



NEWSLETTER

Centre for Academic Excellence and
Quality Assurance



A Message from the Executive Director

It is my pleasure and privilege to introduce an amazing team of dedicated professionals. New members have joined our team since the last issue of our newsletter. The CAE Team has welcomed the following members:

- Phil Aylesworth – Academic Integrity Facilitator
- Joelle Nagle – Coordinator of Educational Development, Program Design and Quality Assurance
- Brian Nairn - Coordinator of Curriculum Development, Quality Assurance and Educational Development
- Thomas Forget – Manager, Academic Excellence

It is through the efforts and dedication of the members of our team that the CAE is able to embark on new and exciting initiatives as well as continue to lead and support existing processes and practices. Some activities and events that are worth mentioning include a successful grant through a second round of Virtual Learning Strategy eCampus Ontario funding which is intended to expand our capacity in online learning, Faculty R&R, mentorship appreciation night, Experiential Learning training and resources, Learning Cafés, Book Club, and more.

In our day-to-day interactions our team stays true to our purpose of driving quality and promoting integrity by supporting faculty, students and administration to advance the College's Vision, Mission, Values and Strategic Directions.

Lindi Prendi

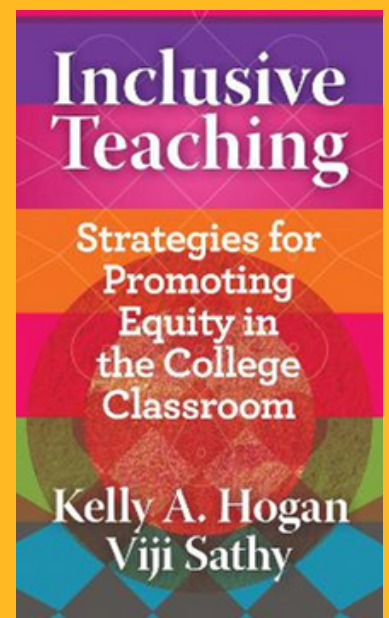
Newsletter Highlights

A Message from the
Executive Director

Learning Cafés Return!

Teaching & Assessing
Essential Employability
Skills

Fall Book Club
Featuring...





FACULTY R&R RECAP

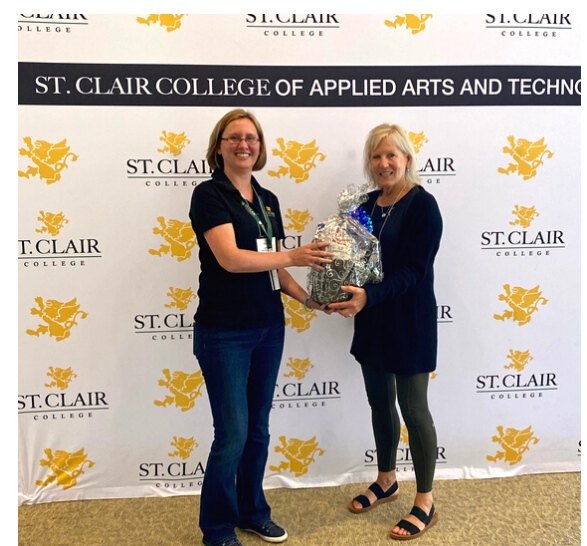
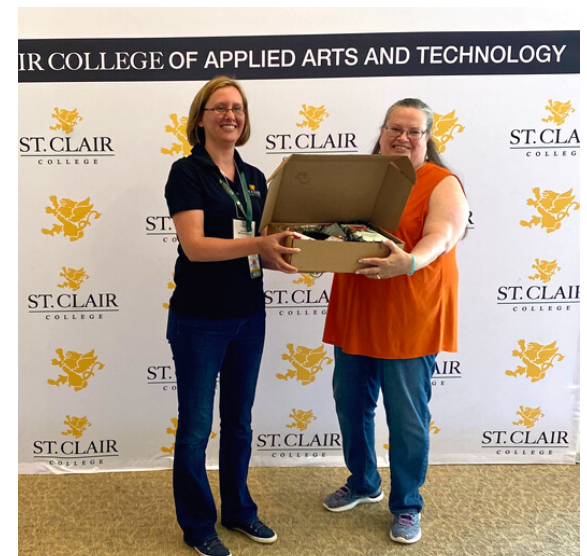
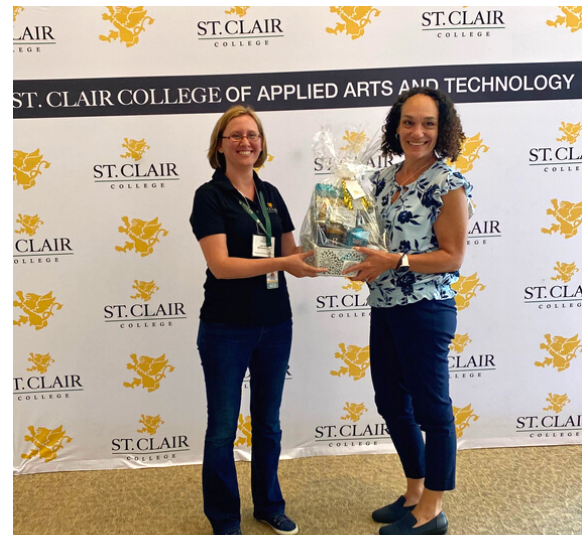
By Antoinette Bertucci

Last June, many of our faculty attended Faculty R&R, which centered around the theme: Reconnect & Recalibrate. We were thrilled to be back in person for this annual event for the first time since 2019! The event featured keynote speaker Melanie Sodka, CEO of Capacity Creator, who spoke about building capacity in times of renewal. Our very own St. Clair College faculty/staff delivered various concurrent workshops:

- LouAnne Hunt, E + R = O (Events + Response = Outcomes)
- Neil Pettit, Breaking the Ice: Activity Sandbox to Foster Community
- Kayla Murphy & Muriel Sampson, The Blanket Exercise
- Melissa Simas, The Enneagram Journey
- Kelly Henley, Gentle Flow Yoga
- Kathryn Hansen, Recalibrating River Walk & Talk

The Twitter Challenge #SCCRetreat2022 helped attendees further connect in an online space. Photos posted throughout the day enabled participants to be entered to win 1 of 3 prizes featuring items from local businesses. Congrats to our winners!

President Patti France and VPA&R Mike Silvaggi both spoke at the event, sharing words of admiration and appreciation for our faculty and their tireless efforts in times of great turbulence over the last few years. The event wrapped up with the plenary session, Reconnecting: Student Perspectives, led by Pat Papadeas, Neil Pettit, and Kathryn Hansen. Faculty viewed a video filmed at St. Clair Convocation where students answered the question: What do you wish your teachers knew about you? Faculty engaged in activities and conversation that allowed them to unpack the main messages of the video and think critically about their teaching and relationships in the classroom moving forward. Many thanks goes out to the R&R Planning Team, CAE staff, SCCA staff, presenters, and all our attendees – we can't wait to see you next year!



[View photos from Faculty R&R 2022!](#)



PROFESIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By Antoinette Bertucci

Professional Development Workshops

Now that faculty have settled into the Fall semester, you may be thinking about professional development. The CAE offers plenty of PD sessions that aim to provide teaching and learning support and helpful resources for faculty. The CAE will release several PD sessions this year covering the topics of Blackboard, academic integrity, program curriculum & course outline development, quality assurance, teaching & learning strategies, technology, assessment strategies, teaching & assessing essential employability skills, experiential learning, supporting students, accommodation plans, and more. We welcome feedback and new ideas from faculty; if there is interest in other areas, please let us know! Visit the [CAE website](#) to see our current offerings.

Additionally, if you're interested in facilitating a PD session, feel free to contact the CAE at cae@stclaircollege.ca, or visit us in room 272.

Welcome 2024 CEDP Cohort!

In August, CEDP returned to in-person delivery for Phase I at Fanshawe College. Our new full-time faculty, who make up the 2024 St. Clair College CEDP cohort, engaged in many workshops, activities, and networking events with faculty from Fanshawe, Mohawk, Niagara, and Lambton colleges. Faculty experienced the exhilaration of connecting with their learning teams in person and are already looking forward to Phase II in May 2023.

Participants continue completing in-between phase elements including T&L Conversations, mentorship, and teaching circles. The CAE wishes our new full-time faculty well as they embark on their post-secondary teaching experience in a full-time capacity. St. Clair College students are lucky to have you and will greatly benefit from your participation in CEDP. Thank you & good luck!

LEARNING CAFÉS

By Antoinette Bertucci



The CAE is pleased to announce the relaunch of Learning Cafés for Fall 2022. October's Learning Café kicked things off with Teaching Portfolios. Learning Cafés are a space for participants to engage in open discussion over coffee and donuts while learning and growing from each other. For November's Learning Café, we'll discuss Blackboard Templates with Students in Mind. [Registration is now open!](#) Space is limited at Learning Cafés, so please register early to secure your spot! We can't wait to see you then!

FALL BOOK CLUB



By Joelle Nagle

Interested in being a part of a community of learners focused on literature relevant to your teaching practice? Starting Fall 2022, the CAE will host a faculty book club. With weekly sessions starting at the beginning of November through to December. This Fall we will review our first book, *Inclusive Teaching: Strategies for Promoting Equity in the College Classroom* by Kelly A. Hogan and Viji Sathy.

Written for instructors in higher education, topics include teaching and designing your course and syllabus with inclusivity in mind, creating an equitable classroom environment and creating positive interactions with students, and reflecting on what we do both inside and outside the classroom to attend to an inclusive mind-set. Through collaborative conversations, we will dive into our weekly sessions and discuss ways to apply these strategies into practice. The Fall Book Club registration is closed, but stay tuned for announcements about the Winter Book Club!

NEWS FROM THE QA FRONT



By Sandra Blais, Thomas Forget, Brian Nairn, Lindi Prendi

Here are the latest quality assurance updates from the CAE:

Cyclical Reviews

2022/2023 Academic Year

As cyclical reviews remain a key component of our quality assurance process at the College, we are excited about welcoming the new group of programs entering their review process in the 2022/2023 academic year. There are currently 23 programs that will be participating in the process this academic year, with 1 program entering into its first review cycle, and the remainder having completed at least one review previous to this.



@stclairCAE



Website



Intranet

Location: Room 272, South Campus

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Email: cae@stclaircollege.ca

The Cyclical Review Launch meeting was held on August 29 and provided program teams an overview of the process. This meeting was followed up with individual program orientation meetings as they maneuver through each phase of the review process. As always, the CAE staff is committed to providing support and guidance to all program teams both with the completing of cyclical reviews as well as implementing any required program changes that arise as a result of the review. *We look forward to working with you this year and beyond.*

Program Standards

The Ministry of Colleges and Universities directs updates to program standards. The Electronics Engineering Technician and Technologies, and Pharmacy Technician have entered the final stages of the review process from 2021-2022 academic year.

This academic year (2022-2023) the following programs are selected to go through program standards review -2023 academic year – Educational Support; Veterinary Technician; Architectural Technology; and Horticulture Technician.

Program Charts

The program chart is a tool that allows us to review and validate proposed changes to programs to ensure revisions remain within the scope of a program's delivery information and, where applicable, accreditation criteria. Two of the most recent features of program charts include identifying experiential learning courses in a program and identifying delivery mode for online and hybrid courses.

Reminder: *Program chart changes are due at the beginning of January 2023, so now is the time to begin discussing proposed program revisions with your Chair. Please contact us with any questions related to program charts.*

Course Outlines

CAE curriculum coordinators were busy validating and implementing requests for updates to Fall courses through the summer. Big thanks to faculty for using the new Course Outline Change Request Form to submit revisions (located on the [CAE Intranet](#)).

Reminder: *the deadline for submitting edits to existing outlines or new outlines created as part of new program chart changes for the Winter 2023 term is November 18, 2022. Please note that courses running in the Winter term that have already run in the Fall term cannot be changed.*

Experiential Learning

Enhancing experiential learning is the focus of one of the College's affirmations from the CQAAP quality assurance audit self-study. Since our experiential learning report in the last newsletter, the second phase of the experiential learning project has begun. This phase involves an in-depth review of the experiential learning courses from programs undergoing cyclical review in the 2022/2023 academic year. In addition, a variety of training and resources have been developed and shared with our academic team.

College Quality Assurance Audit Process (CQAAP) 18 Month Report

We had a very successful quality audit in 2021 and were commended on our commitment to quality assurance and *Excellence in all we do*. We achieved *Mature Effort*, which is the highest category achieved through this audit. Through our continuous improvement mindset we identified in the audit self-study four affirmations:

Requirement 1.2 - Affirmation 1: Implement Impact Reviews

Requirement 2.3 - Affirmation 2: Enhance Documentation of links between T&L activities with other components of program's curriculum.

Requirement 4.4 - Affirmation 3: Enhance documentation of Capstone/EL/WIL in program's curriculum.

Requirement 5.7 - Affirmation 4: Review and revisions of program specific handbooks and guides.

The CAE has started work on the 18-month report that is due in April 2023. The purpose of the report is to provide updates and progress on the affirmations and the state of our quality assurance activities. More updates will be provided at the next issue of our newsletter.



TEACHING & ASSESSING ESSENTIAL EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS: TAKING A LESS-IS-MORE APPROACH

By Brian Nairn

Essential Employability Skills (EES) are the skills that go beyond the vocationally relevant skills a student must have to be successful in their field of work. According to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities Framework for Programs of Instruction, these skills are critical for success in the workplace, in day-to-day living, and for life-long learning. In a broader sense, we can think of EES as the “soft skills” or “people skills” that we all need, yet often take for granted in how we have developed and honed these skills.

From a curriculum viewpoint, we often think of the EES in our own classes as operating in a vacuum, independent of what is happening in the other courses within our programs. This approach can lead to challenges when developing and implementing our course outlines – particularly when we end up with a course where we want to teach/assess sometimes upwards of eight or nine of these skills.

It's important to start thinking about EES from a less-is-more approach within our own classrooms. According to the Academic Assessment Policy (1.4.6), Article 9 provides important insight into how we should be approaching the assessment of these skills, stating, “the assessment of EES must yield an evaluation that students can recognize separately from the CLO assessment. Students must be able to distinguish portions of an assessment activity that assess EES from portions that assess CLO” (p. 2).

What this policy description means is we really need to think about the intentionality of EES within our courses. It is not uncommon to get into a mindset of “I need to highlight the value of my course by showing that I teach and assess most of these EES,” when in reality we should view these as a less-is-more approach. When we are strategic about the specific EES we want to address in our courses (with a recommendation of around 3-5 of these skills per course), we are truly able to dedicate the space and time needed to ensure these skills are being taught and assessed up to the standards that we would expect, and not a tack-on addition to the outlines because they are required. Having conversations at the program-level can also help with strategizing the EES map across the program, which in turn will ultimately lighten the workload of everyone involved once a strategy is in place.

Of course there are certain exceptions to the less-is-more EES mindset – namely being Capstones, Work-Integrated Learning, or courses that contain a major Experiential Learning component. Within these types of

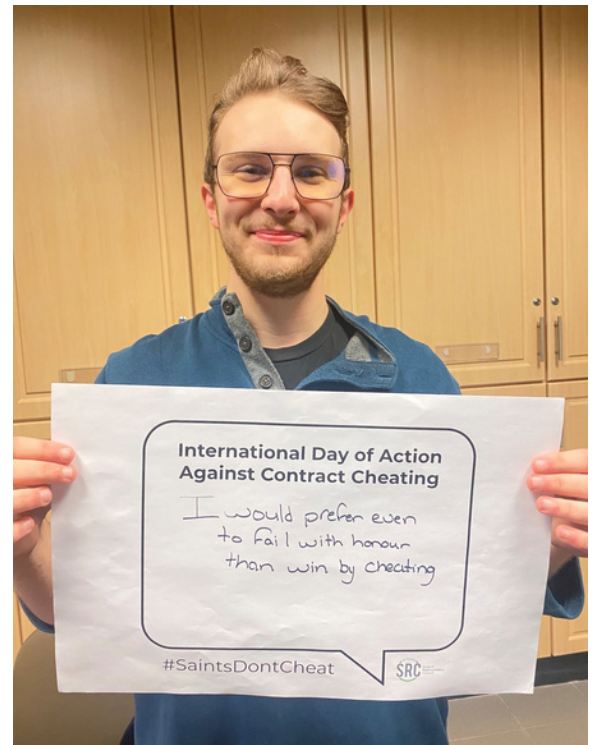
courses there is an expectation that the application of most of the EES is present, which should be the case when discussing a culminating performance. However, for our standard courses, we don't want to over-do things as we run the risk of “watering down” the importance that these skills offer. Remember, the more EES we identify within our courses creates a subsequent increase in workload for faculty (teaching, assessing, providing feedback), and students (being aware which skills are being taught and assessed and how they differ from the vocational skills of their program – or to put it another way – another “thing” to be tested on).

In order to mitigate these unintended consequences of adding more and more EES, we might want to consider scaling back and being more strategic and intentional with our approach. When we take a less-is-more approach to EES, everybody wins.

CONTRACT CHEATING

By Philip Aylesworth

Contract cheating is a growing problem in the college environment, and studies show it has increased over the past few years. Why? The simplest answer is that students don't know they are doing it. It may seem hard to believe that a student can give someone money, get back an assignment, and not realize they are cheating. However, there is a growing number of “tutoring” websites that purport to help students with their studies. Once a student signs up, they are convinced they are being “helped” with their assignments, when in fact their assignments are being done for them. To see how easy it is to find contract cheating websites, search for “homework help” and look at the first few that come up. When students participate in paid online homework help services, it's the hardest type of cheating to detect as a teacher. Therefore, when evaluating student work, we need to ask: Is the quality of this submission far above the student's ability considering previous work submitted? Is it slightly or way off-topic? Even a 0% match on *Turnitin* is a



smoking gun, since the service is going to at least make sure there is no plagiarism. One example is [Homework Help Canada](#). It's a nice looking website with prices listed. This site even has an impressive address in downtown Toronto. It turns out that it is an office sharing location, so there is likely no one there.

Contract cheating cases are also the most successful at appeal. After all, it's often based on a teacher's hunch.

So, what can we do? The most effective approach is to educate our students about contract cheating. Most don't even know what the term means. When confronted about an assignment, a student once told me when referring to the tutoring service they used: "It did seem like they were doing more than I had expected." This was a teaching moment. Have these important discussions with your class about contract cheating. Warn them about these predatory websites that prey on students under the guise of offering tutoring or homework help.

