

## **CALM Develops Innovations through Learning**

McMaster's ground-breaking management training program is changing the way the University thinks about organizational challenges.

While the formal classroom learning portion of the inaugural Certificate in Advanced Leadership & Management (CALM) program concluded more than a month ago, the real-life learning continues for pilot participants. The most unique element of CALM is the use of 'action learning' which consists of applying of the program's lessons and knowledge toward real-life challenges.

Participants were divided into teams, and each team selected a project identified by senior management as strategically important to the University. The project component allows for participants to work closely with peers from across the organization and with one or more designated project champions. The networking and relationship-building alone is a benefit to many participants. The benefits for the University are innovations and possible solutions for institutional challenges.

One project team is working with project champions, professor Carolyn Eyles and associate professor Susan Vajoczki, School of Geography and Earth Sciences, to develop a plan that enhances campus community space to promote learning and collaboration. Vajoczki is also the acting director of the Centre for Leadership in Learning (CLL). The team has reviewed best practices, toured other universities and will be making recommendations.

"One of their strengths as a team comes from their ability to apply the skills and concepts they have learned in CALM to their project work and to help them function effectively as a team," said Eyles. "They appear to have learned a lot about themselves and how best to accomplish their goals through effective collaborations - both with their team members and with other 'experts' in their field of research. The outcomes of this project will be most valuable to the university and will provide a set of guidelines for future building and renovation initiatives on campus."



Another team is working with a number of University departments and vendors to devise a plan to reduce the amount of waste that comes to the campus through the ordering of supplies. An excessive number of boxes and packaging materials are delivered along with common office materials every day. While recycling is the commonly-assumed response to this influx of material, the cost to recycle has increased dramatically over the past year. A waste reduction strategy that examines everything from packaging and delivery practices to encouraging the use of "green" products may result in significant cost savings for the University.

"We are working with several different departments – Purchasing, Trucking, Media Services, Sustainability and at least two outside vendors," said Susan Jack, manager of accounting and administration for the Nuclear Reactor and a team member. "It is quite amazing to see a cooperative approach come together, with departments that appear to have little common ground, to effect change on a University-wide scale."

Other project topics involve graduate student recruitment and classroom inventory management. Participants and key stakeholders will convene in a final session in October at which time the teams will present their *Innovations for the University*.

"As a project champion I can say that this has been an incredibly rewarding experience," said Eyles. "From my perspective the CALM initiative is doing exactly what we need here at McMaster - encouraging, developing and instilling confidence in our future institutional leaders."

Applications for the next offering of CALM are currently open and the deadline to apply is July 10. CALM is open to members from The Management Group (TMG) and MUFA Librarians with direct-reports and Faculty Chairs, Directors and Assistant Deans. Details about how to apply, along with the preliminary schedule for the 2009/10 cohort, are available at [www.workingatmcmaster.ca/calm](http://www.workingatmcmaster.ca/calm).

CALM was designed and is delivered by the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE).