

**Maple League of Universities Quarterly Report**  
**January 1, 2023 - March 31, 2023**



## Table of Contents

<b>I. Extraordinary Student Experiences</b>	<b>1</b>
OLTC Program Gets National Recognition in University Affairs	1
Inaugural Maple League Connection Series Brings MTA's Dr. James Devine to BU	3
A Second Cohort Prepares To Connect Nation To Nation	4
<b>II. Faculty and Staff Engagement</b>	<b>5</b>
Teaching to Transgress is a Catalyst for Vital Conversations	5
Record-Breaking Winter Better Together Season Reaches Farther Than Ever	6
Micro-Certificate in Teaching and Learning Knits Together a Cross-Campus Community	7
<b>III. External Engagement</b>	<b>8</b>
University Affairs Highlights the OLTC Program	8
Maple League Hosts Welcomes ISSOTL President Dr. Raj Chaudhury	9

## Executive Director's Note:

This has been a busy quarter, with a flurry of activity within our communities of practice, committees, and external engagement. We went from strength to strength, including a few highlights like \$150,000 in new external funding from Co-operative Experiential Learning (CEWIL), engaged over 1000 participants in the Virtual Maple League TLC programming, reached over 300 universities and colleagues through professional development initiatives, and were featured in a national article on student-led higher education in *University Affairs Magazine*.

However, what is most exciting in the evolution of the consortium is the recruitment, selection, and on-boarding of a new leadership team that will take the Maple League to new and yet unimagined heights.

The Maple League is delighted to announce the new Executive Director of the Maple League, Jack Rice, and the new Director of the Virtual Maple League Teaching and Learning Centre (VMLTLC), Juan Carlos López.

Their respective terms begin July 1, 2023. They will spend three months leading up to their official appointment in a succession planning transition phase with the current Executive Director Jessica Riddell, who ends her five-year term June 30, 2023.

Jack Rice is a career educator and academic leader; he currently serves as the Director, Centre for Online Learning & Professional Studies at St. Francis Xavier University. Previously, he was a Dean at Elizabethtown College and a Director in the School of Education at Loyola University Maryland. Jack began his career in K-12 Education spending time in Canada and Australia as a Teacher, Head of School, and Director of Education. A graduate of the Academy of Innovative Higher Education Leadership offered jointly through Arizona State and Georgetown University, Jack, and his wife Shannon, now live in Antigonish where they can often be found chasing sunrises and sunsets along the coast of Nova Scotia.

Juan Carlos López is a soil microbial ecologist who has worked and trained in Europe, North and South America. With students as leaders and collaborators, Juan Carlos has created and modelled high impact practices for student success centred around mental health, as well as decolonization and reconciliation initiatives that have impacted the way we think, talk and learn about Mi'kmaw knowledge in our institutions and beyond. After successful nominations from students and

colleagues Juan Carlos was honoured with the *Faculty of Pure and Applied Science Teaching Award* (2020) and the *Alumni Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching* (2021) at Acadia University.

Jack Rice: “It is an honour to represent the schools of the Maple League and I look forward to working with the community to make us, even better, together. We have a powerful story to tell about the value of connection and scholarship as we inspire young people to create an exciting and inclusive future.”

Juan Carlos reflects, “The Maple League to me is equivalent to having the opportunity to go to your favourite teaching conference...but having the opportunity to do so year round! A guiding principle present across our four institutions is forming and nurturing deep connections with our students and communities. I am convinced that, in the same way that the forest plants I study connect via the presumably ‘unseen’ allies that run throughout the forest floor to make the entire system stronger and more resilient, so everyone in our universities can be stronger and more resilient when we build deeper connections between one another. By intentionally finding and strengthening collaborations within our consortium, we can envision and create the brighter future that awaits us as we embrace and move towards true inclusion and reconciliation in Canada.”

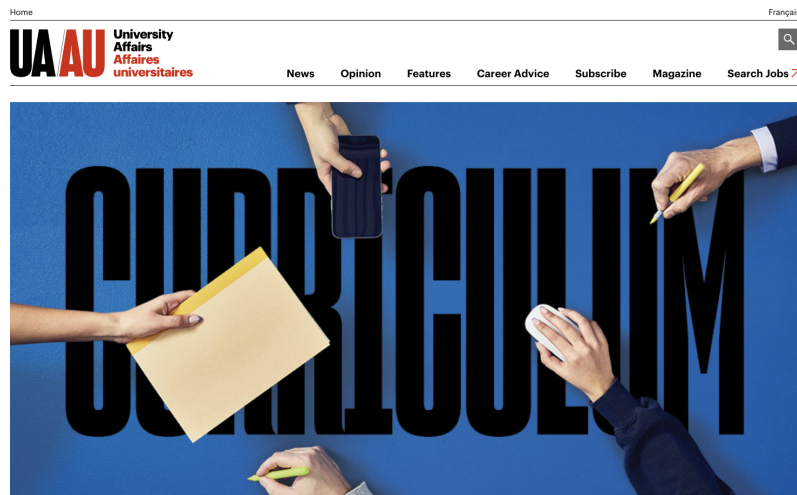
Succession planning is good governance, and the Maple League Governing Board, along with the selection committee for the new Maple League leadership team, have done a remarkable job ensuring we are positioned to lead conversations around high quality undergraduate education for many years to come.

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

**I. Extraordinary Student Experiences**

**OLTC Program Gets National Recognition in *University Affairs***

On March 8th, a features article about the Online Learning & Technology Consultant program was published by *University Affairs*. Shannon McGowan’s article gives an overview of our award-winning program, from its inception to now, with a focus on the Students as Partners (SaP) model that makes it so successful.



The feature includes thoughts from OLTC Sonoma Brawley, as well as the program’s co-founder, Dr. Jessica Riddell. McGowan

also provides an overview of SaP across Canadian institutions, demonstrating that while the OLTC program made a big splash during COVID, a similar sentiment for including students in classroom design is being felt all over the country.

We are grateful to Ms. McGowan and *University Affair* for putting on a spotlight on our ever-growing program. The full article can be found in the appendix section.

“I felt nothing but equal respect between the professor and us as students ... I think the great thing about this program is that we are really redesigning and reimagining the postsecondary education system by bringing students into the conversation.”

~ Sonoma Brawley, OLTC at Bishop’s University

### **OLTC Program Granted \$100,000 by CEWIL for Spring Course**

We are thrilled to announce that Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Canada (CEWIL Canada) has granted \$100,000 towards our spring intensive course UNI299: Designing 21st Century Classrooms in Higher Education. This money will support up to 50 students in the course and automatically include a tuition bursary and technology bursary to help bridge the technological divide. The course will run from 9 am - 5 pm daily for two weeks (May 8-19) and be open to all students across the Maple League. During synchronous modules, students will receive crash courses in tech (mainly the Learning Management System Moodle), EDID, and innovative pedagogical practices that will be implemented in real Bishop's courses. These courses, created by UNI299's students in partnership with Faculty Member Mentors (FMMs), will be a capstone project that will serve as the courses final exam. Following the course, students are invited to apply as OLTCs to support Maple League faculty during the 2023-24 school year.

Thank you, CEWIL, for investing in this Students as Partners (SaP) initiative!

### **ENG225: Shakesperience Granted \$50,000 by CEWIL**

The OLTC Program is not the only Maple League initiative being supported by CEWIL this season. We are grateful to also be receiving \$50,000 for Bishop's extremely popular course Shakesperience – an experiential learning opportunity that brings current Maple League students (and students of life) to the Stratford Festival in Ontario for a week of live theatre, behind the scenes access, and more! Thanks to this funding, all students will receive bursaries to cover their stays in Stratford, as well as their travel to and from the festival. We can't wait to discuss patronage of the arts with our students in person thanks to our very own patron, CEWIL!

“Shakesperience allowed me to explore theatre ... and to broaden my understanding of how the arts function in the workforce. It has taught me that Shakespeare is all around us and how important it is to remain curious as adults. Take Shakesperience as a way to rediscover yourself as a student and as a person, once you have come back home you won't even recognize yourself.”

*~ Anonymous student testimonial from Shakesperience 2022*

**SHAKESPERIENCE 2023**  
JUNE 26 - JULY 1

**6-DAY IMMERSIVE COURSE (3 CREDITS)**

- 5 Plays
- Backstage Tours
- Post-Show Chats
- Workshops
- Final Banquet

*Stratford Festival*

- King Lear
- Richard II
- Much Ado About Nothing
- Spamalot (inspired by Monty Python)
- Rent

MAPLE LEAGUE of UNIVERSITIES | A MAPLE LEAGUE SUPPORTED INITIATIVE

**ENG225**  
REGISTER BEFORE  
APRIL 10, 2023

### **Inaugural Maple League Connection Series Brings MTA's Dr. James Devine to BU**

As a Professor in Politics and International studies, I teach on current events in the political and security realm as part of my International relations courses, peacekeeping honours seminar and United Nations Practicum. As I am preparing for my courses, I was impressed that so many experts and specialists of security and defense issues are also faculty in Maple League universities. So many I wish I could invite on Bishop's campus to speak to the students and share their work and publications.

The ML Research committee and the ML Academic committee are working towards reinforcing institutional bridges through common research projects and shared courses to tap into the fact that these experts are all part of the same league.

This year, we created a new one: The Maple League Connection Series.



“This represents a “first step” , an entry point, a first connection opportunity between faculty and for faculty and students to familiarize one another with research expertise and teaching styles. These events are meant to open ways for more collaboration whether in the research or teaching realm, or both.

This First ML Connection Series is meant to act as a catalyst for longer term projects between ML institutions, faculty and students!”

### **A Second Cohort Prepares To Connect Nation To Nation**

With funding from the Global Skills Opportunity grant the team of Maple League International Liaisons have recruited and organized the group of 18 students from across the 4 Maple League Universities to participate in the program *Nation to Nation: Building Indigenous Knowledge Across International Borders*. This second cohort will be travelling to Belize in early May with the support of Genner Llanes-Ortiz (Bishop’s) as the Indigenous Faculty Supervisor, Krista Hanscomb (Coady Institute - StFX) as the Indigenous Support Member for the group, and the Administrative Support Faculty, Juan Carlos López (Acadia).

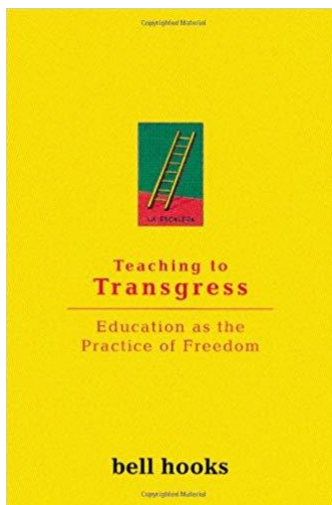
Throughout the semester, participants have met each other online and also interacted with the Belize support team from Galen University, Sherry Gibbs and Sylvia Batty. The entire group will meet in person in the pre-departure gathering hosted at Mount Allison on May 3-5. All pre-departure events are aimed at creating relationship and a strong sense of community in the



travelling cohort as they bring and reflect upon their own experiences in an intercultural visit where they will interact and learn from Yucatec, Mopan, Garinagu and K'ekchi cultures of Belize.

## II. Faculty and Staff Engagement

### Teaching to Transgress is a Catalyst for Vital Conversations



The Maple League Book Club's winter-term reading of bell hooks' *Teaching to Transgress* has been a great success. Working in four sections, 76 registrants from across the Maple League and from 9 colleges and universities external to the four universities have been diving deep into this classic pedagogical text. Conversations have been vulnerable, honest, and energized, and participants have been sharing thoughts, strategies, and resources for improving how we care for and teach all our students. As has become a tradition, we have assembled a collection of resources that our readers have shared with one-another, which is [available here](#).

A telling statistic is that 67% of Book Club registrants this term are returning after having taken part in a previous Book Club. This shows that we have struck a balance between being a welcoming community that people want to return to, and that we are continuing our outreach to ensure that we are bringing new voices into the conversation too!

Voting is open now to pick the book for our upcoming Summer Book Club - we hope that you'll take part in helping us select the subject of our next book club adventure by [clicking here](#).

“To engage in dialogue is one of the simplest ways we can begin as teachers, scholars, and critical thinkers to cross boundaries, the barriers that may or may not be erected by race, gender, class, professional standing, and a host of other differences.”

~ bell hooks in *Teaching to Transgress*

## Record-Breaking Winter Better Together Season Reaches Farther Than Ever

With two sessions yet to happen, the Winter Better Together season has already broken records. We have had just shy of 1000 registrants across five sessions. This represents over 800 unique visitors from across the Maple League, and from 300+ outside institutions. Asynchronous connection with our sessions has also grown, with over 2300 views on our YouTube channel this quarter.



Better Together continues to put the Maple League on the world stage as a leader in innovative pedagogy and teaching leadership. We're excited for a soon-to-be-announced mini season of sessions coming this spring!

I am so thankful for such high-quality and timely learning sessions. The sessions are my favorite learning tool. Thank you for all of your hard work!

~ Anonymous Better Together Survey Respondent

### Micro-Certificate in Teaching and Learning Knits Together a Cross-Campus Community

Since September, the 22/23 Cohort of the Micro-Certificate in Teaching and Learning has been meeting in monthly ateliers, attending Better Together sessions, taking part in the Maple League Book Club and engaging in critical self-reflection. This community has been a source for support, brainstorming, and problem-solving throughout the Fall and Winter Terms, and we are preparing for an in-person retreat at Mount Allison, where the cohort will come together for three days of workshops.

The Micro-Certificate serves as a model for finding efficient solutions to many new challenges faced by universities. For example, as many universities are putting more and more weight on teaching dossiers for tenure and promotion, a small sub-group within the Micro-Certificate cohort are working together, with the leadership of their mentor Dr. Jessica Riddell, to develop (and redevelop) their teaching dossiers together. This small-group, co-mentorship model has led to deeper reflections, and clearer storytelling within the dossiers developed by this group than any of them could have accomplished on their own, even with one-on-one mentorship.



The Micro Certificate cohort have collectively spent hundreds of hours in workshops and ateliers, and have written thousands of words of critical self-reflection. Preparations are being made for a three-day intensive retreat, to be held at Mount Allison on June 7th-9th which promises to be a career-defining moment for these intrepid educators.

### III. External Engagement

#### University Affairs Highlights the OLTC Program

In [an article this March](#), University Affairs magazine opened and closed an article about Students as Partners (SaP) by highlighting the OLTC program's successes over the past three years. With quotations from Maple League Executive Director Jessica Riddell, Mount Allison's Director of the Purdy Crawford Teaching Centre, Toni Roberts (who also chairs the Maple League Teaching and Learning Committee) and BU Undergrad (and current OLTC member) Sonoma Brawley, this article continues to position the Maple League as national leaders in creating 21st century education.

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## Maple League Hosts Welcomes ISSOTL President Dr. Raj Chaudhury

A special subsection of Better Together sessions, Maple League hosts brings in luminary thought-leaders from outside the Maple League to elevate our thinking and practice around teaching and learning.



We kicked off 2023 with an inspiring Maple League hosts session featuring Dr. Raj Chaudhury, Executive Director of the University of South Alabama's Innovation in Learning Centre, and the president of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL).

Dr. Chaudhury's session explored his experience of teaching in two far-flung disciplines, physics and classical Indian music, and how each has informed the teaching of the other.