

Don Sparling

Professor Don Sparling has played an active role in the co-ordination of Canadian Studies in the Central European region since April 1995, when academics dedicated to this field first met in Budmerice, Slovakia. In the fall of 1998 he organized the first regional conference of Canadian Studies in Brno where contributions in English and French showed that this discipline was widely present in Central European universities. The organizing team of this conference has stayed together ever since and became the 'steering committee' of Central European Canadianists. Don Sparling, as convenor of this body, has played a vital role in co-ordinating academic activities on the regional level in Canadian Studies, launching a publication series of congress proceedings, inclusive of graduate students and teaching staff. He also hosted the annual European Graduate Student Seminar in Brno in October 2000.

Thanks to Don Sparling, a regular exchange of information was introduced concerning academic activities, including new courses, conference papers and other publications, guest lectures, Ph.D. defenses, etc. and made accessible through the website of this regional co-operation. With his help and strong support, in 2001 the Central European Canadian Studies Journal/Revue d'études canadiennes en Europe centrale was first published. He has always encouraged guest lectures within the region and has invited students to do their thesis research using the Canadiana of the library of Masaryk University, Brno.

Don Sparling is a very popular scholar in the region: without his perseverance, friendly understanding, organization skills, and tremendous work, Central European Canadianists would not have been able to apply for associate membership in ICCS-CIEC. The ICCS Certificate of Merit symbolically conveys the gratitude and thanks of Central European Canadianists to Don Sparling.