

# Teaching Commons News For Graduate Students

## Celebrating Teaching and Learning at York



May is teaching and learning month at York. Across the university there are celebrations of teaching and learning initiatives, accomplishments and events, which started with our third annual Supporting Teaching At York (STAY) Symposium on May 1st. Upcoming later this month is our third annual Teaching In Focus (TIF) Conference. Registration closes May 8<sup>th</sup>, so grab one of the limited spots available before it is too late! See page 2 of this newsletter for details. Also, check with your Faculty or Department for other exciting events and recognitions of your teaching colleagues.

### STAY Symposium a Smashing Success

On Friday May 1st, nearly a hundred Teaching Assistants from Faculties across York gathered in the TEL Building to celebrate the graduation of the newest cohort of Senior Teaching Assistants (STAs). The daylong STAY Symposium (Supporting Teaching At York) celebrated the hard work of the graduates, and put their new training on display for their colleagues.

While the day began and ended with congratulations from Associate Dean of Academic Affairs in the Faculty of Graduate Studies Karen Krasny, Teaching Commons Director Celia Popovic, and Educational Developers Natasha May and Mandy Frake-Mistak, graduate students were really the stars of the show. STAs led fourteen different workshops in four sessions that ran throughout the day. Topics ranged from “Just Don’t Do it: Academic Dishonesty” to “How to get Students to Read” to “How to avoid Burn-out as a TA” – and many others!

It was that chance to learn from her colleagues, as well as the opportunity to reach out and meet with others passionate about teaching that attracted Masters candidate An Nguyen from the Faculty of Health to STAY this year. “First of all it was the networking, the chance to meet other grad students. Sometimes as a grad student it can be a little isolating...and also I want to hear other people’s ideas, other people’s opinions, and other people’s perspectives on undergraduate students.” There were plenty of both at the conference, as students got the chance to talk and think together both inside and outside the workshops.



Third Year PhD student Stefan Lazov had a similar perspective. “The level of interactivity of the workshops is wonderful. Not only do you get to meet so many people, but you get to discuss issues that otherwise you don’t really have a way to express.” Symposium attendees got the chance to learn collaboratively as well as come away from the sessions with many new practical suggestions for their own classrooms. Many attendees also got the chance to tick the last box on their Junior/Senior Record of Completion as well (a professional certification offered by the Commons, which will be presented to awardees at a celebration at the end of June. Watch for your invitation!).

The feeling of collegiality in a productive learning environment was also the take-away for Symposium organizer and STA-advisor Natasha May. “It was so exciting to feel the energy in the individual sessions while the participants were

all sharing their teaching experiences!" The STAY Symposium is a collective undertaking by TAs for TAs, so it is not surprising the attendees left with many new peer-reviewed strategies for their own classrooms.

The Teaching Commons STAY Symposium is an annual event taking place on the first Friday in May every year.



Friday May 6, 2016 will mark the Teaching Commons 4th annual symposium, and all York graduate students are invited to participate. STAY Symposium sessions are facilitated by the participants of the Senior Teaching Assistant (STA) course. To join the STA course, you must first complete the Teaching Assistant Certificate in Teaching (TACT) and then enroll in the Senior Teaching Assistant course. Stay tuned to our newsletter and website for updates on when registration is open for both of these courses and STAY next year!

If you still need to attend one or two workshops to attain the Junior or Senior Record of Completion Certificate, the following workshops will count toward it:

### **How do I know I'm on the Right track? Strategies to evaluate my own teaching**

**Friday May 15, 2015, 12-1pm in TEL 1014**

Register at: <http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/forms/view.php?id=178852>

### **Supporting Students' Academic Literacies**

**Wednesday May 20, 2015, 9:30am-12:30pm in TEL 1030**

Register at: <http://teachingcommonsforms.apps01.yorku.ca/forms/view.php?id=192183>

### **Human Rights in the Classroom**

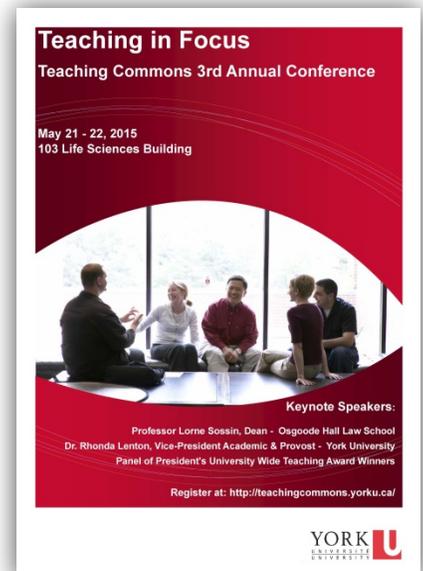
**To be rescheduled in June**

Register your interest at: <http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/forms/view.php?id=177467>

## **Teaching In Focus (TIF) Conference**

On May 21st and May 22nd, we will have a two-day Teaching in Focus conference to celebrate teaching and learning at York. This peer reviewed conference is for all who teach or support student learning at York to celebrate teaching, share experience and innovations in teaching practices, make connections, and build and expand a community and scholarship of teaching and learning.

We have an extensive schedule of sessions; including a keynote presentation from Dean Lorne Sossin, a plenary on the First Year experience, and our PUWTA award winners' panel moderated by Provost Lenton. Come learn from experienced course directors from across the university who will share their teaching practices and innovations. Moreover, support your fellow graduate student colleagues who will be presenting, including Ann Henley's "Engaging First Year Students: How to Capture the Interest of the Texting, Facebooking Enchanting and Disarming First Year Student", Yael Machtinger's "Why I Won a Teaching Award", Thiru Kanagasabai's "Prezi Basics for Engaging your Students with Creative Presentations" and the Equity Reading Group members, Nicole Bernhardt, Rehanna Siew-Sarju, Pat Breton, Sandra Smele and Elena Chou. The full program is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/TIF052015-schedule>



Register by May 8<sup>th</sup> at: <http://tinyurl.com/tif2015-register>. We look forward to seeing you there!