

AACUSS Executive List 2005-2006

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Executive Committee

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AACUSS TALKS

Fall 2005

Winter
Workshop
2005

Staying Power -
Growth and Student Retention
February 2nd & 3rd, 2006
NSCC- Annapolis Valley Campus
(Middleton, NS)

You are invited to attend the AACUSS Winter Workshop 2006 which is hosted by the Nova Scotia Community College - Annapolis Valley Campus & Centre of Geographic Sciences (COGS), Middleton, NS.



Post secondary institutions continue to face critical challenges related to student retention. Student growth and retention is everyone's business. There are a number of reasons why students leave school. Some of these factors include academic difficulty, adjustment problems, lack of clear academic and career goals, uncertainty, lack of commitment, poor integration with the institution, and isolation. Understanding the factors that influence retention and developing effective strategies to reduce attrition needs to be a critical focus for all student services professionals.

This is a great opportunity to network with other colleagues to explore student retention strategies and issues at other post secondary institutions. Our goal is to build relationships and encourage a high degree of interaction between conference participants. For updated information please visit the AACUSS website www.aacuss.ca. Fees and registration forms will be available on the AACUSS website by October 21, 2005 or contact bilynda.whiting@nscc.ca.

Winter Workshop 2006 Objectives

- Highlight emerging trends and policy issues in higher education that impact retention and graduation efforts at colleges and universities such as: Beyond the First Year, Transfers, Special Population, Special Needs, International Students, Retention Theory, etc.
- Highlight successful, effective programs and retention strategies implemented by member institutions and partners
- Promote opportunities for dialog, networking, and shared understanding between AACUSS members
- Identify useful research resources for addressing the entire retention life cycle



Centre of
Geographic Sciences



EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the Fall edition of AACUSS Talks. Thank you for all of your wonderful feedback on the last issue. As some of you may have noticed, there have been a few additions to the newsletter: Two Cents Worth and the Editorial Comment. I invite readers to respond to the Editorial Comment in "Letters to the Editor", the newest addition. Why not generate discussion around some of the hot topics, and debatable issues within our profession? If you see something that you have an opinion on, a response to, or a side that was not yet presented, write it down and send it in. Let us share with our colleagues and friends and learn from one another.

Keep writing! Oonagh Holmes, Editor

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Renew your AACUSS Membership
By going to
www.aacuss.ca
To get a Membership Form
Ask a colleague to join too!

Winter Workshop 2006 Call for Presentations Best Practices

This year the AACUSS Winter Workshop is hosted by the Nova Scotia Community College - Annapolis Valley Campus & the Centre of Geographic Science (COGS), Middleton, NS. The theme is "Staying Power - Growth and Student Retention". The goal of the conference is to highlight strategies related to student retention within post secondary environments. The dates of the Winter Workshop are February 2nd & 3rd, 2006.

The Winter Workshop will provide an opportunity for student services professionals to showcase research, best practices and programs/presentations revolving around student retention strategies. Concurrent Program Sessions will be approximately 90 minutes in length. If you are interested in presenting and/or have a program/idea you would like to present related to student retention at your institution please send me an outline highlighting what you would like to present. You can send it to bilynda.whiting@nscc.ca or by fax 902-825-3359 The deadline is **December 16, 2005**.



**Centre of
Geographic Sciences**

MEMBERSHIP REVIEW

Recently Bob Gibson sent out an email with an attachment: *Report on Sustaining the Membership and Growing the Organization*. Bob has asked the AACUSS Membership for input and suggestions for reassessing our membership in terms of divisions, eligibility of membership, bilingual services, and committee structure. Please have a look and send comments to bgibson@upe.ca

Professional Development Extraordinaire cont.

2-hour learning session that evening. For the next four days we had morning, afternoon and evening sessions for nine hours per day. On Tuesday we had the afternoon off to walk the Trans-Canada Trail into the village of Tatamagouche, or swim at a nearby beach. We made up for this 'slack time' the next night when many 'small groups' burned the midnight oil to prepare for their 'big presentations' on Thursday. By Friday morning –after a night of the singlemost fun party I have ever been to in my whole life – the 25 learner/participants could not believe how much we had learned from each other and from the engaging/challenging exercises we had been through.

The Tatamagouche model was actually far less innovative than I had expected. Simply stated, the model is "assess...set objectives...plan the design...execute the design...allow for reflection...evaluate." Are you wondering how we spent a week on that? Well, the Tatamagouche training involves "toss-you-into-the-deep-end" immersion in this model! Each of the six steps contains scores of points to consider and difficulties to overcome. Particular emphasis is placed on the reflection stage i.e. the "so what? How will our workshops affect these participants in the future?"

By the end of the week each participant had worked in a small group with every other participant – great for developing co-facilitation skills! We had designed and led four different training sessions, each increasing in length and complexity, and countless times had been 'guinea pig' students for our peers. We learned – sometimes the hard way – about adult learning principles, team building, games, breathing and stretching, giving feedback, group development, differences, and resistance. Every one of us had our eyes opened to something new within ourselves or within groups.

Speaking personally, I was blown away by the sheer number of creative exercises that were offered. I am an energetic 'ideas' person who gets a thrill from trying new fun things, but by the end of this week I was begging (jokingly) for the innovative learning activities to stop! This alone was 'worth the price of admission'. I also expected to go to Tatamagouche to be engaged with my mind only. To my surprise, I left there having somehow learned and changed within what we refer to as 'heart' or 'spirit'. How did they do that? I don't know. Groups can be pretty spiritual, I guess, or maybe it's the place, the beautiful, restful Tatamagouche Retreat Centre. Certainly the leaders, staff and amenities could not have been more dedicated to our comfort and growth.

There is a 'labyrinth' at the Tatmagouche Centre – an elaborate path in the grass that, when followed, walks you gradually into the middle of, then gradually out, of a vast circle. The week of the Education Design and Leadership course was much the same – intriguing, engaging, surprising, renewing. I hope I have inspired you, fellow educators, to look into and consider taking this training for yourself. You will find more information at <www.tatacentre.ca>. I can be reached at ktrotter@mta.ca.

Check out the AACUSS Website www.aacuss.ca

There you will find:

- About AACUSS (Missions and Values, Constitution and History, Current Executive)
- Membership Services (Current members, How to become a member, member highlights, etc.)
 - Events and Information
 - Previous issues of AACUSS Talks
 - Contact Information
 - Some of our rich history
- Employment Opportunities in Student Services

Web Liaison: Tracy Price (UNB Fredricton) pricet@unb.ca

Editorial Comment Cont.

most have grown accustomed to allowed that different members of AACUSS did different things. A member at large system of representation would, among other things, imply that AACUSS is more about what we all do in common. How will we handle this grouping together if it comes to pass? Will executive structure have no impact on members' participation as people continue to informally congregate by area of interest? Will particular aspects of student services come to dominate the discussion (we counsellors have always wanted to rule the world, you know)? I ask these questions not to oppose the proposed changes - this would not be the venue for such a venture - but rather because I hope that by addressing the questions we can help AACUSS become a focal point for what all of us have in common as student services professionals.

So, who do you work for? Go ahead, answer the question. Talk with your colleagues; send a comment to the AACUSS listserv. Oonagh tells me she'd like to start a 'letters to the editor' section - write Oonagh and tell her who you work for. Maybe I'm too anxious to find controversy or tension, but, as *the new guy*, I think I already saw tension at the workshops. Now I'm not saying that tension is a bad thing. Quite the contrary, it is through tension, disagreement, differences of opinion being voiced that we challenge ourselves about our own beliefs and grow as individuals, as an organization, as a profession. But that growth is a lot tougher to experience and tougher to share if we don't speak up in the first place. The tension already exists; let's talk about it. Who do you work for?

Please note: The views expressed in this column are in no way representative of the AACUSS association, its sponsors, and other organizations related to it, the institutional memberships, or anyone else!

Professional Development Extraordinaire

by Kris Trotter, Personal Counsellor, Mount Allison University

Did you ever go to summer camp? Did you ever want to? I know a way that you can experience summer camp as an adult - after all, they say it's never too late to have a happy childhood. You'll make new friends, stretch beyond your previous comfort zones, get mosquito bites, swim and canoe, watch bald eagles soar, sing the 'Waddaly-atcha' song complete with difficult hand gestures, and learn hundreds of new skills! Yes, all this, and your school might pay for you to attend! Why would they do that? Because I'm talking about the acclaimed week-long "Tatamagouche Model of Education Design and Leadership" program offered by the Tatamagouche Centre of (you guessed it) Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia.

I first heard of this program when I attended a training session on "Multiculturalism in the Classroom" put on by Darren Brown. I consider myself a pretty good presenter/trainer/facilitator but Darren accomplished things in that session that I always struggle with: staying bang-on-time with each exercise, for instance, and generating animated discussion in small groups despite a very mixed audience. After the session I approached Darren to express admiration for his skills, sharing that I wish I knew how he did it. "If you take the Tatamagouche facilitator's course you will definitely learn how!" Darren enthused. I was intrigued!

Unfortunately the course costs \$555, steep for my professional development budget (although more-than-reasonable when you calculate that this includes hearty home-cooked meals and comfortable lodging for six days, as well as tutelage by three knowledgeable facilitators). It also takes place during the third week of August, when we at Mount Allison are up to our eyes preparing for the arrival of students. Despite these obstacles, when I received the new 'course calendar' from the Tatamagouche Centre in December 2004 I vowed I would attend the Education Design and Leadership course in August '05, 'come hell or high water'. I overcame the obstacles simply by being super-organized with my preparations for September prior to the week away, and by being prepared to pay the cost out of my own pocket if necessary. (In the end the Purdy Crawford Teaching Centre at Mount Allison covered half of my tuition, for which I am grateful.)

Lest my opening paragraph give you the impression that this week was all play-play-play, I assure you that it was plenty of roll-up-your-sleeves participatory learning/work, too. We arrived on Sunday at suppertime and had our first

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Meet James Reddin Yet Another New Member of Your Executive Committee Counselling Divisional Representative

Oonagh would like all AACUSS members to get a chance to know their executive and asked me for a bio for this edition of the newsletter. First fact: one of my favourite authors is J.D. Salinger; in his dedication for *Franny and Zee*, he says, "as nearly as possible in the spirit of Matthew Salinger, age one, urging a luncheon companion to accept a cool lima bean, I urge my editor. . . to accept this pretty skimpy-looking book." I think it is safe to feel more humble than J.D. about my writing, but hope that the reader, and my editor, will accept this in all its *skimpy-lookingness*.

I grew up in the Saguenay region of Quebec, a couple of hours north of Quebec City to what in the heyday of Quebec separatism was a mixed family - my father was from PEI and spoke English while my mother had been born in the Saguenay and spoke French. Compared to what some of the students we all work with have been through, life was good, but as a five year old getting dirty looks from people for speaking English with my dad I learned about being part of a minority and feeling like I didn't belong.

This didn't seem like it would be a significant part of my life as from grade two on I knew I'd grow up to be a physicist (for those who think this is little specific for a seven year old - I've got drawings to prove it). Fast forward to 1989 and I'm studying aerospace engineering at Carleton University and subsidizing my summer income by working as a Residence Fellow (most universities call them RA's or RLA's or Residence Dons, you get the point). Not being the most astute person, apparently, it isn't until my fourth year that I realize I'm not enjoying the engineering, but am enjoying the peer counselling work. In January 1993, I drop out of engineering and work for 9 months as an office temp before starting my studies in psychology at Carleton.



While working on my B.A. in Psychology and subsequently my M.Ed. in counselling, I work for a software development firm - first developing in-house applications for the accounting department and then as a junior developer. It pays the bills while I finish my M.Ed. at the University of Ottawa and complete a year-long, life-changing practicum with Counselling and Student Life Services at Carleton University. An amazing year ended with a difficult choice - I had to choose between joining my computer colleagues in a new startup that would see me own a share of the business, stick with my degree in Ottawa and get survival wages doing front-line youth work, or move North and work in post-secondary education.

Four years of living in Fort Nelson, BC (about 100 km shy of the Northwest Territories) I learned a lot about dealing with people who didn't come from my middle class, academic background, I had the good fortune to be invited into very fulfilling work with a number of First Nations' communities, and got involved in every initiative a town of 4000 people a 12-hour drive from the nearest city can offer. I continued to learn about the politics of education in my involvement as Vice President of the BC College and Institute Counsellors Association.

With two kids rounding out our family, my wife and I decided to move back eastward to be closer to family. Trying to find my feet in PEI I've worked in the provincial mental health system as a therapist, as a family therapist for a local non-profit group and finally

landed back in a post-secondary setting. In addition to the therapeutic side of the job, I enjoy working collaboratively with other professionals and when I have the time, the science geek in me loves to be involved in research. My hiring at UPEI was based in part on the need to provide culturally sensitive counselling services to our international students and it seems that many cultural diversity concerns have also found their way to my office - I love it.

In my distressingly sparse spare time, I run, lift weights, play basketball, paint watercolours and brew beer. That's most of me and yet nothing of me at the same time. If you'd like to know me, invite me out for a pint next time we have the chance and we can actually meet. I'd like that a lot. Comments regarding this short story can be directed to the author, James Reddin, at (902) 566-6067, by email at jaredin@upe.ca, or on MSN as james_reddin@hotmail.com.



Mount Allison University Hosts its 3rd Annual 12 Hour "Relay for Life"

Submitted by: Cindy Crossman, Nurse/Educator, Student Health Centre

This year is Mount Allison's 3rd consecutive year hosting the 12-hour "Relay for Life". Mount Allison University is the first in eastern Canada, and one of the first Universities in Canada, to host this event on campus. The "Relay for Life" involves teams of about 10 people each taking turns walking the track at Mount Allison University over a 12-hour period. The date for the event this year is Friday, October 14th (7 p.m. to 7 a.m.). The reason that the event is throughout the night, instead of during the day, is simple-cancer never sleeps, so why should participants? The event kicks off with hundreds of candles lighting the Relay course to honor cancer survivors and victims alike, and plenty of food and entertainment to help participants reach the 12th hour stretch. The "Relay for Life" at Mount Allison University is an event that focuses as much on health awareness as fundraising. Last year's student organizer commented that, "this event puts an emphasis on cancer, and not fundraising for cancer".

During the 12 hours, there is an opportunity to facilitate many innovative ways to help raise awareness for cancer prevention. At 6 p.m., a Survivors Reception is planned prior to the 7 p.m. relay start. Cancer survivors complete the first lap around the track and this Survivors' Victory Lap is also about giving people hope. This touching launch will be a precursor to another highlight of the night, the lighting of hundreds of candles that will trace the figure-eight Relay course.

One of the roles of the Nurse/Educator on campus is to provide health awareness, outreach opportunities. Proper warm ups are completed by the participants prior to the start of the Relay. Along the course of the Relay, there are healthy snacks and recipes; and trivia games such as cancer questions and answers affiliated with healthy food rewards. In addition, anyone seeking information on healthy living, measures to prevent cancer, and the recognizable signs of the disease, is advised to stop by the Smart Shop tent (health education component of the Relay). In the Smart Shop tent, the Nurse/Educator answers questions, explains the techniques of self-examinations, shows health demonstrations, and provides resource materials from the Canadian Cancer society. Also available in the Smart Shop tent are healthy snacks such as bags of popcorn (with cancer statistics written on the bags), samples of sunscreen packets, and educational videos on health topics.

During the first year, University students and the Health Centre on campus organized the event. Over the past two years, a partnership was established with the town of Sackville to broaden the event. This event on the whole, promotes health awareness and encourages people to take an active role in their own health choices. We hope that the event makes people more aware of how huge an impact cancer has had on so many people. Part of Mount Allison University's mission states; "...Our teaching, research and creative enterprise are combined with extracurricular activities, in a liberal education tradition, that emphasizes development of the whole person..." This Relay allows us another way to integrate the importance of health awareness to Mount Allison University students and to the local community.



Two Cents Worth

Take a minute or two to share a tidbit with your colleagues

Call for Portfolio Information

Jane MacDonald, Manager of the StFX Centre for Student Employment is currently conducting an inquiry into portfolio learning at universities and workplaces in Atlantic Canada. Career portfolios have emerged in post-secondary institutions and organizational workplaces as a means for determining one's skills and competencies. As a career-planning tool, the portfolio can be used for all phases of career development and decision making for students, workers, or adults in career transition. The portfolio process enables self-discovery and self-evaluation, and assists the learner to identify generic skills which can be used in the world of work.

It is the intent of this study to examine the role of portfolios in the recruitment and retention of new graduates in the workplace. More specifically, Jane will investigate:

- whether a new graduate with a portfolio who is hired at an organization is a better 'fit' within the organization
- whether the organization uses portfolios to track or determine an employee's potential.

In post-secondary institutions, we need to foster student success in the transition from school to work. Portfolios are one tool that can assist with this transition. Further research and discussion may expand and develop the use of career portfolios in recruitment and retention of new graduates in organizations. Identifying these links could enable organizations currently utilizing career portfolios in their teaching strategies to further promote the outcomes of developing a career portfolio. In turn, it could foster a better understanding for the need of post-secondary institutions to assist students with their transition from school to work.

Invitation to Participate: Jane is currently looking for University senior administration and career centre participation. If you would like to participate in the research, please contact Jane MacDonald at 902-867-2442, jsmacdon@stfx.ca



Housing Support for Single Parent Families at Acadia University

Submitted by
Scott Robinson

On September 15, 2005, David Morse, Minister of Community Services, and Scott Brison, Federal Minister of Public Works and Government Services, announced affordable housing projects that include a student housing pilot program for single-parent families attending Acadia University. The affordable rental housing is being developed under the Canada-Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Program Agreement.

Five of the units will be designated for single parent students. Two of the units are located on the Acadia campus and are available immediately. Single parents currently enrolled in full time study at Acadia and in receipt of a student loan are eligible to apply and may qualify for these affordable units. Students apply to the Annapolis Valley Housing Authority and if they are eligible the housing costs are subsidized by the housing authority and Acadia University through bursary support.

This program makes family housing cost about the same as the average single student sharing off campus accommodations in Wolfville. This project is a response to the issues raised last year regarding university students not being able to receive funding through community services while attending a university.

Who's Who and What's New? At UNB SJ

Meet UNB Saint Johns' Nurse Educator

Terry-Lynne King is a UNB Saint John alumnus from the Bachelor of Nursing Program.

Her career includes nursing experiences ranging from Neurological Nursing, Gerontological Nursing, and Public Health Nursing with emphasis on health promotion and disease prevention.

She also has experience in the area of co-ordinating and maintaining infection control in long-term care, health and safety, and sexual health.

UNB Saint John Student Health Centre

UNB Saint John's Student Health Centre is now open and has been servicing students since June of this year. Student Services was pleased to see the service being used in moderate numbers over the summer. We are happy to say that since the beginning of this academic year UNB Saint John students accessing the Student Health Centre has definitely exceeded our expectations.

Some ongoing projects for this year include Immunization Clinics for Influenza Vaccinations for students, faculty and staff; National Food Safety Campaign; Wellness seminars and Feeling Healthy workshops for ESL students.

UNB Saint John Student Services invites you to visit the Student Health Centre's website at <http://www.unbsj.ca/student-services/healthcentre/>



Letters to the Editor



Dear Editor:

I enjoyed the article on international students: Cash and Carry? As international numbers increase and internationalization becomes a mandate of most post-secondary institutions, attention must be paid to the operational budget support for these students. The expectation of international students is that they should be receiving excellent service and support due to the amount of differential fees they pay. The reality of many of the service providers is that they must annually provide a high level of service with the same budget designated year after year. The pressure of providing quality services with limited resources is an issue facing so many institutions. We must all ensure we lobby for adequate budgets to support the work we are being asked to do. This includes campus funding for professional development, attendance at National conferences, surveys of international student support needs, and operational and service costs. Internationalization does not come without a price tag and we have the responsibility of bringing that to the attention of the policy makers and budget allocators.

Julie Snair, International Student Advisor
Acadia University

Who's Who and What's New? At St. Thomas

The Student Affairs Office at St. Thomas has seen a lot of changes this past year and we'd LOVE to share them with you!! We realize that as we have seen people come and go that our AACUSS colleagues may not be on "the up and up" about "who's who" here at STU.

Jane McGinn-Giberson is our Director of Student Affairs. Jane's responsibilities include overseeing all of the Student Affairs Staff, as well as Athletics Department, Drama and Music programs. jmcginn@stu.ca

Shelley Rolland is our Coordinator of Residence Affairs. Shelley's responsibilities include everything residence! In particular she manages and supervises all of the Residence Life Staff and House Committees, administers all residence programming and initiatives as well as oversees all 800 residence students.

srolland@stu.ca

Marina Nedeshkivska is our Coordinator of Student Accessibility. Marina's responsibilities include supporting and overseeing our students with disabilities.

marina@stu.ca

Judy Coates is our International Student Advisor. Judy's responsibilities include supporting all of our International Students. Judy is also responsible for working with STUISA, our International Students Association.

judy@stu.ca

There are three Academic Advisors here in the Student Affairs Office as well. Our Academic Advisors meet with students regarding academic concerns. They are responsible for planning and implementing workshops as well as oversee the Writing Service, Student Tutors and Exchanges.

Marla Dagnone

dagnone@stu.ca

Shauna Foote

shaunas@stu.ca

Patrick Toner

tonerp@stu.ca



From left to right are: Susan Sears, Marla Dagnone, Jane McGinn, Shauna Foote, Shelley Rolland and Judy Coates.

The Student Affairs Office is also supported by two administrative staff. Susan Sears is our Office Coordinator (sears@stu.ca) and Becky Soffee (beckys@stu.ca) is our Office Assistant.

Please don't hesitate to contact our office with questions. For more information about St. Thomas University, please visit our new website at www.stu.ca.

Top five things you probably didn't know about St. Thomas....

5. After a decade of significant growth, St. Thomas has maintained an enrolment of 2800 for several years. We feel this is just the right size for us and our students!
4. St. Thomas was founded in Chatham NB in 1910, and moved its campus to Fredericton NB in 1964.
3. St. Thomas' journalism program is unique in that the University is partnered with the CBC and allows students an opportunity to learn in a hands-on journalism setting.
2. St. Thomas was one of the first Universities to offer programs in Criminology and Human Rights
1. Despite what you may think, St. Thomas is NOT a part of UNB and is a completely separate institution!! If we weren't separate and distinct universities, we wouldn't be able to be pitted against one another in the upcoming La Tomatina (squished tomato fight) on October 22nd!