



# College Matters

College Matters, March 2005

## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

The CSC has focused during the past two years on developing the curriculum and promoting the credentials (ACE and TOWES) required to facilitate the smooth transition of upgrading students into employment and post secondary programming.

In June 2004 the Academic and Career Entrance (ACE) program received final approval from the Colleges Branch. The ACE Certificate is accepted as equivalent to an OSSD for purposes of enrolling in further college education or registering as an apprentice. TOWES is an alternate credential for people seeking improved employment opportunities.

In 2002, seven upgrading students were profiled in the newsletter. In this edition, we are focusing on upgrading students who have moved on to post secondary programming.

Of course there have been a number of Freudian slips since the last "College Matters". No doubt, "upgrading" often does feel more like "updraging" and "dripouts" is a good way to describe student exits. I want to clarify that "faulty" instead of "faculty" in a recent document was a typo not a slip!

## PREPARED FOR SUCCESS

In 1995 the CSC began tracking the success of graduates who had moved on to post secondary programs. The full 2003-2004 report is available at [www.collegeupgradingon.ca](http://www.collegeupgradingon.ca) / Reports and Resources.

Here are a few highlights from that report:

The most popular Post Secondary (PS) destination continues to be Health Sciences (26%) followed by Technology (21%) and Business (20%).

82% of upgrading students in PS programming pass their first semester. Only 8% withdraw – primarily for financial reasons.

Average GPA's by program range from 2.82 in GAS to 3.28 in Trades.

## ACADEMIC AND CAREER ENTRANCE PROGRAM

ACE, approved for delivery at all 24 Ontario Colleges, replaces the College Entry Level programming called Basic Training for Skills Development—Level4 (BTSD 4). Students desiring an ACE credential must complete clearly defined criteria. Students not requiring the credential may take only those courses or portions of courses required for admission to their chosen post secondary program.

## TOWES Canada's Essential Credential

Test of Workplace Essential Skills (TOWES) "measures workplace

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essential skills, which differ from the academic skills measured by credentials such as ACE and an OSSD." TOWES can help improve job prospects and advancement opportunities. TOWES tests for three essential workplace skills: reading text, document use and numeracy. This nationally validated test takes 2 hours to write and is available at colleges across Ontario. For more information log on to [www.collegeconnect.on.ca](http://www.collegeconnect.on.ca) or [www.towes.com](http://www.towes.com).

## **PROFILES IN LEARNING**

The response to a request for profiles of upgrading students who had moved on to post secondary programming was overwhelming. So many stories of worthy and inspiring students were provided that Profiles in Learning has been added to the CSC web page in order to adequately share their experiences and advice. For a more complete narrative on these and other students log on to [www.collegeupgrading.ca](http://www.collegeupgrading.ca)

All their stories start at the same place – a major event which necessitated returning to school: workplace injury or layoff death of a spouse, becoming a single parent or immigrating to Canada. Many returned with clear and realistic goals which their time in upgrading confirmed. All of them believe upgrading was critical to their post secondary success. They identify the interest which their teachers showed in them and the confidence they gained as “life changing”. Many of these people have won prestigious awards at their colleges.

## **ALGONQUIN**

**Sawssane Charaoui** participated in upgrading from August 2003 to August 2004. She spoke very little English before starting retraining, but during her year in upgrading, she obtained a solid foundation in English which “helped me in my academic career, personal life, and employment.”

This foundation has helped her in the first semester of the Business Admin. Program. “I keep going back to my old notes from my preparation classes for quick references. I will never forget that I got an A in my first grammar test in the post-secondary English class. Currently, I am one of the top students in all my classes, and I plan to keep it up.”

## **CAMBRIAN**

**Mike Marcotte** is in the first semester of the Social Services Program at Cambrian. Mike, a WSIB sponsored student, was in the Access Program from May 2003 to July 2004. Mike says that because he was accustomed to setting goals for accomplishing learning tasks in

upgrading, he is ahead of his post secondary classmates, many of whom have just finished high school

Mike advises upgrading students “Don’t waste time. Get as much learning in as possible.”

**Susi Six** also returned to upgrading through WSIB. She enrolled in the Medical Laboratory Technology Program in September 2002 and is maintaining a 3.65 GPA. Upgrading really helped her to succeed in her first year by making her “a better academic student”. She credits the encouragement she received from her teachers as important to her success, “They did a great job for me.”

**Mary Lynn Way** was in the Access Program from January to August 2004. She is currently in the first semester of the Practical Nursing Program. Mary Lynn had chosen Practical Nursing before coming to the Access Program, and researching this occupation in study skills reinforced her decision.

She feels her success in upgrading encouraged her to go on to her goal. It gave her confidence. Because upgrading is in the college, Mary Lynn feels the familiar environment made the transition to post secondary easier.

## **CENTENNIAL**

**Clint Morehen** seriously injured his left knee prior to enrolling in the upgrading program. This 48 year old WSIB referral was still in considerable pain when he enrolled in upgrading in 2002. A grade eleven graduate of Borden Vocational School he had worked as a pipe fitter until his injury.

His passion for cars led him to the Durham College Automotive Technician – Service and Management Program in September 2003. At the end of his first year, his GPA was 4.56

He built his academic confidence and learned good study skills in upgrading. He says, “The teachers encouraged me to believe in my academic ability. They made all my courses interesting.” Now he “enjoys” learning, knows he can successfully complete his diploma program and do well on the job.

## **DURHAM**

**Theresa Mulligan** was in upgrading from January to May, 2003. She went on to Power Engineering where she has maintained a GPA of 4.27. She returned to school after her husband’s sudden death to financially care for herself and her three children. Upgrading assisted Theresa to improve her overall average to be accepted into this limited admission program.

For Theresa the most challenging part about adjusting to post secondary studies was time management. She found she needed to create her own personal strategies and establish priorities. Theresa’s teachers describe her as a truly dedicated, focused student who committed herself completely to her goal. ‘She was a joy to instruct, a pleasure to have in the class, and there is no doubt that she will enjoy academic and career success.’”

## **FANSHAWE**

**Sherry Lin Terry**, a 38 year old single parent of 4 children, worked as a kitchen assistant and farm labourer. Initially, she returned to school to get a credential other than her basic high school diploma. While in upgrading, she reevaluated her goals and potential and went into the Developmental Services Worker Program.

She graduated from DSW with an additional Educational Assistant endorsement in November, 2004. She received the Mary Anne Darling Award for volunteer work outside of Fanshawe College and the Community Visions Award for writing an essay on her personal vision for “my community”.

Currently, Sherry Lin is in the accelerated Early Childhood Education program. She is considering entering the Social Service Worker program in September 2005. Sherry Lin would like to work in Correctional Services with young offenders.



## FLEMING

**Lynda St Peter** enrolled in the Social Services Worker program in September 2003 after 3 months in college upgrading. Tired of factory work, which she found stagnating and monotonous, she needed something more challenging. She considered a career as a grief counselor after losing a daughter at birth, but that road seemed too long. As a foster parent, she saw a real need for social workers who want to make a difference in children's lives. After 3 semesters in post secondary, Lynda is maintaining a 90.2% average. This year she won the Millennium Excellence Scholarship, presented to students who maintain a high academic level and contribute to the community. This is a two year bursary valued at \$4,000.00 per year. Lynda plans to use the second installment to help pay the costs of the first year of a BSW at Trent University.

## LAMBTON

**Chantal Nadeau** spent five months in the upgrading program to improve her English skills in order to enroll in the Personal Support Worker Program. After graduating from this program in January, 2004, she began working at a shelter for homeless youth.

Her experience in upgrading improved her writing skills and gave her the confidence to succeed in post secondary. She found the relaxed classroom atmosphere and positive support contributed to her success. She advises other upgrading students to "Stay at it. Be positive. Finishing your upgrading is a great accomplishment."

## LOYALIST

**Wendy Sherman**, a WSIB referral, was in upgrading from March to August of 2004 and moved on to post secondary in September, 2004. Upgrading helped her get use to going to school again especially the workload. Wendy found that written assignments especially essays were particularly helpful. She says, "I have more confidence in my English writing. It was an eye opener for me to meet students of all ages and social backgrounds. It also made me realize that many of us have the same

problems and that no one person is better than the next." She liked that the program was self paced and offered during hours convenient to people with children.

**Doug Hawden** was injured at work and required academic upgrading to qualify for admission to the Environmental Technology Program in September, 2004. Doug feels that upgrading was excellent preparation for post secondary. "I knew the level of difficulty to expect. I couldn't have succeeded without College Prep." Doug's time in upgrading has built his confidence, and he knows he can succeed in PS despite his physical challenges.

## MOHAWK

**Bill Black** enrolled in the 3 year Mechanical Engineering Technology Program at Mohawk College after 5 months in upgrading improving his math skills. He feels this preparation gave him a better understanding of math and the workload required in post secondary. Upgrading helped him have a more structured life.

"Bill had a very positive impact. As an older student he provided an excellent role model (not just for the classroom but for life in general) of what is possible when one has the motivation, determination, positive attitude, work ethic and ability. He completed the entire ACE math curriculum in record time after being out of school for twenty years!"

**Tyson Fries**, currently enrolled in the two year Business Insurance Program, was in upgrading from January 2003 to June 2004. He returned to school as part of a WSIB market re-entry plan.

Participation in the career development workshops offered in the upgrading program confirmed his career choice. As a first semester PS student, Tyson feels upgrading helped a lot with his adjustment. Studies were fresh in his mind. He was aware of the homework and the rapid pace of PS studies. He advises other students in upgrading to take their time, "*DON'T CHEAT YOURSELF. THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO BETTER YOURSELF – USE IT.*"



## SAULT

**Jeff Cameron** is currently a first year student in the Computer Networking Technician Program. He enrolled in upgrading in 2002 with the support of WSIB. Just being in the college environment and having access to college professors to discuss different programs was very essential to his PS choice. It gave him the opportunity to 'gently ease into' the college system.

**Solet Edgar** who returned to school after 23 years is in the second year of the same program. She achieved a 3.32 GPA her first semester and a 3.38 in her second. "I had a wonderful experience in upgrading". She credits the friendly atmosphere for her perfect attendance, "I was always happy to be in school." She advises others to "take advantage of this wonderful experience."

**Helene Myers**, out of school for 32 years, feels that the upgrading program helped her to succeed in post secondary "with reduced difficulties and stress". She is currently in the last year of the Registered Practical Nursing Program. Helene is convinced that without the assistance of the staff, which she calls "the most caring people she has come across in a long time", she would not have been able to return to the main stream education system.

Her first semester in post secondary was "facilitated by my familiarity with the college". She feels her age was a barrier which the upgrading program addressed, "I still would have felt intimidated by the system" but her upgrading experience was "a very positive factor in my life."

## SHERIDAN

**Sonal Patel** was in upgrading from December, 2003 to July, 2004. She wrote the mature student test as part of her application to the Early Childhood Education Program but was unsuccessful. She was referred to upgrading to obtain the necessary prerequisites.

Sonal is 35, married with two children. In 1988 she earned a Bachelor of Commerce degree from Maharaja Sayajirao University in India. She was a housewife for eleven years but always yearned to do more. After immigrating to Canada in March, 2001, Sonal responded to the elementary school's request for parent volunteers. She was eventually hired to work in the school's Snack Program and was paid to teach chess to a group of 20 children from grades 1 – 6. Sonal says that her mother wasn't able to attend school after the age of 10. In Sonal's view, her mother was limited in what she was able to do because of her lack of education. When Sonal examined her own situation, she felt there were some similarities.

She started the first semester of the Early Childhood Education Program at Sheridan in September, 2004. Participating in the upgrading program really increased her confidence. When she first started, she was frightened to speak in front of the class. In her Strategies for Success class, she moved from being terrified to stand in front of the class to confidently delivering oral presentations.

## WHAT'S GNU?



## ST. LAWRENCE

**Dave McQueen** returned to upgrading on the advice of his KEYS counselor when he was laid off. He returned to retraining in March 2002 to complete senior math and science. In September 2002, he enrolled in the General Arts and Science Program graduating with a 3.15 GPA in April 2004. Dave is now in the first year of the Social Services Worker Program to prepare for a job in the field of mental health and addictions.

Retraining helped him to develop the skills of regular attendance, time management and study skills. "My successes in College Prep built my self-confidence and self-esteem. It helped to develop a sense of responsibility and self-discipline. I am more prepared and confident to take on new challenges. By setting deadlines for myself, I developed initiative. If you want something, you have to go after it, and that's what I'm doing."

Dave has made an exceptional contribution to St Lawrence College by actively participating in the upgrading Orientation Program, and providing peer support to students in both adult training and the Arts and Science Program. His maturity, sense of responsibility, caring attitude and strong work ethic have served as a model for others. He was the recent recipient of the Arts and Science Outstanding Achievement Award.

**Registrations for this year's provincial conference are now being accepted. Sessions for managers, faculty and support staff are planned.**

**Where: Conestoga College  
When: June 2 & 3**

**Plan to attend this unique opportunity to meet other College staff from across the province.**

## ST. CLAIR

**Pendo Omar** returned to the upgrading program in May 2004 to prepare to enroll in the Common Business Program in September 2004. Improving his grammar, writing and math skills helped him get into post secondary. The most difficult part of adjusting to post secondary has been the different style of teaching and the increased number of subjects to take. He feels he has more self assurance and "can communicate with people without concern about my English." He advises students currently in upgrading "to keep working hard because it will help you in the future." He expresses his appreciation to his professors, "The most rewarding part of my upgrading experience was the teachers".

## ACE LOGO CONTEST

**The CSC is looking for a logo and tag phrase to use in ACE promotion. Upgrading students from all colleges are eligible to participate in this contest.**

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Prize</b>	<b>\$300.00</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Prize</b>	<b>\$200.00</b>

**Contest submissions should be sent to [lwallace@vianet.on.ca](mailto:lwallace@vianet.on.ca) by 5:00 p.m., April 29, 2005**

