

OCULL Newsletter

May, 2006

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Ontario Council for University Lifelong Learning Newsletter – Spring 2006

The Ontario Council for University Lifelong Learning (OCULL) is a professional association for administrators and practitioners who develop and deliver degree and non-degree continuing education programs in Ontario universities. OCULL is an advocate for adult learners at Ontario universities, a collegial network, and a vehicle for professional development for its members.

The organization began with a meeting of Ontario university extension directors in 1959. In 1960, they formed the Ontario Departments of Extension and summer Schools (ODESS), and in 1972, ODESS became the Ontario Council for University Continuing Education (OCUCE). In 1994, OCUCE became OCULL to reflect its role as champion of lifelong learning. OCULL provides a forum for the exchange of ideas about adult education, continuing education, and distance education in Ontario universities.

Message from the President

You asked for it. We are delivering it. On behalf of the Executive, I am thrilled to send to you our first NEW newsletter. I believe this might be one of the lengthiest newsletters OCULL has published in a very long time. This is also our first newsletter since 2003-2004.

First, I would like to begin by thanking all of you for your ongoing commitment to OCULL and to lifelong learning in general. It is important, if the Ontario Council for University Lifelong Learning is to continue to grow, that it also continues to change and represent that unique diversity that is embodied in lifelong learning.

We are not all distance educators, continuing educators, teachers, administrators, or program evaluators – we wear, collectively, many different hats and are represented by many different organizations (and acronyms). But where we come together – our single most important similarity and the impetus for our being – is our commitment to and representation of the advocacy of lifelong learning in the Province of Ontario.

We are diverse by our nature – our membership extends to academic units, ancillary operations, and professional schools, and over the present future, our challenge is to examine our boundaries and to grow, welcoming new voices to our collective table.

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*The great thing in the world
is not so much where we
stand, as in what direction
we are moving.*

- Oliver Wendell Holmes

Mission of OCULL

OCULL promotes public recognition of university continuing and distance education as a major source of lifelong learning opportunities for adults in Ontario. The Council advocates for its constituency; builds partnerships with organizations, government and industry for the benefit of members and client groups; supports collaboration among members; and promotes professional development and excellent and equitable practice in adult education.

OCULL Launches New Website

We are happy to announce the launch of our newly designed website. Special thanks to Carleton University for initiating the process and to Wilfrid Laurier University for completing the work associated with this project. The website can be found online at <http://www.ocull.ca/>

OCULL Launches Communities of Practice Online Forums

Based on the success of our Winter Meeting, and on your feedback, we are responding to the demand for online forums to promote discussion across our communities of practice. When you surf to the new OCULL website, you will see a link to Communities of Practice. Here, you will find five very interesting forums:

- OCULL General Membership
- Distance Education
- Program Planning
- Marketing
- Visioning and Lifelong Learning

Please feel free to sign-up and login. These forums will provide you with a means of communicating informally with your peers at other Institutions. In the past, our online discussions have ranged from topics including examination centers, course development and contract administration, as well as a means for posting available positions within your unit.

The Executive will publish summary minutes of their meetings as well as the newsletter under the OCULL General Membership forum. This will also be your first line of communication on OCULL news and updates related to professional development initiatives, the Annual General Meeting, and the retreat.



Message from the President, Cont.

The priorities of the current executive are communities of practice, OCULL promotion and marketing, research, recruitment, and advocacy. First, we have created and are nurturing the growth of **communities of practice**, and we are encouraging low cost opportunities for staff professional development (including looking at the possibility of bursaries to attend, or a fully funded annual retreat day. We have also created online forums for discussions, and encourage the continued use of teleconferencing.

Our second priority is the **marketing and promotion** of OCULL. We are thrilled with the work that has been done to complete our new OCULL website. We think that you will find it engaging, usable, and current. This newsletter is another example of how we aim to raise our profile among our membership – to energize you and to reward you for the hard work that you do on behalf of all of our lifelong learners.

Our third priority is **research**. OCULL administers a small research fund that supports projects which build knowledge of our constituency and enhance the quality of university lifelong learning. These grants are designed to support research projects whose outcome is going to be of direct relevance to the topic and practice of university lifelong learning, in any or all of its guises. We are thrilled to welcome our current OCULL Research fellows to our Annual Meeting in October to hear all about their work and progress so far.

Our fourth priority is **recruitment**. In 2005-2006, we invited our colleagues from continuing education programs at Professional Schools to join our network. Our successful recruitment for 2005-2006 secured 16 institutional members – the same number as our record high in past years. Second to this, we have examined the feasibility of welcoming grass-roots community learning organizations to join in our discussions.

Finally, our fifth priority is **advocacy**. As an organization, our members demand that we play a role in, and strengthen our place as the advocate for lifelong learning in the Province of Ontario. To lend credence to this process, we have invited the comments, concerns and issues of our Deans and Directors to regularly flow to the Executive Committee. We need to continue to hold the ear of government policy makers who steer the legislative agenda around education, and especially lifelong learning.



Mark Your Calendars:

Annual General Meeting and Retreat Day

The OCULL Executive is happy to announce that the 2006 Annual General Meeting and Retreat Day will be held on October 27, 2006. We would like to thank the University of Waterloo for volunteering to host this successful and popular day.

Last year's theme for the retreat was "Building Communities." The theme for the 2006 workshop is "Shaping Communities" to show that we are, collectively, taking the next step toward redefining our role, and the role of lifelong learning in an ever changing society.

The tentative agenda for the day is as follows:

9:30 a.m.	Registration and Coffee
10:00 a.m.	Opening Comments
10:15 a.m.	Research Rounds – OCULL Research Initiatives
2005-2006	
11:00 a.m.	Moderated Round Table Discussions: Round One
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Distance Education and Learning Technologies ▪ Marketing ▪ Program Planning ▪ Vision and Lifelong Learning
Noon	Lunch and Annual General Meeting Honorary Member Induction
1:30 p.m.	Moderated Round Table Discussions: Round Two
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Distance Education and Learning Technologies ▪ Marketing ▪ Program Planning ▪ Vision and Lifelong Learning
3:00 p.m.	Overview of the day and closing remarks

Based on your feedback, we are responding by offering TWO sets of round table discussions. This will enable participants to join two different communities of practice during the day-long workshop. To ensure that everyone is able to leave at a good time and travel in good weather, we have moved the day-long workshop to October (instead of November) and we will conclude the day as early as possible. Please plan to attend the entire day as it is an opportunity to network with and learn from your peers. More information on the Retreat and AGM will follow soon.



Initiatives, Committees and Programs

Standing Committee on Distance Education

Formed in the early 1980s as an advisory committee to COU, this committee has been affiliated with OCULL since 1991. It engages in liaison with government and other agencies, advocates on behalf of adult distance learners, seeks outside funding to support research, and undertakes collaborative projects. The committee also assumes responsibility for maintaining the distance education course database, in cooperation with our colleagues at the Canadian Association for University Continuing Education.

The next three meetings are:

- June 13, 2006
- September 12, 2006
- October 10, 2006

If you would like to attend, please contact Leslie Malcolm at lmalcolm@lakeheadu.ca.

Report of the Distance Education and Technologies Institutional Round Table

Members and friends of the Distance Education Committee met at the Annual Meeting in November of 2005. The group discussed a number of important issues related to distance learning and lifelong learning in general, including: learning management systems, student support, course development, course evaluation, web-casting and course administration.

Learning Management Systems

The majority of institutions represented at this session use WebCT as their primary learning management system. It was interesting to learn that some institutions delineate between on-campus and distance education and between credit and non-credit for the administration and support of course sites. Typically the on-campus courses are the responsibility of the IT department where the DE courses fall under the CE and/or DE units' jurisdiction. We talked about some of the challenges of migrating from a paper-based delivery mode (digital copyright issues, application of effective pedagogical principles, cost and time to train faculty, etc.). We also discussed various "open-source" systems and whether these may be under consideration.

Student Support

We discussed the various methods we use at each of our institutions to support our students in their learning. This included online tutorials on using the learning management system, to printed and/or online student guides, to helpdesk support. Some institutions have implemented a toll-free help line with extended hours. We also discussed how and when students are notified about accessing their online course sites (email or mail notification before courses start or advised at time of registration).



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Report of the Distance Education and Technologies Institutional Round Table, Continued

Course Development

The online course development process at each of our institutions was discussed, including how developers are paid (based on the weight of the course i.e., half or full stipend, other payment structures e.g., two stipends). We also talked about copyright ownership of the developed materials (some institutions equally share the ownership of developed materials, some institutions own it wholly, while others give developers a choice to retain or give over copyright). We shared our best practices for “Effective Course Design” which included using templates, check lists, incorporating adult learning principles in course design, and availing developers of faculty resource sites and materials. We also shared our processes for updating course materials for subsequent terms (can be delivery instructor or original course developer).



Course Evaluation

Most institutions evaluate their DE courses using the standard student evaluation form that is used on-campus. These are typically sent through the mail with a few done electronically. Some institutions have a formal course evaluation form specific to DE courses while others have a less formal procedure for evaluating the delivery mode (leave it to the delivery instructor to design and implement). We also discussed incentives for students to submit evaluations. These included: raffles, donations, money, etc.

Mediastreaming and Webcasting

At this time very few institutions have embraced mediastreaming and webcasting. The main concerns expressed included: cost, infancy of technology, evidence it enhances students' learning experience. Users of the technology indicated that it is well received by students and faculty and consider it a valuable learning tool.

Course Administration

The group also shared their policies and practices on the administration of distance courses. They identified items and issues of common interest - e.g., mid-term examination administration, handling of assignments, etc.

Initiatives, Committees and Programs

OCULL Research Fund

OCULL administers a small research fund that supports projects which build knowledge of our constituency and enhance the quality of university lifelong learning.

Ontario Council for University Lifelong Learning (OCULL) Research Grants

These grants are designed to support research projects whose outcome is going to be of direct relevance to the topic and practice of university lifelong learning, in any or all of its guises.

Grants are typically in the \$1,000 - \$1,500 range. They can be higher if the OCULL Executive deems a given project to be worthy of such support.

Research Grant applications must include:

1. a comprehensive statement of objectives and anticipated outcomes;
2. a contextual review (literature);
3. a description of research design and methodology;
4. reasons why the project is of relevance to university lifelong learning;
5. a budget; and,
6. a description of how the research findings will be disseminated.

Selection criteria are as follows:

1. relevance and timeliness of research to university lifelong learning;
2. clarity of proposal;
3. soundness of research design;
4. other financial support for the project, or letters of support; and,
5. process for disseminating findings.

For more information, or to apply for an OCULL Research Grant, please contact Karen Maki at karenmaki@trentu.ca



Initiatives, Committees and Programs

Executive Committee

We have an active and interested Executive Committee this year. Because of position changes, we are a smaller than usual group – however, no less hard working.



Past-President - Sandy Hughes
Wilfrid Laurier University

President - Matt Wannan
University of Western Ontario

Vice-President - Cathy Newell Kelly
University of Waterloo

Secretary and Research Coordinator - Karen Maki
Trent University

Chair, Distance Education Committee - Leslie Malcolm,
Lakehead University

CAUCE Representative - Sara Tonks
Nipissing University

CADE Representative - Bettina Brockerhoff-Macdonald,
Laurentian University

Thank you to our hard working executive members for their focus and vision.

Our next meeting is June 7, 2006 at 11:00 a.m. If you have issues that you would like the Executive to address on your behalf, please contact Karen Maki and ask that your issue be put on our agenda. Karen can be reached by email at: karenmaki@trentu.ca

OCULL Membership – 2005-2006

We are particularly pleased to have sixteen institutional members in 2005-2006. This represents 77% of Ontario's 21 Universities. Our membership includes representatives from the following Ontario Universities:

- Brock University
- Carleton University
- University of Guelph
- Lakehead University
- Laurentian University
- McMaster University
- University of Nipissing
- University of Ottawa
- Ryerson University
- St. Michael's University College
- University of Toronto
- Trent University
- University of Waterloo
- University of Western Ontario
- Wilfrid Laurier University
- University of Windsor



If you are interested in joining OCULL, we offer three different levels of membership. Institutional membership (\$250 annually) is open to Ontario universities that are members of the Council of Ontario Universities. Each university has one vote, vested in the head (dean or director) of the central continuing education, extension or lifelong learning unit. Members of continuing education units in professional faculties and other areas of the universities are invited to participate in the membership held by their institution.

Subscriber membership: (\$60 annually: non-voting) is open to associations, agencies, and individuals associated with, or interested in, post-secondary continuing education.

Honorary memberships: (non-voting) may be conferred from time to time by OCULL on individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to university continuing education in Ontario

Nominating an Honorary Member

OCULL honorary lifetime membership is awarded to:

- Long standing members of OCULL (10 years or more) with considerable achievements and contributions to the Continuing Education profession in Ontario, primarily outside their own institution.
- Members of the OCULL Executive with outstanding contributions to the activities and priorities of the Council over several years and having promoted the advancement of Continuing Education provincially.
- An individual who has made outstanding progress and took a crucial leadership role to initiate Continuing Education at an Ontario institution and was also an active member of OCULL.



Notes

- The lifetime honorary membership is normally awarded to someone no longer serving directly in Continuing Education at an Ontario university.
- The lifetime membership is normally given at an annual general meeting, but could also be awarded at another special occasion.
- Further, only under exceptional circumstances would an honorary membership be awarded posthumously.

Nomination

- To nominate someone for Honorary Membership to OCULL, complete the online Honorary Nomination Form found on the OCULL Website.

Process

- The executive will serve as the nominating committee and the past president will serve as chair of the committee.
- Normally, in the spring of every year, the past president will request nominations for honorary membership from the membership. Members will be asked to complete the OCULL honorary member nomination form and submit it by the end of May.
- The executive will consider the nominations and make a determination by the end of June allowing sufficient time to contact the nominee and to make the necessary preparations to honor the member. Normally not more than one member would be honored each year.

Current and Upcoming Events

CADE Conference 2006

Theme: *Innovation in Education Challenges, Issues and Solutions*
May 23 to May 26, 2006

Host: Université du Québec à Montréal–Téléuniversité.
http://www.cade-aced.ca/cade_conf_past.php?i_nEventId=17

CAUCE Conference 2006

Theme: *Through the Eyes of Our Students: Looking Forward*
May 28 to May 31, 2005

Host: Ryerson University
<http://ce-online.ryerson.ca/cauce2006/>

OCULL Fall Meeting and AGM

Theme: *Shaping Communities*
October 27, 2006

Host: University of Waterloo
<http://www.ocull.ca>



Submissions to the Newsletter

We want to hear from you! Are you involved in a project that is innovative, exciting and new? Is your unit or institution doing something to foster best practices in lifelong learning that you want everyone to know about? We would be very happy to publish your news and stories in our Fall/Winter newsletter.

Please contact Matt Wannan at mwannan@uwo.ca with your submissions or for more information on what to submit. No article is too short or too long – our goal is to be an advocate for lifelong learning and to share the collected wisdom and achievements of our members to promote professional development.