



President's Report to the Board of Governors

April
2021





Office of the President

Lakehead in Top 100 of Times Higher Education Impact Rankings for second time

For the second year in a row, Lakehead University has placed in the top 100 of the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings.

The THE Impact Rankings measure the societal impact of universities by evaluating an institutions' success in delivering the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. The rankings measure the impact universities make to the world in the areas of poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice.

Lakehead finished 99th out of 1,115 universities from around the world, based on its performance in meeting the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Lakehead is the only primarily undergraduate university in Canada that participated in the 2021 THE Impact Rankings and one of only 26 universities from North America to be included in the top 100. The University was among just 260 universities from around the world that qualified to participate in all 17 SDGs.

Ranking ahead of several top comprehensive and research-intensive Canadian universities, Lakehead scored highly across many SDGs, including a top 10 ranking in SDG 15: Life on Land. The Life on Land SDG evaluates how universities support land ecosystems through education and action, how they contribute to sustainably managing forests, combating desertification, halting and reversing land degradation, and how they halt biodiversity loss by measuring their research on land ecosystems.

Lakehead also scored highly on other metrics, including a top 20 ranking in Life Below Water, a top 30 ranking in No Poverty and Zero Hunger, and a top 40 ranking for Reduced Inequalities and Clean Water and Sanitation.

Visit Lakehead University's Times Higher Education profile at timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/lakehead-university.

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Lakehead University names new Vice-President, External Relations

Lakehead University's President and Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Moira McPherson, is very pleased to announce that following an extensive national search, **Michael den Haan** has been appointed as the University's new Vice-President, External Relations.

Mr. den Haan brings 25 years of experience in fundraising, donor, alumni and volunteer engagement, communications, governance, and external relations. He most recently served as Vice-President, Advancement and Alumni Engagement at Simon Fraser University.

The University's External Relations portfolio plays a critical role in advancing Lakehead's strategic priorities by building and promoting key relationships with diverse internal and external audiences. As a member of Lakehead's Executive Team, den Haan will be responsible for providing a comprehensive, integrated approach to communications, marketing and web development, advancement and philanthropy, alumni engagement, and in close collaboration with government relations.

Mr. den Haan will be based at Lakehead University's Orillia campus while working closely with colleagues, alumni, donors and community members in Thunder Bay, Orillia, and around the world. Mr. den Haan will begin his role on May 5, 2021.



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Lakehead Orillia Food & Conference Services' and TSC working with community and students

On March 4, **Lakehead Orillia hosted the City of Orillia's virtual Business Achievement Awards** event with over 100 attendees. Lakehead Orillia's Food & Conference Services and Technology Services Centre worked behind the scenes to organize the event. The City of Orillia was very happy with the outcome and the show went off without a hitch. Lakehead Orillia would like to host this event in the future, either virtually or in person. This event would normally include an awards gala with a cocktail reception and dinner.

On March 11, **Lakehead Orillia's residence students enjoyed a special dinner** sponsored by the Office of the Principal. While meal service was by take-out only to adhere to COVID health guidelines, the 3-course meal was thoroughly enjoyed — particularly the triple-stack chocolate brownie with strawberries.



***Ingenuity's Disrupt the Day* competition and Ascend Accelerator Program launch**

On March 13, *Ingenuity* held its 7th annual *Disrupt It Weekend* event in a new virtual format, renamed *Disrupt The Day*. The all-day event included 17 participants in six teams who pitched business ideas to win a cash prize sponsored by Thunder Bay Ventures.

The winning team was composed of community members and students from the Faculty of Business Administration. Their idea was Age BIG, a program to keep the aging population socially engaged.



The People's Choice Award went to a group of Lakehead students for their business idea, Bay Bazaar, an online market for local vendors. *Disrupt The Day* and *Disrupt It Weekend* are held in partnership with The Northwestern Ontario Innovation Centre.

Ingenuity has also launched applications for the **Ascend Accelerator Program**. Ascend is a 12-week bootcamp-style program that works with participants to help develop their business ideas to launch. The program features knowledge-based workshops, guest speakers, and mentors, and provides \$7,500 per team for start-up funding. The selection process will begin the week of April 5, and *Ingenuity* is accepting 3-4 business ideas for this year's cohort.

Academic Excellence

Lindsey Holmstrom receives Regina Borowska Scholarship

Lindsey Holmstrom, a student in the Collaborative BScN program, is one of the 2021 Registered Nurses' Foundation of Ontario's (RNFOO) award winners.

Holmstrom has won a Regina Borowska Scholarship which is conferred to individuals who wish to pursue a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing with preference given to post-diploma RNs, RPNs, and applicants whose professional career goals enable them to contribute to the advancement of nursing.

More information about the paper can be found [here](#).





New Lakehead University Research Chairs

Lakehead University is pleased to announce the selection of faculty members **Dr. Connie Russell** (Education) and **Dr. Salama Ikki** (Electrical Engineering) as the newest Lakehead University Research Chairs (LURCs).

Dr. Connie Russell, Lakehead University Research Chair in Environmental Education, will study how humour could be used to better engage the public as well as learners in formal and informal settings with difficult issues like climate change, social injustices, and environmental degradation.

Dr. Salama Ikki, Lakehead University Research Chair in Wireless Communications, will undertake research focused on creating a unified theoretical framework that will lead in the application of artificial intelligence to telecommunications systems. Considering various practical constraints, his focus is on the development of sophisticated algorithms that will enable the realization of these smart systems in realistic environments.

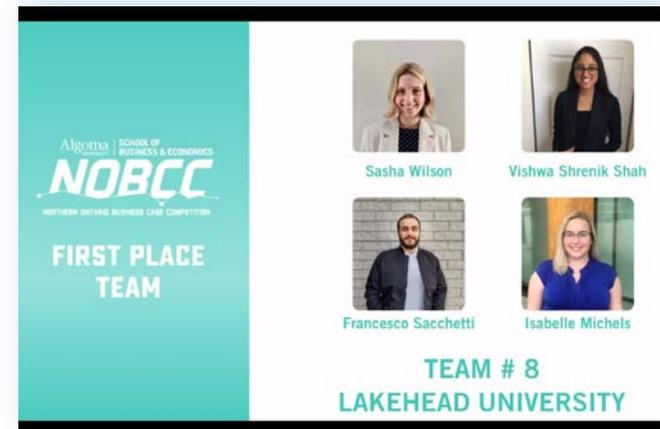
These two chairs, whose terms last for two years, are the 15th and 16th LURCs to be appointed since the program commenced in 2008.

For more information on LURCs and other chairs, please visit the [Research and Innovation website](#).

Faculty of Business Administration students win Northern Ontario Business Case competition

Honours Bachelor of Commerce students **Isabelle Michels**, **Francesco Sacchetti**, **Vishwa Shah**, and **Sasha Wilson** competed as Team #8 at the annual Northern Ontario Business Case hosted by Algoma University. The team's winning presentation was about reducing the effects of contract cheating as teaching transitioned online during COVID-19. They proposed to introduce more support for professors and students because it is an equal effort from both parties. The team took inspiration from some of the Faculty of Business Administration's practices during COVID-19, such as extensive use of D2L.

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Software Engineering professor to guest edit special issue of *Journal of Imaging*

Dr. Thangarajah Akilan, Assistant Professor in Software Engineering, has been selected to be the guest editor of a special issue called Efficient Deep Learning Models for Resource-Limited Learning for Journal of Imaging.

Read more about the special issue [here](#).

Computer Science student publishes paper in *ACM Computing Surveys*

Congratulations to **Dhivya Chandrasekaran**, MSc Computer Science student, who has published *Evolution of Semantic Similarity - A Survey* in the ACM Computing Surveys journal with her supervisor Dr. Vijay Mago.

The paper provides a comprehensive view of existing semantic similarity systems for new researchers who intend to experiment and develop new innovative ideas to address the challenges of semantic similarity in sentences.

Researchers help newcomer women overcome economic shock caused by COVID-19

Dr. Kathy Sanderson, Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Business Administration, and her team, including Dr. Claudio Pousa, Associate Professor in the Faculty of Business Administration, and students, have received \$193,014 from the Future Skills Centre to study how newly-arrived women to Northwestern Ontario women are being further disadvantaged regarding employment.

The research team will survey 400 Northwestern Ontario women residents (half of them will be newcomers) over the next two years to determine how they can overcome the economic shock caused by COVID-19. This comparative, longitudinal study will allow the research team to reconceptualize how employment supports are delivered and identify opportunities and barriers to full labour participation by newcomer women in the wake of COVID-19.



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Lakehead University awarded more than \$360k for Pathway and Transfer Projects that will serve the needs of diverse student groups

Lakehead University has been awarded \$367,708 from the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT) to explore new seamless transfer projects and to continue working on software that will automatically analyze curriculum gaps.

ONCAT's Seamless Transfer projects focus on policy and practice changes and interventions that affect the credit transfer system as a whole. This funding supports experimentation and innovations in credit transfer processes, helps gauge the sector's readiness for change, and identifies realistic models that can be scaled province-wide.

Dr. Lana Ray, Assistant Professor in the Department of Indigenous Learning, has been awarded \$114,094 over the next two years, for a project entitled Indigenous Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR): Exploring how post-secondary institutions can recognize Indigenous community-based knowledge during credit and degree-granting processes.

Denise Baxter, Vice-Provost Indigenous Initiatives, has received \$105,666 for a project called Actioning and Expanding Commitment to Indigenous Learners.

Dr. Heather Murchison, Vice-Provost Institutional Planning and Analysis, will receive \$77,448 for a project entitled Understanding Transfer Student Experience & Outcomes through Business Intelligence Analytics.

ONCAT has also extended and provided an additional \$70,500 for the PathwAI Project led by **Dr. Vijay Mago**, Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Computer Science.

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Local and Global Partnerships

Dr. Wilson Wang Receives NSERC Alliance Grant

Dr. Wilson Wang, Professor in the department of Mechanical Engineering, received \$468,000 from the NSERC Alliance program and partner, Wilderness North (\$270,000 cash + \$198,000 in-kind) to develop a new helicopter aerial refuelling system.

NSERC Alliance grants encourage university researchers to collaborate with partner organizations, which can be from the private, public or not-for-profit sectors. In collaboration with Wilderness North, Dr. Wang will develop new technology and intelligent tools for Helicopter Aerial Refueling (HAR), used for commercial applications such as in-fly exploration and search and rescue. The developed HAR will generate a revolutionary solution in helicopter refueling.

Social Responsibility

Bora Laskin Faculty of Law launches Indigenous Law and Justice Institute

Lakehead University's Bora Laskin Faculty of Law will receive up to \$437,139 to launch an Indigenous Law and Justice Institute, the *Maamawi Bimosewag – They Walk Together*, and expand its law program, thanks to the Justice Partnership and Innovation Program offered by Canada's Department of Justice. On April 1, the Indigenous Law and Justice Institute opened and began its mandate to advance community collaboration and curriculum innovation in Indigenous law at the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law.

This funding allows Lakehead University to meet call to action #50 in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report — collaborating with the federal government to establish an Indigenous law institute for the development, use, and understanding of Indigenous laws and access to justice in accordance with the unique cultures of Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

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Professor Nancy Sandy is the inaugural Director of Lakehead's new Indigenous Law and Justice Institute.



Lakehead launches 24/7 global peer support network *TalkCampus* as part of 2021 Wellness Strategy

Lakehead University is the latest institution to commit to supporting the well-being of students by choosing to partner with innovative mental health solution, *TalkCampus*. In 2021, Lakehead University launched its new Wellness Strategy to support the needs of students, recognizing that investing in the enhancement of health and wellness will better position students for success in the classroom.

With *TalkCampus*, students have free access to instant, ongoing peer support via their smartphones within a familiar and intuitive network. While traditional support services have a vital role to play for student mental health, online peer support plays a powerful role for upstream, early and ongoing intervention. *TalkCampus* is a proactive and preventative mental health solution that is inclusive to all students, whether on campus or studying remotely. With so many students studying at home in isolation, having someone to talk to and share with can make all the difference.

[Click here to view the TalkCampus pamphlet...](#)

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CALAREO Pursues Research Collaborations with the State of Yucatan

Members of the Canada and Latin America Research and Exchange Opportunities (CALAREO) Consortium participated in a virtual meeting with representatives of SIIES (Department of Research, Innovation and Higher Education in the State of Yucatan), and SIIDETHEY (a consortium of 9 research centres and 7 universities in the State of Yucatan).

SIIDETHEY (Sistema de Investigación, Innovación y Desarrollo Tecnológico del Estado de Yucatán) was established in 2008 to enhance the training of highly qualified personnel, as well as scientific research, innovation, and technological development. The meeting was facilitated by the Canadian Embassy in Mexico to assist in establishing research collaborations between Canada and Mexico on health, environmental, community development, and Indigenous issues. The meeting included presentations from SIIES and CALAREO, as well as four individual research presentations from CALAREO members.

Dr. Rebecca Schiff and Dr. Salimur Choudhury presented from Lakehead.





Lakehead's Meal Exchange Chapter and LUSU Food Resource Centre Receive Food Banks Canada Grant

The Lakehead University Meal Exchange Chapter (LUMXC) is very excited to announce that we were successful applicants for the 2020 Rural and Northern Capacity Fund. With the funds received we have been able to purchase \$12,000 in gift certificates from local businesses (Maltese Grocery, The Cheese Encounter, Thunder Bay Country Market, Superior Seasons) that support local food producers. These gift cards are currently being distributed to Lakehead University Thunder Bay students who are facing food insecurity and are in need of assistance.

This is why LUMXC is so grateful to be able to do this work. Knowing what we do has helped even one student and knowing that students are able to purchase healthy food that can sustain them makes the work worthwhile. We're so thankful that we've been able to make even a small difference in these students' lives. At LUMXC we anticipate that we will be increasing the number of grant applications that we will be making in the coming year. In doing so, we hope to be able to support more students dealing with food insecurity. We will also continue our work with our parent charity, Meal Exchange, to increase awareness and to address systemic issues which create inequities that lead to post-secondary student food insecurity. Only when food insecurity is eliminated for all and food literacy is enhanced for all will our work truly be done.

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