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# News Release

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## NMCC students compete with Carleton Project students in Quiz Bowl

*Aroostook County* – Information literacy is a critical skill for students to learn, no matter what their age or academic level. Several students at Northern Maine Community College and the Carleton Project got the chance to build those skills together as they competed in a Quiz Bowl at NMCC on Thursday, November 8, in the NMCC library.

“Our students find themselves in a world where they are constantly barraged with information that they need to navigate and evaluate. Information literacy is an essential skill for their success in school, work, and life,” said Jennifer Graham, an English faculty member at NMCC and coordinator of the competition. “The Quiz Bowl gives students a chance to practice those skills in a fun venue.”

The Carleton Project, a private, alternative education program for high school students, first began with 12 students in Presque Isle in 1999. Since that time, they have expanded with three additional locations and serve over 60 students a year.

Graham serves on the board of directors for the Carleton Project. Fellow NMCC English instructor Eric Pelkey is also involved with the Carleton Project, serving as the English and language arts curriculum advisor. The two reviewed English curriculum with Heather Nunez, a teacher at the Carleton Project in Presque Isle, over the summer. The trio identified information literacy as an important area on which to focus and wanted to do a project around that theme that would connect students from both institutions.

“We are very excited to be able to engage students in a research project that bridges the high school-college gap. I can’t even begin to say how much it means to students to be taken seriously academically by college students,” said Nunez. “I also am very grateful that the English faculty at NMCC stepped up and elevated this activity from a great idea to an amazing event!”

The Quiz Bowl included two rounds with questions in five categories. To prepare for the event, students from one of Graham’s English Composition classes and students from the Carleton Project researched and created 10 questions in each of five categories. The groups then exchanged questions and went to work researching the answers.

From the pool of 100 questions, Pelkey and Graham selected 50 to make a Jeopardy-style game. Pelkey also created a final jeopardy question in a topic narrow enough for students to conduct research. They did not know the question ahead of time.

Competing on the NMCC team were Victoria Bianco of Presque Isle, Larry Doyle of Calais, Danielle Ouellette of Caribou, and Amber Teirney of Washburn.

Representing the Carleton Project team was Kate Allen of Mapleton, Brianna Gerrish of Caribou, and Josh Scott and Josh Daigle, both of Houlton.

The NMCC team was in the lead heading into final jeopardy, with a score of 8100 to 5900. With the topic of Benjamin Franklin leading into the final jeopardy round, the NMCC cautiously wagered only 100 points, while the Carleton Project risked everything, betting all of their points.

The question was: When Franklin began working as a printer's apprentice at the age of 15, he secretly wrote and published a series of letters critical of society's treatment of women and signed them as a fictional widow. What was his female pen name?

Carleton Project students correctly answered Silence Dogood, raising their score to 11,800. The NMCC had an incorrect response, leaving them with a score of 8,000.

Judges for the event were Pelkey; David Raymond, chair of NMCC's arts and sciences department; and Alan Morris, founder of the Carleton Project and teaching principal for their Houlton site. Serving as host of the competition was Mark Oliveira, an NMCC liberal studies student from Mars Hill.

"NMCC instructors and librarians teach information literacy skills in the classroom. Using these skills in another setting is a great way for students to see the value in locating, evaluating, and sharing accurate and reliable information. The Quiz Bowl will help students gain confidence in their ability to find information on a wide variety of topics from different sources," said Gail Roy, assistant dean of learning resources at the College. Roy has been a strong advocate for information literacy on the NMCC campus.

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*A Quiz Bowl was held between a team of students from Northern Maine Community College (center, background) and a team from the Carleton Project (foreground, back to camera). The competition, held on November 8 in NMCC's library, was a fun way to encourage information literacy and promote collaboration.*