

Maple League of Universities Monthly Report

August 31, 2022



Table of Contents

I. Extraordinary Student Experiences	1
2022 3M Student Fellows Share Their Vision for Universities	1
The Path Pilot Launch 2021-2022 At-A-Glance	1
II. Faculty and Staff Engagement	3
Food, Agriculture, and Nutrition Bridges Silos	3
The Organized Academic Prepares Faculty for the Coming Year	3
Maple League Hosted a Welcome Event for New Faculty	3
Communities of Practice Connect for a New Academic Year	4
V_MLTLC Programming Set for a Banner Year	4
III. External Engagement	5
Maple League and Studiosity Discuss Potential Partnership	5
BHER and Maple League Explores Renewing their Partnership	5
Maple League Presidents Council Strategic Retreat	6
Appendix A - SHAKESPERIENCE 2022 TESTIMONIALS	7

Executive Director's Note:

August was a busy month in the Maple League: while many of us were on vacation, travelling, and resting, a number of committees and communities of practice were very animated. The four Maple League Presidents Council (MLPC) met in person at Acadia university for a two-day strategic visioning retreat this month; a number of thought partners and clusters worked hard on the design and delivery of innovative programs (like the OLTC program, decolonization abroad); our teaching and learning champions connected to support the start of the academic year; and we welcomed a new cohort of faculty across our four universities with a new faculty orientation.

What has struck me in August was that every member at the multiple meetings I attended this month are learners and teachers, mentors and coaches in the development of our students and ourselves. Whether it is in the classroom or at the Library, learning at the IT helpdesk or engaged in experiential learning, meeting with leadership and academic facilitators or learning alongside students, we are all engaged in a university experience that transcends (or extends) learning beyond the classroom and into our communities.

Every one of us – as faculty, staff, managers, or administrators – teach and learn every day in our own capacities and contexts.

This maps onto the work of Peter Felten and Leo Lambert, who write about *Relationship Rich Education*(2020) in the following way: Decades of research demonstrate the transformative potential and the lasting legacies of a relationship-rich college experience. But in this revelatory book brimming with the voices of students, faculty, and staff from across the country, Peter Felten and Leo M. Lambert argue that relationship-rich environments can and should exist for all students at all types of institutions. In *Relationship-Rich Education*, Felten and Lambert demonstrate that for relationships to be central in undergraduate education, colleges and universities do not require immense resources, privileged students, or specially qualified faculty and staff. All students learn best in an environment characterized by high expectation and high support, and all faculty and staff can learn to teach and work in ways that enable relationship-based education.

As we move into the new academic year with all its energy and excitement, I hope we carry with us the knowledge that every member of our communities all have a part to play in a transformative university experience that differentiates our universities in Canada.

As they say in Quebec, bonne rentrée scolaire!

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

I. Extraordinary Student Experiences

2022 3M Student Fellows Share Their Vision for Universities



Better Together hosted the four 3M Student Fellows from the Maple League for a discussion about the challenges university students face in 2022, and how they can be addressed. This hopeful, energizing conversation led to concrete steps that students and faculty can take to meaningfully improve university life - for everyone!

You can watch the archive of this session [here](#).

The Path Pilot Launch 2021-2022 At-A-Glance

Over 200 liberal arts students became entrepreneurs through The Path's pilot launch this year. That's 50 startups created across three rural Canadian universities and 7 academic courses. We had 15 startups achieve customer traction, 5 begin generating revenue, and one enter into PropellICT's validation program through a strategic partnership with The Path. See data below:

- 248 Student entrepreneurs enrolled - 197 funded through CEWIL
 - 167 Fall Semester
 - 60 Acadia
 - 107 Bishop's
 - 2 Mt. A
 - 81 Winter Semester
 - 39 Acadia
 - 30 Bishop's
 - 12 Mt. A

- All Maple League Universities engaged
 - 5 faculty partners, 7 courses integrated across Acadia, Bishop's, Mt. A
 - 10 alumni mentors across Acadia, Mt. A, Bishop's, St. FX
- \$250k CEWIL Funding, \$200k paid to entrepreneurs
- Staff:
 - 3 students Entrepreneurs In Residence
 - 1 alumni Manager
 - 1 faculty Director
- Partners:
 - 3 official industry partners
 - PropelICT
 - Dobson Lagasse Entrepreneurship Centre
 - Acadia Entrepreneurship Centre
- Events:
 - 35 panels, socials, and workshops
 - Hosted by: CBDC, VREN, PropelICT, Lean Stack, Maple League Faculty & Staff, UPEI
- Pitch Competition:
 - \$5,000
 - 6 winners

After such a successful pilot the Path will continue creating student entrepreneurs across the Maple League. Going forward The Path will continue to seek out sustainable funding from the Federal Government, Donors, and/or Universities, as well as the support of Maple League Universities senior leadership who have a unique position to champion The Path to the university community, Board of Governors, and Chancellors.



II. Faculty and Staff Engagement

Food, Agriculture, and Nutrition Bridges Silos

Building on a Winter-term meeting of StFX's Ann Fox (Human Nutrition) and Acadia's Jennifer Brady (School of Nutrition and Dietetics), an August meeting looped in Mount Allison's Suzie Andrews (Religious Studies) to talk about bringing together a cross-disciplinary meeting of scholars and teachers focussed on Food, Agriculture, and Nutrition. Many possible avenues lie ahead as this group looks to expand to excited faculty in the sciences, social sciences, arts, and beyond. This grassroots group will be meeting again in the fall and looking to continue expanding.

***The Organized Academic* Prepares Faculty for the Coming Year**



In the final Better Together session of the Summer Season, Mount Allison's award-winning Professor of Music and former Dean of Arts, Dr. Elizabeth Wells, shared a workshop built around her upcoming book, *The Organized Academic*. The workshop aimed to help faculty work toward a less stressful, more enjoyable academic career - all while achieving their personal and professional

goals. The presentation drew an international audience and has resulted in Dr. Wells being invited to present this fall at Dalhousie University. An archival video of the event is available on our [YouTube page](#).

Maple League Hosted a Welcome Event for New Faculty

Dr. Jessica Riddell hosted a group of incoming faculty members on a virtual Zoom call on August 16. The group talked about how to support junior faculty members as they join new communities located in citizen towns. We explored the delight and discomfort of joining new institutions and how to design for hospital and inclusive spaces. There was interest in fostering a community of practice for incoming faculty to support these moves.

Communities of Practice Connect for a New Academic Year

As we enter a new Academic Year it requires scheduling meetings for the 2022-2023 year for all our committees and communities of practice. It is a time consuming endeavour but the conversations had at those tables make the work well worth while, as our committees and communities of practice are the beating heart of what we do.

V_MLTLC Programming Set for a Banner Year

Before the start of the fall term has started, the three main programs run by the V_MLTLC are already starting to create buzz.

At time of writing there are still five days left to register for the Maple League book club, and we already have over 80 registrants eager to read *Inclusive Teaching: Strategies for Promoting Equity in the College Classroom* by Kelly A. Hogan & Viji Sathy.

When a call for applicants for the Micro-Certificate in Teaching and Learning went out, we got a rush of applicants, and there are now only a pair of spots available for interested parties from BU and MTA.

Finally, the Fall '22 Better Together Season is almost finalized. As a sneak peek, it will start with a roundtable featuring all four Student Union Presidents, and will also feature as special guests in our Maple League Hosts series Dr Shannon Murray (winner of the STLHE 2022 Lifetime Achievement Award) and Dr. Ivan Joseph (bestselling author, VP Student Affairs at Sir Wilfred Laurier).



III. External Engagement

Maple League and Studiosity Discuss Potential Partnership

On August 22nd, our Strategy and Advancement Lead met with the Canadian Vice President and General Manager of Studiosity to discuss a potential partnership with the Maple League.

Studiosity is an international company with success in Australia and the UK that offers 24 hour study support 365 days a year for students allowing them to receive help at any time. They are now looking to do a Pilot Study in Canada, so they will meet with a number of Maple League Communities of Practice in the coming weeks to discuss how this might fit within their institutional contexts.

What is Studiosity?

Online, on demand study support from a real person



Available 365, 24/7



High-quality Specialists from diverse academic backgrounds



Working at scale to provide tailored support for all students



Collaborating with institutions to improve achievement, experience and retention

Studiosity

BHER and Maple League Explores Renewing their Partnership

Business + Higher Education Roundtable (BHER) committed \$170,000 to the Maple League to scale the OLTC (Online Learning and Technology Consultants) pilot program across the four Maple League campuses in 2021 - 2022. Due to funding lapses in the federal budget, BHER was delayed in renewing funding for established partners. However, conversations between BHER and Maple League have been revived this summer as federal funding becomes a promising reality. BHER has moved forward in curating renewed agreements with hand-picked partners. We are in discussions now for reinvestment and are confident we will be able to secure funding over a longer-term with ambitious but realistic WIL goals.

Dr. Jessica Riddell, Executive Director of the Maple League and OLTC co-founder notes, “As we move into a post-COVID world, many of the lessons we have gleaned in a time of disruption will inform classroom design and delivery and should enhance the delivery of a 21st-century liberal education. The hope is that we can expand this to universities across Canada in the future so other universities can benefit from this model of student co-design and authentic collaboration of a 21st-century education.”

Valerie Walker, CEO of BHER, highlighted the value of this partnership when we announced the 2021 funding: “BHER is thrilled to partner with the Maple League of Universities to support this innovative approach to Work-Integrated Learning. Maple League is uniquely positioned to help students recognize valuable career paths within post-secondaries. Putting students in a driving role, especially in remote learning environments, equips them with key digital and human skills needed for evolving post-COVID workplaces - all while advancing high-impact teaching and learning practices.”

Maple League Presidents Council Strategic Retreat

The university presidents and their representatives met August 18 - 19, 2022 at Acadia University to reflect on the tremendous growth of the academic consortium and discuss the next phase of the Maple League. As we move into the next phase of working together as leaders of quality undergraduate education, we are moving towards a new governance model that will provide the infrastructure necessary for this academic consortium to be an inciter of innovation. The university presidents were united in the promise of the Maple League as an inter-institutional collaboration that will support the sustainability and resilience of our four universities in the longer term.

In its most fundamental form, the Maple League is founded on the conviction that together we can be better than our individual parts in delivering high-quality undergraduate education. The two guiding questions that animate all Maple League collaborations are: What can we do together that we cannot do on our own? and How does working together enhance what we do on our individual campuses? The Maple League universities are increasingly visible as leaders in conversations around quality undergraduate education in Canada and around the world. The global pandemic has demonstrated that the goal of influencing undergraduate education is even more important than it was when the consortium was first created. We look forward to sharing this new governance structure.

Appendix A - SHAKESPERIENCE 2022 TESTIMONIALS

SHAKESPERIENCE 2022

Letters written by students
to thank our generous patrons





September 12th, 2022

TO: Patrons of the 2022 Shakesperience program

FROM: Students of Shakesperience

Dear Valued Donors of Shakesperience 2022,

On June 28th, 2022, 25 students from five Canadian universities gathered in Stratford, Ontario for a week of plays, tours, and workshops. Before gathering in person, they spent the month of June taking the course virtually, covering the material and content on early modern drama, the plays, and various political and social issues so they could get the most out of the field trip component.

The in-person component of Shakesperience offered a transformative experiential learning opportunity hosted by Bishop's University in partnership with the Stratford Festival.

Such a course is one of Bishop's most innovative and immersive: it combines all the best elements of liberal arts learning – from holistic approaches to assignments to co-design inside and outside of the classroom – with work-integrated learning to educate students for an ever evolving and increasingly complex world.

Shakesperience transcends traditional classroom learning by transporting learning spaces (and students) into the “real”, embodied world. Very few university students have the opportunity to attend Canada's largest repertory theatre, never mind have behind-the-scenes access to shows, actor talkbacks, archive tours, and guest lectures from some of Stratford's most important players.

During our week at the Stratford Festival, our students participated in the following activities:

- Watched 5 plays (*Richard III*, *Hamlet*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Little Women*, and *Chicago*)
- Attended 3 x one hour-long actor “talkbacks” (we got to talk to Hamlet and Ophelia!)
- Visited Stratford's costume warehouse and archive
- Toured the brand-new Tom Patterson theatre
- Participated in two interactive workshops (learning how to stage fight and dance to a number from Donna Feore's *Chicago*)
- Attended a guest lecture led by Antoni Cimolino, Stratford's artistic director, plus a surprise visit from famous Canadian actor Colm Feore

If all the world is a stage, all of Stratford was our classroom. We spent hours spent together over early morning coffees at the Bentley Inn, between shows on the lawns of the Festival theatre, or late into the night as students bonded over a love for Shakespeare, literature, and the performing arts.

Thanks to your donations, 15 of the 25 students who attended Shakesperience could do so as a direct result of your generosity. In return, these students created a campaign to thank you for your support by writing individual thank you letters about what Shakesperience, and your generosity, meant – and continues to mean – to them.

On behalf of all of us, thank you for supporting this course and the next generation of liberal-arts learners.

Sincerely,

Jessica Riddell

Stephen A. Jarislowsky Chair of Undergraduate Teaching Excellence



Dear Donors,

My university journey officially begins in September, but as an incoming freshman I was thrilled to be given the opportunity to jumpstart my Bishop's career with Shakesperience. There was no time for second thoughts – the immersion into Bishop's community and culture cemented my place as a Gaiter.

As a performer, I am learning that theory informs my practice. This course also showed me how study enhances our experiences and contributions as audience members. Access to Drs. Riddell & Murray's engaging content in advance set the stage for a learning adventure unlike any other. 30 seconds into the first video in the course, I hit pause and ran upstairs excitedly to tell my parents - this was the English class that I had been longing for with teachers who were genuine, caring, and brilliant!

At 17 years old, I had never thought of myself as a patron but as we explored the theme of patronage throughout the week my sense of responsibility to the theatre grew. It was presented as an urgent call to action and it felt like an honour to embrace the title of patron. There was nothing tedious about this responsibility. It was empowering to take my place as an active member of the arts community.

We were not passive when watching Stratford's *Hamlet*, *Richard III*, or *All's Well*. Under Dr. Riddell and Dr. Murray's guidance, we developed a bond with those in the seats around us, and a connection with the performers on stage. We were given permission to explore how our energy in the audience contributed to the performance and I see the theatre as more of a collaborative event now. I felt the true magic of Shakespeare as we collectively drew from his observations to make sense of the world around us.

Our professors were so accessible throughout the week. We were able to debrief over coffee, gain insights as we walked to shows, and learn together in unstructured and unexpected ways. That authentic learning is what I had always hoped university would provide.

I will be studying Music Performance (Voice) with a Musical Theatre Concentration. After Shakesperience, I looked into the English Department with renewed interest and am planning to join Dr. Riddell's Jacobean Shakespeare class in the Winter Term. I will also be looking for more field study opportunities!

Thank you for your support of this program. I live in BC and your generosity made it possible for me to travel across the country to participate. You have given me the gift of an early connection to the school community that I will call home for the next four years. I am grateful to feel a sense of belonging.

**Sincerely,
Sonoma Brawley**

TOM PATTERSON THEATRE



Dear Generous Donors,

Thank you so much for your contribution to making the fantastic experience that is Shakesperience possible! It was a striking opportunity to view so much live theatre after such a long time of in-person performance not being possible. The shows were fantastic and the whole week has left me very inspired for the return of the theatre to the world. I loved seeing this festival from all angles through the different talk-backs and workshops and tours. We were able to meet some really incredible people in addition to seeing their incredible work. This opportunity has really helped me realise some of the specific things that I love about theatre and what inspires me. I particularly loved the Tom Patterson Theatre, and how the directors of *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Richard III* used the space. Seeing shows there and touring the theatre has made me much more aware of how much the space affects the performance. Theatre configurations that are not the standard proscenium style have wildly different considerations. As I have an interest in directing, it was such an amazing opportunity to see professional theatre use a creative configuration and how much it affected the blocking, costume design, and set design. This experience will certainly stay with me and inform how I function as both an audience member and a creative. As a Drama student it is so important to get these experiential learning experiences and exposure to how theatre artists function in the professional world, and I am so grateful to Shakesperience for providing that.

**Thank you once again,
Schuyler Edgar Holmes**



Dear Donors,

Thank you so much for your contribution, which allowed me to attend the 2022 Shakesperience class at the Stratford festival. I had been wanting to attend ever since I started at Bishop's University, but the cost of the course was always daunting. Because of your generosity, I was able to attend without worries, and make the absolute most of my Stratford Festival.

The festival was a wonderful experience for me. I am coming to the end of my undergraduate career, with plans to finish classes by this December, and I'm trying to figure myself and my future out. I've always been drawn to the performing arts, and though I study English literature I've taken many acting and drama courses and loved them all. So to be able to go to the Stratford Festival, not only as a spectator but to go behind the scenes, was a great experience. It gave me a taste of what my future might look like, and gave me the opportunity to learn that what I want is to be on the inside of art-making, no matter what form that may eventually take. I can say that, since then, I have decided that the performing arts are something I want to explore deeply in the coming years.

I want to say thank you for enabling this. To give students at this stage in their lives, when they are starting to think seriously about what they are doing, the chance to engage with art on such a level, is a great thing.

**Thank you again,
Linus Mulherin**





Dear Donors,

My name is Ashlyn Skater and I am writing to you to thank you for your contribution to my education by providing funding for the Stratford experience course, Shakesperience. As a drama studies student at Mount Allison University, participating in programs such as this to experience live theatre outside of a traditional academic setting is important to understanding how concepts taught to us can be applied in a real-life setting. Studying Shakespeare in an experiential, modern learning environment has allowed me to see how his texts still impact everyone today. Many of the questions we would ask about a modern text would still very much apply to a Shakespearian text as many of them revolve around questioning ideals around class, gender, ableism, etc. This course opens up space for these important discussions and it gives more people the opportunity to see how change could happen. It is a powerful thing to compare and contrast the world around you with the Elizabethan era because it will open up the ability to see past your biases.

Theatre is often the first subject to get a major budget cut, especially within the education system and with the generosity of many people I am certain theatre would not survive. Supporting the arts gives many people unique experiences to grow and learn about themselves, whereas, watching the arts will allow people to expand their understanding of the world around them. As a future educator, I hope that these experiences and conversations can continue for many years to come, and I know I will help fight to keep theatre alive.

Thank you so much again for giving me this opportunity to learn and grow.

Ashlyn Skater



Dear Donors,

I write to you to express my profound appreciation for your continuing support of the Stratford Shakesperience program.

As a mature student and a long-time actor, it has been a dream of mine to visit Stratford and attend the Stratford Festival. The Shakesperience program gave me the unique opportunity to deepen my knowledge of, and appreciation for, Shakespeare's enduring plays. I can truly say that without your support, I would not have been able to fulfill this dream.

I must also add that, as I began my Stratford adventure, I was struck by the number of young people among my fellow students. In a world where technological distractions dominate our attention, it is encouraging to see so many young people join me in this theatrical journey. This, along with your generous support, gives me hope for the future of live theatre both contemporary and classical.

Thank you for your support, your commitment to the arts, and to the furtherance of academia for students of all ages. It is through the thoughtful generosity of people like you, that we can continue to foster an appreciation for the timeless work of William Shakespeare and for all of those who have been inspired, enlightened and entertained by his brilliant work.

**Sincerely,
Brian Collins**



SPRIET MEMBERS' LOUNGE

Welcome Sustainers and Privileges Circle Members



Dear Donors,

My name is Jess Kinder, and I am a fourth-year student at Bishop's University studying English literature. I would like to express my deepest gratitude for your generous donations, as they facilitated one of the most delightful and transformative experiences that I had the pleasure to partake in throughout university. Prior to participating in Shakesperience, I had little knowledge or passion for either Shakespeare or theatre. While I enjoyed the few performances I had seen in the past, their purpose for me remained purely one of entertainment and enjoyment. While I still believe these aspects of theatre are important, Shakesperience showed me the many ways in which theatre is so much more. Shakesperience taught me to be not merely a passive spectator but to view myself as a patron, an integral part of theatre and performance. Shakesperience showed me the way theatre holds a mirror up to society and reflects our problems back to us. Theatre is not merely a delightful or entertaining experience. Theatre is equally a learning opportunity that gives space to reflect on and understand many of the problems humans continue to grapple with today. Shakesperience has given me a new perspective on theatre, performance, and the arts and prompted me to understand their essential role within society. Your generous donations have allowed me to experience a truly incredible space for learning which I hope may continue to benefit students such as myself for years to come. Without your generous donations, I likely would have never had the opportunity to gain such a deep appreciation for both Shakespeare and theatre. From the bottom of my heart, I sincerely thank you for making this opportunity possible for students like me.

**With much appreciation,
Jess Kinder**





To the Generous Gift-Givers and Donors,

It is not every day you are given a beautiful opportunity that is as life altering as Shakesperience was for myself and numerous others. There has been so much loss in recent years, and it was more than inspirational to be built up by the words, artistry, and community throughout the program and at the Stratford Festival. The fresh perspectives that have been shared with me have allowed me to grow in my own artistic practices and have renewed excitement to pursue learning and bringing all that I can to reinvest it into my communities.

With all the support for this amazing program so many of us have been able to grow as learners and therefore as beneficial members of our communities as we have been so fortunate to have had this shared experience. Learning and applying engagement in the form of spectator and of co-producer in our own experience through being an active participant in the arts was such a gift and it is so appreciated.

I value all the experiences that came with this program, but there is one that I will hold very dear to my heart, and that was seeing this year's offering of *Hamlet*. My love of Shakespeare began when my father introduced *Hamlet* to me when I was quite young and was a major bonding point throughout my life. Polonius's speech about fatherly wisdom was how I ended up convincing my family that I should pursue my dreams and goals in academics and the performing arts. This performance of *Hamlet* was very timely, and it will be forever moving to have seen this play this year.

Thank you!

**Kindly,
Michelle Cyr**



Dear Donors,

My name is Claire Kim. As a student of the Maple League and a recipient of your generous donation, I have had the honour and privilege of taking Dr. Riddell's ENG225 Shakesperience course.

Before this course, I was not a very experienced theatre-goer. The main appeal of this course for me was the fact that I would be able to see five different performances at a world-renowned festival over the span of four days. Never did I expect to come away with this course with a radically different perspective of the theatrical medium.

As a student, I had only ever interacted with Shakespeare from an academic lens. While I appreciated his plays from an analytical standpoint, I always felt as if I was missing an integral part of his work. As I watched the first performance on our roster, *Richard III*, everything clicked—the audience interaction. Everything from the text to the stage direction and even the stage itself came together to create not only an immersive experience for the audience, but one that actively implicated the audience in its events. During his monologues Colm Feore would often turn and make direct eye contact with different audience members as if to implicate the audience's guilt as a silent bystander to his horrific machinations.

Additionally, watching a live performance of Shakespeare's plays made them infinitely more accessible to the audience. I myself have had a lot of trouble attempting to dissect the language when reading Shakespeare's plays on paper. A live performance is able to somewhat bypass the language barrier thanks to the actors' expert use of intonation making it overall a much more enjoyable experience.

I would like to reiterate my gratitude. Your dedication and passion for this program has made it possible for students of future generations to truly understand the value of theatre.

**Sincerely,
Claire Kim**



Dear Valued Donors,

I would like to take a moment to thank you all for your generous donations towards this year's 2022 Shakesperience. Your contributions helped to make my learning experience one that was stress free and completely immersive.

Being new to Shakespeare and his plays, not only was I able to learn asynchronously with the help of lectures from Dr. Murphy and Dr. Riddell, but after reading the plays, the opportunity to watch the plays unfold on stage in Stratford, Ontario helped clarify the meanings and intentions behind some of the text that can be somewhat difficult to understand for first timers such as myself.

Moreover, I was able to gain a deep appreciation for the work that goes on behind the scenes, and a new appreciation of the arts in general. The opportunity to see how certain scenes are choreographed gave me insight on how much work is involved and most importantly, how timing is everything!!!

Having the opportunity to take part in this course also helps create community. The term, "It takes a village" can easily be applied in the world of theatre and art because without people supporting and advocating for it, theatre and art would simply fade away into nothing. Moreover, with an aging population, it is important to provide education and insight into the world of theatre and the arts in order to ensure its survival.

Your support helps to foster new patrons, new actors, new stage technicians, dancers, etc., for generations to come. Please know that this experience has made me an advocate for the arts and theatre, and a new patron.

Again, thank you for your generous support.

**Respectfully,
Michelle O'Brien**



Dear Generous Donors,

My name is Erica Halliday, I am from Bear Point, Nova Scotia, and I am entering my final year of an undergraduate English degree at Acadia University. With the help of your generous donation to the Shakesperience program, I was able to learn and expand my knowledge of both Shakespeare and theatre, as well as make so many connections and friendships that will last a lifetime.

Throughout the span of a week, we were able to attend several plays and innovative workshops where we were challenged to grow. I learned so much about how to be a patron of theatre and what it means to be a “theatre-goer” or a spectator of theatre. I also increased my leadership skills by watching others lead and set examples. Having the opportunity to share this experience with other students for credit and students of life was so wholesome and enjoyable. After every play we were able to have conversations about our likes and dislikes, what we thought worked or didn’t work, the acting abilities, the special effects, the technology – everything. Having the chance to actually analyze the experience was so interesting and much better than just simply watching and going home!

Again, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to you, for making such a kind and thoughtful donation to a truly amazing program. It is with your help that this program stays alive! Thank you.

Warmly,
Erica Halliday



Dear Donors,

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the opportunity you blessed me with this Summer. Prior to attending the Stratford Shakesperience, I had only seen one Shakespeare play live, so you can imagine my giddy excitement at being offered the opportunity to attend three world-class performances in a single week! Not only that, but I was able to experience those plays with a wonderful, eclectic group of people from across Canada, individuals from all walks of life, united by their mutual love of Shakespearian drama. Being able to discuss the plays with peers, performers, and professors deepened and enriched the experience tremendously, and the many enriching encounters and conversations I had would not have been possible without your ever-so-kind support.

Truly, without using hyperbole, I can say that the experience was life changing. It deepened my appreciation and respect for Shakespeare's work, particularly for his chosen medium of theatre. I became aware of the way in which everyone involved in an onstage production, from the actors to the lighting technicians to the assistant director to me, a member of the audience, becomes part of the meaning-making experience. It was impressed upon me more than ever before that Shakespeare's plays are not static, stagnant, untouchable monoliths. Rather, they are full of life and glorious, untapped potential. Prism-like, they are happy to be approached from new angles and examined from fresh perspectives.

By supporting and allowing young students from across the country to experience the beauty of Shakespeare on stage, you have helped to create lasting friendships, unforgettable memories, and have instilled within every Shakesperience attendee a lifelong love of Shakespeare and a firm belief in the value and ongoing vitality of his work.

**Sincerely and with great thanks,
Joseph Simmonds**



Dear Donors,

Your financial contribution to Shakesperience has alleviated the often-trying responsibility of managing student expenses, and by result, facilitated a learning environment in which I was able to fully immerse myself in. As a student located in British Columbia, Shakesperience initially seemed like an unfeasible dream, between travel expenses and the unpredictability of COVID-19. However, upon hearing about the incredible funding allocated for this course, I immediately applied, without the worry of finances!

After so much time spent in isolation, I felt a longing for the arts—Shakesperience served as an invitation and re-entrance into the vibrant, live-giving world of creativity, human connectivity, and of course, theatre. Our interactions with the actors, directors, and everyone behind the scenes at Stratfest served as a reminder that art is communal, as it gains meaning and momentum when shared with others. During this trip, it became apparent to me that while art often begins as an individual's expression, it develops through active listening, observation, and conversation within and beyond the audience it was intended for. While community patronage directly supports the artists, the indirect benefits are multiple. For example, the poignant and show-stopping performance of *Hamlet* performed by Amaka Umeh does more than simply entertain; rather, it disturbs past idealizations of *who* can play certain roles and opens possibilities and expands accessibility of arts. As an aspiring artist and soon-to-be teacher, this lesson feels crucial in my journey.

Your contribution to my education only reminds me just how important patronage is—supporting students, actors, writers, and artists alike all emphasize this idea. I hope in this letter I have conveyed my deep sense of gratitude to all donors involved. I feel an incredible privilege to have been a part of this group.

Sincerely,
Raegan Cote

