

The Atkinson Centre for Mature and Part-time Students NEWSLETTER

Receiving the Torch

On August 7, 2007 I began my tenure as the inaugural director of the Atkinson Centre for Mature and Part-time Students, more commonly referred to as ACMAPS. From the outset, the ACMAPS mandate was regarded as a continuation of the mission and tradition long-established by Atkinson College and later the Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies: to offer programs and support services designed to meet the needs of mature and part-time students. With the merging of the Atkinson and Arts Faculties on July 1, 2009 to form the new Faculty of Liberal & Professional Studies, I want to acknowledge once again York University's historical association with the Atkinson name and philosophy, the contributions made to adult learners by Atkinson over the years, and the mandate of ACMAPS to ensure York's continued commitment to adult learners.

In the two years that have elapsed since our launch, ACMAPS has continued to grow and to establish its presence on campus. In addition to the director and the associate director, the office now has a full-time student advisor as well as a full-time administrative coordinator. We consistently refer to the four pillars that underpin all our efforts and projects: access, support, advocacy, and research. The legacy of Atkinson is firmly rooted in all that we do, from assisting prospective students to hosting orientation sessions to developing a Mature Student Success Program. Students from all Faculties come through the ACMAPS door, and we are committed to making post-secondary education a positive experience for York students in this demographic. I personally feel privileged to have been handed the torch that first lit the path for mature students at York, and I thank the Atkinson faculty members and staff who worked over the years to make the university dream a reality for so many adult learners.

Very best wishes,
Norma Sue

Office Hours:

Mon 8:30 am - 7:00 pm
Tue 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Weds 8:30 am - 7:00 pm
Thurs 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Fri 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Sat See ACMAPS website
Sun Closed

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Website: www.yorku.ca/acmaps

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

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.

ACCESS

SUPPORT

ADVOCACY

RESEARCH

Adviser's Corner

*“Fighting for something you believe in
Fighting for something you have come to love
Often when you think the fight is over,
It truly has just begun”*

C. Rivers

As an advisor at ACMAPS, outside of the daily opportunity to build my skills, I am privy to the varied and diverse student experience. I have noticed that patterns and consistent recurring themes have emerged with each student advised over the past year. Thus, I thought there was no better time than the present to acknowledge the importance of focus, determination and strength. Each is necessary in a student's academic journey. Please take notice of the word “*acknowledge*”; all too often the significance of maintaining each of these components becomes clouded if not forgotten altogether.

Focus is a given. From the very moment in which the thought of attending University moves from an unconscious into a conscious goal, you have focus. Take for example the prospective mature student who applied for admission to the upcoming academic session but unfortunately lacked sufficient academic preparation. The student viewed the gap in preparation only as a temporary set back, kept focus on the goal, and has initiated upgrading through enrollment in a University Preparation course offered by the Department of Continuing Education.

Determination is that habit of the mind that ensures we stay the course and that we accomplish our specific goals. Sometimes determination is manifested in a much repeated mantra: “by any means necessary”. The means will often consist of one being an active, not just reactive, participant. It entails a reconstruction of a mindset that reminds us that we are not owed this opportunity and that bearing the status of mature student entails a certain obligation to ourselves to do our best. In the moments that frustration kicks in (believe me it sometimes does), try resorting to strategically reestablishing determination by bringing yourself back to your goals – the “*focus*”. This will result in an overall realignment, which is necessary for the onset of progression. This year, I was personally inspired by the determination of two continuing students. Each worked hard this year to remove themselves from academic probation, achieving Honours standing, and, ultimately, creating more options in view of their individual focus.

Strength fuels determination. Building on the strength of your body, spirit and mind requires making effective use

of the various resources provided by the University, all of which aim to support overall well-being and student success. Whether it is recreation for the body through services at the Tait Mackenzie Centre or embarking on building spirit with your fellow students through participation in any of the numerous events held by the different student association on campus or, for the mind, taking in personal development and skill building workshops offered by ACMAPS, the Writing Centre or Counselling and Disabilities Services, all you have to do is use them. I should highlight that YUMSO – the York University Mature Student Organization – offers regular brown bag lunches and social gatherings to give mature students a chance to meet, dispelling the often voiced myth that says, “I must be the only mature student on campus.” As well, ACMAPS offers its Mature Student Success Program that runs throughout the entire Fall/Winter 09/10 academic year. I had the privilege again this past year to participate in the regular sessions for the Single Parent/Parent group held at ACMAPS. Many examples of the role and importance of staying strong filtered through the stories of the participants.

Whether you are a prospective, newly admitted or continuing student, the components of focus, determination and strength will play important roles in your success. Each works in combination to help you achieve. From an advising perspective I cannot emphasize enough the following point: it really should not be a question of whether you have the time to acknowledge your focus, determination and strength, but more so a matter of making the time. One way to do this is through writing a mantra. This being said, my mantra for the coming year is “nothing tried, nothing ventured, nothing gained.” What will your mantra be?

Fall Reading Week: Early help for greater success!

This year, for the first time, York will hold a pan-university Fall Reading Week. From October 10-16, students will have an opportunity to reflect on their transition to university studies, catch up on any outstanding work and connect to supports available on campus.

Administrative and service units on both campuses are busy preparing a wide variety of events, all geared to help students maximize their experience of York. Topics include:

- Academic Skills Development
- Academic Advising
- Campus Involvement
- Career Development

Most events will be concentrated on Wednesday, October 14 and Thursday, October 15, though events will take place throughout the week.

A special web site outlining how students can assess their needs and connect with the array of supports available has been launched at: www.yorku.ca/frw. There is even a Facebook page in the works where students can learn more about what will be taking place.

Mature Student Mentors

Remember what it was like to begin university in your first year?

Now imagine that an experienced, caring upper-year student was available to offer guidance and advice throughout the first few months of the term. Imagine your relief as someone helped you to navigate the services and physical space of the university. Enter the Mature Student Mentors program at ACMAPS to do just that.

Mature and part-time students starting at York this fall will have access to peer mentors who will provide information and guidance to help new students make a smooth transition to university and set the stage for their success at York.

In all, six students were hand-picked to serve as volunteer mentors this year. Their training will include information on York's vast array of student supports and services, and it will build on their excellent people skills with workshops on listening skills, providing feedback, and effecting referrals.

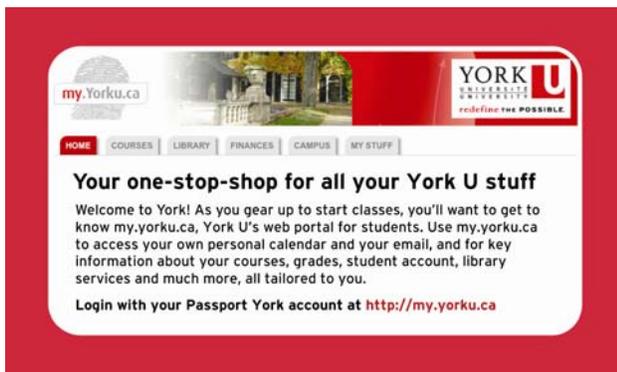
The goals of the program include contributing to student success and retention and growing mature student community on campus through volunteer service.

Schedules and contact information will be available in the ACMAPS office in early October.



ACMAPS

Your Student Web Portal



The student portal is a central information source for all York University students. Students must create their personal my.yorku.ca website in order to use the student portal. Students can customize their individual information and are able to access York university web-based applications, information and news that they want and consider relevant to their life at York.

When you first log into the portal, you'll be presented with content customized to you, based on your student profile (your year, course of study, etc.) It will work much like other portals such as iGoogle™ and MyYahoo!™, but it will contain York-specific information. Be sure to look for the ACMAPS portlet and add it to your view to receive our latest news items.

When my.yorku.ca is complete, you will have access to your course information (instructor, times, course Web site, etc.), grades, student account information, and more. You will be able to use the portal to check your yorku.ca email and, if you choose, your personal IMAP email accounts as well.

Your portal calendar will be automatically loaded with the class times and locations for the courses in which you are registered, and you will be able to add campus events to your calendar, as well as your own reminders and appointments. You will also be able to subscribe to external (non-York) newsfeeds via the portal.

If you have general questions, or are interested in learning more about the student portal please visit the following link: www.yorku.ca/stportal/

Mature Student Success Program Fall, 2009

ACMAPS is once again offering the Mature Student Success Program. The series comprises a number of seminars and workshops grouped into two streams: Research & Writing and Student Life. Each stream encompasses learning goals tied to student success.

The Research & Writing stream roughly traces the steps of the writing process (though later describes the recursive nature of these steps) and includes the following sessions:

1. Analyzing an assignment and pre-writing strategies
2. Research strategies, reading and note-taking
3. Outlining, critical thinking and writing a first draft
4. Revision strategies, citations and academic integrity
5. Putting the process together and using feedback constructively

The Student Life stream emphasizes some of the personal and academic skills that support student success. Sessions include the following:

1. An introduction to computing resources at York University
2. Time and stress management
3. Exam preparation and study strategies
4. Life outside the classroom
5. Looking ahead to graduate and professional schools

For schedule and registration details, please click on: www.yorku.ca/acmaps/events.html