

Maple League of Universities Monthly Report

October 31, 2021



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Executive Director's Note:

As we build relationships between and across professional and disciplinary spaces, we have engaged in strategic visioning exercises that will help guide the next phase of the inter-institutional collaboration in the longer term. Striking a balance between boldness and sustainability, the challenges will be to remain nimble while also building in the governance and infrastructure necessary to scale up, across, and deep.

In the last several months the 16 Maple League communities of practice have strengthened relationships; in many cases they have identified answers to the guiding questions of the consortium, which are “what can we do together that we cannot do on our own” and “how does working together help improve what we are doing on our own campuses.” Several collaborative tables have been engaged in strategic visioning where they’ve identified interventions that would help them achieve the objectives of the individual institutions. You will see evidence of many of these projects, proposals, and conversations in the following pages.

What this has illuminated for me is the importance of communicating the fundamental difference between *Maple League Signature Initiatives* and *Maple League-supported projects*.

Maple League Signature Initiatives:

Maple League Courses

Online Learning and Technology Consultants (OLTC)

The Virtual Maple League Teaching and Learning Centre (VMLTLC) which oversees programming & professional development (Better together series, the book club, the micro-certificate, and innovative educational leadership spotlights

3M Mentorship Network and Resources for faculty and students

Communication and Branding (website, social media, thought pieces, reports, public facing communications, etc.)

ML Supported Projects:

Three dedicated committees

16 Communities of Practice

Racial Justice Symposium

International Offices Grant from Universities Canada

Student Affairs joint grant proposal on supporting mental health

The Path, a social enterprise and student entrepreneurship incubator

These are important distinctions because the consortium itself is small, animated by a cluster of consultants working on short term contracts and either partially or fully funded through external grants: these consultants include my role as the Executive Director, Lauren Boutlbee as the Communications and Advancement Lead, Neil Silcox in the role of Faculty Excellence Lead, and Matthew Dunleavy as OLTC Project Manager. Each one is responsible for a particular portfolio tied to the strategic vision of the Maple League, and have one-year contracts tied to clear deliverables. The communities of practice work together to find convergences, and the ML supports these with some administrative and logistics help, as well as networking and connecting people across and beyond the institutions.

Over the past month I have written a chapter for a forthcoming publication with Dr, David Graham; in this we explore how our respective experiences taught us some hard lessons about the difficulty of constructing and maintaining successful large-scale collaborative initiatives in today's Canadian university context. We write, "As Tom Fletcher has recently written, "the lockdowns exposed a greater truth . . . that had already been introducing itself pre-Covid: namely, that an industrial education model created in the 19th Century and updated for the mass market of the 20th Century is no longer delivering in the 21st" (Fletcher 2021). The problems we face are systemic and cultural as much as they are technological and pedagogical: seldom spoken and deeply hidden, they rest on a bedrock of traditional assumptions about the purpose, value, and meaning of higher learning in today's society. They are thus powerfully resistant to change, and play a disproportionate role in the success or failure of projects that aim to operate on a large scale. We continue to believe that they can be identified, diagnosed, and remedied: to do so, however, will require universities to take collaborative learning design far more seriously and consciously than they have done, and to create and implement incentives that will foster rather than hinder truly collaborative technologically-mediated teaching and learning work."

This work encouraged me to identify foundational design principles informing the Maple League as an inter-institutional collaboration: these include a focus on building communities of practice, leveraging pre-existing and embedded relationships, building in multiple delivery points in programming, facilitating opportunities for co-design and internal community engagement, and securing support at all levels from grassroots through senior leadership.

Communities of Practice (CoP): "Communities of practice often focus on sharing best practices and creating new knowledge to advance a domain of professional practice" (Gabriela & Gray, 2018: 114). Participant incentives included the fact that "CoPs support co-productive research and practice in pursuing social goals through communities of practice" (ibid.: 114). Furthermore,

CoPs are a useful frame for understanding and interrogating equitable access to community supported collaborative learning (ibid.:115).

Embedded relationships: Lynn Taylor and her colleagues (2021) have explored the cultivation of integrated networks of practice, and in particular, the important role of hubs within networks. They define these as “individuals or groups that energize cross-connections, improve knowledge, enhance learning across small clusters of expertise, and play critical roles in building and sustaining robust integrated networks” (1).

Multi-pronged approach: Despite sharing similar institutional sizes and profiles, the faculty, staff, and students working and learning in these four universities differ based on position, discipline, age and stage, intersectionality, and a host of other factors. Offering a combination of pedagogical triage, individualized attention, and disciplinary-focussed support reached faculty who did not engage regularly in pre-pandemic professional development related to pedagogy and technology.

Consultation and Co-design: In this approach, consultation and co-design have been fundamental to the process of ongoing program assessment and adaptation. Amejide, Nelson, Billsberry, and van Meurs (2009) suggest that distributed leadership, characterized as “mechanisms through which diverse individuals contribute to the process of leadership in shaping collective action” (765), is the most effective for engaging in meaningful and high impact culture change. As well, they emphasize that “knowledge work is becoming increasingly team-based and requires the coordination and integration of the expertise of diverse professionals from dispersed fields” (Amejide et al, 2009. P. 767).

Convergence of the grassroots and senior leadership: Kezar (2012) frames the interaction between bottom-up leadership and top down leadership as “convergence”, which she defines as joining efforts between grassroots and individuals in positions of authority. Convergence can flow in either direction; it usually leads to more complex solutions and ideas, more buy-in, more energy and enthusiasm, more consensus, breadth and depth of expertise, etc (726). Kezar concludes that the dynamics of convergence leads to the most successful institutional culture change in higher education organizations and that grassroots movements can also have the potential outcome of deeper and more transformational change within a shorter timeframe and can build the leadership capacity of the organization (cf. Seymour, 1996; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2003). Due to shifts in administrative roles, personnel changes, and different institutional mandates and strategic visions, these relationships are always evolving as

individuals move in and out of the institutions. Ongoing challenges include navigating four governance structures, on-boarding new and interim senior administrators, and ensuring that communication moves across silos.

Timelines and Sustainability: Finally, the most effective factor in building sustainable systems is transformation over time. The Maple League was conceived as part of a longer-term initiative designed to grow over time in order to support institutional resilience and high quality, purposeful education. Deep culture change takes time. Jeffrey Hennessy (2020) outlines deep culture as “the collective unconscious of the organization that has been transmitted throughout its history – essentially its operating system.” It takes time to chart and navigate even one institution’s deep culture: this in turn greatly increases the challenge of inter-institutional collaborations, in which many deep cultures interact and collide. Indeed, Cox argues that “the length of time needed for an institution to show a cultural change as a result of the community approach is at least 5 years. Other obstacles include cost, participants’ time commitment, changes in administration, and the isolated nature of faculty life of the group structure of the community experience is not for everyone (Cox, 2001: 73)

This is not for the faint of heart. However, in managing the design and delivery of an academic consortium, we remain curious and creative. This bold intervention is – at its heart – a fascinating research question that has yielded rich insights into how institutional cultures are organized, how value circulates, and where change is implemented. As a learner-leader I am focussed on getting it right rather than being right. We model daring leadership (cf. Brene Brown in *Daring to Lead*) – which is courageous because it is vulnerable, strong because it is messy, and values a wide range of thought partners, impact players, and innovators. In Brene Brown’s words, “here’s to being awkward, brave and kind” together.

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

I. Extraordinary Student Experiences

Call for Winter Courses Looking for OLTC Support

Although it is only October, the end of the semester is sneaking upon us; therefore, it is never too early to start thinking about 2022 Winter courses. Across the Maple League, Online Learning and Technology Consultants (OLTCs) have successfully supported over 100 Fall 2021 courses since expanding the program across Acadia, Bishop's, Mount Allison, and St. Francis Xavier this summer. As they continue to work with ongoing Fall courses, OLTCs are now ready to consult on plans for January; whether you are in the earliest stages of course development or already have everything set to go, the OLTCs are ready to get in-person, online, hybrid, or hyflex Winter courses ready for delivery.

To register your interest in having OLTC assistance for your Winter class(es), please follow [**this link**](#) to find the registration form for your university.

Curricular Work-Integrated Learning Students Start Working with Faculty

Students enrolled in *Teaching, Pedagogy, and Technology in Courses* with Dr. Toni Roberts (hosted at Mount Allison and offered across the Maple League), have started using the knowledge and skills they have learned in the course to work with faculty across a variety of disciplines. After a guest workshop on conducting a Needs Assessment with Program Director, Matthew Dunleavy, and Logistics and Design Fellow, Charlotte G  linas-Gagn  , students are starting the first stage of their final projects, working on courses in:

- Theoretical and Evolutionary Ecology
- Genetics and Evolution
- Strategic Issues
- Contemporary Canada
- The Art of Persuasion
- Organizational Behaviour

Learner-Centered Syllabi Reviews for Student Success

In addition to offering full support for Fall and Winter courses, OLTCs are now also offering learner-centered syllabi reviews for courses, that take a little less time but can still have a large, positive impact on your courses.

What does it mean to have a Learner-Centered Syllabus? - A learner-centered syllabus is one that considers students as partners in learning, where the assignments are meant to guide students to get to where they want to go in their learning and meet learning objectives and outcomes. A learner-centered syllabus accommodates the various strengths of students rather than privileging one type of learner. It successfully communicates the requirements of your course, but ensures all content on the syllabus is delivered with student success in mind.

What do we look for? - Using Michael Palmer, Dorothe Bach, & Adriana Streifer’s **Measuring the Promise: A Valid and Reliable Syllabus Rubric: Guide to Assessing the Focus of Syllabi** as a framework, OLTCs review your syllabus for four main criteria:

- learning goals and objectives
- assessment activities
- Schedule
- overall learning environment

How does it improve your syllabus? - OLTCs can help make your syllabus more:

- Engaging
- Visually appealing
- Clear and comprehensive
- Positive and motivating
- Equitable
- Accessible
- Varied in assignment structure

...but they will never touch your content!

From scaffolding of assignments to clear, accurate, and measurable learning objectives, OLTCs will provide you with a verbal and/or written review of your syllabus with a series of recommendations that you may wish to utilize as you edit your syllabus. If requested, they are also available to help you implement those changes.

| Criterion | Component | Strength of Evidence | | |
|-----------------------------|--|----------------------|----------|--------|
| | | Strong | Moderate | Low |
| Learning Goals & Objectives | 1. Learning goals encompass full range of Fink’s dimensions of significant learning | | | |
| | 2. Course level learning objectives are clearly articulated and use specific action verbs | | | |
| | 3. Learning objectives are appropriately pitched | | | |
| Assessment Activities | 4. Objectives and assessments are aligned | | | |
| | 5. Major summative assessment activities are clearly defined | | | |
| | 6. Plans for frequent formative assessment with immediate feedback | | | |
| | 7. Assessments are adequately paced and scaffolded | | | |
| | 8. Grading information is included but separate from assessment; it is aligned with objectives | | | |
| Schedule | 9. Course schedule is fully articulated and logically sequenced | | | |
| Classroom Environment | 10. Tone is positive, respectful, inviting | | | |
| | 11. Fosters positive motivation, describes value of course, promotes content as a vehicle for learning | | | |
| | 12. Communicates high expectations, projects confidence of success | | | |
| | 13. Syllabus is well organized, easy to navigate, requires interaction | | | |
| Subtotals | | x2 = | x1 = | x0 = 0 |
| | | TOTAL /46 | | |

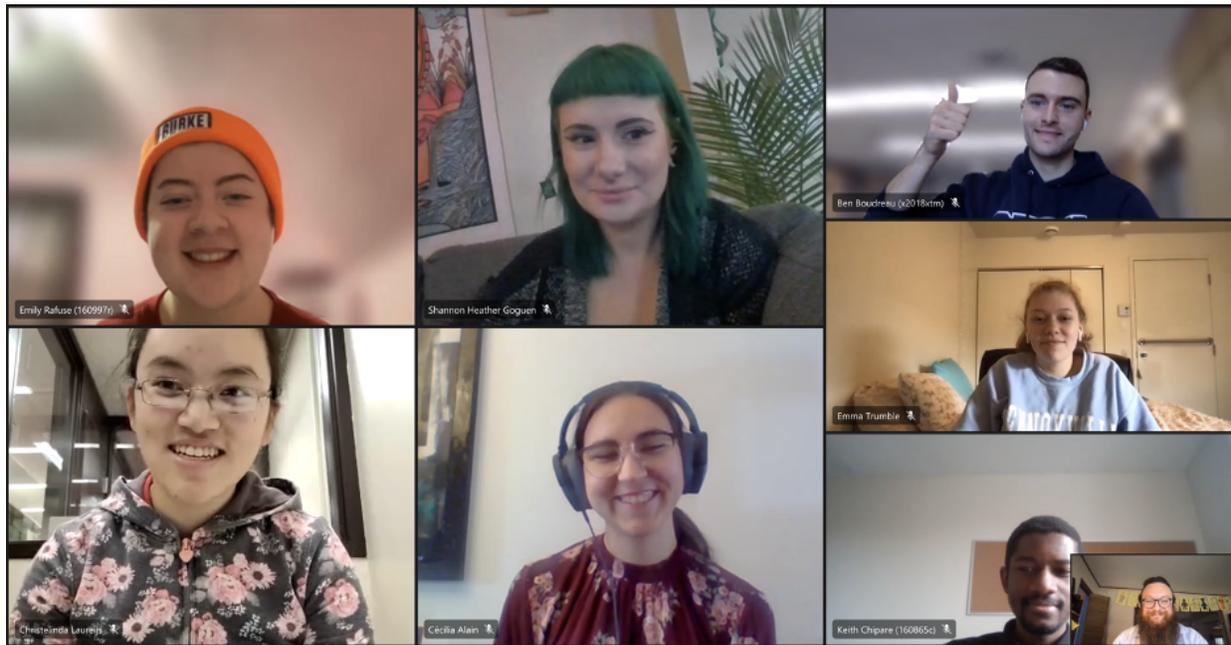
| | | | | |
|---------------------|---|-----------|------|--------|
| Learning Activities | 14. Classroom activities, assessments, and objectives are aligned | | | |
| | 15. Learning activities are derived from evidence-based practices | | | |
| | 16. Learning activities likely to actively engage students | | | |
| Subtotal | | x2 = | x1 = | x0 = 0 |
| | | Total /12 | | |

Content-focused syllabi typically fall in the range 0–16, transitional 17–30, and learning-focused 31–46 (or 0–18, 19–40, and 41–58, respectively, when using the supplemental rubric).

OLTCs Continue Their Professional Development

Students involved in the OLTC program transform each and every course they interact with, but transformation does not stop there! OLTCs themselves are continually growing through weekly team regroup sessions and professional development. Since the start of the semester, they have been participating in live workshops (or, where schedules didn't allow, watching recordings) and reflecting on:

- Educating for Compassionate Communities of Interdependence
- Goofball Pedagogy: Authentic Teaching for Authentic Learning
- Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization in the Classroom



II. Faculty and Staff Engagement

Maple League Builds Strengths in Knowledge Mobilization

The Maple League is officially the first consortium of universities to join Research Impact Canada, an organization that works to build institutional capacity for researchers and students to collaborate and connect with stakeholders to can use their research to add value to their work. This membership will give faculty and staff access to workshops, grant support in writing Kmb plans, connect them with faculty across the country engaged in similar projects, and more. Future planning also includes expanding the Knowledge Mobilization Graduate Certificate currently held at Bishop's into a Maple League initiative, where faculty could benefit from a practicum student to support their own knowledge mobilization practice.



Maple League Visiting Scholar Lynn Aylward

We recently hosted a visioning retreat with the first Maple League Visiting Scholar Dr. Lynn Aylward from Acadia University. Dr. Aylward is spending a month on campus in the CRC Health and Wellness Lab and has met with a broad range of thought partners.

Dr. Lynn Aylward (left), is pictured with Dr. Heather Lawford, Dr. Jasmeen Sidhu, and Georges-Philippe Gadoury-Sansfacon (BU graduate and 3M National Student Fellow) October 25, 2021.



Black Students Matter Teaching Retreat

Maple League partners are included in Part Two of the Black Students Matter Teaching Retreat hosted by St. Francis Xavier University. This retreat features Dr. Carl James on Tuesday, November 9, beginning at 10:15 a.m. Atlantic.

BLACK STUDENTS MATTER

FALL TEACHING RETREAT

KEYNOTE:

Dr. Carl James

**“I KNOW I HAVE TO DO WELL; IT’S NOT A CHOICE”:
BEING BLACK IN UNIVERSITY**



With reference to community, research, and media reports, we will explore the experiences of Black students in today’s universities noting how they negotiate the inequitable institutional structures in order to realize their educational, employment and career ambitions. We will reflect on how today’s discourses of “systemic racism” and the programs initiated are bringing about the changes anticipated or needed.

NOVEMBER 9TH 10-12 P.M.

The Maple League Teaching and Learning Committee

The VMLTLC adopted a multi-pronged strategy to reach faculty at various career stages, who had differing comfort levels with pedagogy and technology, and expressed disciplinary-informed needs. Programming is grouped in three prongs, with varying levels of time commitment.

1. *Online Seminars and Panels:* Better Together (weekly sessions led by faculty, students, and staff from Maple League communities) and Maple League Hosts (monthly events featuring internationally recognized scholars) offer diverse programming, including online lectures, workshops, “welcome to my classroom” sessions, and panels that explored issues like decolonization, inclusive classrooms, mindfulness and mental health, accommodations and accessibility. All sessions are open to anyone, live-streamed, and also recorded: videos are uploaded on the Maple League Youtube channel for asynchronous access in an online, open-access space.

2. *Semester-long workshops in small working groups:* while the online seminars and panels were stand-alone programming, two programs - the Maple League Book Club and the DOCTOR program (Developing Our Courses Together Online Remotely) - offered participants a model of engagement informed by Wenger’s framework for “Communities of practice”: these are “groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (Wenger-Traynor, 2015, 1). The Maple League book club brings together students, staff, faculty, librarians, and administration from universities every semester to explore a book in depth. These book clubs are divided by academic term: 60 – 70 people/semester meet six times over a 12 week period in small groups (8-12 people). Themes have included tackling anti-black racism (*So you want to talk about Race*, Ijeoma Oluo), designing for first generation students (*The Privileged Poor*, Anthony Black), and decolonization of classrooms and institutions (*Decolonizing Education*, Marie Battiste). The DOCTOR program created shared quiet space for faculty to work on designing, developing, and preparing their courses for the upcoming academic year. Participants met twice a week to develop their courses together (Riddell, 2020b: 6).

3. *Year long intensive professional development with cohort:* Launched in August 2021, this Maple League Micro-Certificate in Teaching and Learning is a 12 month program that provides a cohort of faculty with intensive professional development opportunities (including mentorship, bi-weekly sessions, critical reflection, a community of practice, a week-long retreat, and a capstone project). This micro-certificate focusses on programming related to trauma-informed and culturally responsive pedagogy, student and faculty wellbeing, and the decolonizing and

indigenization of classroom and institutional practices. As Wenger-Traynor (2015) outlines, a design principle of this community of practice is that “they value their collective competence and learn from each other, even though few people outside the group may value or even recognize their expertise” (2).

The commitment to open education resources goes beyond the open invitation for anyone to engage in synchronous programming and professional development opportunities via the VMLTLC. In addition to recording live sessions and making the links available to the public, the MLTLC co-developed the first edition of the V_MLTLC Resource Guide. The Resource Guide was crowd-sourced from amongst the faculty and staff volunteers, and compiles resources on topics such as: Teaching and Learning Online Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Adapting Assessment Strategies Supporting Student Success in COVID-19. Developed as an open educational resource (OER) under a Creative Commons Attribution license (CC BY), the Resource Guide is accessible to anyone internal or external to the Maple League of Universities (<https://www.tinyurl.com/VMLTLC>).

Measuring the impact of such a complex and wide-ranging initiative is challenging. The quantitative data indicates that 531 people from 47 universities engaged in one of more of the three-pronged programming in 2020 - 2021¹. However, the qualitative data helps to identify deeper impact: through surveys, feedback forms, panels, and focus groups, three recurring themes emerged. First, engagement in the VMLTLC changed participants’ mindsets around teaching and learning in a pandemic. Second, the virtual hub deepened their instinct to collaborate across institutional boundaries at all levels. Finally, the VMLTLC enabled more diverse communities of practice than those that institutional spaces could provide. These threads surface frequently in participants’ testimonials and reflections; for example, an associate professor in the political studies department at Acadia University reflected:

The Maple League’s Better Together series provided a ‘four-tunate’ response to the stress and strain that accompanied the need for our four increasingly tightly knit campus communities to respond strategically to the Covid-19 pandemic. Beyond providing information and insights around diverse timely and important subjects, the conversations

¹ In 2020 – 2021 the VMLTLC hosted 63 events (panels, seminars, and a “welcome to my classroom” series), a course development program, and an inter-institutional Book Club every term. From June 1, 2020 - January 30, 2021, programming engaged 531 unique participants for a total of 1,975 live interactions, and 1,480 asynchronous views of the session recordings (Riddell & Carroll, 2020: 4).

provided opportunities to deepen community, bolster spirits, envision and co-create exciting new learning environments! (Riddell and Carroll, 2021, 9)

Faculty also consistently reported that engaging in such inter-institutional partnerships improved their classrooms. An assistant professor in psychology from St. Francis Xavier university commented,

As a new professor starting during the COVID shutdown, the Maple League professional development opportunities were a lifeline. Not only did Maple League sessions equip me with crucial skills I needed, such as course planning and anti-Black racism, they also provided me an opportunity to network and meet peers despite working from home. The DOCTOR program in particular provided me with the structure and support I needed to succeed this Fall. For example, without the DOCTOR program and personalized support from the director of the V_MLTLC, I never would have had the confidence to try out discussion forums in an advanced statistics class, which are turning out to be a highlight of my class based on student feedback. (Riddell and Carroll, 2021, p. 24)

The commitment to professional development and continuous improvement initiatives across the Maple League has already had a direct impact on student success, and should continue to have a growing cumulative effect on student learning, satisfaction, and engagement in the longer term, although that will be harder to measure.



III. External Engagement

Maple League Recruitment Teams Present at the Toronto French School

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 continues with more collaborative recruitment events. This month, Michelle Douglas, the Associate Director of University Advising at Toronto French School, provided Jessica Riddell (Maple League Executive Director) with a testimonial after a successful presentation from our recruitment teams.

On behalf of the University Counselling team at Toronto French School, as well as our students, I wanted to send a huge thank you for participating in our Virtual Dialogue Day today! The feedback form we sent students indicated that they found the sessions both informative and inspiring, so thank you for taking the time to speak with our community and help students to understand the many great opportunities available at the Maple League schools.

~ Michelle Douglas, the Associate Director of University Advising at Toronto French School

Maple League Engages in Conversations as Leaders in Higher Education

This month Dr. Jessica Riddell had preliminary discussions with EduNova exploring how EduNova can collaborate with the Maple League of Universities to move the digital infrastructure initiative forward to better support all our learners.

Academica Reaches out to the Maple League to Explore Post-pandemic Collaborations

The Maple League has also been asked by Academica to share best practices regarding online course sharing. We look forward to future conversations!

Maple Business Council Continues to Cultivate Relationships Around Business Innovation

Our collaboration with the MAPLE Business Council is still proving to be fruitful as discussions with Co-Founder Stephen Armstrong and our Maple League Business Deans regarding our emerging partnership. Here is a [link to the article](#) Dr. Jessica Riddell wrote for their wide reaching and influential publication.

Maple League Submits Joint Grant Proposal with the Student Affairs Teams to the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)

The four student affairs teams put together a grant in a very short time frame for a funding call that was only available for umbrella organizations, consortia, and associations. The Maple League was eligible for this grant and Dr. Peter Ricketts (President of Acadia and Chair of the Maple League Presidents Council) urged the ML team to prioritize this opportunity. This funding would allow the four universities to create a “Maple League Mental Health Hub” (ML Hub) to fill a demand and gap in mental health promotions programs and strengthen upstream primary prevention efforts on the four campuses. This ML Hub will expand upon a series of campus-specific pre-existing programs (peer support, alcohol harm reduction, Student-as-partners (SaP) model of course design*, faculty training in trauma-informed pedagogy) and scale them across the four universities. Working on the grant allowed the four teams to identify some fundamental problems, and imagine multi-pronged solutions in a post-pandemic world.

The Problem: Young people have been disproportionately affected due to COVID; even before the pandemic they were some of the highest risk demographics for mental health & substance use. As we move into a post-pandemic reality we must design multi-pronged strategies that focus on mental health promotion and mental illness prevention for youth by engaging the entire community in these efforts

The Research: Young people have been disproportionately affected by COVID. A report from the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) (KFF) demonstrates a 400% increase in anxiety and depression in the general population due to COVID, and the [CDC notes](#) that young people, racial/ethnic minorities, and essential workers (all of which figure prominently on our campuses) demonstrated an increased risk of “worse mental health outcomes, increased substance use, and elevated suicidal ideation” – over and above the increase in the general population. The [Society for Human Resource Management](#) reports that 71% of Generation Z workers report mental health issues during the pandemic, and [a report from the Harvard Graduate School of Education](#) indicates that 61% of young people feel lonely between “frequently,” and “all the time.” The KFF also notes a doubling in the use of alcohol and substance use among young people. In [a literature review on substance use at the university level](#), the Journal of American College Health suggests that up to 91% of men and 53% of women had a problem with drinking (102). Research suggests there will be a long tail to the mental health fallout of COVID. Research published in [Plos One](#) suggests that Covid is a traumatic stressor, even for those without direct contact or loss due to the virus. The [Canadian Journal of Addiction](#) shows not only a correlation

between trauma and substance use but also a direct relationship between the severity of that trauma and the severity of the substance use.

In [a 2015 report](#), the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (now the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction) indicated increased drinking, increased binge drinking and increased drinking-and-driving among rural students. While other drug use is equal or slightly lower than for urban students, the [Rural Health Information Hub](#) shows that rural communities suffer more from similar levels of substance use due to several factors including A) fewer resources and less-experienced health professionals, and B) increased fear of stigma because of small, interconnected communities.

The Context for Intervention: The Maple League of Universities (ML) is a consortium of four primarily undergraduate universities located in rural/regional areas in Eastern Canada focussed on delivering high-quality undergraduate education. Each campus has a student body of 2200 – 4500 undergraduate students (average age range 18 – 23) located in small, citizen towns. The four Maple League Universities attract undergraduate students seeking immersive and highly engaged community experiences. By design, our rural “small town” locations support strong and immersive community connections.

Particularly in the first two years, the quality of the campus and residence life experience dominates the student experience due to the relative lack of other activities in the surrounding areas. This is a tremendous benefit as it supports strong and interconnected student communities. There is evidence to confirm that academic performance for first-year students is better for those residing in University Housing. However, this environment presents a risk when students rely on excessive substance use to build belonging in communities located in rural/isolated areas.

This risk can have a disproportionately negative effect on equity deserving students. The immersive community experiences provided by the Maple League (ML) Universities uniquely position us to find new ways to support students, particularly equity-deserving students, to transition, and engage in authentic, healthy, and supportive communities and proactively address stigma while building mental health literacy and resiliency skills.

Since we began working together in 2012, our member universities have discovered the value in bringing four unique perspectives to the problems that we have in common. Through this project, we hope not only to benefit students across the ML, but also to create new models and methodologies that non-urban universities and campuses across the country can use to improve the wellbeing of young people at a critical juncture in their lives.

The Proposed Intervention: A Maple League Mental Health Hub Focused on

Trauma-Informed Engagement: This funding will allow the creation of the “Maple League Mental Health Hub” (ML Hub) to fill a demand and gap in mental health promotions programs and strengthen upstream primary prevention efforts on the four campuses. This ML Hub will expand upon a series of campus-specific pre-existing programs (peer support, alcohol harm reduction, Student-as-partners (SaP) model of course design*, faculty training in trauma-informed pedagogy) and scale them across the four universities. The fundamental question we must ask is, how can we design post-COVID universities that are more just, equitable, and healthy for young people? The answer is complex and multi-pronged, but the values are fundamental.

The grant is for \$4,173,474 and would be transformative to all four institutions if successful.

The Four Maple League International Offices Secure \$800,000 in Funding to Support Decolonizing Education Abroad.

In June 2021, the four International Offices responded to a Request for Proposals for the Global Skills Opportunity program, Funded by Employment and Social Development Canada and administered by Universities Canada. Canadian Universities were invited to submit a maximum of two proposals for innovative projects meant to promote the international mobility of Canadian undergraduate university students with the underlying objective of strengthening their global skills and competencies. Preference would be given to projects promoting opportunities for students traditionally underrepresented in mobility abroad: Indigenous students, students with disabilities or students with financial needs. Applicants were also invited to prioritize activity in non-traditional countries (i.e. countries other than the US, UK, France, and Australia).

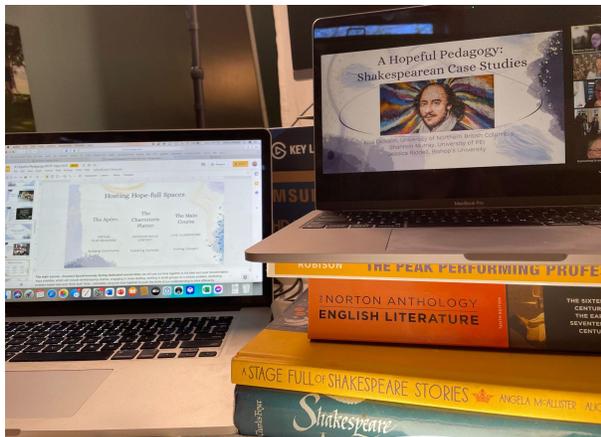
Maple League short-term study program – Belize: This project was submitted by the International Office of each Maple League institution, as a consortium. In its first effort to work collaboratively on an education abroad activity, member institutions of the Maple League will mount an opportunity for Indigenous students to participate in an international experience together. The international offices of each Maple League institution will work together to initiate a short-term study abroad program focusing on Indigenous cultures in Belize. By working together, the institutions will build their capacity to support other education abroad activities, create effective wraparound supports, and build their ability to work as a consortium on international initiatives. The total funding amount is \$800,000.

The Maple League supported project jointly submitted was successful and projects must be completed by March 2025. A total of 60 students are expected to participate in the Maple League Belize project. The first cohorts are planned for Summer 2022, but travel will depend on

Government of Canada travel restrictions and institutional decisions regarding student travel in the pandemic context.

Dr. Riddell Delivered a Keynote Address to the International Federation of Teaching Fellows on October 20th

Dr. Riddell delivered a keynote address to the International Federation of Teaching Fellows October 20, 2021. That talk, titled “A Hopeful Pedagogy: Shakespearean Case Studies” was given by Dr. Riddell, Dr. Shannon Murray (UPEI) and Dr. Lisa Dickson (UNBC) to launch the speakers series.



ABSTRACT:

An academic vocation is among the most hopeful. We go into teaching and scholarly work because we believe, even if we haven't articulated it to ourselves fully, that development, improvement, and transformation are all possible when we are engaged in nurturing an insatiable intellectual curiosity in ourselves and in young people. Exercising the hope muscle keeps us on that optimistic course, even when we might see plenty of evidence that things don't work or don't work as quickly as we would like. Students are at the centre of a definition of hope, not just as individuals but also as a philosophical impetus. Learners and learning are not metaphors for hope, but, rather, hope embodied, hope on the move, hope as an agent, a method of acting and a way of seeing. Transformational, messy, complex, always in motion, hope is inseparable from learning. In the classroom we are always caught up in the momentum of becoming. “We never are what we are,” John D. Caputo writes. “Something different is always possible” (More Radical Hermeneutics 35). Every participant in the learning endeavour has tacitly announced: “I am willing to be different in five minutes, or 13 weeks or four years from what I am now.” This is a tremendous act of courage.