

# The Atkinson Centre for Mature and Part-time Students NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the winter term. Most of you are continuing your studies, so January means a return to routines (often too busy!) and re-establishing your weekly patterns for study, work, family, etc. However, there are also students who begin their studies at York in January.

Whether you are a new or continuing student, one of the “secrets” of academic success is engagement. How we engage, and to what extent, can vary tremendously. Ideally, we hope that all York students have opportunities to interact with one another and with faculty or staff members, outside class times, but we also know that adult learners and part-time students can sometimes find it difficult to feel engaged. Perhaps you do not see anyone in your class who looks to be your age; or maybe you are dashing between work/family responsibilities and class, arriving just in time or leaving immediately after. No matter what your personal circumstances, it is important to find ways through which to become engaged that work for you. If you have time between classes, even once each week, you might arrange to have coffee with

classmates to discuss the course material or to study together. You can also use time between classes to attend a Learning Skills or other academic session. Joining a student club or volunteering to be a peer mentor offer additional possibilities for rewarding experiences. Finally, if your usual weekly schedule prohibits any of the above, you can take advantage of the sessions and activities offered during Fall Co-curricular Week and to a lesser extent, during the February Reading Week, when classes are not held. If you want some help identifying ways through which you can become a more engaged member of the York community, ACMAPS can be a useful first stop. Of course, you are also welcome to drop by just to say hello.

In case we do not see you in the next few weeks, all the members of the ACMAPS team wish you much success in your academic endeavours this term.

Best wishes,  
Norma Sue

#### Office Hours (extended for 2010-2011!):

Mon	8:30 am - 7:00 pm
Tue	8:30 am - 7:00 pm
Weds	8:30 am - 7:00 pm
Thurs	8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Fri	8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Sat	9:00 am - 2:00 pm
Sun	Closed

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**Website:** [www.yorku.ca/acmaps](http://www.yorku.ca/acmaps)

#### ACMAPS Listserv

ACMAPS has a listserv that will be used to circulate 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](mailto:acmaps@yorku.ca). If you are a Facebook user, please look up our profile on the York University Canada network and add us to your friends to receive regular status and event updates (our like page name is York University - ACMAPS).

#### ACMAPS on the Web

For all the latest about the Atkinson Centre for Mature and Part-time Students, check [www.yorku.ca/acmaps](http://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

## New Faces at ACMAPS

If you haven't been into the ACMAPS office in a while, you'll see some new faces when you visit next! ACMAPS is pleased to welcome Mary Barbieri in the role of Receptionist and Administrative Secretary, replacing Navinie Somaroo-Durga while she is away this year on Maternity Leave.

Mary comes to us from the Office of the Dean, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies, and she brings a wide range of skills, including tremendous customer service, event management skills, and secretarial skills. Please feel free to stop by and introduce yourself!

The other new face at ACMAPS is Navinie's new baby boy! Deshan Videsh Durga was born on December 3, 2010, and while he isn't actually here in the office, we count him as a member of the ACMAPS family. Navinie is embracing her new role as mom and we wish her and her family all the best for a wonderful maternity leave year. Navinie will rejoin the ACMAPS team in early 2012.

## Meet the Mentors

Walking among you is a group of mature student volunteer mentors. These are committed, friendly individuals whose role it is to help you navigate your way around campus, connect with resources, and offer a peer-to-peer view on life at York.

Through the Fall term, our mentors met with many students, both through our Mature Student Academic Orientations and through office hours at ACMAPS. Topics ranged from finding campus services, to managing time and handling stress, to referrals to our in-house advisor, Karen Tait.

This Winter term, for the first time, incoming students will be assigned a mentor and contacted by email at strategic points through the academic term with information relevant to achieving student success. As well, you can continue to drop in on our mentors during office

hours or meet them via appointment in our office.

Mentors can answer questions, suggest resources, make referrals and – perhaps most uniquely – help students make sense of their experiences from the point of view of another adult learner. We encourage you to stop by our office in Central Square and get acquainted with our mentor team. Whether you have a concern that needs immediate attention or you just want to share your triumphs and successes, our mentor team is here for you.

For schedule details, click on:

<http://www.yorku.ca/acmaps/mentors.html>

## Mature Student Success Program Winter 2011

ACMAPS continues its popular Mature Student Success Programs this Winter term.

While these workshops are geared towards mature and part-time students, all students are welcome to attend. These sessions will particularly interest those who wish to develop their skills in writing, research, study strategies, time and stress management as well as those who are looking ahead toward the next steps in their degree.

### 1) Time and Stress Management

Making the transition to university can present some serious time and stress issues for even the best-prepared students. This session will provide an overview of time and stress management concepts and provide tools you can use right now to maximize your experience at York.

### 2) Exam Preparation and Study Strategies

Anxious about exams? Worried you might forget what you've learned? This session will offer practical strategies for maximizing your performance in tests and exams. Topics include understanding the goals of the course,

detecting themes in readings and lectures, memory strategies, and tips for exam day.

### **An Overview of the Writing Process**

Appropriate either as a solid introduction to university writing or as a refresher session, this session will describe the writing process, including elements of thinking through the topic, researching, beginning to write and revising.

### **Research Strategies, Reading and Note-taking**

Essay writing will be a lot easier and more interesting if you are working with relevant resources. In this session, you'll learn the ins and outs of using the Library's online research tools and documenting sources using the RefWorks bibliographic management tool. Additionally, we'll talk about using specialized reading techniques to locate relevant information, making useful research notes and thinking critically about your research process.

### **Critical thinking**

Critical thinking is at the heart of a university education and can make the difference between mediocre grades and excellent grades. This session will discuss the role of critical thinking in university studies and review a variety of practical critical thinking strategies that students can apply in their course work.

### **Introduction to ACMAPS Mentors**

Stop in to meet our current Mature Student Mentors and hear about how they volunteer to help fellow students make a smooth transition and succeed in university. Mentors are available during office hours to provide information, referrals and support on matters related to student success.

### **Looking Ahead to Next Year**

As you near the end of the winter term, you'll no doubt be thinking about what comes next. What courses will I take next? Am I on track with program requirements? Am I set to graduate on schedule? Students attending this session will have a chance to ask questions of our in-house

advisor as they review the key steps to managing their academic career at York.

### **Introduction to the Learning Commons**

The Learning Commons provides an integrated approach to student learning supports at York. The key partners in the Learning Commons are: writing instructors, reference librarians, learning skills professionals and career centre personnel. In this session, students will take a physical tour of the Learning Commons facilities and learn about how this integrated model supports student success.

Sessions are offered free of charge, but registration is required. For schedule information and to register, click on our web site at:

[www.yorku.ca/acmaps/events/workshops.html](http://www.yorku.ca/acmaps/events/workshops.html)

### **YUMSO Update**

The York University Mature Student Organization followed the ACMAPS Winter Orientation with a very successful mixer event at 113 Vanier College.

New Execs Dwayne Noble, Dominique Gauthier and Yolanda Douglas worked with sitting President Michael Collens to host an open house on January 12<sup>th</sup> from 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.. In addition to some tasty snacks and free YUMSO buttons, attendees had the opportunity to meet each other, learn about YUMSO's upcoming events, and build community connections.

YUMSO has a number of events planned for the coming months, beginning with a YUMSO Pub Night on January 26<sup>th</sup> from 3:30 p.m. at the Absinthe Pub, located in the basement of Winters College. Come out to meet other mature students and take a break from all the studying, lectures, and homework! And keep an eye out for details on the March 1st and March 30<sup>th</sup> pub nights as well. Contact YUMSO for more details at: [yumso@yorku.ca](mailto:yumso@yorku.ca)

## Doing what needs to be done

--Karen Tait, Student Advisor

As I continue to meet and advise mature students at ACMAPS, I consistently see that there are themes among the students' experiences. This space has provided the opportunity for me to share and give voice to these experiences that would have perhaps otherwise remained silent.

Whether you are a mature student that is newly admitted, continuing, or potentially graduating, there are things to do. I have taken the opportunity to compile a checklist of tasks you will want to consider in order to stay on track. These items will or should become routine as part of the journey, regardless of whether it is just beginning or ending. Hopefully you will find this of use in keeping track of *"Doing What Needs To Be Done"*. As questions or concerns arise, please feel free to connect with me.

Consider these to-do items:

- Check your eligibility – do an online Degree Audit/ and verify with an Academic Advisor
- Apply to Graduate (Online) Deadline for June 2011 Convocation – end of January
- Apply to Graduate (Online) Deadline for October 2011 Convocation – end of July
- Declare Major if you haven't already done so
- Change Program or Major via "My Program" (Online)
- Ensure that your student account balance is below \$75
- Book an academic advising appointment with Faculty/department
- Pick up supplementary calendars from departments
- View Summer Course Offerings – (mid February)
- View Summer Enrollment date – (available end of February)
- Enrol for Summer courses (begins in March)
- Plot your timetable & print it for your records
- Pay the \$450 enrollment deposit within 5 business days of enrolling in a course
- Print a copy of Summer Important Dates/Refund table
- View Fall/Winter Course Offerings – (end of March)
- Enrol for Fall/Winter courses (begins in June)
- Plot your Fall/Winter time table & print it for your records
- Pay the \$450 enrollment deposit within 5 business days of enrolling in a course
- Print a copy of Fall/Winter Important Dates/Refund table
- Review available workshops on study skills, writing, etc.
- Visit the Career Centre for career related workshops and resources
- Utilize available campus resources
- Be Proactive, Network & Engage!

## Update on Mature Student Health Survey

If you were around in the fall term, you might have been invited to take part in our research project, The Mature Student Health Survey, which explores the experiences of mature students attending post-secondary institutions in Canada. The project is the product of a partnership between York University's ACMAPS office and the Centre for Families, Work and Well-being at University of Guelph.

The survey follows post-secondary students who are 25 years of age and older over a three year period. Information from the survey will help to identify the specific health and academic impacts related to post-secondary attendance being experienced by mature students. This research will be used to improve campus-based services and information to better serve the needs of mature students. We've now completed the first of a series of surveys and we have some preliminary

findings that will help us understand the needs of mature students and underpin work we do to support you.

A few of our findings to date:

- About 59% of respondents are studying full time; 41% part-time.
- 67% of respondents work for pay and of those 46% work full time while attending school.
- 77% of respondents report good physical health and 79% of respondents report good mental health. For a third of respondents, school has had a positive impact on overall health.
- Unfortunately, 34% report they never or seldom get enough sleep.
- 30% report that lack of time impacts the quantity or quality of food they eat.
- And, 62% report that they have decreased their levels of physical activity since starting school.

We will continue to follow the respondents to our fall survey through the winter and new students will enter the study in the fall.

For more information about the survey or to become a participant, please contact:

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University of Guelph  
Phone: 519-824-4120 ext. 52248  
Email: [tvanhij@uoguelph.ca](mailto:tvanhij@uoguelph.ca)

-or-

Brian Poser  
York University  
Phone: 416-736-5770  
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## Research and Resources Update

Doing a paper on the experiences of Mature Students in higher education? Or maybe you're just the curious sort who wants to know what academics around the world are writing about adult learners and their quest for education.

Either way, you'll want to check out ACMAPS's updated Research and Resources web page at [www.yorku.ca/acmaps/research.html](http://www.yorku.ca/acmaps/research.html). These resources have been freshly updated thanks to the work of Robert Mizzi, a PhD student in York's Education program, who served as a graduate assistant with ACMAPS during the summer of 2010.

## Brown-Bag Lunches at ACMAPS

Starting again on Tuesday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, ACMAPS will host its weekly Brown-Bag Lunches event. Mature and part-time students are welcome to visit on Tuesdays between 12 Noon and 2 p.m. in the Committee Room of 111 Central Square.

While carrying one's lunch in a brown paper bag might be a thing of the past, getting together informally to connect with each other certainly is not! We'll provide some free coffee and biscuits. You bring your lunch (in whatever container suits you!). Together we'll have a chance to talk, to share experiences, and to get to know each other a little better.

## Know a Mature Student who should know about us?

Know a Mature Student who could benefit from contact with our office or who'd like to get involved with our programming? If so, please refer them to us. Students are always welcome to contact us, either by drop-in or appointment at 111 Central Square, by email at [acmaps@yorku.ca](mailto:acmaps@yorku.ca), or by telephone at 416-736-5770.