



## Advancement Investment Model

**Category:** University Advancement

**Jurisdiction:** Vice-President, University Advancement, Board External Relations Committee;

**Approval Authority:** Board of Governors;

**Established on:** December 5, 2025;

**Amendments:** NA;

**Most Recent Review:** NA;

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### 1. Purpose and Scope

Lakehead University's Advancement Investment Model (AIM) invests in the growth of advancement capacity and budgets, and supports the costs of receiving, managing, and stewarding philanthropic gifts by reserving a modest portion of expendable gifts (non-endowments) to invest in fundraising and engagement growth and deepen the impact of philanthropy for the university community. Ultimately, Lakehead students are the beneficiaries of this sustained and essential source of funding that enables Lakehead University to deliver transformative education and gives students life-changing opportunities to pursue their ambitions and support the communities they live in.

Lakehead University is privileged to receive gifts from donors to accelerate strategic priorities, including offering visionary programs, enabling research and innovation, attracting talented faculty, and elevating student experience. Donor support is critical to student success, expanding student financial aid through endowments that now exceed \$60M. These endowments are the foundation of the University's commitment to access. Philanthropic support is also critical to creating innovative, welcoming spaces made possible through capital building projects.

With significant pressures on the University's constrained operating budget, philanthropy is now more essential than ever to sustaining and expanding Lakehead University's vital work.

To meet this challenge, it is important to fund donation revenue growth in a way that can supplement funding from current operating budgets. To achieve the philanthropic impact needed to meet these goals and advance Lakehead's strategic plan, the university must expand its capacity to raise, manage, and steward donations at the highest standard. AIM addresses the gap between the university's need to raise more philanthropic revenue and the capacity of University Advancement. AIM reserves the right to apply modest service fees on such programs as annual appeals and crowdfunding. The existing administrative fee from Net Investment Returns on Endowed funds does not fall within the scope of the AIM policy.

## 2. Definitions

*AIM Reserve:* The AIM Reserve will hold money accumulated from the AIM assessment. These monies must be used to invest in fundraising and engagement growth, determined through the annual Operating Budget process.

*Bequest:* A gift that an individual specifies in their will or estate plan to be given to Lakehead University. It can involve cash, securities, real estate, or other valuable assets and may be structured as a specific amount, a percentage of the estate, the remainder of the estate after other obligations are met (residual), or contingent upon certain events.

*Endowments (Donor Restricted Endowments):* Funds received and invested for the purpose of financing an ongoing scholarship, award, or other commitment from annual earnings, such as a donation designated to provide a scholarship award out of the earnings derived from the investment of the donation money.

*Expendable (Funds) Gifts:* Funds that are received to be used directly for specific purposes, such as awards, operations, or other designated activities. These are not endowment principal funds, which must generally remain intact.

*Planned Gift:* Planned gifts include bequests, but can also encompass gifts like life insurance policies, annuities, retirement fund beneficiary designations, and charitable remainder trusts. Planned gifts typically require advance thought and legal or financial consultation.

*Pledge:* A donor's formal commitment to contribute a specific amount of money to the university, usually over a set period of time.

### 3. Procedures

1. For expendable funds, the university applies a 10 percent assessment on new expendable gifts ("gifts refers to any gifts in excess of \$25,000 that are given at one time or pledged over a period of time) (beginning January 1, 2026). This assessment is capped at \$250,000 per pledge/gift.  
AIM is collected at the time the gift and/or first pledge payment is received and will be transferred to the AIM Reserve. In the case of a pledged expendable gift directed for the use of scholarships, and when AIM will impact the ability to disburse the award/scholarship, then AIM is collected at the time of each pledge payment for the duration of the pledge.
2. The 10 percent assessment will not be imposed on:
  - gifts or agreements of any kind signed or pledged before January 1, 2026;
  - annual gifts under \$25,000;
  - Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) funding;
  - sponsorships;
  - endowments; or
  - gifts-in-kind.
3. For gifts under \$25,000, the university reserves the right to apply a service fee of up to 1.5% on online transactions (beginning January 1, 2026). The service fee is taken at the time that the fundraising service occurs (at the time the gift is processed).
4. AIM funds will be transferred to the AIM Reserve.
5. All pertinent donor documentation (including gift agreements, websites) will include transparent language regarding the Advancement Investment Model and state the levy.
6. There will be no exceptions to the policy.

Note: Lakehead University Advancement follows the Canadian Council for the Advancement of Education (CCAEE) Guiding Principles on Supplemental Funding Sources for Advancement.

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**Review Period:** Every 5 years;

**Next Review Period:** 2030-2031;

**Related Policies and Procedures:** Statement of Investment Policies and Guidelines for Trust and Endowment Funds; Endowment Management Policy

**Policy Superseded by this Policy:** None.

The University Secretariat manages the development of policies through an impartial, fair governance process, and in accordance with the Policy Governance Framework. Please contact the University Secretariat for additional information on University policies and procedures and/or if you require this information in another format.

### **Office of the University Secretariat**

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