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Letter from Stephen T. Duplessis

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May 2, 1979

Dr. Madeline Giguere
Professor, Dept. of Sociology
University of Southern Maine
96 Falmouth Street
Portland, Maine 04103

Dear Dr. Giguere,

This is to follow up our communication regarding my participation in the Northern New England Tri-State Multicultural Conference, June 8-9, 1979, at the Holiday Inn on Spring Street, Portland, Maine. I definitely appreciate being asked to participate in such a worthwhile conference, but at this point i'm not sure just what I could contribute. Having never before participated in such a conference i'm not really sure just what goes on. However, I would be more than happy to come down and participate in any manner that you might consider appropriate.

The workshop concerning "Data gathering for Equal Educational Opportunity: Who is a minority? Issues of discrimination in education and employment, and the other-than-English speaking populations of Northern New England, with specific reference to FrancoAmericans," sounds very exciting and I would very much like to try and contribute something to its success. My research project this past semester dealt with the perceptions and use of guidance services by French and English speaking students in the Northern Maine community of Van Buren. After presenting the results of this small project in class last evening I was told to consider writing up the results for publication. Presentation of part of these results might be a possibility for the workshop?

My results tend to support your findings based on the 1970 census. More English speaking students are planning on attending college than are French speaking students, 73.9% and 20.7% respectively. English students visit the guidance office approximately 5.7 times a year as compared with 4.0 visits a year for French students. English speaking students discuss more varied concerns with their counselor. As a result the counselor seems to have more influence on the post secondary goals of the English students. Where only 13.0% of the English students indicated some degree of discomfort in seeking these services, an overwhelming 75.9% of the French students indicated similar or greater degrees of discomfort. Finally, French speaking students indicated 2 to 1 (65.5%) that they would be more likely to discuss their concerns with a French speaking counselor. Incidentally, the only counselor for this age group does not speak French!

I would be very willing to share any of this with those who are interested, or I could simply talk about what I have gone through in the academic environment as a result of my FrancoAmerican background. Does that sound like it might be appropriate?

Again, Dr. Giguere, I would be very happy to share anything I might have that is of any importance to people attending this conference. The conference will be of great importance to me also for other reasons. For so long I really did not know how to deal with my Franco background. This year has been a year of increasing awareness for me.

I look forward to hearing from you soon on just what you would like me to contribute and I can hardly wait for June. Thank you for considering me for this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stephen T. Duplessis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "D".

Stephen T. Duplessis
UMO Graduate Student
Guidance and Counseling