

Maple League of Universities Monthly Report

March 31, 2022



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Executive Director's Note:

In the past month we have witnessed the horrors – writ large in the news and across social media platforms – of the invasion of a sovereign nation; Russia has instigated a war against Ukraine and against the fundamental principles of democracy. We are reeling as citizens, as parents, as educators, and as leaders. Set against the backdrop of a global pandemic that is still very much ongoing, many are reporting feelings of exhaustion, disorientation, and grief. How are we supposed to make sense of the horror and heartbreak – *and* continue to learn, teach, research, and work in impossible conditions?

As I work through the deep discomfort in my own personal and professional spheres – while at the same time managing the anxieties of students who believe that chemical and nuclear war is imminent – I have been able to locate critical hope in the classroom, and by extension the work of universities more broadly as crucial spaces that champion democracy and combat despair.

Indeed, higher education has become more relevant – and more urgent – in the light of international atrocities. Below, I share my own experiences with the classroom as a beacon of hope in the darkness; this is just one case study amongst the many and multiple conversations ongoing in classrooms across our universities right now.

In Summer 2021, with the help of students through the Online Learning and Technology Consultants (OLTC), I designed a new version of my course “The Art of Rhetoric: From Classical to Contemporary Uses and Abuses.” At the time, I was concerned that students would find classical rhetoric – reading Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian – so removed from their own experiences that their interest would be hard to capture and hold. I was anxious that students would see medieval and early modern rhetoric as alienating and inaccessible in an unfamiliar idiom. I was worried that they would find Winston Churchill, Frederick Douglas, John F. Kennedy, and Martin Luther King too far removed from their own historical moment.

My fears, as it turns out, were entirely misplaced.

Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Our class went on winter reading week, and when we met next, the world – and our relationship to rhetoric – had changed dramatically. On the day we returned to class after the break, students were assigned a series of deliberative rhetorical speeches: Elizabeth I’s speech at Tilbury in 1588 (as the Spanish Armada was invading England’s shores); Winston Churchill’s 1940 famous oration (where he declares that England will fight the Nazis on the beaches), Charlie Chaplin’s “The Great Dictator” (1940), and William

Wallace’s speech in the film *Braveheart* (1995) where he rallies rival clans to unite Scotland against English occupiers. Before the break, we studied Shakespeare’s orators Marc Antony in *Julius Caesar* (dealing with the political assassination of Julius Caesar) and Henry V’s St. Crispian’s Day speech where he urges his troops to run into the mouth of cannons for honour.

I had designed this cluster of orators in the peaceful summer months – with the help of student consultants – without any inkling of the context within which they would come alive in the classroom, brought to life by an international war that has caused death, destruction, and despair.

The day before we were to meet, on Tuesday, March 8, President Zelensky addressed the UK Parliament and quoted two people: Churchill — whom he quoted almost verbatim — and Shakespeare, invoking Hamlet’s “to be or not to be” speech. And so, the next day we spent three hours together listening to Zelensky in conversation with Churchill, Shakespeare, and the other orators animating the course syllabus. It has been transformative to listen and study and analyze texts – literary, historical, political, philosophical – together in a way I could never have scripted, could never have planned, and could never have imagined while setting the syllabus. This is not serendipity as much as it is an example of design: universities have a mandate to tackle wicked problems that are complex, difficult, and always changing. We create agile spaces – in classrooms, research clusters, leadership, and knowledge mobilization – where we can respond in real-time, harnessing the depth and breadth of transdisciplinary expertise coupled with courage and curiosity.

This is not merely an intellectual exercise. The contexts and convergences are also deeply personal. One of the students in the ENG205 course, whose story I share with permission, is on international exchange this year at Bishop’s. Born in Soviet Ukraine (or Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic as Ukraine was called at the time of 1991 before the Soviet Union collapsed), Daria has lived in Ukraine, Hungary, and across Europe. This semester, far away from her family, she has watched helplessly as her friends and family flee for safety. She helped to organize a fundraising event hosted at Bishop’s on March 20 (that also featured Bob Rae, Canada’s Ambassador to the UN), and she made a compelling plea to us all. As she prepared her speech, she deployed the rhetorical frameworks from ENG205 and workshopped her thoughts with me so she could harness her disorientation, combine the pathos, logos, and ethos, and connect with others in meaningful and authentic ways. Her speech, found [here](#) (58:30-1:03:10) is a compelling example of her fortitude and her learning:

Our fates are bound up together in a war happening thousands of kilometres away in Eastern Europe. But it is of immediate and pressing concern. ...

From my Bishop's dorm room, I am doing what I can to help my family and the Ukrainian community so far away, struggling in war and horror.

And I am asking you to help and support those Ukrainians who are coming here and joining the Canadian society.

I am grateful that you are here.

I am thankful that you showed up for people and democracy.

Thank you for giving me hope that together we can make a difference in a world that feels increasingly disorienting.

This is why we teach, why we learn, why we hope, and why we strive.

As we join in an international chorus of outrage, we also sit in the discomfort with our students, colleagues, and community members in defending the values of a civil, just, and peaceful world for all. In a recent article for the [Guardian](#) titled “The world is unpredictable and strange. Still, there is hope in the madness”, Rebecca Solnit uses a metaphor that illuminates the work we do together and alone in our work in higher education:

“We see no farther than the little halo of our lanterns, but we can travel all night by that light.”

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



I. Extraordinary Student Experiences

The Path Successfully Enters the Final Month of its Pilot

With 82 Tier 2 entrepreneurs and 35 Tier 1 entrepreneurs, the Maple League Universities' number of entrepreneurs building, testing, and launching a business is growing. These students are participating in The Path through entrepreneurship courses across Acadia, Mount Allison, and Bishop's. About eight startups (twenty-five entrepreneurs) will pitch next month at The Path's bi-annual pitch competition on April 8th.

This semester is the first time The Path has run Tier 2, with students going through the stages of going out and testing their startup business model with customers. They have identified constraints and risks in their model, devised experiments to test these, and conducted them with customers. This all culminates in the April 8th pitch competition where they will pitch their full startup for the first time.

The Path facilitated several mentorship pairings this semester between students and relevant Alumni who are experienced in their fields such as Zachary Saine, a 2nd year Bishop's student and founder of The Chess Nerd Co. ([read more](#)), being paired with Acadia Alumnus and e-commerce expert Martin Suter.

Lastly, workshops hosted by The Path this month include: Design Thinking, Finding Funding (hosted by Sherbrooke Innopole), Creating Financial Projections, and an upcoming workshop on March 30th: Careers In Entrepreneurship. [Signup here!](#)

To stay up to date on The Path follow them on Instagram at [thepath_mapleleague](#).



UPCOMING EVENTS

FINANCIALS FOR STARTUPS

MARCH 18TH 11:30 - 1:30 PM AST

Barry Bisson, formerly president of Shad International a program for exceptional high school students focused on science, technology, engineering and entrepreneurship, will be training our startups on modelling revenue and creating financial projections. This will serve as a foundation for their future development and be included in their pitch to investors on April 8th.

PRESENTATION ON FUNDING SOURCES

MARCH 9TH 9:30 - 11:00 AM AST

Sherbrooke Innopole (Bishops) will be meeting with 20 of our student entrepreneurs to discuss qualifying for their pre-seed funds.

PITCHING WORKSHOP

MARCH 30TH 4 - 5:30 PM AST

Last but certainly not least, PropellCT's Chief Coaching Officer Charlotte Murray will be putting on a workshop to train our startups in creating a compelling Pitch Deck and practicing some pitching techniques before our final pitch day.

WANT MORE INFO?

<https://thepath.mapleleague.ca/events>

PETAL Workshop Series Begin

Our first Pedagogy, Edu-Technology, and Learning (PETAL) workshop was hosted on March 17th, 2022. Toni Roberts (Mount Allison) spoke to a large group of students across the Maple League about Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Students have now embarked on an application of that new learning and are completing UDL audits for real courses at our universities.



March also saw a session on Learning Objectives and Bloom's Taxonomy (with Program Director, Matthew Dunleavy) and Critical Reflective Practice with Neil Silcox (Maple League; Acadia)

Registration is still open for the Maple League PETAL workshop series. From March-May, the OLTC Program is offering a series of free, virtual work-integrated learning (WIL) workshops. Once completed, students will receive a PETAL badge for the specific topic. The Micro-WIL experiences contain two parts: 1) a short workshop/training session on a given topic, and 2) a challenge/project. First students are introduced and trained on a given topic/area and then they use their new training and experience as students to complete their challenge.

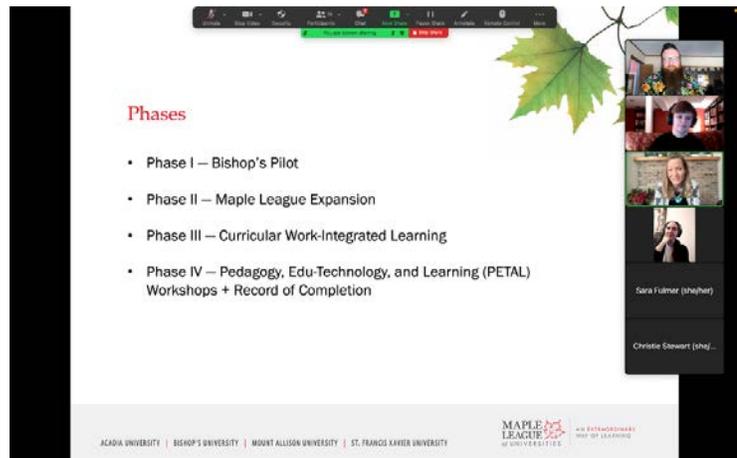
When students complete four or more workshops (of their choice) they will receive a PETAL Record of Completion. These sessions will run every Thursday at 9:00am ET / 10:00am AT covering the following topics:

- Learner-Centered Syllabi — April 7th
- Alternative Assessment — April 14th
- Formative and Summative Assessment — April 21st
- Critical Empathy and Hope University — April 28th
- Understanding Your Privilege (and What To Do With It) — May 5th
- Visual Syllabi — May 12th
- Educational Technologies and Learning Management Systems — May 19th
- Accessibility — May 26th

Spaces are limited, so sign up today! All registrations links and sessions details can be found on our [website](#).

OLTC Weekly Research Meeting

Each week, Dr. Jessica Riddell, Matthew Dunleavy, and Toni Roberts are joined by two undergraduate research fellows—Cécilia Alain and Casey Hebert—to conduct research on the OTLC Program. From threshold concepts to Student-as-Partners to pandemic pedagogy, we are evaluating and analyzing our programming in the light of many contexts, which include COVID-19 and the innovative interventions in 21st higher education. These research meetings have led to multiple conference appearances, discussed in previous reports, and in-process research articles.



OLTC Advisory Team Plans for 2022 and Beyond

The founders of the OLTC program, Scott Stoddard, Georges-Philippe Gadoury-Sansfaçon, and Dr. Jessica Riddell, met for their quarterly visioning retreat to plan for what the OLTC program looks like in a post-COVID context. Ongoing conversations with our external partner Business + Higher Education Round Table (BHER) are promising and we are in discussions for securing future funding; however, with the delay in the tabling of the federal budget (expected early April), most of our federal funding partners will now experience approximately a six-month delay in operational funding. This delayed timeline will shape how the OLTC program will run in a post-pandemic context: the advisory council met to discuss various pathways and planning for the longer-term sustainability of the program.

Undergraduate Research is Featured at Bishop's University Research Week

Maple League Student Fellow alumnus Georges-Philippe Gadoury-Sansfaçon and Jessica Riddell are leading a panel on fostering high-quality undergraduate research at the Annual Bishop's University Research Week on March 29. They will talk about how to use design principles around students as partners to facilitate authentic and mutually transformative relationships in research projects. They will use their research collaborations around the OLTC program as co-inquirers and how they jointly published in peer-reviewed journals and at conferences.

Maple League Supported Initiative Prepares for Belize Field School in May

The Maple League supported initiative with funding from the Global Skills Opportunity program titled *Nation to Nation: Building Indigenous Knowledge Across International Borders* is preparing to run their first field school to Belize in May. Twelve students from across the four institutions have been selected to participate in this first field school. In the month of March, the International representatives continued to meet weekly with Genner Llanes-Ortiz (Faculty Supervisor), Juan Carlos Lopez (understudy for the Faculty Supervisor), Terena Francis (Indigenous Support Lead) and Sherry Gibbs of Galen University attending bi-weekly. This month’s discussions have been centred around the following topics:



- Pre-departure Gathering from May 4-6 at Mount Allison University co-organized by Mt. A Indigenous Affairs Coordinator Patty Musgrave Quinn
- Virtual Pre-Departure Events held March 16th and March 30th
- Itinerary and travel for the two week Belize trip



The Virtual Pre-Departure sessions held this month were very successful. The first meeting was centred around introductions of the team and the cohort of twelve students, as well as going over cursory trip details. The second session was filled with excitement as Sherry Gibbs attended as well and reviewed the in-country schedule that students will get to experience during their trip. It also focused on preparing students for travel to Belize and

included pre-departure information on health care, practical travel considerations, managing risks and navigating cultural adaptation.

The International representatives are continuously monitoring any and all situations that may affect travel such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine.

Maple League Promotes Spring & Summer Learning Opportunities

As preparations for Fall 2022 & Winter 2023 Maple League Shared Courses continue to move ahead, we are also taking the opportunity to promote exciting courses taking place in the Spring & Summer across all four campuses. To see a list of the twenty-eight courses we are promoting see [Appendix A](#) of this report.

Unlike courses during the school year, Spring & Summer courses function through the standard Letter of Permission (LOP) structure, which incentivizes departments to bring in outside students. While the Maple League doesn't facilitate the process of connecting students with courses, we are able to help promote courses, to make sure that as many students as possible know what is available to them.

To this end, we shared a survey, open to all full- and part-time faculty who are teaching courses in the spring & summer, where they could share information about their courses. We will use this information to promote these courses through our social media channels ([Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#)), on our new-and-improved [website](#), and through our connections to faculties across the Maple League.



GREAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

The Maple League offers students across all four universities incredible opportunities to expand their horizons, and make meaningful change on their campuses.

Maple League Shared Courses (Fall & Winter)

Offered during the Fall & Winter terms, Maple League Shared Courses allow students to connect with new mentors, new colleagues, and new friends across all four campuses through online and hybrid courses.

[For more information about Maple League Shared Courses, click here.](#)



Spring & Summer Courses

Make the most of the Spring and Summer terms by taking a course at another Maple League University. Spring & Summer courses can take place online and in hybrid format, as well as in-person either on-campus or in specialized field classes.

More information about Spring & Summer courses for 2022 will be coming soon.

II. Faculty and Staff Engagement

Two MLTLC Members Inspire Their Colleagues with Better Together’s “Cornucopia of Creativity”



On March 23rd, MLTLC co-chair Toni Roberts, and MLTLC member Elizabeth Wells hosted an inspiring better together session: “Cornucopia of Creativity.” Through a series of short, fun, engaging activities, they helped faculty open up new possibilities in their own teaching practice in actionable, do-able ways.

Regular Micro-Certificate Ateliers Build Trusting Relationships amongst the Pilot Cohort

As we continue developing the Maple League Micro-Certificate in Teaching and Learning throughout its pilot year, we have discovered something unexpected: some of the biggest value for our participants comes from relatively unstructured time together. Following feedback from the cohort after the Fall term, we scheduled semi-monthly hour-long ateliers, which individual participants could make use of in order to explore the core ideas they are developing through their work. These have slowly become the backbone of the Micro-Certificate program, and we have received positive feedback across the board from all participants.



“The...conversations I’ve been able to participate in our group’s journey this year have helped me get through the past few weeks and I wanted to thank you and the group for this.”

~ De-Ann Sheppard, St.FX

The Award-Winning Educators Series Continues to Explore Hope and Resilience



In March we continued the series of Award-Winning Educators across the Maple League. This month we were in conversation with Acadia Professor Juan Carlos López (a soil microbiologist) and Acadia Professor Mary Sweatman, head of the Community Development program. These uplifting, heartfelt conversations confront the challenges of academia head-on, with a hopeful view of how we can build systems where people can flourish.

While Hope University Project started as a series of public scholarship essays, it quickly transformed through interviews, summits, workshops, focus groups, and panels. This project is inspired by hopeful and resilient leaders, learners, and community clusters in the post-secondary sector that have the nerve to re-imagine high-quality education for a 21st-century context. It is nothing short of radical to work, in communion with others, to build hopeful and resilient systems where individuals flourish because the structures and policies are designed for thriving, not surviving.



A New Project Exploring Narratives of Failure and Hope



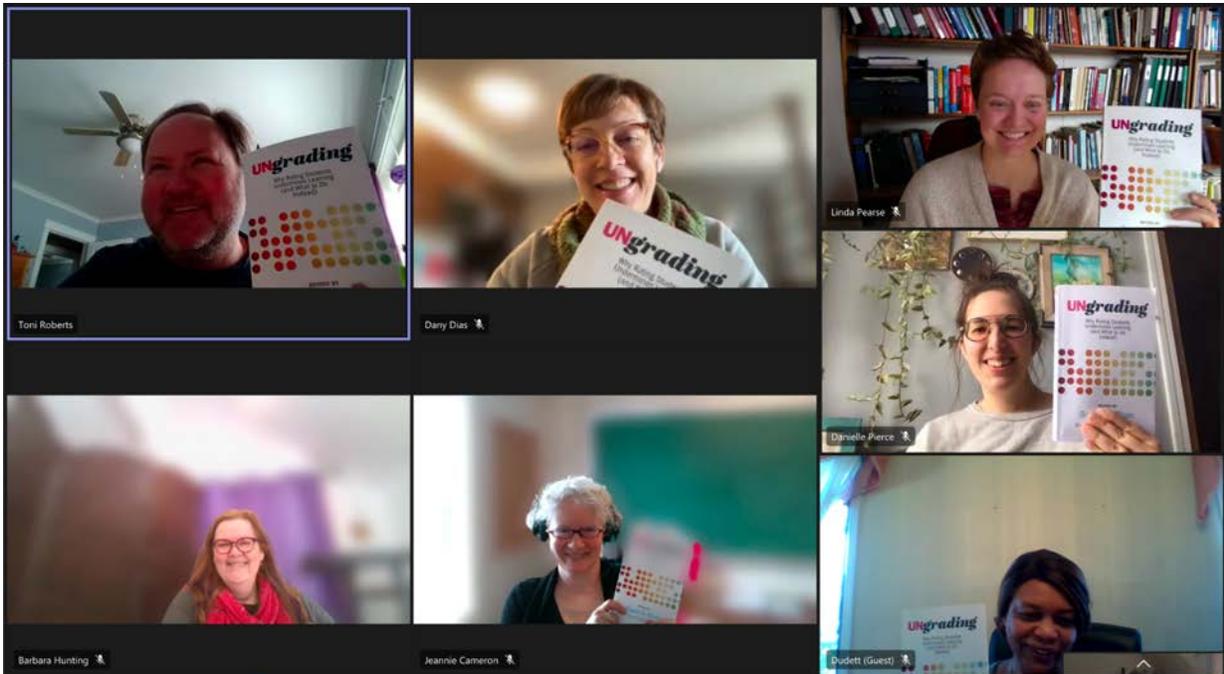
In a STLHE funded research and mobilization project, Dr. Jessica Riddell is working with colleague Dr. Pat Maher (Dean of Teaching at Nipissing University) in a 12 episode series that interviews leading thinkers on educational leadership from Canada, the Global South, Australasia, Europe, and the UK. Inviting these luminary teachers to reflect on how moments of failure in their careers led to their long-term success, the series (which will live on the STLHE website, the Maple League channels, and the Nipissing Teaching Hub) seeks to inspire hopeful actions in difficult times.

In March alone we have interviewed:

- Dr. Joy Mighty - Professor Emerita, Carleton University
- Dr. Birgitte Madelung - Senior Educational Consultant, Southern Denmark University
- Dr. Andy Martin - Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, Massey University (New Zealand)
- Dr. Billy Streat - Professor, University of Alberta
- Dr. Duncan Cross, Associate Teaching Professor, University of Bolton (UK)
- Dr. Jaqui Ala - Associate Professor, University of the Witwatersrand (South Africa)

Maple League Book Club's Ungrading Inspires Faculty to Break the Mold

This month the Maple League Book Club wrapped its reading of *Ungrading: Why Rating Students Undermines Learning (and What to Do Instead)*. Knowing that Omicron, a return to online teaching, and ongoing COVID fatigue were weighing on our faculty, staff, and students, we made a number of design decisions aimed at making the space a welcoming one, and a healing one. This resulted in high retention rates, and many faculty expressed how valuable the Book Club was to them.



Learning communities are so refreshing and necessary. I might not have read this book on my own, and I also learned a lot from the book club members. Great discussions. Absolutely the best way to do that extra reading you always promise yourself---but rarely get around to.

~Anonymous Survey Respondent

Engaging in Strategic Planning with Maple League Communities of Practice & Committees

As we approach the Maple League end of year (June 30, 2022), Executive Director Dr. Jessica Riddell has been engaged in design thinking about sustainability and succession planning with various communities of practice (CoPs) and committees. Her goal with these meetings was to lead the groups through a strategic visioning exercise and hear their ideas, recommendations (including resources) that would enhance their own professional practices as we head into the last year of her mandate. The time was spent listening and steering conversations to come away with real tangible interventions tied to action items.

Sports Information Services Team Work Together on Maple League Branding via Athletics

On March 2nd, the SIS team met to discuss ways to enhance Maple League branding via Athletics. The meeting sparked a lively discussion that led to the brainstorming of great ideas. For the next meeting, the group will do an inventory of what their school is doing and then share with the group to come up with best practices to make standard across the Maple League.

One of the practices Bishop’s University currently does is include the Maple League promotional video when streaming their games. Below is a testimonial speaking to the impact the video had on a viewer this month. To view the video visit [the home page on our website](#).



“I watched the two basketball games last night on the Gaiters website. Almost as good as seeing Bishops win both!!! games, was the inspiring and beautiful film showcasing the Maple League. It gave me a huge lump in my throat. I had such an emotional reaction to the film, how the beauty and potential of the Maple League is captured in every frame. When there is so much sorrow in the world right now, that little film lifted me up, and reminded me of all the potential within each student to change the world for the better. I hope they know we are counting on them. Congratulations on capturing that.”

~ Pam Dillon, Bishop’s Grad 2020

III. External Engagement

Maple League Hosts Presents the Maple League on National & International Stages



On March 9th we presented our second Maple League Hosts session of the season with Gavan Watson, Associate Vice-President, Teaching & Learning at Memorial University of Newfoundland. This inspiring talk, “Ethical Principles for University Teaching: 25 years later” had over 70 registrants both from within the Maple League as well as from 34 outside institutions from across Canada, including participants from 10 states in the US as well as India, Australia, & Pakistan. This terrific talk is [available on our YouTube channel](#).

Thanks for making attendance widely available to people. It really is fun to interact with colleagues across Canada and internationally.

~Anonymous Feedback on Dr. Watson’s Talk

OLTC Business + Higher Education Roundtable (BHER) Final Report in Preparation

In early March, the Program Director and Project Manager had a final reporting meeting with our external funders—Business + Higher Educational Roundtable (BHER)—in preparation for a final written report. The creation of this report is an opportunity for us to evaluate the work of the OLTC Program over the past year and reflect upon its many successes.

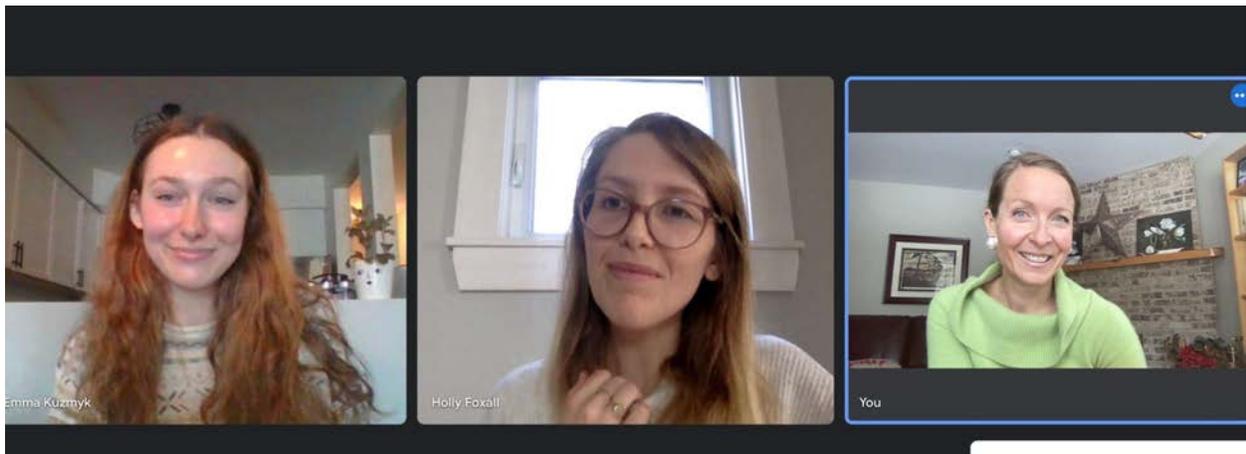
The OLTC Program Continues to Make the Rounds at International Conferences

In preparation for the 89e Congrès de l’ACFAS, Université Laval, Québec, Georges-Philippe Gadoury-Sansfaçon and Jessica Riddell scripted and filmed a 20min presentation in French to be delivered at the largest scientific event in the French speaking academic world. Their presentation is titled —"Réinventer la pédagogie universitaire en partenariat avec les étudiant.es en temps de pandémie: co-conception, technologie éducative et compétences d’avenir”.



Executive Director Met with the Founders of Action Now Atlantic

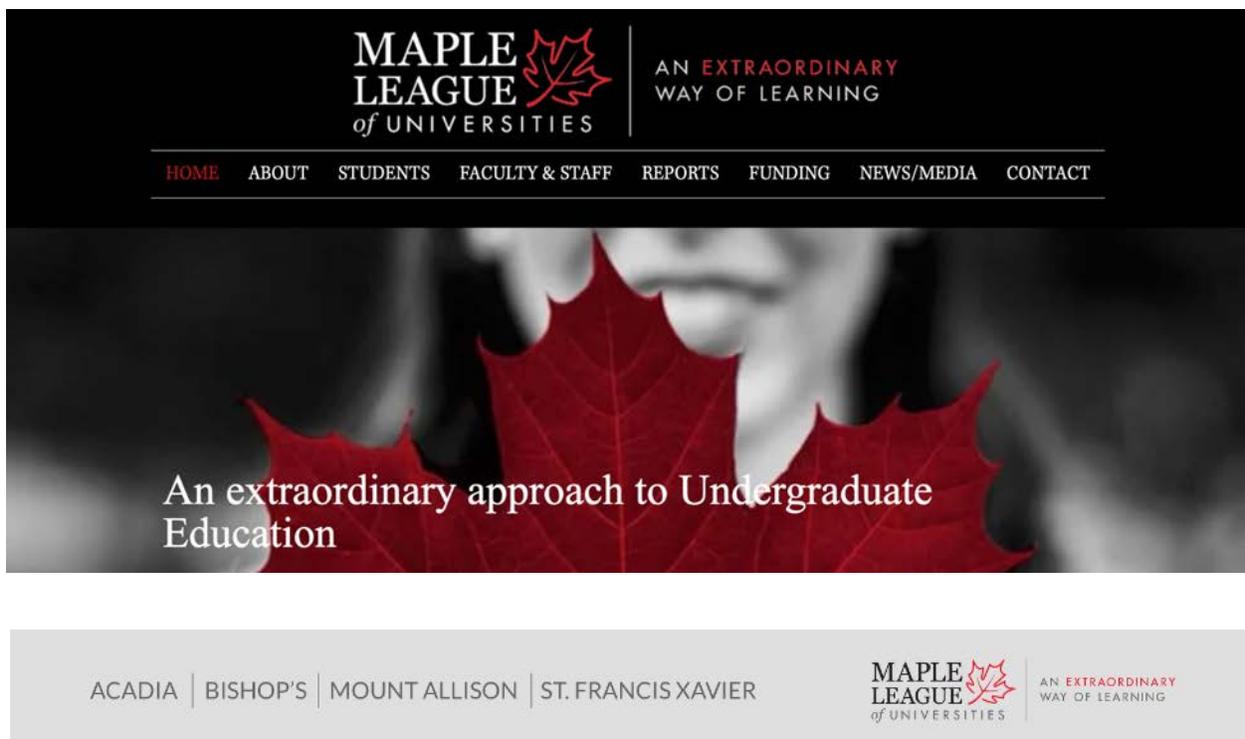
On March 11, Dr. Jessica Riddell met with Emma Kuzmyk and Holly Foxall who are doing the important work to eradicate sexual violence on university campuses in Atlantic Canada. Action Now has the mandate to support universities with resources, sessions, seminars, and other kinds of programming, so they will meet with a number of Maple League Communities of Practice, including the Athletic Directors and Student Affairs teams in the coming weeks.



The New-and-Improved Maple League Website is Relaunched

The original Maple League website, created in 2015 by M5 creative firm, was built in the infancy stages of the consortium and was, therefore, fairly one dimensional (in fact, in 2018 when the new ED came on board, the website was one single landing page). As the consortium has grown and become a complex organization with multiple grassroots communities of practice, the backend infrastructure could not accommodate for the vibrancy of the projects and interconnections. The backend architecture became a bottleneck in the day-to-day communications and knowledge mobilization that is essential to supporting the mandate of the consortium – which is to build the profile (small, primarily undergraduate, 21st-century liberal education) to Canadians and international audiences. Built on an old platform, the site was difficult to update, did not support collaboration, and limited creative communications. Maple League Strategy & Advancement Lead Lauren Boulton, with the assistance of Bishop’s student Emma Trumble, undertook the herculean task of migrating to a more modern platform, redesigning and rebuilding the site from the ground up, and (crucially) migrating all of the information over from the old website.

This month the new website was officially launched. It is already cleaner and easier to navigate than the original, and with its new nimbleness, it has continued to grow and be refined in the weeks since it launched. It is a bold, exciting new face for us to show to the world who we are and what we do. The new website can be viewed [here](#).



Appendix A - Spring & Summer Maple League Promoted Courses

Introduction to Prose Fiction - Mount Allison	Atelier de conversation multiniveau 1 - Bishop's
Shakespeare 1 - Acadia	Introduction to Screen Studies - Mount Allison
Bridging Cultural Differences: Introduction to Intercultural Communication - Mount Allison	Introductory Filmmaking - StFX
Scientific Terminology - Acadia	Personality - Mount Allison
World War One - Acadia	World War Two - Acadia
The Stratford Shakesperience - Bishop's	Child and Adolescent Development - Mount Allison
Introduction to Psychology I - Mount Allison	Introduction to Psychology II - Mount Allison
Women and Gender in Today's World: A Cross-Cultural Perspective - Acadia	Women in Science - Acadia
Introduction to Sociology - Mount Allison	Sociology of Aging - Acadia
Social Policy Analysis - Mount Allison	Sociology of Death & Dying - Acadia
The Anthropology of Magic and Religion - Acadia	Non-Profit Organizations - Mount Allison
Aging in Cross-Cultural Perspective - Acadia	Sport and Leisure in Canada - Mount Allison
Contemporary Canada - Mount Allison	Plants in the Modern World - Acadia
Human Biology - Mount Allison	Managerial Accounting - Mount Allison

