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The Atkinson Centre for Mature and Part-time Students NEWSLETTER

Happy Spring Everyone!

There were days when it looked like winter would never end, but here we are at the end of another academic session. The ACMAPS team had a busy winter term. Some initiatives that we began in the fall were continued, such as our brown bag lunches, an exam-prep workshop, and offering students a quiet study space during the exam period. We also launched some new initiatives, including a single parents group, and we participated in special events such as a “meet and greet” of mature students at Glendon. At the March and April Galas, we had the opportunity to meet several prospective mature and part-time students. Finally, as part of our ongoing outreach efforts, Matthew Peattie and I visited several Faculty Council meetings to share information with faculty members on the mature and part-time student body at York. Several people expressed surprise over the numbers: in the current academic year, there were over 8000 York undergraduate students aged 25 and above, and more than 7000 undergraduate students of all ages were pursuing their studies on a part-time basis. So, for all of you who are mature students and/or studying part-time, you are not alone!

I am pleased to report that in February 2008, two full-time staff members joined the ACMAPS team. Karen Tait is our student advisor and Navinie Somaroo-Durga is our receptionist and administrative coordinator. You can read more about them inside the Newsletter. If you have not yet met them, please drop by to say hello.

All the best for a pleasant and sunny summer!

Norma Sue Fisher-Stitt
Director, ACMAPS

Summer Office Hours:

Mon 8:30 am - 7:00 pm
Tue 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Wed 8:30 am - 7:00 pm
Thur 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Fri 8:30 am - 3:30 pm (June – August)
Sat See ACMAPS website
Sun Closed

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ACMAPS Listserv

ACMAPS has a listserv that will be used for a monthly newsletter, event listings and announcements relevant to mature and part-time students. If you would like to be added to the ACMAPS listserv, please e-mail acmaps@yorku.ca. If you are a Facebook user, please look up our profile on the York University Canada network and feel free to add us to your friends to receive regular status and event updates (our profile name is Atkinson Centre).

ACMAPS on the Web

The ACMAPS website is up and running! For all the latest about the Atkinson Centre for Mature and Part-time Students, check www.yorku.ca/acmaps. The website includes up-to-the-minute event listings for mature students, staff bios, FAQs for mature students, and links to important academic and student services at York.

Mature Students at York

As part of its mandate to lead and facilitate initiatives responding to the needs of mature and part-time students at York, ACMAPS spent some time this year working to understand the mature student demographic at York. One of the basic questions we asked in our first year was how many mature students are there at York?

The answer to this question is not entirely simple. There are many types of mature students at York: students who were admitted in the mature student category (an admissions category for students who are over 21, have been out of high school for at least two years and have not completed a full year of post-secondary studies); transfers from colleges; students who have 'reactivated' or are returning to complete a degree started some years earlier. Many students embark on their post-secondary careers with years of personal and work experience under their belts. Some younger students we have spoken to consider themselves mature students as they balance family life or children with a heavy work schedule and university courses, while other students admitted in the mature student category see their experience as no different from that of any other student.

As a centre, ACMAPS is open to any student who feels they will benefit from our services. Whatever the admissions category or age, many York students share the experience of returning to the classroom after some years away from a formal educational context, or of balancing work and part-time studies. ACMAPS is a resource for all mature and part-time students at York.

In thinking about adult learners, one demographic snapshot we considered was the number of currently enrolled undergraduate students over the age of twenty-five. In the Fall Term, 2007, there were over 8000 currently enrolled undergraduates at York over the age of twenty five. The largest single group of mature students at York is in the Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies, with 3251 students 25 years of age or over, (34% of the students in the Faculty). In the Atkinson Faculty, 1417 of those students were

between the ages of 30 and 50. The Faculty of Health had 1524 undergraduate students over the age of 25 (18% of their student body), and the Faculty of Arts 2125 students (13% of their student body). Mature Students are also very well represented at Glendon, with 549 currently enrolled undergraduates (over 22% of their undergraduate enrolment). Mature students are a significant part of the undergraduate demographic and the numbers alone provide a snapshot of the importance of mature undergraduates in the educational mission of York.

During the Winter Term 2008, ACMAPS visited the Faculty Councils in the Faculty of Health, the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Fine Arts, and the Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies to introduce ourselves and to ask questions about mature students at York. We shared Faculty specific data concerning mature student enrolment with each council. Mature undergraduates are an important part of every Faculty at York, and the faculty members we spoke with are very aware of these students in the classroom and the university community at large. Faculty members left us with a number of questions including queries about how York provides for students who work full time during the day, and the question of how teaching mature students might influence pedagogy. ACMAPS is looking forward to further research on mature students in the classroom and further discussion of these issues across the University. We invite any faculty and students interested in research on mature and part-time students to be in touch with us.



Mature Students at Glendon

On January 10, the Glendon office of Student Affairs / *affaires étudiantes* hosted a mature student reception at the Café du Manoir in Glendon Hall. The reception was hosted by Glendon Associate Principal, Louise Lewin, Aaron Doupe manager of Student Affairs, and Leigh Sanger, a mature student at Glendon.

The Glendon campus is home to over 500 mature students (during the fall term 2007, undergraduate students aged over 25 years, accounted for 22% of the students at Glendon). Louise Lewin noted that “the students present at the reception were very enthusiastic about the opportunity to develop initiatives at Glendon geared to mature students.” There were also discussions about creating a committee that would survey the particular needs of mature students at Glendon. The ACMAPS staff enjoyed the chance to visit the Glendon Campus and the opportunity to meet Glendon’s vibrant community of mature students. We are looking forward to many more visits!

Étudiants matures à Glendon

Le 10 janvier dernier, le Bureau des affaires étudiantes de Glendon a organisé une réception pour les étudiants matures au Café du Manoir situé au Manoir Glendon. Les étudiants ont été accueillis à cette réception par Louise Lewin, principale adjointe, Services aux étudiants, Aaron Doupe, directeur des affaires d’étudiantes et Leigh Sanger, une étudiante mature à Glendon.

Plus de 500 étudiants matures fréquentent le campus Glendon. Il est à noter que durant la session d’automne 2007, les étudiants du 1er cycle âgés de plus de 25 ans représentaient 22% des étudiants de Glendon. Les étudiants présents lors de la réception ont fait preuve d’enthousiasme concernant la possibilité de créer de nouvelles initiatives adaptés aux étudiants matures. Il y a eu, en outre, des discussions au sujet de la création d’un comité qui examinerait les besoins particuliers des étudiants matures de Glendon. Le personnel d’ACMAPS a apprécié la chance de visiter le campus de Glendon et l’occasion de rencontrer la communauté vibrante des étudiants matures de Glendon. Nous attendons avec impatience d’autres visites!

NAVIG8 - GET IN GEAR FOR YOUR NEXT YEAR

Are you a mature student finishing your first year?

Navig8 is your e-place to find need-to-know information and online tools.

Visit the following website for more information: www.yorku.ca/navig8

Faculty of Health Open House

The Faculty of Health Office of Student and Academic Services (HH OSAS) and the Atkinson Centre for Mature and Part-time Students held an open house for mature students in the Faculty Health on January 31, 2007.

The Faculty of Health has a significant demographic of mature students. In the Fall Term 2007, there were 1524 undergraduate students in the Faculty of Health aged 25 years or older, a number which represents over 18% of the students registered in the Faculty. Mature students in the Faculty of Health make important contributions to their programs, bringing much real world experience and perspective to their classes.

“We always enjoying going out to the Faculties and meeting students on their home turf” says Matthew Peattie, the Associate Director of ACMAPS. “For many mature students, making connections with other students who share similar experiences is very important, and provides opportunities for networking, and academic support. Part of the ACMAPS mandate is to help facilitate these connections.” Matthew Peattie, Associate Director of ACMAPS, ate more than his share of the cookies. He is looking forward to the next open house.

The Mature Student Experience Saturday Seminar

On Saturday February 23, ACMAPS hosted a Saturday Seminar on the *Mature Student Experience* in the Senior Common Room at Founders College. The seminar featured a day of presentations, discussions, and panels on the experiences of mature students at York. The program included a panel discussion featuring current mature students, presentations from the Learning Skills program and Career Centre, as well as a panel of faculty members who themselves had begun their academic careers as mature students at York.

The student panel featured five current and former mature students who gave presentations

on the topic “How I survived and thrived as a mature student.” Their stories of the challenges and rewards of returning to post-secondary studies were inspiring and the chance to hear about their experiences first hand gave a unique perspective on being a student at York. Panel participants were Margaret Campbell, a BA student in Humanities, Bertie Friedlander, an MES candidate in Environmental Studies, Sherry Stein, a fourth year Honours student in Health and Society and Psychology, and Adele Wilshire, a first year student in Anthropology. Jeff Kushner, an alumnus of the BA program in International Studies at Glendon, looked back on his experience as a mature student from the perspective of a recent graduate.

Cathy Boyd-Withers from the Learning Skills program led a presentation and discussion of time management skills – Balancing the demands of studies, work and family is a particular challenge for many mature students, and the chance to share experiences and strategies was invaluable.

Dr. Andrea O'Reilly, Associate Professor in the School of Women's Studies and Director of the Association for Research on Mothering, spoke about her current research on mothers in the academia.

ACMAPS wishes to acknowledge that the seminar was partially supported by a donation received by ACMAPS.

Be a Mature Student Ambassador! - Fall Term 2008

We are seeking current mature students to participate in the ACMAPS Mature Student Ambassador program for the Fall Term, 2008. Volunteers will be paired with a small group of incoming mature students to welcome and guide new students through orientation and the first months of term.

Mature student ambassadors will provide incoming mature students with a connection to students who already know their way around York and who have experienced the challenges and rewards of embarking on post-secondary studies. We hope that experienced mature students will make use of this opportunity to get involved, engaged and reacquainted with all that York has to offer.

We hope many of you will be willing to share your wisdom and experience with incoming students as they make the transition into their first year of studies (I'm sure each of you has a list of things that worked for you in your first year, as well as things you wish you had known!).

Mature student ambassadors will be invited to an information session in August, and the Mature and Transfer Student Orientation session on August 16th or 27th. Ambassadors will be expected to be in touch with their students at least once in September and October (we'll help make this easy for you by providing events and programs at ACMAPS that you can attend along with your group).

If you are interested in being a mature student ambassador, please be in touch with us at acmaps@yorku.ca or be in touch with Matthew or Karen at 416 736 5770.

The ACMAPS Staff

During the winter term, ACMAPS welcomed two new staff members; Karen Tait in the role of Student Advisor, and Navinie Somaroo-Durga as Receptionist and Administrative Coordinator. Karen and Navinie brought with them a wealth of experience both as students and staff members at York.

Karen was herself a mature student at York, graduating with a Bachelor of Human Resources in 2000 and a Bachelor's in Social Work in 2007. For the past seven years Karen has held various positions at York. Most recently, she was an Academic Advisor within the Faculty of Arts, Student Academic Centre.

Navinie is a graduate of York University and holds an Honours BA, Double Major in Law and Society and Sociology. Navinie has worked in various Faculties at York beginning as a work study student and remained at York after graduating in 2004. Prior to joining us at ACMAPS, Navinie was the Administrative Secretary for the School of Arts & Letters, Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies.

Single Parents Group at ACMAPS

by Karen Tait,
ACMAPS Advisor

In conversations about my own post-secondary education, I have often been asked "How did you do it?" Knowing that I have done many things in my life – some good, some bad, some perhaps best left in the unconscious mind unclaimed, I haven't always been sure exactly how to answer this question.

During the spring 2008 term, I sat in on two meetings of the single parents group at ACMAPS hosted by Joanne Kirzner from the CDC at York and found myself reflecting more and more on the

question: "How did I do it?" For me, at the time and in the context in which it was asked, I never felt this question warranted a specific answer. Within the single parent support group, I found the voice to answer the question of how I managed to complete my undergraduate degrees while balancing a full-time job and being a single parent to a young girl who is now a teenager. I was able to not only claim my experience, but also along with the other participants, share my life hurdles, individuality and strengths.

I believe the key motivation for each of us is to recognize that our goals do not become stagnant around the identity of being a "single parent". I challenge

myself, and other students who are single parents (male and female) within the York community to join in and be active participants. There is a sense that resonates from having participated in these meetings both from a professional and personal stand point, that the Single Parents Group provides a positive space for going the distance in comradeship, beyond the silence of the voices and stories that have not yet been shared.

I look forward to the upcoming group meetings in the 2008-09 academic year, and I invite any interested students to be in touch. I can be reached at ktait@yorku.ca

ADVISING “FYI”

Does a chess master go into a game without a strategy in place to outwit the opponent and win the match? Would the Raptor’s basketball team enter the court without a game plan to outplay the opposing team and emerge as the winner?

The following “FYI” is an outline of key strategic points that will help you plan for a successful academic year.

- ✚ ***EXHALE!*** Give yourself a silent cheer! You have survived the academic session/year (even though there might have been the occasional moments when you wanted to throw in the towel!!). Take the summer months to find the time to relax, refresh and rejuvenate the body, mind and spirit. If you are taking a summer course, try to find some time between terms for yourself.
- ✚ Review your degree/program requirements: Check the program website and pick-up any printed materials such as supplemental calendars from the department office
- ✚ Book an academic advising appointment with your program, department or Faculty Advising Centre. Remember to express your concerns, clarify all questions (write down all questions before the appointment – remember that there is no such thing as a stupid question, especially when you want to clarify details about your program and enrollment).
- ✚ Check enrollment dates/times for Fall/Winter 2008-09 – Prepare in advance for your enrollment date. Set up a list of your first choice and alternate courses for enrollment; there is a hard copy of an enrollment worksheet available online that you can print off and use to input your course choice (s). http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/pdf/enrol_worksheet.pdf. It is a good idea to have more than one option in terms of your schedule. In an ideal world, all the courses of choice would be available when it comes time for enrollment. However, the course enrollment world is not ideal and courses fill up. Ensure that you note the days, time and location of your courses. As well, be diligent in terms selecting a reasonable course load – ---BALANCE! is the key.
- ✚ Check online for posted outlines and required texts. An excellent strategy for success is to begin readings in advance.
- ✚ Network with other students.
- ✚ Be aware of all posted deadline date (s): academic drop deadlines according to session (F/W/Y); refund dates; etc.
- ✚ Preparation includes fully utilizing all the resources on campus – along with the Atkinson Centre for Mature and Part-time Students there are services through the following offices;
 - Student Community Leadership Development
 - Counseling and Development Centre and Atkinson Counselling and Supervision Centre
 - Career Centre
 - Centre for Academic Writing, Atkinson Writing Program, and other writing centres
 - Learning Skills Program
 - YUMSO

YUMSO Update

YUMSO is a student group dedicated to building the mature student community at York. YUMSO has a listserv with over 600 members, a website, a *Facebook* group and sends out regular e-newsletters and bulletins.

YUMSO's office is located at 101E Vanier College and offers a place for mature students to put up their feet, make some tea, eat lunch, chat, or do some homework. The office posts hours on their website www.yorku.ca/yumso that are updated to reflect volunteer schedules. Congratulations go to Kristine Hall who becomes the new YUMSO president May 1st, to Eugenia "Jenny" Morino and Charmaine Marcus who become the new VPs Keele, and to Leigh Sanger who maintains her role as VP Glendon. Edward Fenner, former YUMSO president was featured in the March edition of YorkU magazine. Congratulations and thanks to Edward for all his work and service for mature Students at York!

All mature students are welcome to get involved with YUMSO and make the most of this student initiative.

Mature and Transfer Student Orientation 2008

Saturday, August 16, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm, Vari Hall

Or

Wednesday, August 27, 6:30 pm – 10 pm, Vari Hall

The Mature and Transfer Orientation will be offered twice, once on Saturday August 16th from 10-2pm and again on Wednesday August 27 from 6:30-10 pm in Vari Hall. The orientation will provide incoming mature and transfer students with an introduction to their colleges, a chance to meet other mature students, general information about York, and introductions to academic and student service support areas at York. The ACMAPS staff is looking forward to meeting the new cohort of mature students and will work to provide incoming students with the tools to thrive in their first year at York. As a complement to the orientation, ACMAPS is collaborating with the Learning Skills Program, the Centre for Academic

Writing, the Atkinson Writing Programs, CNS and SCLD to offer sessions that will provide ongoing introductions to resources at York throughout the Fall Term.

We encourage all incoming mature and transfer students to attend one of the orientations and take advantage of these sessions.

For more information see the ACMAPS website www.yorku.ca/acmaps