

# Student Parents: Working Together to Ensure Their Success

Presented By: Howard Magonet  
Director, Counselling & Development  
Concordia University

ARUCC Conference  
Vancouver, B.C.

June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010     15:00-16:15



CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY  
STUDENT PARENTS  
NETWORK

# Agenda

- Welcome
  - A special thank you to Tricia van Rhijn, M.Sc. Centre for Families, Work and Well-Being University of Guelph, for her research and in putting together most of this presentation.
- Profile of student parents in Canada
- School-family conflict & enrichment
- Concordia University Student Parent Network (CUSP)
- Discussion

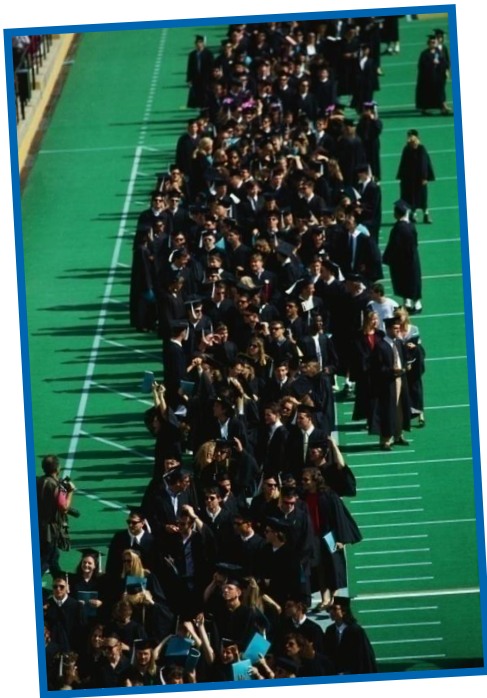
# The Experiences of Student Parents

- Very limited research available
- Parenting found to inhibit post-secondary attendance
- More likely to interrupt studies
- Increased role strain
- More stress than traditional students
- Experience social exclusion



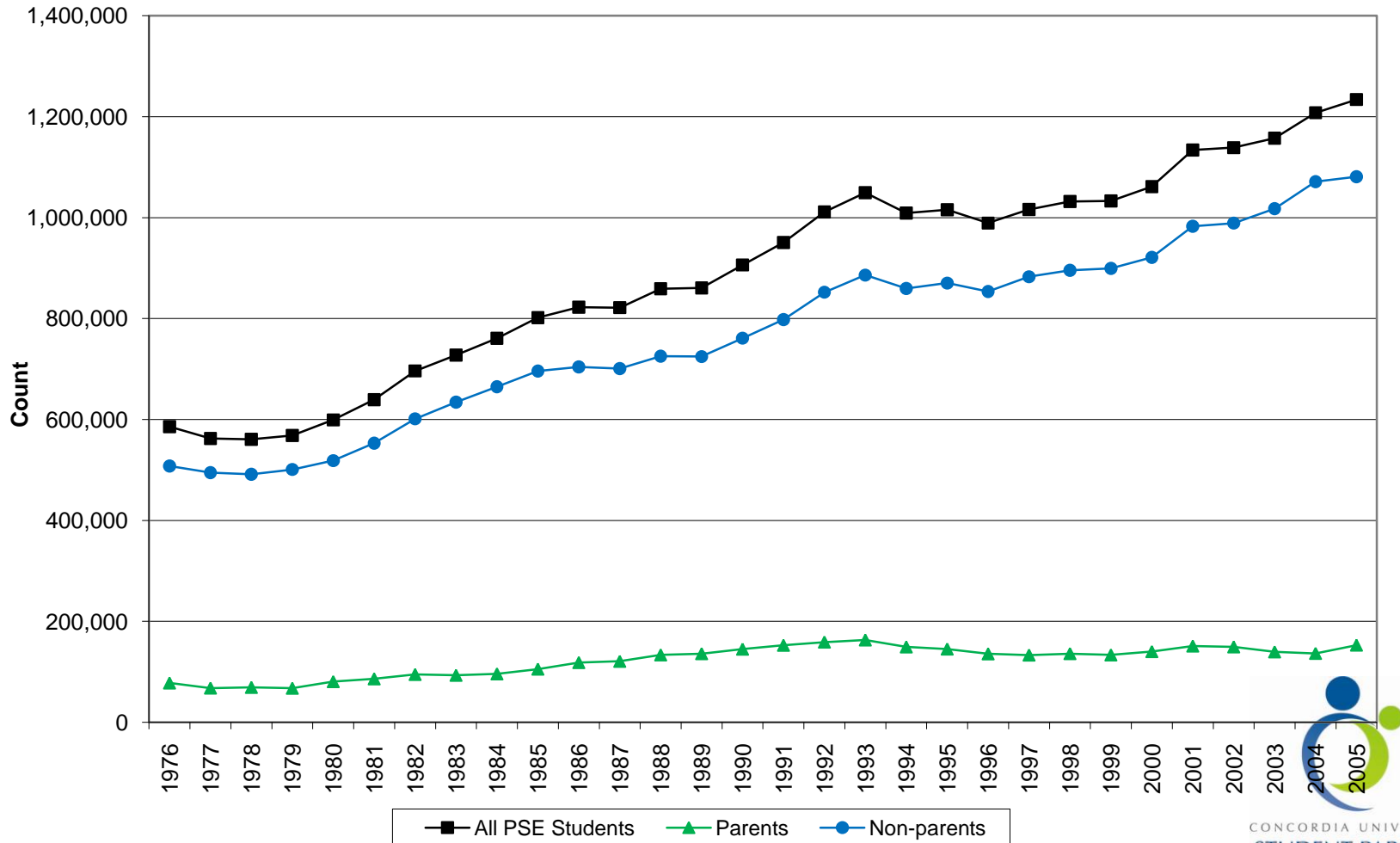
# Prevalence

- Student parents comprise



- 14% of all students in post-secondary programs
- 11% of university students
- 17% of college students

# Student Parent Enrolment Over Time



Source: LFS, 1976-2005

# College & University Enrolment Over Time

	1976	1977	1988	1995	2005	Increase 1976- 2005	% Increase
University Non-parents	270,100	256,400	348,700	412,500	574,600	304,500	113%
University Parents	36,100	30,600	44,700	40,400	55,800	19,700	55%
	<b>306,200</b>	<b>287,000</b>	<b>393,400</b>	<b>453,000</b>	<b>630,400</b>	<b>324,200</b>	<b>106%</b>
College Non-Parents	237,800	238,200	376,800	457,800	506,500	268,600	113%
College Parents	41,800	37,300	88,900	104,800	97,200	55,400	132%
	<b>279,700</b>	<b>275,500</b>	<b>465,700</b>	<b>562,600</b>	<b>603,700</b>	<b>324,000</b>	<b>116%</b>

Source: LFS, 1976-2005

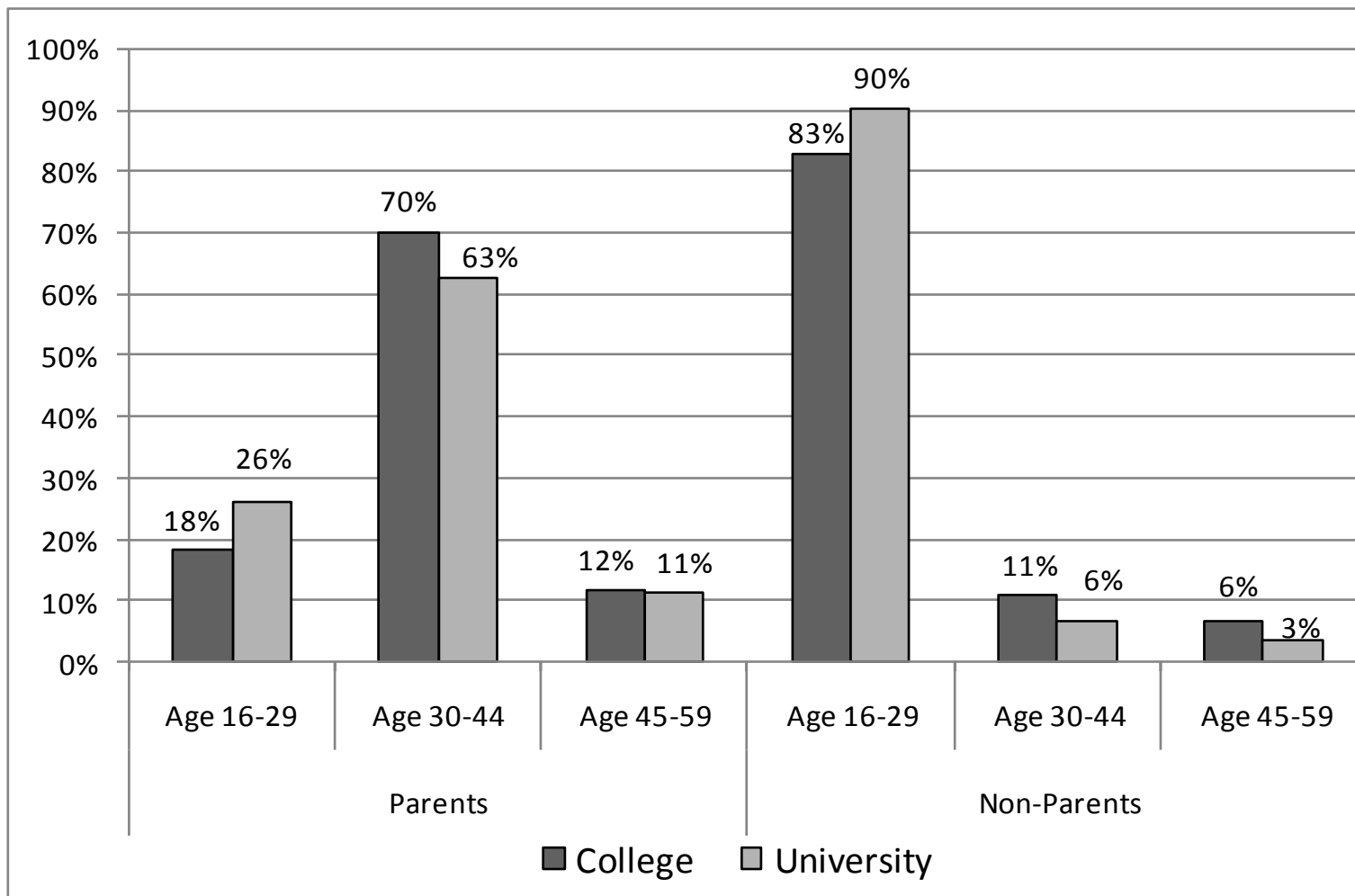


# General Profile of Student Parents

- Female (66 – 75%)
- Older than average students
- Heterogeneous group including single mothers, partnered mothers & fathers
- More diverse in terms of Aboriginal, Landed Immigrant & Visible Minority status



# Age Differences



Source: SLID, 2004



# Other Important Considerations

- **Parents are:**

- More likely to work
- Less likely to attend PSE; may delay entry
- 1.7 times more likely to leave without diploma/degree
  - Higher proportion for young mothers (23%) and fathers (14%)
- Less likely to pursue post-grad education

- **Additional Financial Challenges:**

- Loss of a family income
- Need to manage family expenses
- Less time to pay off student debt, pay for children's education, and save for own retirement
- Lack of fit with loan system designed for traditional students



# Other Important Considerations

- **Barriers to Success:**

- Barriers for Student Parents are similar to those of the traditional students; **Academic, Financial and Motivational.**
- Parents however are faced with additional barriers imposed by trying to fit within a system designed for young, unencumbered learners.
- Having children itself presents a barrier. Younger students are more inclined to enrol in colleges rather than universities when they do enrol.

# Other Important Considerations

- **Barriers to Success (Continued):**

- Increased time demands
- Child care
- 23%-34% of young parents (age 22-24) cited caring for their children as a barrier.
- More likely to study part-time

- **Parents faced with additional financial challenges:**

- Part-time students are ineligible for many government supports and other institutional scholarships
- Parents may be motivated to maintain their income and their career while studying.

# School-Family Conflict & Enrichment

- School-family conflict
  - Conflict between school & family roles resulting from incompatible demands
- School-family enrichment
  - The extent to which experiences in the school or family role improve the quality of life in the other role



# Concordia University Student Parents Network





Concordia University  
**Student Parents Centre**  
Dean of Students Office

CUSP All of Concordia Staff & Faculty Directory

Enter your query here

Programs & Services | Childcare | Resources | Events | Parent's Corner | Volunteer for CUSP

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### Concordia University Student Parents Centre (CUSP):

- is dedicated to offering support and services to assist student parents achieve their goals
- offers a safe and accessible space to congregate, study, voice concerns, share interests, and develop a support network
- includes a lounge with couches and a microwave, computers with internet access, and a play area for children
- provides referrals and resources for such things as childcare, financial aid, and housing.

Student parents are invited to use the lounge, with or without children, to study, work on computers, or just take a break.

Stop by the Centre to become a member, pick up our Student Parent Resource Guide, or grab a cup of coffee! Are you interested in helping out? Volunteers are always needed and welcome!

### Keep Up With CUSP

Join our email listserve to keep up-to-date about services, events and programs offered by CUSP. Email [cusp@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:cusp@alcor.concordia.ca) and ask to join the listserve!

You can also join our facebook group to keep informed and make connections with other student parents. To join [click here](#).

### Location and Hours







## **Our Team**

- Malene Bodington (Researcher),
  - Beth Morey – Dean of Students,
  - Kally Gicopolous (Cook-Out Coordinator),
  - Kristy Heeren (CUSP Coordinator), and
  - Tracey Fisher (Cook-Out Coordinator),
- Also, but not in photo:
- Deborah Simon (Human Relations Intern),
  - Alix Balevi (Leisure Sciences Intern)

# What is CUSP?

- Sponsored by the Dean of Students Office, CUSP is dedicated to offering support and services that will assist parents studying at Concordia to achieve their academic goals
- CUSP staff can provide resources and referrals as well as a safe and accessible space where student parents can congregate, voice their concerns, develop a support network and share common interests





- The Centre's *Mission* is dedicated to offering support and services that will assist student parents studying at Concordia to achieve their academic goals.
- Our *Goal* is for CUSP to be officially integrated into the university operating structure.
- Our *Mandate* is to provide resources and referrals as well as a safe and accessible space where student parents can congregate, voice their concerns, develop a support network and share common interests.
- Our *Future* is to continue development of essential programs and workshops enabling student parents“ to succeed at Concordia University.



# How did CUSP come to be?

- April – May, 2008
  - Student Research Assistant in Dean of Students Office undertakes a review of existing programs in Canada and US and relevant research
  - Enrolment at Concordia for the 2009-2010 Academic year was 42,805 students
  - The Canadian estimate for University student parents is 11% of the total student population, which translates into approximately 4,709 student parents



# How did CUSP come to be?

- June 9, 2008 Brainstorming session with:
  - Dean of Students Office
  - Student Transition Centre
  - Multi-Faith Chaplaincy
  - Centre for Native Education
  - Arts and Science Federation of Associations
  - Applied Human Sciences (students & internship coordinator)
  - Project Chance
  - Board of Governors representative
- Focus on single parents (including staff & faculty) only at this stage
- Expanded to all student parents



# How did CUSP come to be?

- August – December, 2008
  - Gathering information: What do student parents need?
  - Two consultations in the form of informal receptions with discussion (SGW & Loyola campuses) with student parents and potential students with children
  - Survey distributed throughout both campuses (including through University daycare centres)



# How did CUSP come to be?

- Internal publicity campaign:
  - ✓ Plasma screens
  - ✓ Internal publications
  - ✓ Student media
  - ✓ Emails to staff
- Facebook page set up
- Discover Concordia
- Volunteer Fair

# How did CUSP come to be?

- Proposal to Advancement Office
- Letter in Alumni magazine asking for donors
- Vice-President Services contribution
- Congregation de Notre-Dame contribution
- Foundations approached (Chagnon Foundation, Rotary)
- Westmount Rotary Club
- University strategic planning/budget process

# Left in the capable hands of...

- Began with a part-time intern from Applied Human Sciences
- Intern then became the coordinator:
  - ✓ Full-time (was initially 2 days/week)
  - ✓ Received additional funding from the Concordia Council on Student Life (but only until the end of this year)
- Our challenge is to make this permanent and integrate it into the University structure
- Volunteers: Volunteer Fair

# Coordinating / Advisory Group for 2010

- ✓ Coordinator
- ✓ Dean of Students
- ✓ Undergraduate student (parent)
- ✓ Graduate student (parent)
- ✓ Student Transition Centre
- ✓ Multi-faith Chaplaincy
- ✓ Faculty member
- ✓ Alumna
- ✓ External member
- ✓ External group: Project Chance





# What have we done...do we plan?

## To Date:

- Approximately 200 students have signed up with the centre and participate in various ways such as:
  - Newsletter and emails via Face book
  - Drop in (to use the computers, chat, etc...)
  - Attend various social and group activities
- Clothing and toy exchange (Dec 08) □
- Email address □
- Developed a Facebook account in the form of a closed group □
- Held 2 casual Student Parent receptions □
- Resource guide □
- Official opening of office/lounge with computers, phone, play area (April 09) □
- Held several Community Kitchen events with food contributions form local grocery stores)□
- Provided subsidies to send children to summer camps □
- Held year-end picnic to celebrate our graduating student parents (10) (with appreciation to a food donor) □



# What have we done...do we plan?

## Main Needs:

- Childcare
- Financial
- Missing classes
- Registration survey

## Wish List:

- Coop babysitting
- Summer camp ☐
- Grand-parent program
- Adopt a student parent
- Student Parent Workshop series ☐
- Counsellor/social worker on site
- Develop bursaries/scholarships
- Student drop-in daycare (long-term)
- Family residence (very long-term)
- Task Force on studying and working at Concordia with families (to address all issues related to work and study)

## CUSP Student Parent Support Group

The Concordia University Student Parents Centre (CUSP) is offering a Support Group for students raising a family. The Support Groups are child-friendly, and babysitters will be available to run activities with kids while parents talk. Snacks and beverages will be provided.

**The Support Groups take place:  
Saturdays from 10 am - 1 pm  
At Multi-faith Chaplaincy,  
2090 Mackay**

If you would like to attend any Support Group sessions, contact CUSP to reserve your space. Space is limited so register early!

**To register, email:**

[cusp@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:cusp@alcor.concordia.ca) or  
call 514-848-2424, ext. 5954

### Schedule

January 23: Going to School While Raising Children

January 30: Time Management

February 13: Stress Management

February 20: Disability and Family Life

February 27: Loneliness and Isolation

March 06: Knowing your Children

March 13: Child Safety

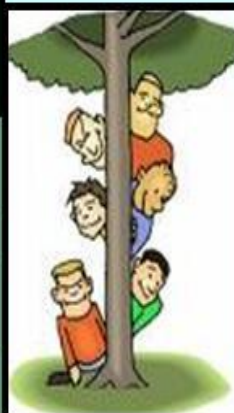
March 20: Engaging Fathers

March 27: Post-pregnancy and the Body

April 03: Contributing as a Father

April 17: Raising Children across Cultures

April 24: Post-partum Depression



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STUDENT PARENTS  
CENTRE



CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY  
STUDENT PARENTS  
NETWORK



# Student Parent Life Skills Workshop Series

Presented by the Concordia University  
Student Parents Centre (CUSP)



Students may bring their children to all workshops, and babysitters will be available to provide childcare.

See workshop schedule below.  
Please register early, as space is limited.

To register for a workshop, contact CUSP at:

514-848-2424, ext. 5954 or  
cusp@alcor.concordia.ca

Please include which workshop(s), the number of children you'll bring and their ages, when registering!



The *Life Skills Workshop Series* is being offered throughout the Winter Semester, 2010. This series provides student parents with a range of workshops tailored to their specific needs. The workshops have been designed to address the contexts of student parents' lives, and target key areas for which student parents often require assistance: academics,



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STUDENT PARI  
CENTRE

The Concordia University  
Parents Centre (CUSP) is  
dedicated to offering support  
and services to assist student  
parents achieve their academic  
goals.

2150 Bishop, room 200  
514-848-2424, ext. 5954  
cusp@alcor.concordia.ca  
www.cusp.concordia.ca



To register for a workshop,  
contact CUSP at:  
514-848-2424, ext. 5954 or  
cusp@alcor.concordia.ca

### Library Skills: What the Library Can Do for You

Presented by Michelle Lake, Librarian  
Thursday, February 11<sup>th</sup>, 6:00-7:30 pm  
LB-203 (Webster Library, SGW Campus)

### Time-Management for Student Parents

Presented by Deborah Simon, CUSP Intern  
Tuesday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-8:00 pm  
H-637, Office of the Dean of Students



### Parenting Skills and Communication

Presented by Howard Magonet, Director of  
Counselling and Development  
Wednesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6:00-7:30 pm  
H-637, Office of the Dean of Students

### Healthy Living for Students and Children

Presented by Gaby Szabo, Health Educator  
Wednesday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-8:00 pm  
H-637, Office of the Dean of Students

## LIFE SKILLS WORKSHOP SERIES SCHEDULE



### Negotiating Financial Aid and Awards

Presented by Judy Lashley, Financial Aid Officer  
Tuesday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-8:00 pm  
H-637, Office of the Dean of Students

### Get the Job You Want: Job Search 101

Presented by Valerie Millette, Career Advisor  
Wednesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-8:00 pm  
H-637, Office of the Dean of Students

### Get the Job You Want: Interviews 101

Presented by Valerie Millette, Career Advisor  
Wednesday, March 31<sup>st</sup>, 6:00-8:00 pm  
H-637, Office of the Dean of Students

### First Aid and CPR for Children\*

Presented by Eric Webber, CPR Technician  
Saturday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 am-6:00 pm  
Location TBA

\*Because this workshop has a limited capacity  
and high demand, it will be offered twice.

### First Aid and CPR for Children

Presented by Eric Webber, CPR Technician  
Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 am-6:00 pm  
Location TBA



### Subsidized Housing and Support Services for Young Families and Single Mothers

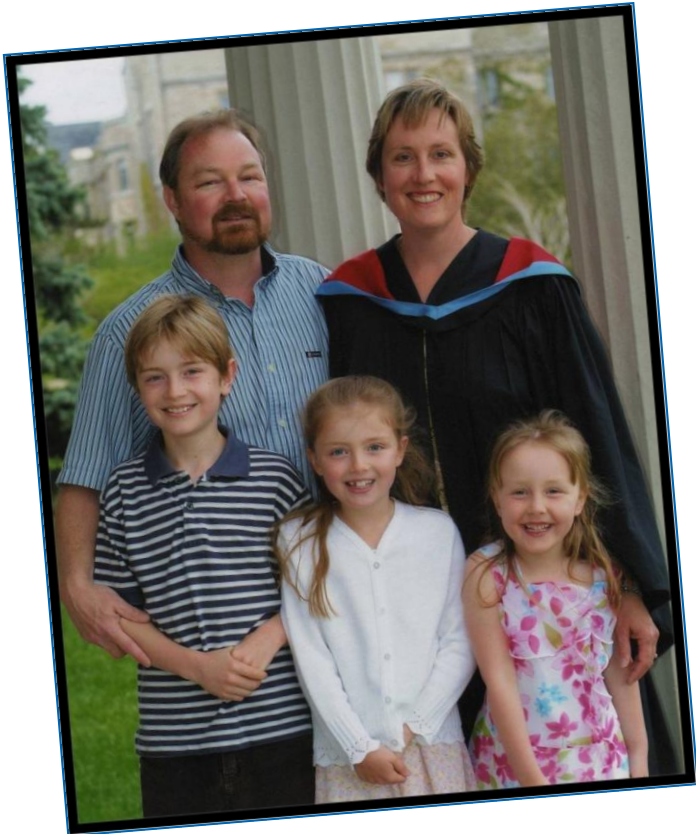
Presented by Linda Babins, Director of  
Maisons Transitionnelles 03;  
and Teresa Capel, Director of Project Charis  
Tuesday, April 13<sup>th</sup>, 6:00-8:00 pm  
H-637, Office of the Dean of Students

\*Participants will learn about subsidized housing  
options offered by these organizations and be given  
an opportunity to register.

# Needs – the 6 “Cs”

- Childcare
- Cash
- Champions ☐
- Computers ☐
- Community (peers) ☐
- Couch ☐

# Discussion



- What is happening in your institutions for student parents?
- What issues do you see (barriers and benefits)?
- How can registrars be of assistance in addressing some of the concerns discussed?
  - Is there a way to capture this information upon registration?
- How can you meet the unique needs of student parents & their families
- Creating a Canadian association?



The screenshot shows the HEASSC website homepage. At the top is a dark blue navigation bar with white text links: Home, Committees, Forum, Membership, News, Listserv, Contact, and Inspiration. Below this is a banner area with two images. The left image is the HEASSC logo, featuring silhouettes of a person with a child and a person with a stroller, with the text 'HEAASC' and 'Higher Education Alliance of Advocates for Students with Children' below it. The right image shows a smiling female graduate in a cap and gown holding a diploma, with a man and a baby in the background. Below the banner is a sidebar on the left with a list of links: History, Founding Members, Board of Directors, Meeting Minutes, and Governing Documents. The main content area has a 'Home' heading with a location pin icon, followed by a 'Mission' section with a paragraph: 'The mission of the Higher Education Alliance of Advocates for Students with Children (HEAASC) is to enable national academic support professionals to promote the academic and personal success of student parents in higher education settings.' Below the mission is a 'Objectives of the Organization' section with a bulleted list of seven objectives. To the right of the list is a small image of a man and a child reading a book together on the grass. At the bottom is a dark blue footer bar with white text links: Home, Committees, Forum, Membership, News, Listserv, Contact, and Inspiration.

- Website: [www.heaasc.org](http://www.heaasc.org)



# Contact Information

CUSP c/o Dean of Students Office  
Concordia University  
1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W, H637  
Montréal, QC H3G 1M8  
Tel: 514-848-2424 ext. 5954  
Email: [culp@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:culp@alcor.concordia.ca)

Counselling and Development  
Concordia University  
1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W, H-440  
Montréal, QC H3G 1M8  
Tel: 514-848-2424 ext. 3545  
<http://cdev.concordia.ca/>

Tricia van Rhijn, M.Sc.  
Department of Family Relations & Applied Nutrition  
University of Guelph  
121 Macdonald Institute (MINS)  
Guelph ON N1G 2W1  
Phone: 519-824-4120 ext. 52248  
Email: [tvanhij@uoguelph.ca](mailto:tvanhij@uoguelph.ca)

