



Association of
**Workplace
 Educators**
 of Nova Scotia

Connecting...

Spring/Summer 2014

Annual General Meeting Celebrates Our 15th Anniversary

To mark our 15th Anniversary, AWENS hosted a special two-day Annual General Meeting on May 29-30 at the Holiday Inn Harbourview in Dartmouth. The meeting was full of networking, celebrating, and learning.

Besides the Annual General Meeting itself, the Thursday evening and Friday daytime events included a gala dinner with inspiring guest speakers, presentations on literacy, a session on Social Learning, and a Professional Development workshop on Graphic Facilitation. The events brought together old friends and pioneers of Workplace Education to mingle with our members, staff, and partners.

On Thursday evening, after an informal networking session, Board Chair Kathy Weagle called the AGM to order around 5:00 p.m. The meeting's agenda included the review of the annual report, a financial report from Sarah Veinot of WBLI Chartered Accountants, and the election of the 2014-15 Board of Directors (see profiles on pages 2 and 3).

Following the meeting was a dinner and celebration, where we welcomed three guest speakers: Marjorie Davison (Executive Director, Corporate Policies and Services, Department of Labour and Advanced Education), Vicki Elliott-Lopez (Director of Workplace Initiatives, Department of Labour and Advanced Education), and Michelle Fike (AWENS member and former Board member). Marjorie, a visionary for the development and management of the Nova Scotia Workplace Education Initiative, took us for a walk down memory lane and shared with us the history that led to the creation of AWENS. As Marjorie pointed out, "We

would not have achieved our goal without the team effort behind it."

Following Marjorie's presentation, the two founders of AWENS, Virginia Schultz and Virginia Vacheresse, were presented with Lifetime Membership awards. Recognition was given to Leigh Faulkner for his extensive leadership to the AWENS Board of Directors and community, and also to four AWENS members who serve on the Communications Committee: Jeff Brown, Lisette Jones, Rick McMullen, and Bonnie O'Toole.

After the celebration, the dinner continued. We heard from Vicki Elliott-Lopez, who spoke on the relationship between AWENS and the Department of Labour and Advanced Education. She delivered a message of encouragement, highlighting the importance of continued investment in training to see success as a province. The dinner and celebration ended with a motivational address by Michelle Fike. Michelle brought a high level of energy and enthusiasm to the room as she addressed the question, "What does AWENS want to be?" The evening was full of networking, reflecting on our history, and looking forward—a wonderful way to celebrate 15 years.

"We would not have achieved our goal without the team effort behind it."

— Marjorie Davison

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Best of Luck, Laura



In June, Laura Park began another academic journey by pursuing a Master in Business Administration degree from Dalhousie University. During her time at AWENS, Laura worked closely with Executive Director Margan Dawson on a daily basis. Margan and the rest of the members will definitely miss Laura's friendly, welcoming presence around the office. We wish Laura the best of luck in her studies.

Get to Know the Board of Directors

The Annual General Meeting marked the election of the Board of Directors for the 2014–15 year. The board, along with Executive Director Margan Dawson, guides the development of the association. The new board has familiar faces as well as some new ones. The Board currently consists of six members: Kathy Weagle, Leigh Faulkner, Rachel Cooper, Tanya Burke, Wayne Sarty, and Zoran Jokic.



Kathy Weagle

[Kathy](#) spent the majority of her 29-year nursing career working in long-term care. She began instructing in 1994. When Kathy's facility sent her on a "train-the-trainer" program to teach stress management, she and the staff became hooked on in-house training. Kathy went on to deliver programs in Nonviolent Crisis Intervention, Alzheimer's

Disease and Other Dementias Care Course, Critical Incident Stress Management, and Improving Morale. In 2008, she earned her certificate in Adult Education and instructed her first program through Workplace Education that same year. Judy Purcell, Southwest Workplace Education Coordinator, encouraged her to join AWENS shortly afterward, and the rest is history. Kathy has her own business and specializes in communication, customer service, and leadership.



Leigh Faulkner

Leigh started Workplace Education in 2007 after a career in elementary/secondary and university education in Canada and Asia. He has served AWENS as a representative for the Southwestern region and as chair of the Board of Directors. Leigh has training and experience in curriculum development in a variety of settings, including for Workplace Education. He has conducted

Organizational Needs Assessments (ONAs) for the Workplace Education Initiative (WEI) and has facilitated WEI courses in documentation skills and communications. Additionally, he has conducted research in the trades sector and facilitated workshops in the business and trades sectors. Currently, Leigh is actively exploring online teaching/learning opportunities.



Rachel Cooper

[Rachel](#) has worked as a freelance editor and writer for 16 years. She joined AWENS three years ago and has gained its professional-development certificates in communication and in mastering facilitation skills. She has also worked professionally for AWENS as a curriculum editor and is a member of the new

AWENS Editorial Board. Rachel served on the Board of the Acadia Lifelong Learning Centre in Wolfville for four years until 2011, the last two of them as chair. She is currently the communications and social media specialist on the Executive of the Valley Women's Business Network, responsible for the organization's media relations, communications, monthly newsletter, and social media.



Tanya Burke

Tanya was born and raised in Cape Breton, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Business Degree from University College of Cape Breton. Before moving to the Nova Scotia peninsula in 2002, Tanya spent several years working in the business and tourism industries. She became a member of AWENS in 2006 and

delivered many communication and numeracy-related programs. In 2008, Tanya joined the Board of Directors and became Board Secretary in 2009. Last year, she held the Vice Chair position. Tanya says being involved with AWENS has provided her with many opportunities and has contributed to her career success in more ways than one.



Wayne Sarty

Wayne currently sits as Secretary on the Board of Directors for AWENS representing the Cape Breton region. He became a member of AWENS three years ago and has since taken advantage of its professional development opportunities, gaining certificates in communication, business, mastering facilitation skills, and human resource management. During his career as a high-school teacher, Wayne served several terms on the Provincial Executive of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, was Vice President of the Provincial Multicultural Association, and served as Coordinator of Community Schools. He also developed curricula as a member of the Council of Maritime Premiers' Task Force.



Zoran Jokic

Zoran has worked in a variety of capacities in the sales and training/consulting sectors in the past 20 years. He began his career working in a humanitarian aid agency and later branched off into the hospitality, technology and wireless industries. Zoran has provided leadership and guidance in matters of life coaching, hospitality, adult learning, account management, sales, IT, and wireless training delivery to various institutions worldwide. Zoran has a bachelor's degree in sports/business management and a diploma in computer networking. Zoran has worked with a number of reputable organizations, non-profits, and business associations. In 2012, Zoran became an AWENS member and has been providing support for many Halifax businesses ever since.

Introducing the Newest Employees at AWENS

AWENS has recently welcomed two new employees to the office. In June, Breagh MacDonald and Sarah Levy began working at AWENS. They both work closely with Margan Dawson, and from what they've told us, they're delighted with their new positions.



Breagh MacDonald

Breagh grew up in Cape Breton before enrolling in the public relations program at Mount Saint Vincent University in 2012. Through her program she is required to complete three co-op work terms. In June, she started her first co-op at AWENS as a communications officer. Breagh works directly with Margan Dawson and the Project Team to identify communication gaps. During her time with AWENS she will also be developing and rebranding the website, creating AWENS' social media presence, and, of course—writing the newsletter. When asked what she's looking forward to, Breagh says, "I'm excited to finally put my skills to use, especially on the newsletter. I think working at AWENS will be a great experience."



Sarah Levy

Sarah was born and raised in the Annapolis Valley and is a recent graduate of Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU). She completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology/Anthropology, and, while her minor was in Psychology, she thoroughly enjoyed various courses in Criminology. In 2009, Sarah graduated from the Human Services program at NSCC Kingstec Campus in Kentville. She began working as a Residential Rehabilitation Worker at King's Regional Rehabilitation Centre in Waterville. In 2013, she returned to MSVU to complete her degree. "I'm thrilled to have this opportunity to work with Margan Dawson at AWENS," says Sarah. "During my studies, I hoped I would work in a setting like this."

The Annual General Meeting Continues

Friday, May 30, was a day full of informative events. The morning began with Lindsay Kennedy and Chris Harwood of the Canadian Literacy and Learning Network. Kennedy shared the results of the Literacy and Essential Skills (LES) Labour Market Study, while Harwood discussed the importance of National Occupational Standards (NOS) for the LES Workforce. Both presentations shared information and opened the conversation around NOS.

The next part of the morning consisted of a Social Learning session—with topics chosen by our members through a survey. Leigh Faulkner (AWENS Past Chair) presented on MOOCs—Massive Open Online Courses—and Zoran Jokic (newly elected Metro region Board Representative) presented on mobile learning. Leigh introduced a wide range of MOOCs and invited the participants to identify possible uses for MOOCs within Workplace Education. As the discussion travelled around the room, we learned that AWENS member Chris Lewis already has a best practice that involves the use of MOOCs, allowing his course participants to have access to material covered in class. This is just one example of how MOOCs are making their way into Workplace Education. As Zoran introduced us to the world of mobile learning, he jumped right in by offering his presentation straight from his tablet. We learned how a tablet could be used in lieu of a computer, which opened the question, “Will we move to tablets instead of laptops?” Zoran demonstrated the ease of use for mobile devices, showing how simple connectivity to both Wi-Fi and Bluetooth is. He also made the point that tablets are easier to transport than computers.



Lisette Jones at the Graphic Facilitation workshop

Friday afternoon, our AGM and Professional Development ended with the engaging Corrie Melanson of See Meaning, who facilitated a Graphic Facilitation workshop.



As humans, we tend to think in pictures, not words. Graphic Facilitation allows us to help people learn visually. The session began with the participants in the room selecting a photo that came from a pool of photographs. People were then asked to describe why they picked the photo and how it related to what they wanted to get out of the day. It was amazing to see how people could communicate so much from just seeing a photo. Corrie said, “Visual tools are a good way to start a group. You can use pictures, postcards, or anything else.”

The session allowed participants to channel their creative skills while also having fun. Throughout the session, instructors shared ways that they thought they could use graphics and graphic facilitation in their instruction. We learned from Corrie that two-thirds of us are visual learners, which is a great reason to incorporate visuals. She also said, “Adding colour can increase recall by 77 percent.” We practised a number of techniques to help express different meanings or feelings—for example, using different lettering styles and different drawing tools (markers, pastels, etc.). At the end, we watched a TED Talk by Sunni Brown called “Doodlers, unite!” that highlighted how we can use senses to enhance our learning environments.

Get to Know Robin Jardine

Northern Strait Workplace Education Coordinator

You might say that Robin Jardine is quite experienced in Workplace Education; this fall marks her 19th year in the field. She started as a Workplace Education Field Officer in 1995, delivering mainly Reading, Writing, and Math programs. Today she is a Workplace Education Coordinator in the Northern Strait region.

When asked what a day in her life looks like, Robin says, "One of the charms of the job is that there is no typical day in the life." While doing this job, Robin has had the opportunity to see many different workplaces. "I am amazed during workplace tours by the variety of places where Workplace Education programs are delivered and at the sheer diversity of workplaces in Nova Scotia," she says.

One aspect of the job that Robin loves is that Workplace Education programs make a difference in the lives of Nova Scotia businesses and organizations. She says these programs help people to meet new challenges at work, whether in an organization of 200 employees or a small business with five employees. "It is always amazing to hear from participants the impact that one of our programs has had on their work and life," says Robin. "I am grateful to be a part of that."

Before working in Workplace Education, Robin was a public-school teacher in Alberta for 14 years. She moved back to Nova Scotia in 1990 and worked in a family business for the next five years. When the opportunity to work in education again arose, she seized it. Robin says it has proven to be a wonderful choice.

Some of Robin's hobbies include reading, hooking rugs, making pickles and preserves, and photographing the beautiful landscape of Nova Scotia. Robin lives in a little place called Sinclair's Island with her husband, Bradley, and their dog, Marilla.

Chris Lewis, a facilitator who works closely with Robin, shared that she is an essential partner in the success of Workplace Education programs. "I am so incredibly blessed to have Robin as my coordinator," says Chris. "Her support and understanding of the market and local businesses ensures a recipe of success."

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 – Chris Lewis,
 Workplace Education Facilitator
 (Northern Strait region)

Get to Know Colleen O'Connor

Central Workplace Education Coordinator

Colleen O'Connor has been working in Workplace Education for nine years. Prior to coming to the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, she worked with the Department of Community Services and Service Nova Scotia. Colleen will soon be celebrating 28 years as a Nova Scotia public servant.

During her completion of a secondment with the Adult Education Division, Colleen learned about the Skills Development Division, which is now Workplace Initiatives. "I felt that it was the type of work to which my skillset could provide value," says Colleen. "When the position became available, I applied."

When asked how she would describe her job, Colleen says, "My job allows me to work with businesses and organizations to assist with their professional development and skills training to ensure that they remain viable, competitive, and productive in the global economy." An aspect of the job she loves is working with professional, competent instructors to create the confidence in the program delivery. When Colleen isn't tied up with work, she enjoys running, cycling, and walking with her dog.

Lynn MacKinnon, a facilitator who works closely with Colleen, shared that it was Colleen who recommended her to become a member of AWENS. "Colleen continues to guide me whenever I need it," says Lynn. "She has been a huge support."

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 – Lynn MacKinnon,
 Workplace Education
 Facilitator
 (Central region)

Get to Know Chris Lewis

Northern Strait Workplace Education Facilitator



[Chris Lewis](#) has been an AWENS member for more than seven years, but he has been teaching for much longer than that. Over the past 17 years, he has taught business skills at universities, community colleges, and through Workplace Education. Chris's expertise is in areas related to small business. Courses he teaches include Management/Human Resources Skills, Supervisory and Leadership Skills, Social Media Skills, and Accounting and Software-based Skills. "I feel passionate about bridging the critical link between successful business and correct skillsets," says Chris. "When they are brought together and you see success, it's incredibly rewarding."

During Chris's membership at AWENS, he once served on the board as the Northern Strait region's representative. Chris has developed his own curriculum for all of his courses and always changes it for each class to meet the needs of the participants. "It's an exciting time to be an instructor as the demand for online relevant materials increases and the learning styles of the participants incorporate more IT-based foundations," says Chris.

When asked what is most rewarding about delivering Workplace Education programs, Chris says helping local business survive and succeed. Chris has witnessed many success stories as a result of Workplace Education. A couple he shared with us include social media training that has doubled the revenue for a local business and accounting training that has allowed owners to understand their finances and save thousands of dollars in accounting fees. "Helping others succeed in business is a passion," says Chris. "Always has been, always will be. It is amazing what can be accomplished with the right skillsets."

"Helping others succeed in business is a passion. Always has been, always will be."

- Chris Lewis

When Chris isn't instructing, he is most likely doing something involving music. Chris says he attempts to plan his schedule around concerts and music. "I have been completing a bucket list of seeing a concert by every artist who has ever lifted my spirit through their work," says Chris. "So far, 124 concerts and counting."

Get to Know Lynn MacKinnon

Central Workplace Education Facilitator

Lynn MacKinnon has been a member of AWENS for three years now. She jumped at the chance to do Workplace Education after teaching for a few years at Success College in Truro. Lynn's area of expertise is accounting—she does most of her work at her own business, MacKinnon Accounting. Programs Lynn teaches include Financial Management and Sage 50.

When asked what she loves about instructing, Lynn says, "I love the cluster programs because you get to meet a variety of very interesting people with unique businesses. From their diversity and questions I have learned a great deal and enjoy the challenge of the unexpected." Lynn said the most rewarding part of delivering Workplace Education programs is seeing the participants put the program material to use right away. She has developed her own curricula which are constantly changing and being updated.

If Lynn isn't teaching, she is usually working in her office at MacKinnon Accounting. When work is finished, Lynn loves to spend her spare time at her cottage. "Not only is it the most peaceful place on earth, it's also one of the few places left that doesn't have cellphone service," says Lynn.



Training Programs Impact NOBL Clients

Northern Opportunities for Business Limited (NOBL) is a federally funded Community Business Development Corporation (CBDC), a not-for-profit organization whose mission statement is “to support business in our community.” Servicing the counties of Antigonish, Pictou, and Colchester, NOBL provides business financing and counselling services to an average of 120 clients a year. Run by 24 volunteers and six staff, the corporation has been in existence for 26 years.

“The instructors’ expertise and knowledge in their field of instruction has impacted positively on the businesses that have attended their training.”

*– Shannon Bouchie,
NOBL Business Analyst*

When Robin Jardine explained what type of training was provided, CBDC-NOBL jumped on the opportunity to partner with the Department of Labour and Advanced Education to provide this training and skills upgrade to their clients—it was a natural fit with their goals. Over the past year, CBDC-NOBL has worked with several instructors, including Chris Lewis and Lynn MacKinnon. “The instructors’ expertise and knowledge in their field of instruction has impacted positively on the businesses that have attended their training,” says Shannon Bouchie, NOBL Business Analyst. “As a funding organization, we see the net positive impact this has to their financial bottom line, as well as their increased presence in their respective markets.” These courses give small business owners the knowledge and the training to understand policy and procedures, analyze their financial information, and make informed decisions in a timely manner.

The participants from NOBL said the training was wonderful. Also, they enjoyed how they were able to implement what they learned immediately in their business. NOBL delivers the Self-Employment Benefits Program for Employment Nova Scotia in Pictou County and also acts as the conduit for business training programs offered through Labour and Advanced Education. “These training programs have impacted our clients in a positive way, whereas before it was difficult dealing one-on-one with issues surrounding human resources, understanding financial information, basic computer skills and communication,” says Bouchie. “We are now able to facilitate this essential skills training reaching our small business owners in communities.”

We would love to hear from YOU!

Send us your news, teaching tips, article ideas, or a moment of classroom inspiration — whether as an instructor or a participant. Deadline for the Fall 2014 issue is August 12, 2014. Write to awens@eastlink.ca

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AWENS Objective

The objective of the Association of Workplace Educators of Nova Scotia (AWENS) is to provide a forum for the promotion and advancement of excellence in instructional practices by networking, creating professional development activities, responding to trends in the field, and representing the interests of educators.

AWENS Mission

To promote excellence in the field of workplace education

AWENS Vision

A strong professional network of partners, supporting workplace education in Nova Scotia

AWENS Values**Collaboration**

We value collaboration with all sectors and regions of the province and with our partners at all levels.

Forward Thinking

We value forward thinking and maintain awareness of and are responsive to workplace trends with all our partners.

Support

We value the support of our membership by providing ongoing contact, networking opportunities, and updates.

Commitment

We will take on only those initiatives that fit with our goals, and we will incorporate our values into everything we do.