

The Atkinson Centre for Mature and Part-time Students NEWSLETTER

On June 2, 2010, the ACMAPS team hosted a recognition event in honour of our graduating students and volunteers. The occasion was particularly meaningful, as some students who were celebrating the successful completion of their degrees had attended the inaugural ACMAPS orientation in 2007. We now have ACMAPS alumni! I remember our 2007 orientation session very well, and I specifically recall the uncertainty and nervousness that was expressed by one of the students on that day. The transition into university meant entering an unfamiliar new world, and the student was unsure about her abilities to succeed. Well, not only did she meet her goal of attaining a bachelor's degree, she became so excited about her area of study that she is commencing a master's degree this fall. In fact, several of our new ACMAPS alumni are moving on to pursue graduate degrees. Congratulations to all!

At ACMAPS, one of our goals is to provide assistance and support to students as they navigate the various transitions associated with being an adult learner at university: seeing themselves as students; establishing a different life/work balance that includes school; building confidence through developing new skills; and even planning for their eventual transition out of university or into graduate school.

September is a time of transitions for everyone at York as we move from the summer months into a new academic year. To the students who graduated in June, I wish you all the best. To the students who are beginning or continuing their studies here at York, welcome and welcome back. I wish you stimulating experiences and smooth transitions. We look forward to seeing you in the months to come.

Sincerely,
Norma Sue

Office Hours:

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

Address: ACMAPS 111 Central Square York University
4700 Keele Street Toronto, Ontario Canada M3J 1P3

Phone: (416) 736-5770 Fax: (416) 736-5787

Email: acmaps@yorku.ca

Website: 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. 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. 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

Return of the Mentors

ACMAPS is pleased to welcome a new crew of peer mentors to its roster this September and to welcome back our continuing mentors from last year.

Our mentors have already been busy meeting students through our Mature Student Academic Orientations that took place in late August and early September. Some shared their experiences of starting university and offered suggestions for making a smooth transition to university through our student panel. Some led walking tours of the campus. And others connected with students through small break-out groups. By all reports, our new students had lots of questions for the peer-mentors about how things work and about student life at York.

Now that the Fall term has begun, new students and upper-year students alike can speak to one of our peer mentors at the ACMAPS office in Central Square at various times throughout the week. 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 student.

We encourage you to stop by and get acquainted with our mentor team. Whether you have a concern that needs immediate attention or just want to share your triumphs and successes, our mentor team is here for you.

For schedule information, click on our web site at: www.yorku.ca/acmaps/mentors.html

Mature Student Success Program Fall 2010

ACMAPS will once again offer its Mature Student Success Programs this Fall term. Sessions are offered in the Student Life stream and the Research & Writing stream. For registration details, click on our web site at: www.yorku.ca/acmaps/events/workshops.html

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 and who are looking ahead toward the next steps in their degree.

The Student Life workshops aim at enhancing the personal and academic skills of students, and the Research & Writing workshops enhances the student's ability to improve in the writing process.

For schedule information and to register, click on our web site at: www.yorku.ca/acmaps/events/workshops.html

Student Life Stream

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.

3) Looking Ahead to Graduate and Professional School

Perhaps you're nearing the end of your degree and are starting to think about what comes next. For many students, the idea of earning an advanced degree, either through graduate school or professional school, is not only alluring, but realistic. If you're considering graduate school or professional school, then this session is for you. This interactive session will provide essential information on what steps you can take – even before your final year – to prepare a successful application to graduate and professional programs and associated scholarships.

Research & Writing Stream

An Overview of the Writing Process

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.

Analyzing the Assignment and Pre-writing Strategies

How do I start my essay? This session will offer insights into how to make the most of your early phases of the writing process. We'll discuss the importance of understanding the terms of the assignment, getting clear on the instructor's criteria for success, thinking about the assignment in the context of the course and developing the questions that will effectively guide your research and writing.

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 it 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.

Come with your Writing Questions

In the midst of writing an essay? Seeking some feedback on how to proceed? This interactive session invites you to bring your specific writing questions for a workshop-style question and answer period.

Portals and list-servs and blogs, oh my!

Looking to stay informed about events and activities on campus? ACMAPS uses a number of means to broadcast updates and information:

First, the student portal. The portal is best described as a student's one-stop-shop for all your York information. A student can use their "my.yorku.ca" to access information such as his or her email, courses, grades, calendar, student account etc. You can also add ACMAPS to your personal student portal and receive updated information on our orientation sessions, mature student success series and other important news and updates that we circulate. Login with your Passport York account at <http://my.yorku.ca/>

Second, the list-serv: A list-serv is defined as an electronic mailing list software application. It consists of a set of email addresses for a group in which the sender can send one email and it will reach a variety of people. This has been one of ACMAPS' primary communication channels. We tend to use it to send our

students specific announcements as well as share announcements from our partners on campus such as, the Registrar's Office, Learning Skills or the Career Centre. In order to be added to the ACMAPS list-serv you need to email acmaps@yorku.ca or call (416) 736-5770 and let us know that you are interested in receiving updated information from the Centre, along with your name and email address.

Third, the blog: Last but not least, ACMAPS has joined the world of blogging! The mature student blog was created to provide mature students a convenient and flexible means of accessing information. During the Fall term our student mentors will be contributing to the mature student blog. We encourage you to read their posts, to comment and to ask questions related to getting started at York University, academic advising, orientation, enrolment etc.. View the blog at: <http://mature-students.blog.yorku.ca/>

Be sure to stay in touch with us at ACMAPS; we're happy to support you in any way that we can!

Doing what needs to be done

--Karen Tait, Student Adviser

What is life if we do not rely on basic principles, values, and goals to guide us? One of the main principles that I rely on to guide me in my journey, be it personal, professional or educational, is "doing what needs to be done". As I reflect on the past few years within the advising role at ACMAPS I realize that for many mature students who have embarked on the educational journey, they are "doing what needs to be done". For some the need has been sparked by the current economic climate, job loss, companies downsizing, or the requirement of greater skill sets when it comes to being more marketable. For others, it may simply be the fulfillment of a personal goal.

Time is of importance in any given situation. However, it seems that mature students are in a personal race against time. This is definitely understandable from the standpoint of the different realities, jobs, finances, families, leaves of absence. But it seems we all want to get it all done now! Right away! Sooner rather than later! Students ask, "How can I fast-track my way through the degree? I want to complete my 120 credit degree in as short a time as possible!" But if they're to really "do what *needs* to be done", it'll be important to heed some advice. I encourage them to think through what fast-tracking means to their progress, both in terms of grades and the learning done in courses. It is also key to maintain balance with the other areas of one's life and to ensure you're looking after yourself.

And there's more to your degree than just what happens in the classroom. "Engagement" is a current emphasis among universities as they strive for continuous improvement of the educational experience. It is important to take the time to network, connect, and build on your skills, while becoming involved with the community around you. It is important to take the time to find out about the various opportunities, for example with ACMAPS, at the Colleges, through the Career Centre, and across campus. In saying this, I have noticed that this year more than any other year there are more enquiries as to how one can get involved, and, of course, the answer varies depending on your interest.

It was inspiring to see the large number of new students who attended this year's mature students orientation sessions. As well, even those who could not attend have stopped by the office to introduce themselves and pick up the orientation package and established a connection with the ACMAPS office, one of the many different resources available on campus. Doing so sets these students up for success. It is especially exciting to see students who attended orientation last year, not only sharing their experiences with new incoming students,

but becoming mature student peer-mentors at ACMAPS for the upcoming academic year.

Of course, there are moments when I question whether as mature students we take the time to pause, look around ourselves and take in all the goodness around us. We may risk becoming so hurried or set in our ways that it becomes hard to adjust and build on what we already know or think we know. There is definitely not one framework or template for success that will work the same for every student, but there are common risks that can lead you astray. Again, "do what needs to be done," as long as your approach can be sustained over time. Earning a degree is a long journey. It is more like a marathon than a sprint...it is important to pace oneself so as not to fall out of the race, and it is a lot more rewarding if we take in all the sights around us along our path.

ACMAPS News and Updates

Our service hours have expanded for the Fall/Winter term! Effective September 13, 2010, ACMAPS Hours will change to:

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

Exciting Research Opportunity for Mature Students!

This fall we are launching an exciting project to begin exploring the experiences of mature students attending post-secondary institutions in Canada.

The project is called the Mature Student Health Survey and is being conducted as part of a Mature Student Research Collaboration between the Atkinson Centre for Mature and Part-time Students at York University and the Centre for Families, Work and Well-Being at the University of Guelph.

This survey will be used to follow 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.

For more information about the survey and if you are interested in becoming a participant, please contact:

Tricia van Rhijn
University of Guelph
Phone: 519-824-4120 ext. 52248
Email: tvanhij@uoguelph.ca

-or-

Brian Poser
York University
Phone: 416-736-5770
Email: acmaps@yorku.ca

ACMAPS

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. 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.

Fall Co-Curricular Week

This fall marks York's second Fall Co-curricular Week. From October 9 -15, 2010, classes will be cancelled to make way for you to take part in a wide array of campus activities all aimed at enhancing your classroom experience, supporting your academic success and helping you to feel part of the York community.

Academic, 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

Events will take place at various times throughout the week. For schedule details, click on: www.yorku.ca/fcw

Brown-Bag Lunches at ACMAPS

Starting on Tuesday, October 5th, ACMAPS will resume 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, or by telephone at 416-736-5770.

ACMAPS