

Proposal for the Establishment of the Canadian Learning Commons Network (CLCN)

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For Discussion by: CAN-LC listserv members and Canadian Learning Commons Conference attendees (Fredericton June 8-10, 2008).

Rationale:

The idea behind the formation of a national organization is to create a network that would bring together individuals from across Canada involved in developing, sustaining, and/or evolving a "learning commons" in a higher educational setting.

A "learning commons" most broadly defined is a central facility, usually an academic library, that provides the space, technology and services to support learning. These learning spaces can include areas for group work, individual study spaces, instructional rooms, computer pools, multi-media labs and soft seating areas. Services may include learning, writing, library research, numeracy, and academic advising support for students; instructional development assistance for faculty, and technology and media support services for both students and instructors.

Purpose/Strategic Goals

The overall mission of the Canadian Learning Commons Network would be to provide a network for communication, professional development and advocacy for those who are involved with a Learning Commons on their campus.

This National Learning Commons Network would have four strategic goals:
To develop a network for communication among Learning Commons

- To provide a forum for Learning Commons to share resources
- To offer professional development opportunities for Learning Commons in higher education through regional meetings or annual/ biennial conferences
- To promote ideas and scholarship that will support the enhancement of learning for students in higher education across Canada.

Such a network would benefit those involved in Learning Commons through the sharing of ideas, experiences, research, and scholarship. Specifically we envision learning from one another through:

- Disseminating information on models of best practices, budgeting, space and service issues
- Promoting cross-service and cross-disciplinary conversations
- Supporting relevant research and publication through collaboration with other Learning Commons

A Short History

In 2005, the University of Guelph hosted the first annual Learning Commons conference on June 19 and 20th at the University of Guelph. 100 delegates from 8 different provinces and New York State attended. The second conference was held April 29 - May 1, 2007 in Vancouver, British Columbia sponsored by Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia. The third annual conference will be held on June 8 – 10 in Fredericton, New Brunswick, sponsored by the UNB.

At one of the final sessions at the 2007 conference, a number of attendees met to talk about the future of this fledgling movement. The general consensus was that it was important to maintain the momentum of the conferences by establishing a framework for future activities and discussions.

As members representing the planning committees for the first two conferences, we hope by this proposal to establish a more intentional organizational structure that will continue the conversations started from the first two conferences.

A number of issues need to be addressed:

1. Governance – we could identify a number of suggestions ranging from very loose to something more structured, but we need to speak to representatives from across the country to assess the level of structure desired

2. Membership –open to all interested parties

3. Annual Conference – conferences have been planned locally with great success. The format and content of the conference could be left to the discretion of the local planning committee, with perhaps one or two placeholders for ongoing organizational discussions.

4. Website – there is a placeholder web address that the U of G has registered for a national network: www.canadianlearningcommons.ca . There will need to be discussions as to who would host such a site and how it would be maintained. (See page 3 for a proto-type on how such a site could be envisioned.)

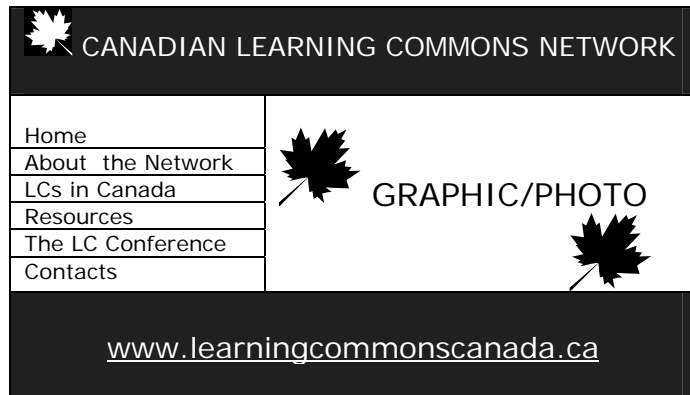
5. Listserve - currently this is hosted by the University of Manitoba and is open to all interested parties.

6. Budget – what would it cost to establish and maintain such an entity?

Next Steps

At the 3rd Annual Learning Commons Conference, time will be set aside time on the Tuesday over lunch for those who want to discuss this initiative in more detail. Comments from the LC listserv prior to the conference will also be used to inform our discussions.

We envision at the end of that meeting to have a national planning group in place that would work on the establishment of such a network.



A proto-type of a Canadian Learning Commons Network website to help us in beginning our discussions about purpose, role, function of such an entity.

Design, graphics, and content would come from a planning group tasked for such a function.

Web content could be built around the following navigational themes:

<p>Home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Welcome ▪ Role of the network 	<p>The LC Conference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information on past conferences ▪ Link to upcoming LC conference
<p>About the Network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ History ▪ Governance 	<p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ links to LCs outside of Canada ▪ research articles ▪ other related conferences
<p>Learning Commons in Canada</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Map of Canada noting location of LCs ▪ Searchable database by province and by institution ▪ Listing of LCs and contacts in Canada 	<p>Contacts</p> <p>(Depends on network structure)</p>