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Celebrating 35 Years of Canadian Studies

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Celebrating 35 years of Canadian Studies



Higher education in the United States is increasingly focused on making students global learners. Programs that provide undergraduates with educational experiences abroad are now an integral part of the curriculum. In line with this trend, Bridgewater has been fortunate to have in place the Canadian Studies program, which since 1973 has taken the lead in Massachusetts and indeed throughout the country in providing students with international learning opportunities. This year the Canadian Studies Program proudly celebrates thirty-five years of ever-growing cross border ties.

In 1973 Professor John Myers of the History Department offered the first course in Canadian History and in effect launched a program of study that after thirty-five years now includes a full range of courses, numerous faculty participants, research and travel grants, a speaker series, heightened student interest and an endowed chair in Canadian Studies, the first among Massachusetts state colleges. During Professor Myers sixteen year tenure as Canadian Studies Coordinator at Bridgewater, the program grew from one course to an academic discipline offering students a minor concentration. Myers also laid the groundwork for the

advancement of Canadian Studies by forming a council of faculty members who would provide support and guidance as the program moved forward. Within a few years there were student exchanges, field trips to Canada, research and travel grants, gifts of books, maps, slides and other materials provided by the Canadian government and summer workshops to train high school teachers about Canada.

In 1989, Professor Myers handed over responsibility for the Canadian Studies program to Dr. Anthony Cicerone of the Economics Department who took the program to a new level of excellence. One of his first objectives was to develop an official budget for the program that allowed him and his fellow Canadian studies colleagues to plan for new initiatives. With the support of then President Adrian Tinsley, Dr. Cicerone was able to make Canadian Studies an integral part of the college's external relations efforts and develop closer ties between southeastern Massachusetts and Canada. As a result of these growing ties, Cicerone developed a series of conferences linking local mayors in the region with their counterparts in Atlantic Canada and hosted numerous workshops and other gatherings to promote cross border ties. Cicerone was also successful in con-



Far Left:
Steven Smalley, *Canada*. 66" x 76". Acrylic
on Canvas. 2008.

Left:
John B. Newhall, Jan Cellucci,
Anthony Cicerone, Kate Newhall,
Paul Cellucci, Dana Mohler-Faria.

vincing the Canadian Government in Boston to provide expanded research and travel support for faculty and students who wanted to develop a better understanding of their neighbors to the North. The result was a significant growth in grants awarded to the program and to Bridgewater State faculty.

The success of the Canadian Studies program convinced the college administration to hire specialists on Canada such as Professor Christopher Kirkey in Political Science (now head of Canadian Studies at SUNY, Plattsburgh) and Professor Andrew Holman in History. Fulbright Scholars such as Louis Balthazar of Laval University in Quebec and Joel Sokolsky of the Royal Military College of Canada spent full semesters at Bridgewater teaching classes and working closely with students. During this time Dr. Cicerone initiated a distinguished speakers series. The TD Banknorth Distinguished Canadian Annual Address brings some of the most visible and respected Canadian leaders to the college. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, the Commission of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, provincial prime ministers, authors, poets and other luminaries were invited to come to Bridgewater to speak to the college community.

In one of his most gratifying initiatives, Dr. Cicerone also was able to develop funding relationships that permitted Bridgewater students to study in Canada. The Maple Leaf Foundation provides substantial financial support giving students new opportunities to spend a semester at a Canadian university. Also ties were formed with the Killam Fellowships Program, which provide Bridgewater students with a \$10,000 award (plus additional money for travel) to attend a Canadian university. Bridgewater's participation in the Killam Fellowships Program placed it in company with Massachusetts schools such as Harvard, MIT, Wellesley and Smith. These programs also allow Canadian students to travel to Bridgewater and spend an equal amount of time here fostering a true exchange relationship.

The relationship with the Killam Trusts set the stage for the most significant accomplishment of the Canadian

Studies Program. While serving as President and CEO of the New England-Canada Business Council, Dr. Cicerone met Mr. John Newhall, who was entrusted with managing the Killam Trusts. Over an eight year period starting in 2000

Dr. Cicerone has worked closely with Mr. Newhall and was able to raise over \$1 million from the Killam Trusts, with additional support from the Canadian government and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Endowment Incentive Program to establish the first endowed chair among the nine state colleges in Massachusetts. The endowed chair was announced in 2007 by college president Dr. Dana Mohler-Faria, a strong supporter of Canadian Studies, with 2009 as the start date. Once fully operational, the college will host a series of distinguished Canadian scholars who will teach classes, conduct research and mentor students. The distinction of being the first state college to endow a faculty chair indicates the standing that Bridgewater's Canadian Studies Program has attained since its inception in 1973.

As the Canadian Studies Program celebrates its 35th year, Dr. Cicerone, his faculty colleagues, administrators and a growing number of students are anticipating continued interest in Canada and expanded cross-border ties. Each year there has been an increase in the number of students who take the inter-disciplinary course in Canadian Studies. Furthermore, the Canadian Studies Program has grown to over twenty faculty and staff members who meet regularly to plan out new initiatives and research projects. Because the Bridgewater State College Canadian Studies Program has received international recognition, there is also increased support from the Canadian Consulate General in Boston, the Canadian Government in Ottawa, and Canadian businesses. There is no doubt that over the last thirty five years Canadian Studies has become a major player in the United States as a center for academic excellence, student exchanges, business involvement and community participation. With such a success rate it can only be concluded that in the coming years the Canadian Studies program will continue its proud tradition of strengthening ties to our northern neighbor and enhancing the opportunities for students, faculty, businesses, public officials and the regional community to develop closer relations and a better understanding of Canada.

—Michael Kryzaneck.