding provided by Business+Higher Education Roundtable (BHER) we have hired four current and recently graduated Bishop’s students—each of which worked as an OLTC during the Bishop’s pilot—to assist with the expansion of the OLTC Program. These Fellows have worked closely with Matthew Dunleavy (OLTC Program Director) and Lauren (OLTC Project Manager) to assist with the creation of the orientation, navigating the logistics of the expansion, assessing the needs of the OLTCs, creating internal and external communication plans, and redesigning our digital footprint.

Sally Cunningham – Program Design Fellow

Sally Cunningham graduated from Bishop’s University in 2021 with a BA in English and is currently pursuing a MA in English, Memorial University of Newfoundland. Sally has worked closely with Alisha Winter in writing and rolling out a blog series highlighting the impact of the OLTC program. She has also worked with Alisha in creating a Moodle site full of Orientation Modules to augment the training for the new OLTCs. As the training has progressed, Sally has helped facilitate the orientation and has led several sessions.



Charlotte Gélinas-Gagné - Program Design and Logistics Fellow

Charlotte Gélinas-Gagné graduated from Bishop’s in 2020 with a BA in Psychology and is a current Masters student in Child Studies at Concordia University (2020-2022). Charlotte has been involved in the design of the orientation of the new OLTCs across all Maple League institutions. She planned and facilitated several training sessions which focused on the application of the technological knowledge OLTCs are learning. This included planning and acting out scenarios to help the new OLTCs gain experience in what working with professors can look like!

Alisha Winter – Program Design Fellow

Alisha Winter is a recent graduate of Bishop's University with a BA in English and minor in French. She continues to pursue her second degree during her 5th year at BU, a Bachelor of Education in Secondary Education. These past two months Alisha has been working alongside Sally Cunningham to create an accessible and transparent blog series about the past and future of the OLTC program for The Maple League of Universities website. She has also been hard at work preparing five modules for the new OLTCs to complete during their orientation. These modules touch on all aspects of the position from the syllabus, to keeping organized within student working groups. Finally, Alisha has been leading different sessions during the orientation, such as presenting the needs assessment and recommendations meeting formats.



Emma Trumble – Communications Fellow

Emma Trumble is a third year Sports Business and Athletic Development Major and Communications Minor at Bishop's. This month she has been updating the OLTC website to look and function like a part of the Maple League. She has been reconstructing the website to make the program more accessible and user friendly for all Maple League professors and rebranding for a Maple League and University focused use and feel.

Maple League Offers Diverse Roster of Shared Courses for Fall 2021

For the Fall 2021 sessions, we are pleased to offer a diverse roster of courses available through online/remote learning across our four institutions. These courses offer an exciting and unique opportunity for students to expand their university experience. Explore unique perspectives, connect with new mentors and peers from across the Atlantic, embrace cooperation, and discover how we can do more together than we can do on our own.



Arts & Culture Marketing

Dr. Rosemary Polegato | MTA - COMM 3217

@ Acadia: Approved - No equivalents

@ BU: General Business Elective (contact Business Chair)

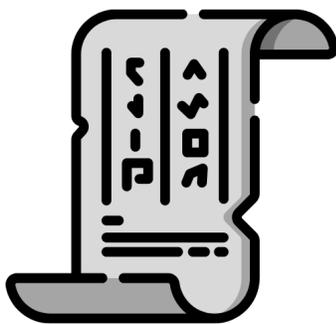
@ StFX: Marketing Business Elective at the 300 Level

Schedule: Tue/Thu 1:30 – 2:50 (Eastern) | 2:30 – 3:50 pm (Atlantic)

Mode: Online, Synchronous

Description: This course examines the appropriate application of marketing management concepts and frameworks to arts and culture.

Students gain hands-on experience with issues related to the identification and resolution of marketing problems in the arts and culture sector. [Note1: Students enrolled in Drama, Fine Arts, or Music programs who are already doing 3/4000 level work in their own field will be admitted to this course.]



Latin

Dr. Chris Forstall | MTA - LATI 4001

@ Acadia: LATI 2693

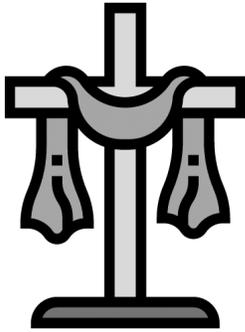
@ BU: LAT 401

@ StFX: Unavailable

Schedule: Wed. 5:30 – 7:00 pm (Eastern) | 6:30 – 8:00pm (Atlantic)

Mode: Online, Synchronous & Asynchronous

Description: This course is a detailed study of one or more Latin authors.



Introduction to Theology

Dr. Christopher Killacky | Acadia - THEO 3013

@ StFX: RELS 212

@ Acadia: Unavailable

@ BU: Unavailable

Schedule: Wed. 5:30 – 7:00 pm (Eastern) | 6:30 – 8:00pm (Atlantic)

Mode: Online (Zoom), Synchronous

Description: This course introduces Christian theology through doctrine and teaches students to live and reflect theologically. In

order to ensure clarity and comprehensiveness we will be systematic in our approach, but our intent will not be just to develop a system of doctrine. Rather, we will also learn doctrine as the means to form, guide, and correct the community of disciples within the broader framework of Christian thought. This introductory course in theology is designed to provide an understanding of the theological task and Christian conviction concerning revelation and Scripture, the Triune God, Jesus Christ, The Holy Spirit, creation and providence, human beings as the image of God, and the fall, evil, and sin as well as other key topics.

Teaching, Pedagogy, and Technology in Courses

Dr. Toni Roberts | MTA - SOSC 4991

@ StFX: [Code TBD]

@ Acadia: EUC 42F3

@ BU: UNI 299

Schedule: 3hours/week,

Mode: Online, Asynchronous + scheduled meetings

Description: In this applied research course, each student will receive a participation bursary and i-Pad. In this course students will

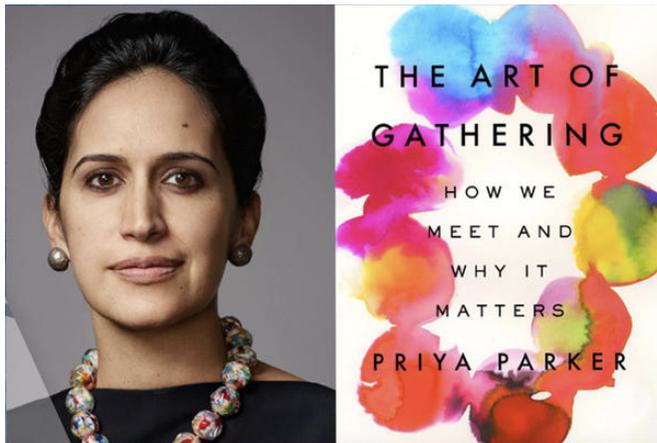
work in student working groups of five on an associated pre-existing course (case study) offered at Acadia University, Bishop's University, Mount Allison University, and St. Francis Xavier University. Teams are expected to complete a need-assessment on their selected case study, collaborate with the Course Instructor of their selected case study, and present their final projects/findings at a virtual symposium to share best-practices for online/hybrid learning to the Maple League of Universities community. Students will learn about current issues in Higher Education in Canada, techno-pedagogy, equitable and accessible learning, and e-Learning platforms and technology, to understand 21st Century liberal education.

II. Faculty and Staff Engagement

V_MLTLC Offers Professional Development Opportunities Across the Maple League

Three Better Together Seasons

Drawing from Neil Silcox's experience creating theatre, we've structured the Better Together sessions in seasons: a summer mini-season of four sessions, and two seasons in the fall and winter which will meet on alternating weeks. Our summer season will start with Maple League Hosts presents: *Critical Hope – Reflection to Practice*, and will be followed by sessions on decolonizing the academy, using podcasts in the classroom, and on addressing the challenges of early career researchers and teachers.



Return of the Maple League Book Club

We've received incredible feedback about the value of the Maple League Book club for enabling deep, nuanced conversations, over a long timeframe, on the pressing challenges that our institutions face. We're excited for the return of the Book Club for the fall with Priya Parker's *The Art of Gathering*. We're still taking suggestions for a book for the winter term, and are considering a spring Book Club as well!

Planning for the Micro-Certificate Program

One new community we're excited to create is the upcoming Maple League Micro-Certificate in Teaching and Learning. Last year's Book Clubs taught us the value in regular conversations happening over the course of time, and this program will extend that time to almost ten months. Plenty of work was done to get this program set up, including meetings with the MLTLC co-chairs, outlining the structure and developing learning outcomes, and drafting an application for certification through the Educational Developers Caucus. We expect the program to fill up quickly, so keep an eye out for our announcement near the end of August.

Executive Director Prioritizes Relationship Building

Maple League Executive Director, Jessica Riddell, makes it a priority to visit each campus throughout the year based on the availability of diverse thought partners. July 22-23 she visited Mount Allison University and engaged various thought partners for one-on-one, and group strategic visioning sessions. The overarching goals of the trip were:

1. Sustain, maintain, and build relationships with key stakeholders and change-makers on campus.
2. Identify, understand, and workshop some wicked problems
3. Consult and co-design a strategic direction for the Maple League so that we can build a strategic plan that lives in our communities
4. Introduce the Maple League to new thought partners, and inspire longer term thought partners may have been engaged in creative problem solving: combining fresh eyes and experience can open up new approaches.

The Maple League campus tours offer a diverse and refreshing perspective on wicked problems that require collaboration to tackle.



Maple League Researcher Shares CCV Knowledge Across the Maple League

Dr. David Bruce, Director of Research Grants at St. Francis Xavier, held three 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.

CCV Workshops

Tips to best maximize each part of the CCV as part of a grant application and more!



Dr. David Bruce
Director of Research
Grants

III. External Engagement

Maple League Attracts Brilliant Scholars to talk about Critical Hope

We are pleased to announce the first session in our 2021 Summer Season, which will take place every Thursday in August at 11 (Eastern)/ Noon (Atlantic).

On August 5th, 2021, Maple League Hosts presents: Critical Hope: Reflection to Practice, with Drs. Lisa Dickson, Shannon Murray, and Jessica Riddell.

An academic vocation is among the most hopeful of professions. In a time of great cultural change both within and beyond the academy, hope is critical in that it is both urgently necessary and located in the practice of navigating our complex and imperfect world, grappling with difficult knowledge and seeking ways to embrace complexity and discomfort in order to move toward a more nuanced and inclusive truth. Hope, Paulo Freire writes, “demands anchoring

in practice” and “thinking which perceives reality as a process, as transformation rather than as a static entity.” As a threshold concept producing an irreversible transformation of the self, critical hope reframes former understandings and ways of knowing and can help to redefine our relationships with others and our work. In this session we discuss the necessary qualities of critical hope in order to identify and devise hopeful strategies in our various roles as consultants, educators and students. We ask: How do we define critical hope? How does crossing the hopeful threshold shape our understanding of our vocation and our practice? What does a critically hopeful practice look like? How can we best support and celebrate hopeful practices?

Innovative Work-Integrated Learning Projects Across the Maple League Receive Funding
Late in July Co-operative and Experiential Work-Integrated Learning (CEWIL) Canada let successful applicants know their funding had been granted. After a well attended Better Together Session in May 2021, when the Maple League partnered with CEWIL to host a panel on how to apply for funding to support experiential and work-integrated learning.

We have heard 18 projects submitted by Maple League universities were successful. We will be partnering with CEWIL and the Project Leads on the various successful projects to showcase the innovative experiences happening through these projects at the institutional and Maple League levels in the coming months.

