



6/30/2024

Maple League Annual Report

Q4 June 2024

Prepared for: Maple League Governing Board

Overview

The 23/24 Maple League year was one of development, as the new leadership team consisting of Executive Director Jack Rice, and Teaching and Learning Director Juan Carlos López attempted to focus on continuity, by delivering a schedule of events to support the member institutions, while building capacity for future initiatives. A key focus of the year was planning, and through a series of on campus visits and consultations a direction for the next two years was articulated, more on that below.

Committees

Teaching and Learning Committee

By the end of the year the MLTLC completed the following activities:

- 14 [Better Together](#) and Maple League Host sessions were offered attracting over 600 participants. A full list of events can be seen at our website. Viewership at our [YouTube](#) channel continues to reach a wide audience. Given the popularity of these sessions we look forward to reaching an even greater audience in 2024/2025.
- A key area of focus for the Maple League is the mentorship of faculty and students towards 3M awards. The hard work paid off again this year as National student recipients [Erin Richelle](#) (Acadia) and [Sonoma Brawley](#) (Bishop's) were both awarded 3M National Student Fellowships. For faculty, [Erin Austen and Heather Lawford](#), from STFX and Bishop's respectively, were both named 3M Teaching Fellows, well deserving recipients.
- Our Micro-certificate in T&L cohort concluded with an in-person retreat on June 4-6 at Acadia. In total 19 faculty members participated from across the 4 institutions. We look forward to a new cohort in 24/25.
- Three book clubs were offered this year, Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer, Undoing the Grade by Jesse Stommel, and Hope Circuits by Jessica Riddell all proved to be popular choices with over 200 participants engaged in the clubs.

I would like to thank all the members of the Maple League TLC, there are so many folks that engage, participate, and lead the events. In particular, I would like to thank Toni Roberts (MTA) and Erin Austen (STFX) our two co-chairs of the committee for their inspiration.

Research Committee

The Maple League Research Committee published two briefs for consideration of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Research with an aim to provide input on the unique and valuable position of smaller, primarily undergraduate universities. Both were well received, and it is our hope that together we can speak with a collective voice on the issues affecting our research communities.

With an aim to expand our network for undergraduate research I had the pleasure of attending the annual conference for the Council for Undergraduate Research, this may be an organization that the Maple League chooses to join to provide valuable resources, support and exposure to students from across our schools.

Academic Committee

The Academic Committee met twice during 2023/2024. A key area to discuss was shared courses. It was decided that to open the potential for future sharing, the Maple League would pivot to a shared, Letter of Permission process, for it's "Shared Courses". A description of the new process can be found at the website under [shared courses](#).

A special thank you to all the Deans for supporting the direction and to the Registrars for working hard to get on the same page and articulate the direction.

Impact Stories

Our communications coordinator, Gray Brogden, has done a wonderful job of keeping our social presence strong and our [impact stories](#) continue to be popular. If you have a story to tell from around the league, please do not hesitate to reach out to Gray at gbrogden@stfx.ca.

Presentations, Events, Networking

Nation to Nation

This was the last year of a 3-year grant funded project, *Nation to Nation: Building Indigenous Knowledge Across International Borders*, an immersive two-week education abroad experience. Special thanks to Juan Carlos and the International offices of all the universities for working together so effectively to make it happen. For more on the program, check out our [website](#).

Student Development

In June, an event was held at Mount Allison which brought together the residence life coordinators from across the Maple League to learn, share and support each other. What a wonderful way of promoting collaboration and our special relationship. Look for an impact story at our website coming soon.

STLHE

The Maple League and its members were well represented at the annual meeting for the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, as several faculty and administrators presented at the event and 3M recipients were awarded.

UPCEA

I attended the annual conference of the University Professional and Continuing Education Association in Boston. Many of our member institutions are relaunching their continuing education portfolios, and so I attended with an aim of making valuable connections for our members.

Budget

Each of the four universities contributed \$50,000 in annual funding for 2023 / 2024 and carry over funds of \$101,147.48 were sent from Bishop's University to STFX where the finances of the league are now codified with a series of GL's. Our goal for the year is to not exceed our annual funding allotment and to maintain or grow our surplus, we were able to accomplish this task and we are well positioned to execute the 2024 – 2026 plan as highlighted below.

A copy of the finances updated to the end of June are included in this report.

Strategic Planning 2024 / 2025

The Maple League was formed ten years ago when a quartet of University Presidents articulated the common values of their respective campuses and saw a need to come together with a shared position and commitment. The group saw the opportunity to champion the approach of four smaller, long standing, primarily undergraduate campuses across the east coast of Canada.

From its beginning, the Maple League has been dedicated to the pursuit of a single question: "What can we do together that we cannot do alone?"

Based on our conversations from around the league this year, Juan Carlos and I have settled on the following areas of focus for the next two year on our term.

Areas of Focus: June 2024 – June 2026

1. Expand and Leverage the Maple League TLC.

Initiatives:

- A Train the Trainer Program for graduates of the Micro-certificate program.

Involving graduates of the micro-certificate program to help instruct in the program for future cohorts, distributing the leadership of the centre and creating capacity and engagement.

- External Cohorts of the Maple League TLC Micro-certificate program.

There is interest in external cohorts of the ML TLC Micro-certificate program, given the investment in the capacity of the TLC, it is time to extend its reach, perhaps internationally.

- International recognition in the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Several members of the Maple League TLC, who share similar roles at their home institutions, are starting to present at major T&L showcases such as AAU, DAL and STLHE. It may be time to share the scholarship of Teaching and Learning occurring throughout the Maple League more broadly.

- A higher education leadership micro-certificate program.

Given the success of the micro-certificate teaching program it is time to think of a similar program for new and aspiring higher education leaders, people stepping into Director, Chair or Dean roles, or who aspire to.

2. Highlight the Unique Student Experiences across the League.

Initiatives:

- Maple League Courses.

We have invested much effort this year creating the architecture for allowing more opportunities for cross-institutional participation for students. We are now looking at ways to embed the concept and grow the sharing.

- Supporting Best Practice in Undergraduate Research.

Undergraduate research is a pillar of the Maple League community, and the Maple League should seek out industry associations, support, and funding to further enable this key differentiator across the league.

- Hosting in person student conferences

Building off the commitment to undergraduate research and the success of programs such as the Business of the Arts conference at Mount Allison, we are seeing a renewed desire for students to travel and connect.

- Student awards

To further define what the league and its member institutions value, an award at graduation could further recognize the achievement of our students and provide an aspirational story for new students.

3. Create pathways into the League for prospective students, faculty, and staff.

Initiatives:

- Developing a program for high school students to engage with the league's ideas and values.

Introduce our league, it's members and our values to high school students looking to engage with ideas for their future and the future of Canada.

- Collaborating on a shared approach to Continuing Education across the Maple League.

Continuing Education, in all its forms, will be an important part of the future landscape in higher education as the nature of credentialing begins to change. Each of our units is small but working together to share infrastructure and cross promote our impact could be large.

- Working with HR departments across the league to share resources for staff.

Training programs for staff; offering exchanges or ways of working and learning together.

- Looking for economies of scale to improve efficiency of operations across the league.

All four universities use the same learning management system, does the back end of the operation, updates, storage, security patches, etc. need to be replicated four times? Just one example.

- Awards to recognize faculty and staff collaboration.

Following on from the concept of student awards, what gets recognized gets done.

On behalf of myself and Juan Carlos López we look forward to continuing our work on behalf of the member universities.

Sincerely,

Jack Rice

Executive Director, The Maple League of Universities

