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Trent University

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Dr. Michael Eamon

Chair, Collegiate Way International

Dr. Eamon is Principal of Catharine Parr Traill College and historian of print culture at Trent University in Peterborough, Canada. His work also addresses the fields of public history, museums, archives, heritage preservation and the digital humanities. His recent book, *Imprinting Britain*, looks at the development of the press in eighteenth-century Canada. In the past, he has also worked for federal organizations such as Parks Canada, Library and Archives Canada, National Archives and Records Administration (Washington, D.C.) as well as the Ontario Heritage Trust. An ardent supporter of collegiate universities across the world, he has been involved in the Collegiate Way International movement since the inaugural conference at Durham University in 2014.

## A Word from the Chair

It has taken some time, but the second edition of the Collegiate Way International's newsletter is now ready! In my last communication, I had observed the importance of both understanding and patience during the pandemic. Now, I would like to thank our readers for being both patient and compassionate as we have labored to continue what we believe to be an important avenue of communication for the organization. It is our sincere hope that our issues will be more frequent as our return to normalcy continues.

While we all share many key traditions, positions, and practices, university colleges are also shaped by various cultural norms, regional differences, and national practices. For example, many aspects of the role of Senior Tutor can be found in different positions across the world. Because of this lack of uniformity, it can be difficult for Senior Tutors, Academic Advisors, and other like professionals to share a common language, or discuss best practices. In this issue, **Melanie Sedge** writes about her project to unite all those who provide pastoral and academic care in our colleges. Concurrently, **Bob Taylor-Vaisey** is surveying what best practices and commonalities exist amongst alumni associations at collegiate universities. You can find out more about his efforts as well and are encouraged to participate in both worthy initiatives.

I believe that the success of any collegiate institution can be measured by how well it navigates the two important currents of tradition and diversity. University colleges, due to their intimate size, high-level of faculty/student engagement, and strong sense of community, are well-positioned to be at the forefront of innovative, safe, and inclusive education. I am happy that we can begin a new feature in this edition on the Student Collegiate Experience. In this issue, we highlight **Abhaya Velmani**, a member of Watauga Residential College at Appalachian State University. In her frank and inspiring story, she tells of how her college helped her to find a sense of belonging and to heal from a difficult childhood. A self-identified queer woman of colour, hers is a story that underscores how the collegiate experience can be inclusive, restorative, and joyful.

I would also like to take a moment to congratulate **Jessica Becking**, our newsletter's editor, who gave birth to a second son over the past year. This, along with completing her PhD, has kept her very busy and I appreciate her continuing on with Collegiate Way International in her editorial capacity.

As before, I ask you to share this newsletter widely. Although CWI extends across the globe, we are always looking for new members who share our outlook and aspirations. Likewise, please share with me any news, anecdotes, or essays that you might want published in the future.

Collegially yours,  
Michael



Image Credit: Trent University

## New CWI Networks for College-based Advisor/Tutors and Alumni Associations

It was a rainy day in November 2014 when our plane touched down after a long trip from Canada to England. We hadn't slept much on the overnight flight and were anxious to rest our heads. This wasn't the end of our journey though. There were still taxi's and trains to take before we would reach our destination of Durham. When we finally did, we were greeted with a welcoming smile by Tim Burt, the Master of Hatfield College at Durham University.

Tim and his colleague Martyn Evans (Master of Trevelyan College, Durham University) had imagined university colleges coming together to share ideas, support one another and promote the collegiate way of education around the world. They had invited participants from around the world to gather and discuss their vision for a world-wide association. I am grateful to have been in attendance representing Trent University along with my colleague Michael Eamon (Principal, Catharine Parr Traill College).

This initial conference was a launching pad for all who attended as we discovered more about the landscape of college-based education around the world. We shared visions, common goals and also quite refreshingly, our challenges and best practices. At that time, I was a newly appointed Head of College and the Collegiate Way International (CWI) was invaluable to me as a resource and a learning network.

At the end of the first conference, it was decided that the idea of an international association had merit and held much value for those involved, not to mention the potential to support the collegiate way of education internationally. Shortly after the second conference was held in Canberra, Australia, my role within the colleges at Trent University changed and I began a new journey as a college-based academic advisor. I have remained engaged with the CWI as a member of the Advisory Board and now see the benefits of information exchange and support that this network can provide to its members through multiple lenses. In my academic advising role, I imagine a new opportunity for the CWI to extend its reach and breadth of impact further into the colleges by providing a network for advisor/tutors.

There are existing opportunities for advisor/tutors to connect through organizations and networks that are solely focused on academic advising . These are valuable networks, however what I found to be the real benefit about the CWI as a College Head remains true to me as an academic advisor. I would like to exchange information and best practices, as well as develop program opportunities, with other professional advisor/tutors who work within a collegiate setting.

In September of 2020, Trent University honoured my colleague Bob Taylor-Vaisey with the Spirit of Trent Alumni Award. At the celebration (which was



### Melanie Sedge

Melanie Sedge is a former Head of Champlain College, and currently an Academic Advisor at Lady Eaton College, Trent University. She also serves as a Collegiate Way International Advisory Board Member.



Image Credit: Trent University

small and physically distanced) Bob and I got talking about this idea of an advisor/tutor network within the CWI. Bob had also attended the inaugural conference in Durham, England where he presented a session about a possible network for alumni associations within the CWI.

“An alumni association is a community with diverse interests and experiences that are multi-faceted, multi-directional, and replete with post-university life experiences and need to be shared. The breadth of experiences world wide is a resource that needs to be tapped”, writes Bob. “What an opportunity to share learnings, best practices, plans and programs.” From this initial conversation, a couple of meetings followed and we decided to formalize the ideas. Bob and I presented a proposal for two pilot networks within the CWI, one for advisor/tutors and one for alumni associations, to the Advisory Board at the January 2021 meeting.

These networks are in the early stages of development. It is our intention that each would have its own subcommittee, with representation from all continents. The subcommittees will have the goal of developing networks of college-based advisors/tutors and alumni associations. It is our hope that this would result in regular communications to CWI members as well as advisor/tutor and alumni association specific components of the 2022 CWI conference.

Input and feedback about this pilot project is welcome and encouraged. We are also seeking members willing to contribute to the subcommittees. If you would like to be a part of one of these new initiatives, please contact Melanie Sedge (Advisor/Tutor Network) at [msedge@trentu.ca](mailto:msedge@trentu.ca) or Bob Taylor-Vaisey (Alumni Association Network) at [bob.taylorvaisey@gmail.com](mailto:bob.taylorvaisey@gmail.com) before the end of September. ■



Image Credit: Trent University



Image Credit: Trent University



## In Memoriam: Thomas H.B. Symons (1929–2021)

It is with great sadness that we observe the passing of Thomas H.B. Symons who died on January 1st, 2021. Tom was a great supporter of Collegiate Way International and an honorary member of our advisory board. Educated at the University of Toronto and at Oxford, he made headlines at the age of 33 when hired as Canada's youngest university president. He served in the role as founding president and vice-chancellor at Trent University for 11 years.

Internationally, Tom distinguished himself through his work as Chairman of the Association of Commonwealth Universities, Chairman of the International Board, and Vice-President of the International Council of United World Colleges. In 1982, he was awarded their Distinguished Service to Education Award. He was the first Canadian to ever receive this award whose council represents 2,300 universities and colleges in the United States, Canada, Europe and South America. Additionally, Tom received an honorary degree from the University of Colombo in Sri Lanka as well as was elected a trustee and an honorary fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. Not to leave Cambridge out, he was a visiting scholar and life fellow of Clare Hall. Recipient of 13 honorary degrees from universities and colleges across Canada he was also awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Golden and Diamond Jubilee medals. In addition to the creation of Trent University, Tom was instrumental in the founding of over a dozen other colleges and universities around the world. His efforts in the creation of Canada's Sacred Heart College resulted in a Knighthood from the Vatican in the Order of Saint Sylvester in 2012.

Tom was a man who embodied the motto of the university that he founded. The words *nunc cognosco ex parte* (now I know in part) framed his life, but also a wider, compelling pedagogy underscoring the importance of self-improvement, humility, and social justice through higher education. His curiosity for the world around him was only surpassed by his compassion for others. He particularly enjoyed conversations with young scholars taking great interest in their studies and, later, their post-university careers. Thanks to the legacy of Professor Thomas H.B. Symons we all are, in part, better and with his passing, in part, diminished. ■



Abhaya Velmani

After five major changes, I can say I am an undergraduate English Literary Studies student, with a minor in Spanish. My learning extends beyond the classroom through mental health and queer advocacy work, and grassroots volunteering. At the end of it all, my Watauga Residential College family is always there to help me rest, heal, and even have fun!



Image Credit: Watauga Residential College

## Student Collegiate Experience: Rediscovering the Joy of Learning in Living

Even on day one, my just-out-of-high-school self knew, without a doubt, that college would be distinctly different from anything I had experienced before. It wasn't just good luck or living in a beautiful campus town: it was the people. Watauga Residential College (WRC)'s beloved director, Dr. Clark Maddux, had begun getting to know my class several months before we moved in. Afterwards, he continued to converse with us, both collectively and individually, throughout the day-to-day flow of things. He consistently modelled genuine and earnest communication that inspired many of my peers to seek in each other a sense of familiarity, and not just acquaintanceship. Alongside him, all of the professors teaching at WRC sought to make connections with students, regardless of whether they taught them or not, out of a relentless desire to get at who we are and to guide us towards a truly holistic college experience. These statements, which sound quite idealistic, should not be underestimated: they reflect both my own and my peers' candid lived experiences. To have had my first experiences of college be so rich with collective care made all the difference in the courage I held to continue bettering myself and showing up more authentically, throughout college and beyond.

That early sense of familiarity sowed seeds of safety and assurance, which grew and flourished into curiosity and creativity within and outside of Watauga. As someone who grew up in a dysfunctional family, I had fought both mental and physical obstacles to show up to college as readily as I did. Still, there were certain needs of self-exploration and desires of belonging that I had not yet realized. The environment in WRC was conducive to the fortification I needed to maintain that efficacy as a college student, while continuing to expand my visions and goals in satisfying and liberating ways that I didn't know was possible. WRC's faculty created a relational atmosphere in which our thoughts and ideas were wanted and respected — albeit not as well-constructed as they would become — there was a trust in what we could become while being seen for who we were in the moment. This consistently generous connection allowed me to feel affirmed enough to realize anew that people can help you develop and humble you enough to receive what you need: this was surprisingly healing considering I moved into college as a trauma-bound, walled off individual.



My roommate and I after hoisting a pride flag on our door to help the new Wataugans know they are welcome, as they are!



Image Credit: Abhaya Velmani

My college campus is politically, as one of my WRC professors told me, “a blue bubble surrounded by complete red.” I experienced this first-hand as an ethnically South Indian and queer student in a majority White residential and greater college. I always knew that Boone was not as exposed to diverse populations as my home-town, Cary, one of the most diverse cities in North-Carolina. Yet, despite the awkward stares and intriguing conversations that my visible identity garnered in Boone, within WRC, I felt comfortable, without prejudice, for being who I am in my race, culture, spirituality, and trauma background. This sense of equity may, perhaps, be due to my stubborn personality that finds pride in pushing through if I can help it, but it was never infiltrated, broken, or hurt by others in my residential program. This offered me a sense of belonging that made me know, again, people as sources of welcome and, eventually, social innovation through the actions found in this community. I started learning an ability to always show up as honestly as I can, rightfully expecting to be embraced and celebrated for it. This allowed for a mutual offering between my peers and I: to offer each other opportunities to learn about life anew and joyfully rethink and rebuild perspectives on our complex world.

Such connection certainly expanded beyond the fluid walls around WRC. With classes within WRC having felt like student-led gatherings and suite and floor mates like family, my peers and I were naturally curious to know about each other’s extracurricular experiences as well and, where and when possible, we were eager to be introduced to those experiences ourselves. In having access to engaged individuals who expanded the possibilities of college experiences, I felt like a child who had gained enough confidence to let go of family, while knowing they are there to return to. I thus explored student-led groups off-WRC and ventured out of my comfort zone further. In this way, I was able to secure leadership roles outside of WRC: all the while continuing to lean on WRC to fulfill home-body needs which provided me with strength to persevere in balancing my coursework and extracurriculars, while continuing to show up to both. This would not have been possible without the encouragement and passion of the people who make up WRC. From the beginning, we were guided to view learning as something multifaceted, contextual, and fluid, and to view each other not as ‘co-workers,’ per se, but ‘co-learners’ who would intentionally share experiences with each other to both enrich those experiences and to create more.

Above all, WRC has demonstrated to me that when well-rounded and curiosity-bound adults take a genuine and down-to-earth approach to leadership, residential programs foster a unique environment in which students may discover a surreal and multifaceted attitude to learning. I have personally found the benefits to this way of learning in increased self-confidence and a more expansive view of what a team or tribe can mean. Despite the turbulence of my youth, showing up to Watauga has allowed me a healing and comfort that has progressed my self-exploration beyond my wildest imagination. And, even more beautifully, it has been a source of transformation where those obstacles now are vivid opportunities for deeper exploration and discovery within my local and greater environment. I know my journey continues, and I show up to its mystery and challenges as willingly and honestly as I do, because of WRC’s enduring impact on my mind and my heart. ■



Image Credit: Watauga Residential College

# Tom and Christine Symons Archival Fellowship at Trent University, Canada



Image Credit: Trent University

The Tom and Christine Symons Archival Fellowship was established in 2018 to honour the many facets of Professor Tom Symons' work and legacy. It supports archival research using the T.H.B. Symons and related fonds located in the Trent University Library and Archives, Peterborough, Canada. This fellowship of up to \$1000, administered by the Symons Archival Fellowship Committee, assists both graduate students and established researchers who need to travel to, and establish temporary residence in Peterborough. Intended to assist with travel, living and research expenses, the fellowship is available to scholars interested in any aspect of Tom Symons' work although priority will be given to applicants whose proposal indicates how it will contribute to articles, monographs or other writing projects.

Applicants must submit a brief (2-3 pages) description of their project and a short curriculum vitae of no more than 20 pages. If the applicant is a graduate student, a letter from their supervisor or a thesis committee member is required. The proposal should include a description of how the applicant intends to use the archival materials, why the

Symons papers are important to the project, how the funds will be used, as well as any other sources of funding the applicant has for this project. Awards are made to individuals or a group of scholars, but not to institutions. Successful applicants should not be associated with Trent University or live in the Peterborough region although someone with an honorary affiliation to Trent may be considered if they do not live near to Trent University. Recipients are required to commence their research at Trent University Library and Archives within 18 months of receiving the fellowship and are normally expected to be in residence near or at Trent while doing the research. They may be asked to participate in campus activities where appropriate, such as giving a public talk about their research. Recipients will submit a short report on the outcome of their research within two years of the award. The award can only be held once. The Committee will receive applications until Dec. 1, 2021, and a recipient selected and announced by March 1, 2022. Questions about the award can be sent to: [symonstrust@trentu.ca](mailto:symonstrust@trentu.ca) Please submit your application in PDF form by email to: [symonstrust@trentu.ca](mailto:symonstrust@trentu.ca) ■



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## Collegiate Way International Advisory Board 2021

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