Recruiting a New Class

We are in the next to final process of reviewing applications for the group of students who will start classes in September following the August 6-12 Orientation (see below). At this point we anticipate an enrolment of 18 – 20 new Masters candidates from across the USA and Canada – as yet, alas, we have no potential candidates from the UK although the deadline is not yet past. Applicants have varied backgrounds coming from natural foods, purchasing, retail, housing and farm co-operatives. If you know anyone planning to apply who has not yet contacted us, please have them do so in the next week so that we can complete our planning.

Orientation August 2004

The Orientation program is focused on the same three goals as last year:
1. Building a learning community of candidates who will support each other and work well together;
2. Getting familiar with WebCT so they can hit the ground running in September; and
3. To expose them to new ideas and ways of thinking from innovative thinkers and a few of the most successful co-operative CEO’s in the world.

As with last year we have carefully invited guest speakers who we think will whet their appetites for learning. Bob Burlton, the CEO of Oxford Swindon and Gloucester Co-op and Chair of the Board of the world’s largest co-operative retail, UK’s Co-operative Group, will be back, as will Ron Colman of Genuine Progress Indicators Atlantic. Last year’s Masters candidates gave Bob and Ron very high marks.

This year Masters candidates will also have an opportunity to learn from and share thoughts with John Lahey, CEO of FirstOntario Credit Union, and Stan Dreyer, the former CEO of the National Cooperative Bank and CLUSA in the USA.

John came to credit union land after a strong career with the CIBC. He has become a committed co-operative businessman with a strong co-operative vision shaped by both his banking and credit union experience. He has keen insights about the co-operative difference and the challenges that lie ahead for co-operative business.

Stan Dreyer is an ‘icon’ in co-operative circles in the US, having provided outstanding leadership not only to the NCB, but to the co-operative movement across the country. He has served as both the CEO of the National Cooperative Bank and the Cooperative...
League of the USA, now known as the NCBC. Stan has been inducted into the Cooperative Hall of Fame and in 1999 the Stan Dreyer Spirit of Co-operation Award was named after him.

**MMCCU Masters Candidates to Visit Mondragon**

In October, the second year Masters candidates will spend nine intense days visiting and learning about the Mondragon Co-operative Corporation (MCC) in the Basque Country of Spain. The Mondragon co-operatives produce fully 7% of the gross domestic product of the Basque Country. They are one of the two beacons of achievement co-operators around the world look to when they try to envision what a successful co-operative economy might look like.

The Mondragon Co-operatives are based on a worker co-operation model and are leading manufacturers of home appliances, industrial robots, machine tools, forged metal products, car parts, bicycles and numerous other products as well as providing insurance and financial services and are Spain’s largest retailer. As well, they own their own university and six research and development labs to keep them on the leading edge of technology.

Prior to traveling to the Basque Country students will spend four weeks reading about and discussing the theory, history, economic performance and critiques of the Mondragon co-operatives and upon their return will spend a final two week period discussing and assessing the lessons of the MCC and how they might be applied to their own co-operative businesses.

**Welcome to New Members**

The Co-operative Management Education Co-operative, Saint Mary’s partner in developing the MMCCU program, continues to grow. New members include:
- Canada’s largest credit union, VanCity;
- Credit Union Central of Alberta;
- Trans national co-op GrowMark;
- Arctic Co-operatives.

The CMEC Development Fund has grown by more than $80,000 reaching more than 65% of its objective.

**CUNA’s Tom Decker Joins CMEC Board**

The Board of Directors of CMEC is pleased to announce that Tom Decker has been appointed to the Board. Tom Decker is the Director of CUNA’s Executive Development Center, responsible for a wide range and variety of executive development programs at CUNA. Tom will bring a strong academic and practical experience to CMEC’s work with St. Mary’s.

Contact Tom Webb, St. Mary’s University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada tom.webb@smu.ca Phone 902-863-0678 or 902-496-8170
Prior to joining CUNA in February of 1999, Tom spent over eighteen years in higher education where he served as an administrator and faculty member. He has extensive experience in program and organizational development in education, needs analysis work, conflict resolution, curriculum design and evaluation, and management and leadership.

Tom was formerly an Assistant Dean for Cardinal Stritch University where he was the chief administrator of its branch campus in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He has taught courses in business ethics, management and leadership, and strategic management among others. He has worked with adult learners for over a decade and owned his own consulting firm specializing in project management, strategic planning, ethical decision-making, mediation and dispute resolution, and training and development.

Like Coop America, Saint Mary’s too has seen sweatshops as an issue. Perhaps a major reason the MMCCU program is so at home at Saint Mary’s University is an acceptance of values close to co-operators minds and hearts.

The University’s recently created ethical purchasing policy will ensure that all suppliers of products bearing Saint Mary’s name, trademarks or images will be in compliance with the University’s code of conduct.

The University’s “no sweat” policy requires all of its vendors, which include suppliers of crested apparel and crested giftware, including its contractors, subcontractors, manufacturers, assemblers and packagers to comply with its code of labour standards and workers’ rights.

“Saint Mary’s University is committed to the pursuit of ethical workplace standards and an appropriate code of conduct,” says Gabrielle Morrison, Vice-President Administration. Morrison worked with the University’s code of conduct committee as they developed the terms of the policy.

All vendors were recently required to submit a declaration of compliance with the code and to review their standards for employment, wages and benefits, working hours, overtime compensation, health and safety and freedom of association. The code clearly states that the University will not do business with vendors who do not comply.

Saint Mary’s, Co-op America and the No Sweat Struggle

On Coop America’s “No Sweat” website they answer the question, “Why are there sweat shops?” this way:

“As retailers compete with one another by seeking lowest-cost workers, they put pressure on suppliers to keep their costs down, and they encourage consumers to buy more at “discount” prices. This market for cheap goods then squeezes factory owners to pinch even more. The result is forced overtime, low wages, punishments and fines for slow work and mistakes, worker intimidation, child labor, and other abuses.”