Mobile learning:

Algonquin College teams with Adobe to expand software access

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Cover photo courtesy of Fleming College.

Rick Helman
OCASA President

How do we create conditions in which students thrive?

Welcome to the Fall 2011 edition of *College Administrator*. This is my first opportunity as President of OCASA to connect with members in print, and I'm excited to have this venue to do so.

We're well into the fall semester when this magazine goes to press, but I'm sure we all vividly recall a rather unusual and somewhat chaotic beginning to the academic year. It was a challenging couple of weeks while our support staff colleagues were out on picket lines. Experiences varied across the colleges. Clearly it was not business as usual, but the consensus is that, for the most part, we were able to minimize adverse effects on our students and get them off to a good start for the academic year.

Working through those difficult weeks gave many of us some insight into the way things work in areas of the college outside of our own particular bailiwick, and to work side by side with people we might otherwise engage with in limited contexts. It gave many of us an opportunity to appreciate the day-to-day professionalism required of staff, and to think about how we could better encourage faculty and support staff and faculty in daily interaction with students.

Two stories in this edition – Career Corner by Brian Desbiens, and Michelle Cole's article on encouraging student persistence – deal with this topic, and more will follow in the Spring 2012 edition. And to me it emphasized the importance of professional development, and how we create the conditions in which students thrive.

Professionalism is, of course, one of OCASA's core tenets, as is networking. OCASA membership and participation offer unique and valuable opportunities to build relationships and support systems across the college system, and from all walks of operational responsibility and expertise. See OCASA's website for details of the variety of professional development courses now offered online. And plans are under way for the 4th annual OCASA Professional Development Conference June 25-28 in Collingwood. Pencil that in your calendar and ink it in your budget.

A word about your new Board of Directors: there is a huge pool of energy, talent, and expertise among board members – we (and I) are fortunate to have their commitment and wisdom as we move forward. The board is absolutely committed to be strategic and focused, and to work to make OCASA even more relevant and essential.

And a final quick note about this issue – we have an outline on grant funding (a subject near and dear to my heart, or at least my brain); a digitizing story involving Algonquin College and Adobe (one of our valued partners at the 2011 PD Conference); and an article on a CMU-OCASA research paper. Read, enjoy, reflect – and if you have feedback and/or suggestions, we'd love to hear from you. C|A

> OCASA membership and participation offer unique and valuable opportunities to build relationships and support systems across the college system.

Rick Helman
Président de l'APACO

Votre adhésion et votre participation à l'APACO offrent des occasions uniques et précieuses qui facilitent l'établissement de relations professionnelles et de réseaux de soutien à travers le système collégiale.

Comment créer l'environnement nécessaire à la réussite de nos étudiants?

Bienvenue à l'édition de l'automne 2011 de votre magazine professionnel, *Administrateur de collège*. À titre de président de l'APACO, ceci est ma toute première occasion de communiquer par écrit avec tous les membres, et c'est un grand plaisir pour moi de me prévaloir de cette voie de communication pour le faire.

Aujourd'hui, nous avons les pieds fermement plantés dans le semestre de l'automne, mais je suis convaincu que nous nous souvenons tous du début d'année plutôt inhabituel et légèrement bouleversant. Nous avons vécu quelques semaines difficiles lorsque nos collègues du personnel de soutien s'affairaient aux lignes de piquetage. Les expériences variaient d'un collège à l'autre, mais nul ne peut réfuter qu'il ne s'agissait pas de nos quotidiennetés habituelles. Par ailleurs, nous sommes tous d'accord sur le fait que dans l'ensemble, nous avons réussi à atténuer tout effet néfaste sur les étudiants et à les guider vers un bon départ pour cette année scolaire.

Passer à travers ces semaines difficiles a nous a tous sensibilisés au fonctionnement des activités du collège qui se déroulent dans les départements autres que ceux nous étant propres. En outre, ce défi nous a donné l'occasion de travailler de plus près avec certains membres du personnel; des gens avec qui nous n'engagerions de collaboration que dans des contextes limités, et nous avons certainement pu apprécier le haut niveau de professionnalisme exigé de ces membres du personnel quotidiennement.

L'expérience nous porte à réfléchir sur la façon dont nous pourrions encourager le personnel de soutien et le corps enseignant davantage quant aux interactions avec les étudiants.

Ce sujet est traité dans deux des articles de cette édition – « Coin carrière » par Brian Desbiens et l'article de Michelle Cole sur l'encouragement de la persévérance des étudiants. D'autres articles seront inclus dans l'édition printanière 2012. Pour moi, ce sujet souligne l'importance du perfectionnement professionnel autant que celle liée à l'environnement que nous devons créer en vue de promouvoir la réussite des étudiants.

Tout comme le réseautage professionnel, le professionnalisme est l'un des principes de base de l'APACO. Votre adhésion et votre participation à l'APACO offrent des occasions uniques et précieuses qui facilitent l'établissement de relations professionnelles et de réseaux de soutien à travers le système collégiale entier et ce, avec des collègues chargés de diverses responsabilités opérationnelles et dans des domaines d'expertise variés.

Je vous invite à consulter le site Web de l'APACO pour vous renseigner davantage sur les programmes de perfectionnement professionnel maintenant offerts en ligne. En outre, les planifications sont déjà en œuvre pour la 4e conférence annuelle de l'APACO sur le perfectionnement professionnel prévue avoir lieu du 25 au 28 juin 2012, à Collingwood. Notez ces dates au calendrier provisoirement, mais prenez soin d'inclure son coût à vos planifications budgétaires de façon plus définitive.

Un mot sur votre nouveau Conseil d'administration : il existe parmi les membres du Conseil, un rassemblement incroyable d'énergie, de talent et d'expertise, et nous (surtout moi) sommes privilégiés de pouvoir bénéficier de la force de leur engagement et de la sagesse de leur expérience alors que nous progressons. Le Conseil tient absolument à démontrer ses compétences stratégiques et son engagement envers les objectifs de l'APACO, lesquels incluent accroître la sensibilisation des administrateurs de collèges à la pertinence et la valeur des activités de l'APACO.

Un dernier commentaire à vous faire part… cette édition offre un aperçu des subventions, un sujet que je tiens grandement à cœur (ou au moins que j'ai gravé dans mon cerveau); un article sur l'apprentissage numérique impliquant le collège Algonquin et la société Adobe (l'un de nos merveilleux partenaires à la conférence annuelle 2011 sur le perfectionnement professionnel); ainsi qu'un article sur un papier de recherche de l'APACO-CMU. Lisez le tout, appréciez-le, réfléchissez aux questions - et si vous avez des commentaires et/ou des suggestions, nous apprécierions bien les recevoir. c|a

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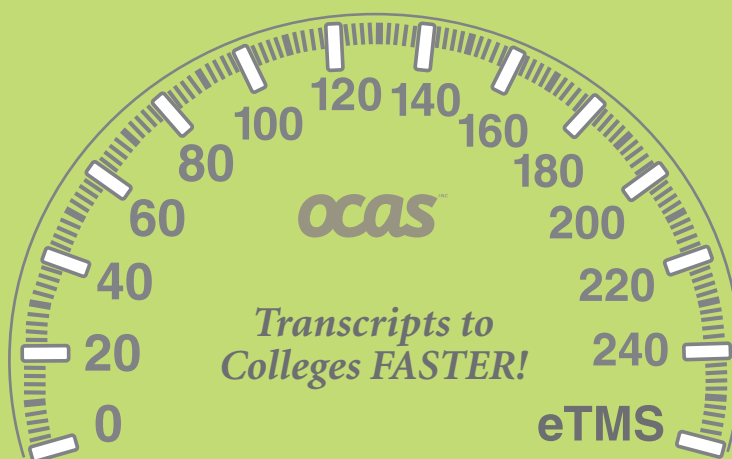
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WHAT HELPS STUDENTS?

Use of active learning and a positive classroom environment influence persistence

By Michelle Cole

Michelle Cole of Durham College received the Central Michigan University-OCASA award for outstanding research for her capstone paper entitled Student Perceptions of Faculty Classroom Practices that Influence Student Persistence. *Michelle is Executive Assistant to the Vice-President, Student Affairs, at Durham College. In this article she shares her insights gained in her research.*

With the colleges heavily involved in Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) planning, student engagement and retention initiatives are top of mind among administrators.

Year-round, staff and faculty assemble in various forums to discuss strategies to improve the student experience, and agree that the answers do not rest with only one college group or department. However, the research demonstrates that faculty plays a more important role than what was once believed.

My research study explored students' perspectives of classroom activities and faculty behaviours that contribute to their learning, academic success, and decisions to remain in college.

Key factors that contribute to a good classroom experience have always seemed obvious to me: respect for students, a passion for teaching, student motivation, and a busy and active class.

My own classroom experiences, as a mature student at Central Michigan University, were overall very positive. The professors kept us thinking about the subject matter through discussions, debates, and various group activities. We were given the opportunity and encouraged to talk about our own on-the-job and classroom experiences too. My professors used these types of active learning techniques to keep us thinking about the subject matter. They treated us with respect, were in a good humour, and enjoyed teaching.

Commonplace, right? Unfortunately, the literature says otherwise.

The literature

Amazingly, a great deal of literature, including *Taking Stock: Research on Teaching Higher Education* (2010) published by HEQCO, revealed that many college and university professors continue to use lecturing as their main form of teaching course content. Furthermore,

research conducted by Statistics Canada (2003) demonstrated that the most common reasons why students leave postsecondary education is a lack of fit in their area of study and not having enough interest or motivation in the course content. Studies clearly revealed that the use of active learning techniques increase students' engagement in classroom activities and thus increase the students' likelihood to persist in their educational endeavours.

My research study demonstrated that faculty play a significant role in the success of students. I discovered in my literature review and through discussions with students that teaching techniques, specifically the use of active learning, and the behaviours exhibited by faculty in the classroom, affect how students perceive not only the faculty but the institution as well. Students believe that faculty who use active learning techniques and who demonstrate a generally positive attitude toward their students are concerned about the students' academic success and overall well-being. This fosters loyalty toward the institution and enhances the students' commitment to his or her studies.

Active learning

When asked what I enjoyed most about my research, no doubt the opportunity to talk to students face-to-face about their classroom experiences stands out as the best part of the whole experience. They valued the opportunity to describe how their faculty made them feel, what helped them learn and enjoy going to class every day. In the end, I accomplished my goal, which was to find out what it is about their college professors that kept them wanting to go to class.

Colleges are proud to boast that their faculty bring years of field experience to the classroom and many of the student participants explained that relating personal experiences and telling stories often led to class participation that resulted in further discussions. Students said that when professors related their personal and professional experiences, it helped them to understand the concepts of the lessons better. One student said: "I like it when examples are based on relating personal experiences. It's very interesting to know about their work and
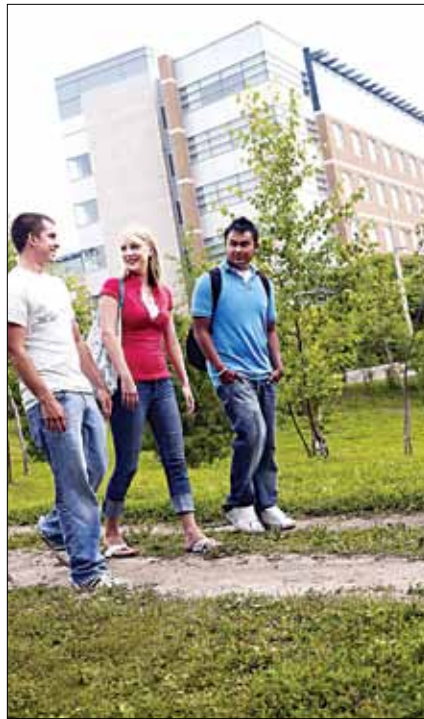

Photo courtesy Durham College

I memorize it better. If they link their experience to the topic, I memorize it for sure."

A journalism student who came to college after spending a year at university said that most of her university professors lectured endlessly and rarely engaged the students in any form of interactive exercises. "If I was in a classroom sitting there every week listening to my professors talk, it was like everything was going in one ear and out the other," she said. "I didn't get anything." She confessed that she would often skip those particular lectures and sometimes fell asleep in class. On the other hand, her college experience has been much more positive. She mentioned that for the most part her professors were very outgoing and interesting and said she really liked hearing about her teachers' time in the field. Those stories kept her interested in the subject and helped her grasp the course content.

The nursing and water quality students I talked to mentioned the importance of having quality time in the labs. They benefited from the practical, hands-on exercises that allowed them to practice what they talked about in class. The students liked having the materials

available to them before class. Students preferred to be prepared for class and said that having the assignments, PowerPoint slides, and professors' notes beforehand allowed them to focus more on what the professor was saying during class rather than having to take down copious notes. They also liked the use of technology-based learning tools. "The use of technology is huge," said one nursing student who really benefited from the audio lectures that were posted on WebCT. She said she would listen to the lectures repeatedly while she did other things around the house.

College professors who use lecture as their main teaching method have to step outside of their comfort zone and investigate how to incorporate active learning into their classrooms. There is an abundance of research demonstrating that active learning promotes deeper and more critical thinking and contributes to enhanced engagement. Although the preparation of active learning exercises may seem daunting, the benefits to the students are overwhelmingly positive and contribute significantly to their academic success and educational persistence.

Faculty have a unique opportunity to influence student persistence. The students I interviewed all agreed that they performed better academically, wanted to go to class and stay in school when they were engaged in their courses. They also said that when they were engaged, they participated in classroom activities, were more self-disciplined, focused, and passionate about the subjects.

Faculty behaviours

A smile and greeting a student by name can go a long way to creating a welcoming learning environment for students. The students told me that behaviours such as being happy, humourous, personable, and friendly were interpersonal qualities that kept them engaged in their studies and made them want to come to class. The students also said that behaviours such as professionalism, being well-prepared and organized for class, influenced their perceptions of the professors.

As college administrators, we can all appreciate the value of doing a job well. The students expect nothing less from their professors. One student said,

"Organization makes all the difference in the world. Personally, I feel I have a pretty high level of expectation from my own work and if they are setting expectations for us to have grammatically correct reports, correct spelling, correct layout, and on time – you expect that from me, then I expect that from you." I've heard that some professors feel that they need to entertain their students when in fact it's really about being a good teacher, a quality that all students value and admire.

Next steps

The students were clear about their classroom expectations. Teaching techniques and interpersonal behaviours contribute to the students' learning outcomes and influence the students' decision to remain in college. Students realize that the use of active learning techniques in the classroom, such as class discussions, and relating personal experiences, enhances the level of engagement in their studies, encourages them to continue attending and participating in class, and improves their ability to retain course content.

Students also value professors who are organized and prepared for lessons, and those who display positive attitudes in class. They recognize the value of good teaching and presentation skills. Students know when their professors are committed and when they are making an effort to deliver quality lessons. In return, students work and study harder, remain loyal and committed to the institution, and persist in their educational endeavours.

So, what can institutions do to promote good teaching?

First and foremost, we need to support, praise, and reward faculty who already exhibit good teaching practices. Faculty who have embraced active learning, who are effectively using the techniques as part of their regular methods of instruction and those who have created a positive classroom environment for their students should be acknowledged for their efforts and commitment.

Furthermore, institutional leadership and, more importantly, students, would benefit from incorporating the institution's commitment to good teaching into their hiring practices. Administrative leadership has an opportunity to influence future generations of students by providing faculty with the tools and training they need to incorporate active learning into the classroom and create a positive, stimulating classroom environment.

I will reiterate my earlier sentiment that the best part of doing this research project was talking to our students. The students' voice is so powerful. One summed it up this way: "Teachers breathe life into the courses they teach – but it is their choice to do so. My science teacher even said himself, 'it's worth seeing a light bulb turn on when a student understands something, and you can see it…it's very rewarding.' Teachers that motivate, praise, and keep a positive environment…there should be no reason to not want to attend class." **C|A**

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MOBILE LEARNING
Algonquin College teams with Adobe to expand software access

By Bill Swan, Contributing Editor

Once upon a time, and a long, long time ago it was, I was an academic director at what was then a small college. Like many of the time then and since, we had a computer problem: How do you provide computers and software to the flood of incoming students with rising expectations?

And worse: Since the field is moving so fast, how do you keep both the hardware and software up-to-date?

Our solution – in this long ago before-retirement past – was both expensive at the time and limited, even though both the Academic VP and I thought it elegant: We would outfit three labs with computers powered with Intel's 486 chip.

The college would then provide site licensing for word processing and spreadsheets, too.

For those who aren't familiar with the '90s, let me explain: the *i*486 computer came with 1 MB of memory and often was expanded to 4 MB and maybe 8 MB. For heavy use programs, the really, really expensive version came with 16 MB, or in extremes, 32 MB.

And that's no typo: MB, as in megabyte. This was less than 20 years ago, when one MB could cost a couple of hundred dollars.

Preparing staff to thrive in a connected and digital learning environment requires a continued focus on professional development.

Moore's law continued to gallop, and I write this article on a desktop with 4 G of memory, as in gigabytes, or 1,024 times the working memory – at about the same cost as my 1992 PC, without factoring in inflation.

Do the math: the computer power doubles every two years, just as Mr. Moore said it would.

We live in such heady times with such machines in it.

But all those advances have done little to change the basic problem still facing most colleges: how do you keep up with hardware and software? All those fabulous, new computers labs that academic, financial and IT departments worked so hard to push through the capital budget are going to be obsolete in two years, four at the most. What then?

And that's not counting the software dilemma: stay with the software you have, and it will be out of date. Update the software and it won't run on four-year-old computers.

Try surfing the Web on a 486 these days.

Today, of course, as many have observed, students walk through the door of the college with more computing power in their pockets than the best labs provided 20 years ago. With those smart phones, tablets and laptops come rising expectations.

The chase is on.

Most colleges have adapted by providing wireless environments. Some have offered laptop purchase plans.

Algonquin College has gone one step further with their Mobile Learning Project. This plan, which will be fully implemented by 2013, makes a bold move into a mandatory laptop program. All students in the program will be required to provide their own laptop computers.

"We found that 90 per cent of our students were entering college with a laptop or wireless capable mobile device and perhaps we were well past the tipping point in terms of incorporating the use of these devices into the learning environment," said Glenn MacDougall, Director, Learning & Teaching Services at Algonquin. This fall semester, 27 programs with more than 2,300 students were designated as mobile learning programs where students were required to provide their own laptops. By 2013 every program at the college will go mobile.

"A few years ago this would have been very difficult due to the cost of laptops,"

he said. "With the lower cost of laptops and the fact that these devices now rival desktops in terms of sheer computing power, this is no longer a problem; Algonquin recommends the specs of laptops required to utilize the software required for the program of study.

While this allows the college to get out from under the problem of providing hardware, students now enter with other expectations. Students take for granted that they will enter a wireless environment with the capacity to meet growing demands "and it is hard to stay ahead of the curve on that one," says MacDougall.

As well, the laptop program highlights another issue.

"It didn't make sense to ask students to then provide their own software," MacDougall told *College Administrator*. Not only would the costs be prohibitive, but each program has its own specific software demands. Consistency of software versions is not only a practical consideration, but also necessary for staff sanity.

To make the Mobile Learning Project functional, Algonquin developed a special arrangement with both Adobe and Microsoft to provide a combined package of software programs. Microsoft Office has become a standard tool for almost any program. Who, these days, does not use word processing, spreadsheets, and email?

More specialized is their arrangement with Adobe, which provides students full access to Adobe Creative Suite Master Collection, a package that includes Acrobat Pro, Premiere Elements, Photoshop or Photoshop Elements (depending on program requirements).

In this program, students have access to updates and training on the software. At the end of their college program, students retain the software as they emerge into the working world, complete with access to updates (by that time at their own cost.)

The ancillary fee the college charges to students: $150 a semester.

The program is part of Adobe's reach into the education sector, with special programs for JK-8, high schools, and postsecondary institutions. Jim Holscher, Adobe's Director of Education Sales for North America: "Our goal is to provide

digital tools that are not tied to specific platforms."

In an interview with *College Administrator*, Holscher said students enter college with smart phones, tablets, laptops and other devices, and Adobe provides the unifying factor – apps that run independently of platforms. This diversity "is the sweet spot for Adobe," he said.

The goal, he said, is to help build the

skilled work force needed in today's economy.

It's all part of re-defining literacy in today's world. "To be computer literate, one must know how to use a word-processing program, a spreadsheet program, a slide-presentation program," says Adobe in a promotional White Paper on Education.

There's more: "Individuals (must) understand the nature of images and

Photo courtesy Algonquin College

multimedia and comprehend how visual representations are created, produced, manipulated, and shared." In other words, literacy now includes *visual* literacy.

Adobe's foray into the area is evident at all levels and encourages active learning.

Holscher cites a program at Mother Theresa School in Ottawa, in which a group of Grade 9 students worked with a Grade 3 class on a game creation project. "The third grade students provided input on what the game should include," he said. "Using that information, the ninth graders developed the game."

And that's just the beginning. Holscher acknowledges that the work being done by Khan Academy, Ted Talks and Adobe is changing the way educators teach and students learn. And, says Holscher, Adobe makes the diversity of this educational revolution possible.

At Algonquin, MacDougall sees Adobe as an important part of the college's goal of providing 20 per cent of all courses to involve online learning activities, noting the learning succeeds when the student is engaged.

Will online learning become the norm? Partly, says MacDougall. Algonquin plans to shrink the computer labs – which now provide 2,500 workstations throughout the college – to about 400.

Some programs will always require access to high end computing facilities or complex or very expensive software packages. MacDougall says there will always be computer labs at the campus and of course many of programs involve a significant portion of applied learning activities so specialized labs with residential components will never disappear.

Preparing staff to thrive in a connected and digital learning environment requires a continued focus on professional development, and Algonquin continues to provide scheduled workshops, just in-time-training sessions and mentor-based assistance as required. In addition, most of the training and professional development materials are available online, including resources provided by Adobe.

But just as 486 PCs of 20 years ago were not the ultimate solution, no program has all the answers. Software and hardware change too rapidly, and in themselves are reshaping education itself.

Holscher looks down the road 10 to 15 years and sees digital textbooks, and the possibility that all this information will be available "in the cloud" – with access as students require it. And in his vision, Adobe will play a key role in this future.

Possible? Likely.

But even Moore's Law is predicted to run out of steam by 2015 – there have to be technical limits to everything. But even if all software and hardware development froze at today's level, finding new applications for what exists would likely carry us another decade.

In the meantime, don't undo your seat belts. C|A

APPRENTISSAGE MOBILE

Le collège Algonquin s'associe à Adobe en vue d'accroître l'accès au logiciel

Photo courtoisie de Collège Algonquin

Par Bill Swan
Conseiller de rédaction

Il était une fois et ce, dans un passé très lointain, je détenais le poste de directeur académique de ce qui était considéré un petit collège. Nous avions alors et avons eu à plusieurs reprises depuis, un problème informatique : Comment fournir des ordinateurs et des logiciels pour la foule d'étudiants qui arrivent munis d'attentes croissantes d'une année à l'autre?

Et le défi ne s'arrêtait pas là. Le domaine de la technologie évolue à une telle vitesse qu'il est pratiquement impossible d'à la fois maintenir la pertinence du matériel et des logiciels.

Dans ce « bon vieux temps » et tenant compte de l'économie de l'époque, notre solution était limitée autant qu'elle était dispendieuse, même si le vice-président académique et moi la croyions élégante : Équiper trois laboratoires d'informatique d'ordinateurs alimentés par un microprocesseur Intel 486.

Le collège se chargerait par la suite de fournir des licences d'utilisateurs pour les logiciels de traitement de texte, y compris les tableurs.

Pour ceux qui ne connaissent pas les années 90, permettez-moi d'expliquer :

les ordinateurs équipés d'un microprocesseur Intel 486 étaient munis d'un (1) mégaoctet de mémoire que l'on pouvait augmenter à 4 ou 8 mégaoctets (meg) de mémoire. Pour les logiciels en grande utilisation, la version incroyablement dispendieuse était munie de 16 meg ou, dans les cas extrêmes, de 32 meg.

Et ce n'est pas une faute de frappe : je veux bel et bien dire mégaoctet et ceci, il y a moins de 20 ans et alors qu'un (1) meg pouvait coûter quelques centaines de dollars.

La loi de Moore continue de s'appliquer. J'écris cet article en utilisant un ordinateur de bureau équipé de 4 gig de mémoire – et oui, c'est bien ça – 4 gigaoctets, ou 1 024 fois la mémoire d'auparavant, pour environ le même coût que mon ordinateur de 1992, sans tenir compte de l'inflation.

Faites le calcul : la puissance des ordinateurs double à chaque deux ans, tout comme M. Moore l'avait prédit. Nous vivons et faisons partie d'une époque de progrès technologique qui inclut de telles technologies.

Il est par ailleurs impossible d'ignorer que malgré tout ce progrès, un problème de base existe toujours pour la plupart des collèges : Comment s'assurer de la pertinence continue des ordinateurs et des logiciels? Tous ces fabuleux nouveaux laboratoires d'informatique sur lesquels les départements académiques, financiers et TI ont travaillé et poussé pour obtenir l'approbation budgétaire requise seront désuets d'ici deux ans, peut-être quatre au plus. Que ferons-nous à ce moment?

À ce problème, il faut ajouter le dilemme avec les logiciels : gardez le logiciel que vous avez, et il sera désuet en peu de temps; investissez dans la version la plus récente et celle-ci ne fonctionnera pas sur un ordinateur qui date de plus de quatre ans.

Essayez donc de naviguer le Web sur un 486 de nos jours.

Aujourd'hui, comme plusieurs le constatent, les étudiants arrivent à la porte des collèges avec plus de puissance informatique dans leurs poches que les meilleurs laboratoires d'il y a vingt ans. On ne peut réfuter que les téléphones intelligents, les tablettes électroniques et les ordinateurs

> Préparer le personnel à prospérer dans un environnement d'apprentissage connecté et numérique nécessite un accent continu sur le développement professionnel.

portables entraînent des attentes de plus en plus grandes.

Alors, la course démarre!

La plupart des collèges se sont adaptés en fournissant des environnements sans fil. Certains ont proposé des programmes d'achat pour ordinateurs portables. Le Collège Algonquin a franchi un seuil encore plus avancé avec leur projet d'apprentissage mobile. Ce dernier, étant introduit à titre de programme obligatoire et prévu être pleinement en œuvre d'ici l'an 2013, représente un pas légèrement audacieux : tous les étudiants du collège seront tenus de fournir leur propre ordinateur portable.

« Nous avons constaté que 90 % de nos étudiants entraient au collège avec un ordinateur portable ou autre appareil mobile sans fil en main et que nous étions possiblement au point de basculer l'équilibre quant à l'incorporation de ces appareils dans l'environnement d'apprentissage », déclarait M. Glenn MacDougall, directeur des services d'apprentissage et d'enseignement au collège Algonquin. Ce semestre automnal, plus de 2 300 étudiants se sont inscrits à des programmes d'études (27 programmes au total) désignés Programmes d'apprentissage mobile pour lesquels les étudiants sont tenus

de fournir leur propre ordinateur portable et d'ici 2013, tous les programmes d'études du collège seront désignés de même.

« Il y a quelques années, le coût des ordinateurs portables ne permettait pas l'introduction d'une telle pratique », ajoutait-il, « mais avec la baisse du coût de ces ordinateurs et la réalisation qu'ils sont maintenant de grands concurrents aux ordinateurs de bureau, quant à leur puissance, ceci n'est vraiment plus un problème ». Algonquin se charge de communiquer les spécifications nécessaires à l'utilisation du logiciel requis pour le programme d'études auquel l'étudiant est inscrit.

Les étudiants étant tenus d'avoir leur propre ordinateur élimine le problème d'avoir à fournir ce matériel pour le collège, mais ces étudiants entrent maintenant aux études avec de différentes attentes. Ils anticipent l'entrée dans un environnement informatique sans fil capable de répondre aux exigences d'utilisation qui ne cessent de changer, « et il est de plus en plus difficile de demeurer un pas en avant de ces attentes particulières », disait M. MacDougall.

La question touche également un autre enjeu lié aux ordinateurs portables.

« Il n'est nullement logique de demander aux étudiants de fournir leur propre logiciel dans tous les cas », indiquait M. MacDougall, à l'*ADMINISTRATEUR DE COLLÈGE*. Et ce n'est pas seulement une question de coûts prohibitifs, mais chaque programme d'études propose ses propres exigences de logiciel. La cohérence des versions du logiciel utilisé est une considération pratique autant qu'elle est nécessaire à la santé mentale du personnel ».

Pour mettre en œuvre le projet d'apprentissage mobile, Algonquin a conclu une entente avec Adobe et Microsoft ayant pour but de fournir un ensemble de logiciels pertinents. Microsoft Office est devenu un outil standard pour pratiquement tous les programmes d'études. Qui de nos jours n'utilise pas un logiciel de traitement de texte, un tableur et le courrier électronique?

L'entente avec Adobe s'avère plus

spécialisée, offrant aux étudiants un accès complet à Adobe Creative Suite Master Collection, un ensemble d'outils qui pourrait inclure Acrobat Pro, Premiere Elements, Photoshop ou Photoshop Elements, selon les exigences du programme d'études.

Le programme d'études offre une formation sur le logiciel et l'accès aux mises à jour pertinentes. Une fois le programme d'études collégiales terminé, les étudiants conservent le logiciel alors qu'ils émergent sur le marché du travail et toujours, avec l'accès aux mises à jour (à ce moment à leurs propres frais).

Les frais accessoires que le collège exige de l'étudiant : 150 $ par semestre.

Le programme fait partie de la portée d'Adobe dans le secteur de l'éducation, offrant des logiciels et programmes spéciaux pour les écoles primaires et secondaires ainsi que les établissements postsecondaires. M. Jim Holscher, directeur des ventes pour le secteur de l'éducation en Amérique du Nord précisait : « Notre objectif est de fournir des outils numériques qui ne sont pas liés à des plateformes ou environnements informatiques particuliers. »

Lors d'une entrevue pour l'Administrateur de collège, M. Holscher indiquait qu'effectivement, les étudiants entrent au collège avec des téléphones intelligents, des tablettes électroniques, des ordinateurs portables et autres appareils. Adobe fournit le facteur unificateur – des applications qui s'exécutent indépendamment des plateformes. Cette diversité « est l'atout d'Adobe » disait-il.

« L'objectif », précisait-il, « est d'aider à bâtir la main-d'œuvre compétente nécessaire à l'économie d'aujourd'hui ».

Tout cela fait partie de la restructuration de l'alphabétisation dans le monde d'aujourd'hui. « Pour devenir connaissant en informatique, il faut savoir comment utiliser un logiciel de traitement de texte, un tableur et un logiciel de montage ou de présentation visuelle quelconque », disait Adobe dans leur promotion *White Paper on Education*.

Et ce n'est pas tout! L'alphabétisation inclut désormais la littératie *visuelle*. « Il importe que les gens comprennent la
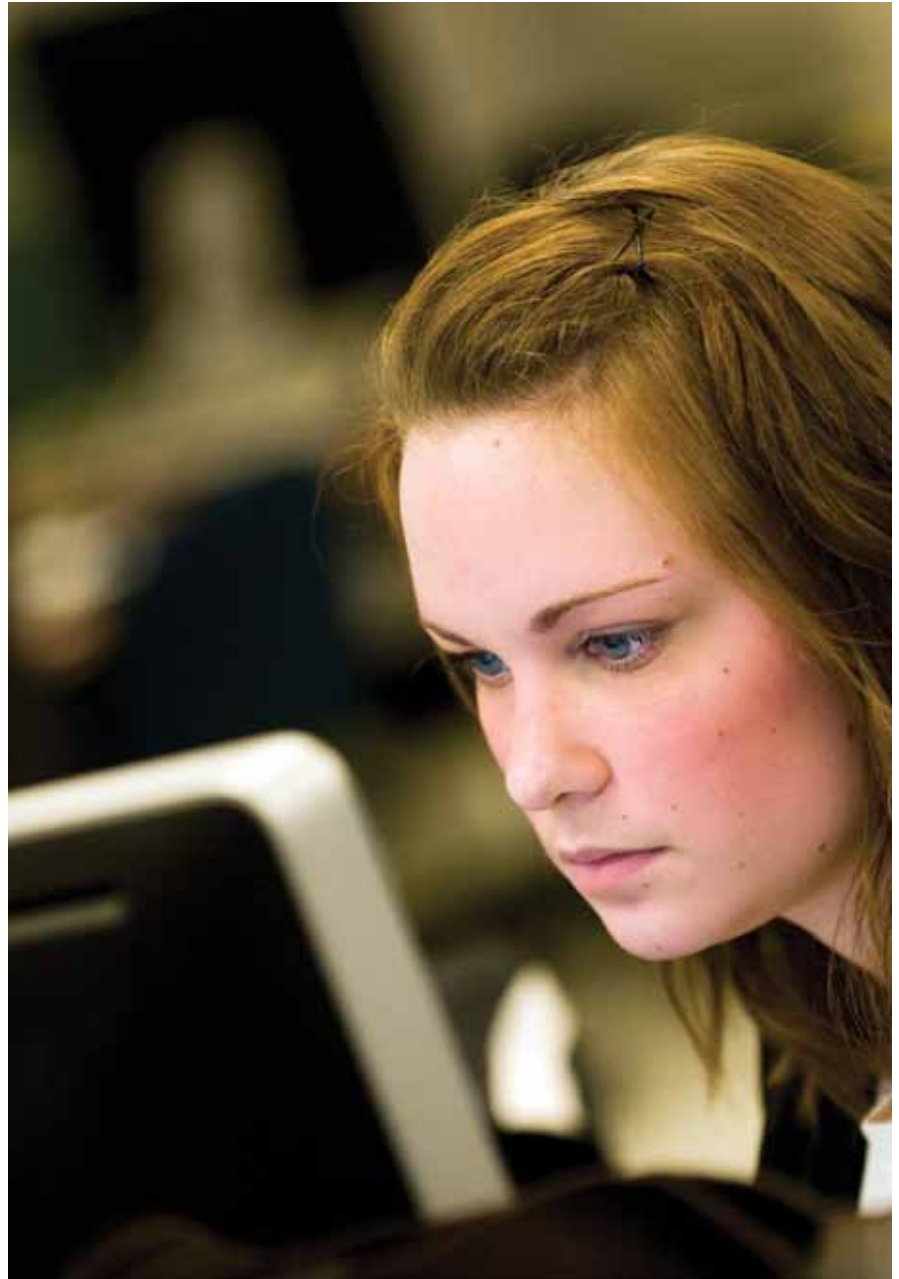
nature des images et des multimédias et qu'ils apprennent comment les représentations visuelles sont créées, produites, manipulées, et partagées », expliquait Adobe. La présence d'Adobe dans ce domaine est évidente à tous les niveaux et encourage un apprentissage actif pour tous les étudiants.

Holscher a cité un programme à l'école Mother Theresa à Ottawa, par le biais duquel un groupe d'étudiants

de la neuvième année a travaillé avec une classe de la troisième année sur un projet touchant la création d'un jeu. « Les étudiants de troisième année ont partagé leur point de vue quant à ce que le jeu devrait inclure et à partir de ces attentes, les étudiants de neuvième année ont élaboré le jeu » disait-il.

Et ce n'est qu'un début. M. Holscher reconnaît que le travail réalisé par Khan Academy, Ted Talks et Adobe transforme l'éducation, autant pour

Photo courtoisie de Collège Algonquin

les corps enseignants que pour les étudiants. Il indiquait également qu'Adobe est parfaitement positionné pour concrétiser la diversité nécessaire à cette révolution dans le domaine de l'enseignement.

Au collège Algonquin, M. MacDougall considère Adobe être un atout important à la réalisation d'un des objectifs du collège, soit d'inclure 20 % d'activités d'apprentissage en ligne pour tous les programmes d'études, et remarque que le succès s'atteint plus aisément lorsque l'étudiant est pleinement engagé.

L'apprentissage en ligne deviendra-t-il la norme? « En partie », disait MacDougall. « Le collège Algonquin planifie réduire les quelques 2 500 postes de travail actuels dans les laboratoires d'informatique à travers le collège à environ 400 ».

Il est entendu que certains programmes nécessiteront toujours l'accès à des installations informatiques de haute gamme ou de logiciels complexes ou très dispendieux. De ce fait, il y aura toujours des laboratoires d'informatique sur le campus, et compte tenu des programmes qui impliquent une partie importante d'activités d'apprentissage pratiques, les laboratoires spécialisés munis de composantes résidentielles ne disparaîtront jamais.

Préparer le personnel à prospérer dans un environnement d'apprentissage connecté et numérique nécessite un accent continu sur le développement professionnel. Le collège Algonquin continue d'offrir des ateliers planifiés, des sessions de formation au besoin, en plus de toute assistance requise par le biais d'un programme de mentorat. En outre, la plupart des éléments de formation et de développement professionnel sont disponibles en ligne, y compris des ressources fournies par Adobe.

Mais tout comme les ordinateurs 486 d'il y a 20 ans qui n'étaient pas la solution ultime, les outils d'aujourd'hui n'offrent certainement pas toutes les réponses. Les logiciels et les matériels changent trop vite, et en eux-mêmes refaçonnent l'éducation.

Holscher jette un coup d'œil 10 à 15 ans dans l'avenir et voit des manuels numériques ainsi que la possibilité de fournir des textes et des logiciels dans un environnement virtuel, facilitant ainsi l'accès à tous les étudiants selon le besoin. Et dans sa vision, Adobe jouera un rôle clé dans cet avenir. Possible? Probable.

Même la loi de Moore est prévue perdre son souffle d'ici 2015 - il y a des limites techniques à tout. Et même si tous les logiciels et matériels développés jusqu'à date demeuraient tels quels, sans un seul soupçon de progrès, l'élaboration de nouveaux logiciels ou de nouvelles applications pour ce qui existe déjà nous occuperait vraisemblablement pour une autre décennie.

Entre temps, ne débouclez pas vos ceintures! C|A

FUNDING:
Changes to the funding formula make financial predictions more stable

First, the cliché about funding: you'd always like more. Everyone agrees on that, so we can dispense with that right away.

Colleges thrive and strive based on funding. It's a key issue, especially in uncertain times, so *College Administrator* started on a quest to answer one question: How does college funding work?

Most of us understand the gross simplicity: students pay tuition and the government provides grants. Combined, this provides the money colleges need to operate.

The tuition part is simple. The province regulates the tuition paid by students. Some ancillary fees are allowed, but in general those are college and often program specific.

It's the grant structure that can get complex.

And if you thought you understood the formula a couple of years ago, take note: it's all changed.

The changes – which we will do our best to explain – were a joint project of the ministry and the colleges (through Colleges Ontario). The aim was to

provide some stability and predictability to college funding.

Prior to the changes the province set the total budget for provincial expenditures (we'll be scientific and call this the whole pie). The ministry then claimed a portion of that provincial pie, and in turn gave a slice of this to the colleges.

Since the size of the slice was set by the province, the share to go to each college then depended on activity (or enrolment.) Colleges with more students got more money, with some variation depending on geography and college size.

The problem became apparent in the '90s when two things happened at the same time: enrolment grew rapidly; and budget restraint limited the size of the slice. The result: the amount of funding for each student could (and some years did) shrink. Those colleges that added enrolment at less than the system average growth rate ended up a smaller share of the total envelope. The situation rewarded colleges that increased enrolment the most. But note that even the reward could be a smaller

per-student grant. Colleges, already leading the way in efficiency, literally learned to do even more with even less.

The recent changes to the funding formula have attempted to adjust such anomalies. The previous formula distributed funding based on "share of system activity base." The new formula allocates funding by a rate per WAFU. Instead of sharing a fixed slice of pie among a growing student population, the current formula is aimed at providing a predictable per student grant (modified, of course, by weighting factors), and adjusted to take account of audited enrolments.

With a stable funding based on student enrolment, the CFF aim to provide a simple and transparent model that is able to respond to future policy initiatives.

Allocations are set at the beginning of the year and are based on audited enrolment data. This ensures that allocations do not fluctuate during the year, making it easier and more predictable for colleges – and the ministry – to plan and manage their

QUICK FACT 1
General Purpose Grants: These *are funds provided* to support the delivery of programs and the overall administration of the colleges. They have no restriction on use, and can cover salaries, benefits, utilities, supplies, etc. *Most General Purpose grant allocations are linked, in whole or in part, to the College Funding Formula three-year average, two-year slip mechanism (see 3 below).*

QUICK FACT 2
General Purpose Operating Grant (GPOG) is the largest General Purpose Grant. In 2011-12 of the total Grant envelope of $1.382 billion, $958 million was allocated through the GPOG.

A portion (about 4%) of the GPOG is held back pending submission of certain MTCU-required reports. Allocation of the GPOG is based on the Colleges Funding Formula (CFF), which in turn is driven by audited enrolment data from all of the colleges.

QUICK FACT 3
College Funding Formula (CFF) is a moving average calculation, based on audited enrolments in the years four, three, and two years prior to the year in which the grant is received. Thus the '11-12 allocation is based on an average of enrolments in 2007-08, 2008-09, and 2009-10. This calculated average is called a college's "activity base." *The key point here is that there is no direct link between students enrolled in 2011-12 and 2011-12 grants.* The CFF is sometimes referred to as a "three-year average/two years slip" methodology.

budgets. Additionally, the funding model is simpler. Eight previous funding envelopes are now combined into two, reducing complexity and improving transparency.

It's not perfect – could any formula ever be? In particular, the slip year methodology imposes a delay between enrolment growth and related grant funding. On the other hand, it does provide a buffer for colleges with declining enrolment.

As well, there is no mechanism to include increases in costs of salaries and benefits driven by the centrally bargained collective agreements. Many other provincially funded sectors have inflation mechanisms in their funding arrangements; the college sector does not.

But in general the CFF is stable and predictable across a period of years. It's now possible to simulate future allocations with considerable

College System Revenues

Total revenue = $3,244,468,989

Grant revenue 50.8%
Other revenue 11.6%
Other student fees and ancillary revenue 12.3%
Apprenticeship classroom fee and other tuition 1.1%
Unfunded and international tuition 5.6%
Additional cost recovery tuition 3.8%
Regulated tuition 14.7%

Source: Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Tuition Fees

Grants   Regulated tuition fees

Notes: Figures for colleges exclude the tuition set-aside and collaborative and second-entry nursing and clinical education funding for collaborative nursing. Fees for universities are for first year arts and science.
Sources: Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and Ontario Public School Boards Association.
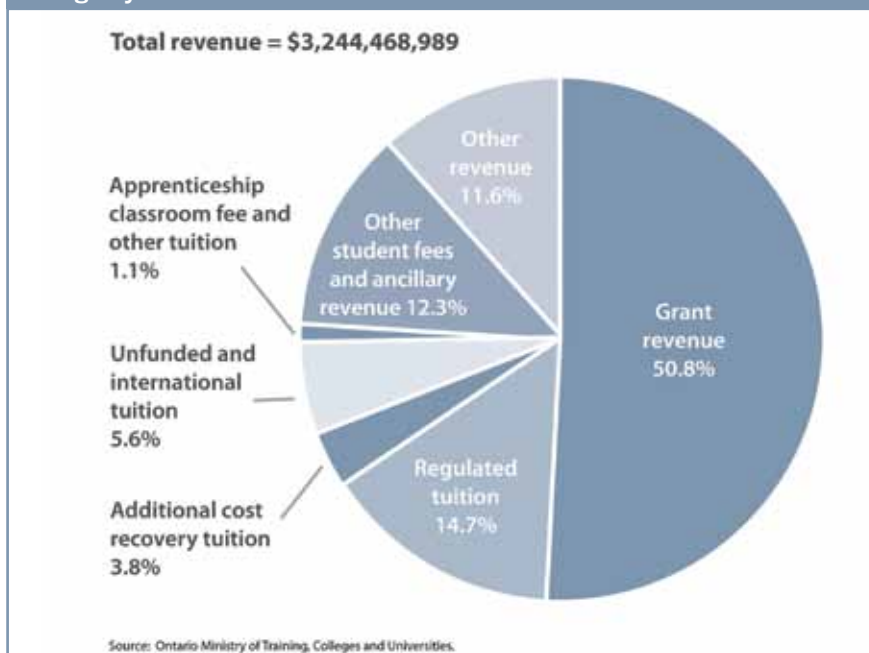
QUICK FACT 4
Weighted Funding Units (WFUs): Audited enrolment data are converted to WFUs through a complex set of factors which we will not go into here. The average of the WFUs for the three-year period outlined above is the **Weighted Average Funding Units** (WAFUs) which determine a college's GPOG allocation.
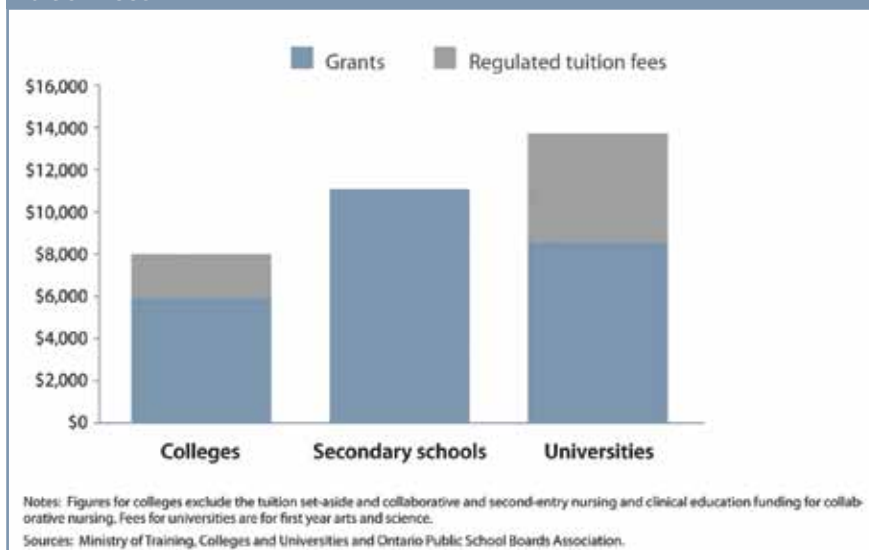
The CFF assigns a standard or base value per WAFU (currently $4,358). Thus, a college's 2011-12 GPOG allocation will be its WAFUs times $4,358.

While primarily used in the GPOG allocation calculation, the CFF methodology also is at play in many other Grant allocations, in whole or in some modified version.

QUICK FACT 5
Other General Purpose Grants include Growth Funding; Transition Funding; Small, Northern and Rural Colleges Grant (SNRC); and Performance Funding (sometimes called KPI Grants). In sum, these account for about $200 million of the total grants envelope.

accuracy. By funding each WAFU at a constant level, the CFF has removed the sensitivity to other colleges' enrolment patterns that existed under previous formulas and which resulted in widely varying per-WAFU amounts.

In the accompanying sidebars, we attempt to provide more some definitions of the grants, their characteristics, and at least some idea of the adjustments and fine tuning that college financial staff deal with in trying to provide a reliable revenue budget for the college and for school and department managers to administer.

QUICK FACT 6
Special Purpose Operating Grants: These are grants provided to support specific programs or initiatives, and that have restrictions on their use/expenditure. In some cases, a Special Purpose Grant will contain a provision to allow the offset of some administrative overhead; in many cases, that is not permitted, and the funds may be spent only for the direct costs of the program or initiative supported. Examples of the latter approach are Access Funding for Students with Disabilities, and the Aboriginal Education Strategy. Many of the Special Purpose grant allocations derive, in whole or in part, from the activity base calculation as outlined above. There are a large number of Special Purpose Grants, in some of which all Colleges participate; in others, only certain specified Colleges receive funds. The Special Purpose Grants account for the remainder of the $1.382 billion envelope – in total, about $225 million.

> Colleges, already leading the way in efficiency, literally learned to do even more with even less.

QUICK FACT 7

Capital Grants are funded from an envelope separate from the Operating Grants ($1.382 b) envelope, and carry restrictions as to their uses. A preliminary report of the intended expenditures is required to be submitted to the Ministry for approval; and a final report once the funds are spent. Capital grants cannot be used to cover operating costs. In recent years the Capital Grants have fallen well short of addressing the college's growing needs for academic equipment and technology, and physical plant repairs and maintenance.

College Equipment Renewal Fund (CERF) is provided to support the acquisition of instructional equipment and technology.

Facilities Renewal Program (FRP) is intended to help address deferred maintenance and physical plant upgrades.

Apprenticeship Enhancement Fund (AEF) as the name implies, must be used to acquire equipment and technology for Apprenticeship Programs.

The calculation of CERF, FRP and AEF individual college allocations is in part a function of the activity base methodology outlined above.

DEFINITIONS:

GPOG	General Purpose Operating Grant
MTCU	Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
CFF	College Funding Formula
WAFU	Weighted Average Funding Units
CERF	College Equipment-Renewal Fund
FRP	Facilities Renewal Program
AEF	Apprenticeship Enhancement Fund

In compiling this information, College Administrator *received help from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities; Colleges Ontario; and several individuals knowledgeable in the field. Special thanks to Bill Summers of Colleges Ontario; and to Rick Helman, Director, Financial Planning and Budgets at Loyalist; and to Dr. Steven Hudson, Vice-President Academic, Niagara College.*

How can college staff help students feel at home and welcomed – and up to the task?

We all say it: students are the reason our institutions exist. Sadly, we often put other priorities first. Yes, those cost efficiencies – always sought because of revenue shortages – can have negative impacts on the ability of front line staff to serve students.

But even more perturbing to students is management's insistence that rules or regulations have to be followed. Colleges are, after all, bureaucracies. Many times we signal to students the institution comes first. Hey – students come and go, but we have to keep the ship afloat, right?

On the other hand, almost every study on the topic shows that educators find meaning in their work because we can make a difference in student lives. At almost every retirement party you hear how working in the college system was special because of fellow staff – and the students. (As a retiree, I certainly can tell you what I miss most is the camaraderie of working with my colleagues and helping students. You do feel that your mission in life was worthwhile.)

Most people I talk to agree that there is a great stress on the Student Satisfaction Key Performance Indicator, but the day-to-day grind focuses on time and cost efficiencies.

It's almost as though we have two directives: our role in helping students achieve success, and that of meeting institutional requirements. And sometimes the two seem to be distinct – and not compatible.

Fortunately, that doesn't have to be necessarily true. Many colleges are rethinking their role in serving students. Some have set up one-stop centres where students can go and get the majority of their questions answered. Others are doing customer training. These institutions have seen

By Brian Desbiens

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some significant improvement in student satisfaction. The job requires focus and investment of time and resources.

Some institutions are ahead of others in developing strategies in this area. But we all need to value student engagement in all that we do. Over my years in the colleges, I have developed and practiced a few tactics that any staff member can apply – regardless of where your institution is on this spectrum.

Note that the following list is not definitive, and was distilled over a whole career. Some of these I came to later rather than sooner in my career. Most I learned from other great role model colleagues in our system. Many are now common, and without a doubt some of these you already model. I offer them as my collection earned in the school of experience.

1. Each student has a story that makes him or her unique and special. I tried to learn one student story a week.
2. I got back into the classroom whenever I could, often just as a guest lecturer. One of the great wonders in the classroom is how each class is so different. This is an ideal way to get a glimpse of what is going on in the learning spaces of your college. Or just ask teachers about what is happening. I found that faculty were eager to share with you how things were going.
3. I had to learn when to get out of the way. As managers, we are often seen as creating obstacles. Teachers having to become facilitators of learning, not just dispensers of information. Similarly, as a manager I had to be a problem-solver. Eventually, I learned that sending a student to the next office was not quite enough. Would I, as a student, be satisfied with the response just dispensed?
4. Through the years I missed many opportunities to support leadership development for students. Student projects, student interns, student research: all staff have the opportunity to use encounters and issues as opportunities for learning. Not only should we welcome these intrusions, but we should encourage all staff to be so involved.

> Most people I talk to agree that there is a great stress on the Student Satisfaction Key Performance Indicator, but the day-to-day grind focuses on time and cost efficiencies.

5. I truly enjoyed helping coach the hockey team, advising student leaders, co-teaching a student leadership course, going on an educational trip with students or just being in attendance as our marketing team competed against other colleges. Getting involved with students not only in the job, but in campus life, benefits both you and students. Each of us can mesh our interests with learning about and contributing to student life.

6. If I were starting my career again, I would seek more student opinion. I would establish a student focus group, and find ways to respect their ideas, to ask them what they want, to ask how they think we can improve, or how we are doing in serving their needs. Asking for student feedback is always worthwhile. Not only does it show respect, but you get fresh new views on problem solving.

7. As a college president, I regularly went to the student cafeteria and sat down with students. This helped me have some grounded knowledge when it came to decision making. A simple question in a safe student environment can be powerful. I was amazed at how much I could learn by stopping to say "hi," or just getting to know a handful of students. Managing by walking around can be powerful but only if you stop, talk, and listen.

8. Student awards or graduation ceremonies I always found to be uplifting just at a time when my energy was getting low. It is rewarding to learn of the achievements of our students, and to celebrate their successes.

9. Some staff have a real ability to relate with students. I doubt if we support these natural leaders to the extent they deserve. We need to show them that we value their special caring and interest. Saying thanks to staff who make special interventions to help students is important.

10. Would I like a member of my family to be treated this way? This is the question that I posed to myself. With each student encounter I tried to visualize a member of my family. It was amazing how it brought an extra smile, an extra question, a little more attention.

These are all approaches that any staff member can bring to the job. None are dependent on an institution (though admittedly, some may be harder to practice in a push for efficiencies). And all of the ideas above work better if your college has an articulated over-all strategy for student success and engagement. Almost all colleges say they are student

> Some have set up one-stop centres where students can go and get the majority of their questions answered. Others are doing customer training.

> Getting involved with students not only in the job, but in campus life, benefits both you and students. Each of us can mesh our interests with learning about and contributing to student life.

centred but it is through our individual actions that we convey whether we and the college really mean it. If in the long run our greatest satisfaction comes from making a difference for students, then let's do it every day, for us and the student.

In the Spring 2012 edition of *College Administrator* I will discuss the role of the college and senior administration in fostering learning. Yes, every staff member in a college, I believe, is an educator. Stay tuned and keep up the good work. C|A

OCASA APACO

2011 Innovators & Leaders Conference a success

OCASA's 6th Annual PD Conference drew more than 100 participants in June – a feast of networking and professional development supported by a venue at Blue Mountain Resort in Collingwood offering hospitality and rejuvenation.

Jesse Hirsh, CBC Technology columnist, speaking at a plenary session, said we all need to play with technology to master it, or be prepared to be victims of it.

Laurel Schollen of Seneca College told a panel on innovation that, "we all must keep abreast of trends," and that this is not easy "unless we become masters of the quick five-minute read."

The conference included a variety of workshops, networking opportunities, and awards presentations. More details including workshop presentations are available for members on the OCASA website *www.ocasa.on.ca/events*.

The 2012 OCASA Professional Development Conference will return to the Blue Mountain Resort in Collingwood on June 25-27 next year. Mark your calendar now. C|A

OCASA supports the arts

Each year OCASA supports student programs or graduate art by purchasing their work for conference speakers' gifts? Approximately 25 gifts are given each year at the conference. Let us know if you have a program that would provide suitable gifts. C|A

Professional Development

Online education: Enjoy courses developed specifically at OCASA's request for Ontario college administrators, taught by Ontario instructors working in the system. Take one course, or all eight for the Certificate in College Leadership and Administration.

Next course: *Innovation in Administration*, facilitated by Cate Walker-Hammond. This course will change the way you approach innovation.

Starts January 30. Visit *www.ocasa.on.ca/certification* for more information. C|A

Student bursaries for members

Student Bursary applications for 2012 open in January. OCASA certification courses qualify, as do advanced studies and professional development. The bursaries (only for OCASA members) help defray costs of your professional development. Visit the OCASA website for further information. C|A

OCASA Awards
honour excellence and commitment

Impressive, inspiring, and excellent aptly describe the spirit of the Awards Banquet.

Judy Spring, Dean, School of Business, IT & Management at Durham College, was the recipient of the OCASA Distinguished Administrator Award. In her 25 years at Durham, Ms. Spring has also served the community at different times as an Oshawa City Councillor and Chair of the Lakeridge Health Board of Trustees.

Alanna McDonell, Marketing and Conference Services Manager at Algonquin College, received the OCASA Volunteer Recognition Award. While strongly supporting the success of the local Administrative Staff Association, Alanna was described by her peers as demonstrating "high enthusiasm, good motivation, and very professional work ethics." Her creativity was also noted as being a key contribution to the local success. Alanna has also recently started a three-year term on the provincial OCASA Board of Directors.

Grow your network

- Join us on Twitter and LinkedIn. Not there yet? Set up an account and check us out. Twitter: OCASA_APACO. Linked in: OCASA/APACO
- Local Administrative Staff Associations bring greater value for a local network. Call the OCASA for further information on starting one.
- Interested in a mentoring program? OCASA is considering a program that will help to connect those in similar work across the system. Watch for more details or contact us if you're interested in working on this program. C|A

Member profile

OCASA is updating its database, and expanding member profiles. This will help OCASA design improved services and communication to fit your needs. Please complete the Member Profile survey found on the OCASA website. C|A

Legal services

OCASA offers a referral service for members with matters relating to employment. Your membership pays for the first two hours of consultation, per issue, per year. Completely confidential, services can be accessed directly by members. Details are on the website, under Member Services. C|A

Student bursaries

Student bursaries are given out regionally each year, on a lottery basis. If you're enrolled in advanced studies, or a professional designation study program, submit your application in the year of study. Four names are drawn at the Awards Banquet in June for an award of $500. Those applicants not drawn in 2011 can reapply in 2012 if they are still enrolled in studies.

2011 student bursary recipients:

- Cynthia Carey, Manager Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Services, George Brown College (M.Ed. in Leadership of Colleges & Universities, OISE)
- Alanna McDonell, Marketing and Conference Services Manager, Algonquin College (OCASA/CHERD Certificate in College Leadership & Administration)
- Susan Miller, Manager, Residence and Student Life, Sault College (M.Ed. Higher Education, OISE)
- Kelly Murray-Scott, Manager, Financial Services, Lambton College (MBA, Laurentian University) C|A

CA invites letters to the editor

College Administrator welcomes feedback and comments on all content in this magazine. Continue the dialogue.

Send your comments to CA@ocasa.on.ca.
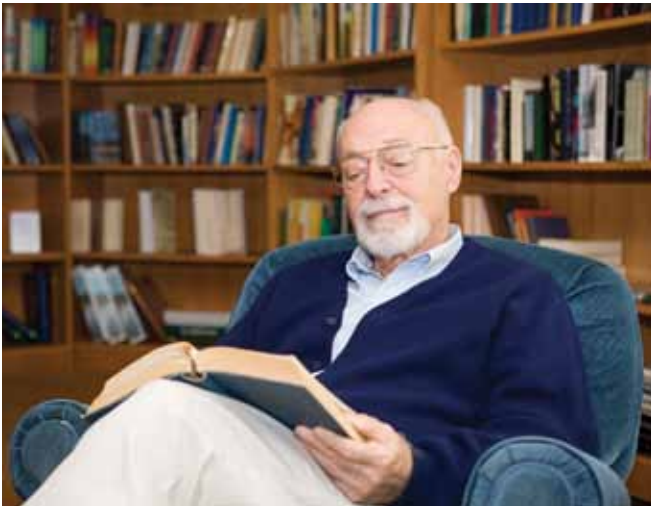
Retirees may join OCASA for life

OCASA membership for life is available for retiring members. For a single one-time payment of $100, members may continue their membership in OCASA. For more information, contact the OCASA office: *info@ocasa.on.ca* or call 1-866-742-5429. Or visit the website, *www.ocasa.on.ca/membership/retirees*. C|A

Editorial Board welcomes your ideas

College Administrator welcomes queries and suggestions for future articles. If there is a particular topic you believe would be of interest to administrators on Ontario colleges, write us a brief note about the topic. If you have developed some background information on the topic you could share that with us and suggest one or more people who you believe might be best suited to write such an article.

If you're really well versed on an issue and would like to share your knowledge, *College Administrator* is welcomes submissions. Send a brief query on the topic (200 words or so) outlining the topic.

Have a comment on any article in this magazine? Share your thoughts through a letter to the editor.

Send all queries and suggestions to: *CA@ocasa.on.ca*. C|A

Cynthia Carey

Imagine living in a silent world – no voices, no music, no honking cars or crying children. Then picture yourself in the shoes of a deaf person.

Cynthia Carey is not deaf, but as a young person she pictured herself in those shoes, and has since dedicated her career to helping to break down barriers between the deaf and the hearing.

As the manager of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Services at George Brown College, Carey manages a team of three sign language interpreters, two computerized note-takers and two schedulers, as well as a large contingent of freelancers, who support over 170 deaf and hard-of-hearing students enrolled at George Brown and four other colleges in the GTA: Seneca, Sheridan, Humber and Centennial.

Her unusual career choice came about by chance. When she was studying psychology at Queen's University in the late 1970s, she enrolled in sign language classes at night simply to keep a friend company, and a lifelong passion was born.

She went on to earn an Honours BA in Sign Language Studies at Madonna University in Michigan. When she returned to Ontario to work as a community development worker for the Canadian Hearing Society, she discovered some uncomfortable truths about the treatment of deaf people in our society. "It never occurred to me that they were an oppressed minority – I was shocked to discover this."

While the services she oversees assist the students in the classroom, she is troubled that they miss out on the full student experience. "Our funding is limited to the classroom, so deaf students are often excluded from the out-of-class activities that add up to a well-rounded experience," she says. The problem is exacerbated by the shortage of qualified sign language interpreters in the province. Carey is also dismayed by the employment prospects for deaf people, who are often under-employed if they find work at all.

Still, she is encouraged by the advances made over the past 30 years. "When I started, the only training options open to the deaf were trades like tool and die and typesetting. Today, the services we provide allow them to enter any field of study."

Many years on, signing remains a passion for Carey, who describes it as "a visual language, and very expressive," and one that carries over into her life outside of the college. She performs as an interpreter at Roy Thomson Hall in Toronto for the Unique Lives & Experiences series. Over the past 10 years, she has interpreted the life stories of a myriad of superstars – from Sidney Poitier, to Robert Redford to Jane Fonda. Heady stuff, but it's also taught Carey that, "all people have struggles, and theirs is not a life I would like." Instead, she finds her reward in helping deaf people overcome obstacles to achieving their own unique and fulfilling lives. C|A

By Susan Atkinson, Manager, Media Relations & Editorial Services, Sheridan College

In each issue, *College Administrator* profiles one OCASA member with out-of-the-ordinary hobbies or activities. If you know someone who might qualify, send your suggestion to *info@ocasa.on.ca*

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