

January 2022



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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

Happy New Year!

After two years of pandemic pivots, COVID cancellations, and overarching uncertainties, I know that some may find it difficult to feel optimistic about 2022. Nonetheless, the consensus that I am hearing from our world-wide network of members is one of cautious optimism. I want to wish our readers only the best for a much-improved new year full of good health and possibilities.

In that spirit, I am excited to announce the **Collegiate Way International 2022 Online Conference** to be hosted by Trent University, Peterborough, **May 18 to 20th, 2022**. The theme will be **Collegiate Communities in a Changing World** and the organizing committee is now accepting proposals for online papers and presentations (please see page 4 for more details). I would like to particularly thank the **Colleges of Trent University** and **Trent Online** for their support in keeping the CWI momentum going. As many of you know, plans for an in-person conference at the **University of Otago** have been delayed. This online conference will offer an important forum for collegians to present best educational practices from around the globe, particularly considering the current pandemic context.

In the past, I have observed that university, or residential, colleges are well-suited to take on the changing 21st-century needs of students. Our relatively small and diverse communities of scholars can be incubators of innovation, offering the flexibility to test and implement new ideas quickly and effectively. In this edition of the newsletter, we will hear about one such success story from **Watauga Residential College** at Appalachian State University in the United States. **Holly Ambler**, Academic Adviser and Director of Peer Advising, tells of her work in developing a peer advising program that has been both effective and pandemic proof.

On a more personal note, I would like to congratulate the editor of our newsletter, **Jessica Becking**, on the successful completion of her doctorate in Cultural Studies. Her continuing assistance with the newsletter and website is very much appreciated. Jessica is currently receiving suggestions and submissions for the next newsletter. Please contact her (jessica-becking@trentu.ca) if you have a contribution that you would like to see published.

Until the next time, stay well.

Collegially yours,
Michael



Image Credit: Watauga Residential College



Holly Ambler

Academic Advisor & Director of Peer Advising, Watauga Residential College

Holly came to higher education after working in outdoor leadership where she worked mostly with college age students. She developed a curiosity for adult education and college student development which lead her to complete a Master's Degree in Leadership and Higher Education. As the academic advisor for Watauga Residential College, Holly has the opportunity to engage with students and faculty in interdisciplinary, experiential learning and foster the development of undergraduate students.

Image Credit: Appalachian State University



Students Advising Students: Developing the Watauga Residential College Peer Advising Program

In a residential college there is a unique opportunity to engage students in working through challenges and solving problems. At Appalachian State University, we knew that curricular changes were coming for the fall of 2019, so in the fall of 2018, I brought together a graduate student who was an alum of our residential college, Watauga Residential College (WRC), and a current junior WRC student who had worked as a Student Orientation Undergraduate Leader serving our residential college students. Together, we spent the 2018-2019 academic year researching, designing and implementing the WRC Peer Advising Program.

We knew students were already informally advising, and in some cases misadvising, each other. We also knew that residential college students are always looking for leadership opportunities. Developing a peer advising program allowed us to train upper year students to educate first year students and support their second-year peers in academic planning and to direct them to student support resources, while also offering them a formal way to serve in a leadership role within WRC. When we created the program, we developed a mission statement: to provide quality peer advising, academic support services and information resources in coordination with the WRC Academic Advisor. The goals we developed in that first year were to connect first year WRC students to upper year WRC students; to connect first year students to campus resources; to help our students better understand the general education curriculum, WRC curriculum and their major requirements; and to provide advising support alongside the one professional academic advisor in our program.

As the Academic Advisor for WRC, I coordinate the program in partnership with a student director who helps select and train the incoming peer advisors. The student director supervises the peer advisors and assists with course design and instruction for the 1 credit hour course that new peer advisors are required to take during the fall semester of their first year as peer advisors. The application and interview processes take place January through March so that we can begin training the new peer advisors in March and April to be available to support the incoming first year class through registration and orientation in May through June. The student director takes the lead on training the new peer advisors which allows for greater responsibility and leadership development. Each year, the incoming Student Director of Peer Advising is allowed the flexibility and creativity to design and implement training as they choose. This year our student director implemented a mentoring program in which second year peer advisors served as mentors for the first-year peer advisors in addition to designing and conducting a retreat for all peer advisors to get to know each other as well as the critical information for this role.



Though the pandemic has brought many challenges to residential colleges, the introduction of Zoom and other video conferencing tools has made access to our students much greater. We are now able to host Zoom sessions before orientation to answer any questions and assist with schedule building for our new students who have not yet come to campus. The peer advisors are also able to help with orientation even though none of us are in the same physical location. Having this accessibility has eased the anxiety of our incoming students and given our peer advisors more access to the students they serve. Peer advisors are even able to listen to group and individual advising sessions that I conduct with first year students as an additional training tool so they are better prepared for when they meet one on one

with students beginning in the fall semester.

Some of the topics covered in the fall course taken by the peer advisors include advising theory, student development theory, personality assessment, identity, and leadership development. The most eye-opening lessons come from the combination of learning about these concepts and then having the opportunity to practice them when working one on one as peer advisors. The written reflection assignments and class conversations show us that the peer advisors are learning as much about themselves and their own growth and development as they are learning about their students and how to better serve their peers.

As we move into the third year of peer advising in WRC, we continue to learn how to best train peer advisors, connect our students with peer advising, support peer advisors and our residential college students, and assess peer advising among many other lessons. It has become clear that the program benefits the students who serve as peer advisors as much as those they serve.

Watauga Residential College uses interdisciplinary, experiential and inquiry-based learning to educate students, and this is also the foundation of the peer advising training. We teach our peer advisors to ask questions in their advising sessions rather than to give answers. One peer advisor shared with us that she started asking questions in other conversations and it changed the dynamic of those conversations and relationships. Inquiry based advising changed the way she thought not just about peer advising, but conversations in other settings. Another peer advisor shared that she was often frustrated with peers at work, but now understands that people are in different places developmentally. She learned to be less frustrated with peers that are less mature and to demonstrate patience and empathy.

Our peer advising program has proven to be a valuable tool for helping our first-year students better understand their curriculum and degree requirements, but it has also helped us develop upper year students into effective leaders within the residential college and in all aspects of their lives. ■

To learn more about Watauga Residential College's Peer Advising Program, check out their [website!](#)

To connect with Holly and other collegiate based academic advisor/tutors and others who advise students in a collegiate setting, please join us on [LinkedIn](#) in the Collegiate Way International-Advisor/Tutors Network or contact Melanie Sedge (msedge@trentu.ca) for more information.





Collegiate Way International Online Conference 2022: Call for Papers

Collegiate Communities in a Changing World

May 18 to 20th, 2022

Hosted by Trent University, Peterborough

Proposals for papers, presentations, and panels (3-4 participants) are now being accepted. Proposals for papers or presentations should be no more than 300 words. Panel proposals should be no more than 800 words. Along with your proposal, please include a current C.V. of each presenter, or panelist.

Possible Topics Include (but are not limited to):

- Coping with the Pandemic
- Education at a Distance
- Building Online Collegiate Communities
- Fostering Civil Society and Encouraging Citizenship Through Collegiality
- Racialization and the Promotion of Social Justice in University and Residential Colleges

The conference will be held entirely online and papers will be given live to participants. Eastern Daylight Savings Time will be observed. Proceedings will be recorded for later viewing.

Out of respect for the challenges online audiences face, all papers and presentations shall be no longer than 15 minutes. No panel shall exceed 40 minutes.

Submissions should be sent directly to: collegiateway2022@trentu.ca

Due date for submissions: 22 March 2022

Collegiate Way International

Collegiate Way International (CWI) is a world-wide association of residential and university colleges founded in 2014. Its mission is to support collegiate higher education around the world, particularly through the facilitation of interdisciplinary conferences. Previous conferences have been held at Durham University (2014), the Australian National University (2016) and Rice University (2019). For more information visit:

www.collegiatewayinternational.com

Trent University, Peterborough

One of Canada's top universities, Trent University was founded on the ideal of interactive learning that's personal, purposeful and transformative. It was built as a collegiate institution in 1964 and is a leader in many fields including Education, Nursing, Environmental Sciences, and Canadian Studies. For more information visit:

www.trentu.ca

General questions about the Conference or submission procedures can be sent to:

Dr. Michael Eamon, Chair,
Collegiate Way International
michaeleamon@trentu.ca ■



Image Credit: Catharine Parr Traill College

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