

Manitoba Association for Distributed Learning and Training (MADLaT)

Conference 2014

President's Report

May 2nd, 2014

Our theme this year was “Creating the Dialogue” acknowledging the importance of conversation and discourse to education and understanding. It is a ‘big concept’ but one that brings perspective back to the role of technology in education. Implementing this theme resulted in a gathering that had many interesting strands and connections but required much work on the part of all involved. I am gratified that the 2013-14 year has been a successful one for MADLaT, although not without its challenges. We started the year with a fairly new board and some big ideas. Our board is no longer ‘new’ and our ideas still ‘big’. But, we’ve accomplished several key goals.

First, we have been able to engage leaders at various institutions with respect to how MADLaT can help meet their professional development goals. Details on upcoming initiatives are yet to be determined but we will continue to work with our contacts to make MADLaT more responsive and relevant to their needs.

Second, through our connection with institutional leaders, we were able to increase our sponsorship for the 2014 conference (just over \$10,000)! This helped us cover conference costs and will help us provide some additional PD events during the year.

Third, our 13th annual conference was a success – both in terms of attendees and quality of sessions. We made new contacts and had some high-level presenters and deep sessions. Our opening panel discussion on May 1st highlighted key enhancements to the learning landscape (in post-secondary education initially) in Manitoba and triggered new ideas and discussions on various aspects of the eCampusManitoba initiative. Once again we hired a conference manager – Tamara Maurer – who helped us with logistics and on-site organization.

Fourth, and connected to the third goal, for the first time in MADLaT history we live-streamed the panel discussion, keynote and several sessions and will make these available online later in the year. This was a pilot project that we want to continue in future conferences.

Fifth, bigger changes involved amending our Bylaws to update the language and allow more flexibility and expand our board so we can get more work done!

One of the aforementioned 'challenges' was the relatively short notice that we had to change venues. The staff at all levels at RRC Notre Dame Campus have been stellar in their support for our conference and worked hard to get us rooms, parking and catering. The eTV staff have also been very supportive with their live-streaming crew despite their already heavy schedule.

Of course, without a Board, a President is just an imaginary concept so I'd like to thank my Board and conference committee:

Board: Stevi Dram (Vice-President), Kathy Snow (Treasurer, Pgm Committee Chair), Melissa Goulbourne (Member-at-large, logistics), Terralyn Mckee (Member-at-large, web/communications), Bev Leckie (Member-at-large) and Pat Stoddart (Past-President)

Conference Committee: Tamara Maurer (Conference Manager), David Larocque, Ryan Nicolson, Rob Lawson

It has been my pleasure to serve as President and I look forward to completing my final term as President in the 2014-15 year.


Claudius Soodeen