

# The Western Star partners with college on survey

The **Western Star** and the **College of the North Atlantic** are teaming up to carry out a newspaper market research survey project.

The project will utilize 5-6 students from the Business Administration program at the college's Bay St. George campus under the direction of faculty member and college researcher, Shawn Tilley, as principal investigator.

The collaborative applied research project will run until May.

Publisher and General Manager Trina Burden said one of her key priorities is to develop a better understanding of the existing and potential client and geographic markets through solid market research.

"The last Western Star market research that was done in the 1990s," she said. "We know who our home subscribers are but not much more than that about them. It's important to know who our readers are and what they're looking for," she told the students, who are going to be involved in the project, following the signing of the agreement on Wednesday at the college's L.A. Bown Building.

Burden said the newspaper has a huge following in print and online, including the print edition, traffic to **TheWesternStar.com**, a Facebook membership, Twitter followers, newsletter subscribers and subscribers to **The Digital Star**, the paper's mobile and online edition.

"We're the news source for local news," she stressed to the students, whose job it will be to prepare and analyze telephone surveys.

These students completed a Market Research course in the fall 2011 semester and are eager to put their skills towards an applied research application.

Tilley said it's good for his students at the college to see a real-world exercise.

"There is no question that my class and I are thrilled to be involved with this project with the Western Star," he said. "I've long been a strong proponent of experiential learning and this project allows the students an opportunity to apply their business research skills in a real-world environment," he said.

For the students, this project allows them to build on the skill base as those involved will have letters of accommodation composed for the students to include in their portfolios. Tilley said, with the relationship they would establish with The Western Star, there could be opportunities for some students to continue with the newspaper to fulfill the requirements of their work exposure in May and June.

The Western Star's objective is to complete the project plan and have a final report by the college research team on the market research as the basis for branding, marketing and sales strategies development as well as editorial direction after the May completion.

Burden said some key points The Western Star is hoping to discover through this study include:

- who the readers are;
- what the readers like about The Star's current products;
- what changes they would like to see.

Burden said the information gathered would be utilized in all aspects of The Western Star's business.

The newsroom team would focus some content of interest and design aspects of the newspaper accordingly. The reader, sales and service team will look to service existing readers better and market to non-readers to increase readership. The sales and marketing team will describe The Star's readers and market reach to its advertisers.

# The Western Star

Navigating our communities



**College of the North Atlantic's Bay St. George Campus** and **The Western Star** inked an agreement Wednesday to have The Western Star Market Research Survey project done. Involved in the signing are from left: (front) Darlene Oake, campus administrator; Trina Burden, Publisher and General Manager of The Western Star; Shawn Tilley, instructor of the School of Business Studies and Information Technology at Bay St. George Campus; back, second-year business administration students, Charlene Felix, Amanda Hulan, Amy Erickson, Albert Grandy, Diego Navas, Serena Young and Marlena Messervey.



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