

THE CONFLUENCE

The Camosun College Faculty Association Newsletter

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In This Issue

Message from President.....	1
Essentials of Dignity.	2
Student Work Groups.....	3
Setting up your D2L.....	4
A Counsellor's Tale.....	5
PD Highlights.....	6
A Taxing Christmas Card.....	7
CCFA Executive Contacts.....	8

HOLIDAY HOURS

The CCFA Office will be open intermittently in December.

For specific hours please refer to our voicemail and the Y221 door sign.

Merry Christmas to all!
Peg & Autumn

Message from your President

What Thoughts Can I Share?

As I began to think about the upcoming holidays, I wondered about what wishes I might be able to give to my Camosun colleagues as we all leave for time with friends and family.

During a recent workshop I attended, Leadership Author, Margaret Wheatley asked us all what we wanted from our work. I responded that I wanted us to all go home at the end of the day fulfilled and with our dignity intact. These are challenging times we live in... "white water" as we would say in the field of change management. When change happens it sometimes leaves us bruised, but often it can also leave us better. That middle piece (torn middle) can leave us confused and anxious until we break through to the new reality. The torn middle is when we really need to work at ensuring we are being kind to one another.

So, I leave the workshop with this concept of dignity rolling around in my head and I am not sure how to put my finger on what it looks like in practice. Then, the following Sunday I am having coffee with a Camosun Alum and we are chatting about the leadership courses she is studying in her Masters program. She shares one of her favourite readings with me and it just happens to be on the topic of dignity.

I am going to share with you the Ten Essential Elements of Dignity and hope that you will share it with others because at the end of the day we are all trying to do our best and in that "trying" we deserve dignity.

Enjoy the break everyone, come back fulfilled.

- Al Morrison



How intentional are you about student work groups?

Group work is bread and butter methodology for most teachers...we put students in discussion groups, assignment groups, presentation groups, short-term and long-term groups....

However, did you know that (very) many students get stressed out by group work, find it a source of anxiety and DON'T LIKE IT AT ALL?

I learned this when I attended Kyra Garson's presentation at a recent one-day symposium sponsored by British Columbia Council for International Education (BCCIE) at Langara College. Kyra is the Intercultural Coordinator in the faculty of Student Development at Thompson Rivers University. A specialist in interculturalisation, Kyra began this research into "Enhancing Group Work for Intercultural Learning", got initial feedback from a high percentage of students that group work was "torture", and then broadened her enquiry to find out why so many students get stressed by group work and what could be done about it.



Some reasons reported to Kyra why students found group work stressful:

- ◆ workload imbalance - some students don't pull their weight
- ◆ time constraints - students were expected to meet outside class, but many had other commitments, including work
- ◆ the expectation to work with 'strangers' and conversely the pressure to work with friends
- ◆ cross-cultural differences and perceived language barriers
- ◆ anxiety about group 'grades' and methods of assessment

Some students are put into groups at the beginning of term to work on high stakes, long term projects with little input about how to form or function in the groups.

Kyra worked with Robin Reid, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Adventure, Culinary Arts and Tourism, to develop and report on "intentional group formation" and "evaluation that includes the process of working with others".

Developing groups intentionally is a lot of work. In this case, the instructor surveyed students, solicited their input and formed the groups very deliberately (think flash cards and a bottle of wine) balancing personal and cultural communication styles, skill sets, and diversity (to include differing perspectives, cultures, languages). There was also a "...group charter to deal with challenges".

A significant step in forming the groups so they worked effectively was that prior to their actual group work, students received instruction and completed learning activities to prepare them for it. This included **intercultural communication theory, the valuing of diversity, the reality of working across differences and the value of developing intercultural skills for their future.**

Despite the time it took, the preparation paid off and student feedback showed that the **intentional** group formation and evaluation that included self and peer assessment improved the functionality of groups and the quality of the assignments produced; students, were also, mostly, happier. For instance, the research showed that 72% of students began the semester with a negative (53%) or neutral (19%) attitude towards group work, but 78% finished having had a positive experience.

This is a brief and limited account of the work that Kyra and Robin did, but I feel compelled to report on the presentation of their work so as we continue to get students to work in groups, we do it with intention and stress our students less.... and as for 'us' instructors, it's the bottle of wine as carrot.

- Leigh Sunderland



Things You Didn't Know You Needed to Know

Setting up your D2L course sites for next term?

Are you wondering if your students know how to access D2L?

If you have a D2L course site, you should know that students will not have access to that site **until the first day of classes**, although they can login to D2L one week earlier.

(NOTE that wait-listed students won't have access to D2L until they are officially enrolled).



Here in eLearning, we often help students who aren't sure if their courses have a D2L site, or who don't know how to find and log into D2L. We are, of course, happy to help these students out, working with them to log into D2L and to see if their course sites are there. However, a preferred way for students to find out if their course(s) use D2L is directly from their instructor before the term begins, or in class on the first day.

One way some faculty members let students know about D2L is by emailing them before classes begin, both to let them know what to expect on *Day 1*, and to let them know that they will have a D2L site associated with their course. This is a great way to both connect with your students before you see them for the first time, and alleviate some of the anxiety they may have about that first day of class.

While the specific content of that email will depend how you use D2L for your course, one thing you could include is a handout showing your students how to login to D2L from the Camosun home page. If you would like to download and use a copy of the eLearning tutorial *Logging into D2L – a Student Tutorial*, you will find the most recent (PDF) version at <https://sites.camosun.ca/elearning/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2017/11/LoggingIntoD2L-August2017.pdf>.

And remember, if you have questions about using D2L, come see us at eLearning. We are available by email (desupport@camosun.ca) or by phone (-3488), or just come by to say hi in our Lansdowne office (Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning) in the library (LLC158), or our Interurban office in Campus Centre, room 236.

And if you have any questions or want any other tutorials on D2L, please let me know at schudele@camosun.ca. I will be glad to help you out!

- Emily Schudel



A Counsellor's Tale

I can still remember the day when I first raised my hand to answer a question in a large college classroom. I have a clear recollection of the professor's voice saying "yes, Scott?" Although I can't remember whether I gave the correct answer to the question or not, I *do* remember answering it, because speaking up in class was a big step for me. Prior to that day I had experienced a paralyzing anxiety whenever I tried to say something in front of a group. Each time I tried to work up the courage to speak publically, my heart would race and sweat would flow from my palms and forehead. More often than not I would rush right out of the classroom.

This time, however, I had some new tools to bolster my courage. I took a deep breath, remembered what my counsellor and I talked about at our last session, and took the plunge. To my great surprise, I heard my voice speaking out in front of the class. To the rest of the class, this appeared to be a routine occurrence – it was the simple act of a student answering a question. To me, however, the moment represented an important turning point: it was me moving away from living in a shell and beginning to express who I really was, on the inside, to the rest of the world. During my college years I spent many hours with my counsellor, and it was through that process that I began to examine who I truly was, what mattered to me most in life, and how I might express myself in the world. My experiences there directed me toward the life path I now find myself on - a college counsellor working with students who, like myself, may find these years to be some of the most critical in their lives.

As a counsellor at Camosun, I support students who are experiencing personal challenges and reexamining their beliefs, habits, and values. Most are looking to make changes in their lives, or are seeking help with academic and career direction.

"It was me moving away from living in a shell and beginning to express who I really was."

Working in mental health and addictions often opens the door to exploring people's personal and family relationships, identity issues, histories, hopes, dreams, and goals. For many, personal growth means facing difficulties and learning from them. Sometimes this means overcoming obstacles through practical and goal oriented work, and sometimes we are better off to 'be' with our challenges, give them some reflective time and energy, and try to make sense of them in the broader unfolding of our lives. Beyond finding solutions to problems, growth, happiness and a sense of wholehearted success often come via a full engagement in life.

As a third generation English-Lebanese cis-gendered male living and working on the unceded territories of the Lekwungen and SENĆOŦEN speaking people, I am continually reminded that I hold significant privilege and power. It is therefore an ethical imperative for me to situate experiences of distress and my position as a professional in a context where inequality, racism, and gender-based, economic, and colonial violence is ongoing. It is also important for me to make visible the ways the people respond to and these dominant structures. For example, I remember speaking with a female client whom a psychiatrist had diagnosed as anxious and insomniac. After a brief conversation with her, I learned that she had been staying awake at night because she was listening for signs to determine whether or not a particular person in the house she was living in had been drinking. She felt a strong needed to protect another female living in the house, and so her 'insomnia' could instead be understood as a form of vigilance. Working with the student to understand her 'insomnia' and 'anxiety' in this way shifted the meaning from pathology to one of positive value – acting as a protector for others. Our work shifted the problem from an individual and internal problem to a contextual one where gender-based violence persist. By co-creating meaningful interpretations of experience with clients, counsellors and other professionals have the opportunity to bolster people's attempts to mitigate harm, empower themselves, and preserve their dignity.



- Scott Kouri

Spotlight on Professional Development

PD Committee Update

The PD Committee has been busy this fall at their regular biweekly meetings, approving 69 short-term and in-house PD activities so far since September and conducting its yearly review of the *PD Guidelines* and forms. Unlike the Committee's busiest time in the spring when, for instance, the Committee reviewed a record 52 applications at one meeting, the fall is typically the slowest time of the year for PD applications since most faculty members are teaching. This gives the Committee necessary time for the yearly review. The updated PD Guidelines are now complete and are posted on the CCFA website for your use: <http://camosunfaculty.ca/professional-development/pd-forms/>

PD Acknowledgements

Your PD Committee and CCFA Administrative Services Coordinators deserve a hearty round of applause and great thanks for the work that they do. The PD Committee members, representing all schools in the College, volunteer their time for the Committee work, so they are engaged in this above their regular College work. In addition, the Committee includes two exempt members who also contribute to the work. The Committee members take their mandate in 10.02 of the Collective Agreement to "receive and assess the merits of all requests for use of professional development funds and [to] direct the Bursar in the allocation of the funds" very seriously, so the CCFA faculty members can be confident that the PD funds are in good hands. Peg Ford and Autumn Frimann also ensure that the PD budget is in good order, that individual applications are recorded, and that they are processed through Finance in a timely manner.

So many thanks to:

- Jacquie Conway (CETL & CCFA Rep)
- Blair Fisher (A & S Rep)
- Larry Anthony (A&S Rep)
- Karen Giffon (Bus Rep)
- Mandy Hayre (HHS Rep)
- Gill Atkinson (Access Rep)
- Gwenda Bryan (Lib Rep)
- Barb Severyn (Admin Rep)
- Tim Walzak (Admin Rep)

2018 Long-term Applications

Deadline: January 26, 12 pm, 2018
Bring submissions to Y221

For faculty members who are intending to apply for Long-Term Professional Development for the next fiscal year (April 1, 2017 – March 31, 2018), please note the application deadline.

PD Guidelines and Application Forms

The Long-Term PD application forms have been updated, so please use the most recent forms.

If you have questions, please contact Peg or Autumn in the CCFA Office.



SHOWCASE 2017
Professional, Scholarly & Creative Activity

Share your scheduled development/professional development work with the Camosun College community and beyond by submitting a short description for *Camosun Showcase 2018*. Once again, Camosun College's Learning Services will produce an online and print publication highlighting Camosun faculty's professional and scholarly activities. If you have a current or recent research project or a scholarly or creative activity that you have conducted within the last year, we invite you to submit a brief description of your work.

Publication Date: April 2018

Submission Intention Deadline: December 15, 2017: Send a short expression of your interest to Elizabeth West (west@camosun.bc.ca). If you have any questions, please contact Elizabeth.

Upcoming dates for PD Meetings:

Fall/Winter Bi-weekly Dates: Dec. 19, Jan. 9, 23; Feb 6, 20; Mar. 6, 20

A Taxing Christmas Carol

Some seasonal advice from Mahesh Kumar for anyone planning a New Year tax review with a little help from Charles Dickens

It was Christmas Eve and Ebenezer Scrooge was as cold as the ice on the end of his nose.

“Bah humbug!” he screamed to the carol singers who wished him a Merry Christmas.

Scrooge didn't believe in Christmas or in giving presents. His pleasures in life were accumulating wealth and avoiding taxes. The only reason he was content to grow old was so that he could claim the additional annual age credit of \$1,084 and receive Old Age Security.

That night, Scrooge was woken from his slumber to see the ghost of his old auditor, who had died the previous year after seeing what Scrooge wanted to claim as allowable business expenses.

“I am the Ghost of Christmas Past,” laughed the ghost as he showed Scrooge scenes of his childhood and his friendly mother. “Look how she cared for you,” he said. “Yet this year she will die of hypothermia while her nursing home saves up to pay 5% GST on heating. Why don't you give the nursing home a donation this Christmas?”

“Bah humbug!” Scrooge replied.

“It could have tax advantages for you,” said the ghost.

Scrooge smiled. “What do you mean?” he said.

“If you donate to a housing corporation in Canada consisting exclusively to provide low-cost housing for the aged, you can claim a tax credit of 15% on the first \$200 and 29% on any amounts in excess of \$200.”

Scrooge's smile grew broader.

A few hours later he was woken again, this time by the Ghost of Christmas Present. The phantom led the cheapskate to the ghostly queue at his local tax office where he was shown a vision of his young grandchildren, in tears because they had no presents.

“Why don't you give them something this season of goodwill?” asked the ghost. “There could be a tax advantage.”

Scrooge's eyes sparkled. “What do you mean?” he said.

“Give them some money to save. Any interest will be covered by their basic personal credit of \$1,745. Better yet, invest the money for them in a Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) to fund their post-secondary education. The Canada Education Savings Grant (CESG) means the government will contribute up to \$500 to the plan annually based on your contributions and the Canada Learning Bond (CLB) means they will also contribute up to \$2,000 over 15 years.”

Scrooge smiled again.

He was woken for a third time in the dim morning. “I am the ghost of Christmas Yet to Come,” said the visitor, who promptly pulled Scrooge off to his own funeral. Scrooge was terrified, not at the severe lack of mourners but at the size of his final tax bill.

“Why didn't you give presents each Christmas to avoid having such a large tax bill when you die?”

“Tell me more,” came the reply, as Scrooge beamed another smile.

“All of your investments are deemed to be disposed when you die, so any accrued income they have earned is subject to tax on your final return. It is best to give these investments to your heirs over time to spread the gains over multiple tax years and stay in a lower tax bracket.”

On Christmas morning Scrooge carried out all his tax saving plans and even organized a Christmas party for his family and friends in celebration of lower tax charges.

But Scrooge did not survive to see the benefits of his plans. He died that night, taken from this world because he gave presents for tax purposes rather than out of kindness. Even in his final moments, however, he was said to be smiling, because he discovered that his estate would receive a one-time CPP death benefit of up to \$2,500, his wife would receive a survivor's pension based on his contributions, and his wife could apply for an Allowance for a Survivor at age 60 if her income was under \$23,928 and she had not remarried.

It's exactly how he would have wanted to go!

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year To All My Friends & Colleagues at Camosun College

- Mahesh Kumar



CCFA Camosun College Faculty Association

Your 2017-18 Executive

Al Morrison	BUS	President
Tanya Kirkland	ACCESS	Vice President
Valerie Montague	T&T	Secretary
Shannon Black	BUS	Treasurer
Judith Hunt	ACCESS	Contract Management Chair
Chris Ayles	A&S	Contract Negotiation Chair
Elizabeth West	ACCESS	PD Committee Chair
Emrys Prussin	A&S	Member At Large (Term)
Jody Isaac	ACCESS	Member At Large
Nasr Khalia	A&S	Member At Large

CCFA Administrative Services

Mon.-Fri. 8:15 AM - 3:00 PM Y221

Phone: 250-370-3655

[Peg Ford](#) FordP@camosun.bc.ca

[Autumn Frimann](#) FrimannA@camosun.bc.ca

Please visit our CCFA [website](http://www.camosunfaculty.ca) at www.camosunfaculty.ca