

President's Report to Senate – April 13, 2012

Pay it forward: the concept of repaying a good deed by doing something nice for someone else. If I had to pick a theme for Lakehead University this spring, it's all about "paying it forward."

It was evident at two Donor Appreciation lunches I recently attended, one for faculty and staff, the other for the general public. Donors were honoured and recognized for their support of our students, and our community. I am especially proud of our employees and retirees who continue to give generously. By supporting students with scholarships, bursaries and awards in all program areas, donors transform the lives of our young people and give them the resources to become the leaders of tomorrow.

Speaking of leaders, one of our students recently demonstrated he already is one. In fact, I'd call him a hero. Nick Lounsbury risked his own life to save the life of another man who had attempted suicide by jumping in front of a subway train in downtown Toronto. Facing possible electrocution, Nick leaped onto the tracks without hesitation, and coaxed and pulled the badly injured man to safety. "I didn't do it for recognition. I did it because it was the right thing to do," the 24-year-old says.

Doing the right thing. For electrical engineering professor Dr. Mohammad Nasir Uddin, that means donating his own land and money to build a new school in his home village in Bangladesh, where the vast majority of residents live below the poverty line and can't afford schooling. The Arshed-Sajeda Primary School officially opened earlier this year, and now provides free access to education for children in Grades 1 to 5. In addition, scholarships will be provided for students in financial need and for high-achieving students so that they can have continued access to education.

And finally, the importance of paying it forward came to mind just two days ago at Sherbrooke Public School, where we formally signed the *Achievement Program Memorandum of Understanding* with Lakehead Public Schools. The *Achievement Program* will open doors for students throughout Northwestern Ontario who face major barriers to a university education. The goal is to raise \$10 million in 10 years, but this innovative program is about more than the money. It's about changing attitudes and expectations. It's about giving young people, especially First Nations, Métis and Inuit youth, the opportunity to realize their dreams. I believe it's our chance – no, our obligation – as a University, as a community, to make postsecondary education a reality for those who face barriers to higher education.

In other words, to pay it forward.

SUSTAINABILITY

Budget Update

The province has extended the current tuition framework. Administration and the Board of Governors will now review budget options. A final budget is expected to pass at the Board meeting in June.

Staffing

Vice-President External Relations

The hiring process for the VP External Relations is in the final stages. An announcement is expected in the next few weeks.

Vice-President Administration and Finance

The search is on for VP Administration and Finance. Laverne Smith & Associates is the executive search consultant, based out of Toronto. The committee has had its first meeting.

University Advancement

Employee and Retiree Donor Event

On March 28, the Office of Advancement in conjunction with Special Projects & Protocol hosted an *Employee and Retiree Donor Lunch*. More than 60 people attended the event, which was an opportunity to recognize and thank current and former employees for their continued support. Their generosity demonstrates pride in Lakehead University – its people, its programs, and most importantly, its students. It is particularly gratifying to see retirees continuing to contribute, proving that they are still integral members of the Lakehead family.

Success Through Giving Luncheon

More than 150 people attended the *Success Through Giving Luncheon* on April 3. Every spring, Lakehead University brings donors together with students who have benefitted from their generosity. This year, donors will provide more than \$400,000 to students to assist them with their university expenses. This popular event lets the wider community learn about the aspirations of our students and the important role donors play in helping them realize their goals.

RESEARCH

Lakehead University's Office of Research Services, along with Physical Plant, are working together to assess the feasibility of establishing an off-campus research facility to support research activities at the Orillia campus. In particular, the facility would support environmental research related to local water quality, which is being conducted by faculty members within the department of interdisciplinary studies.

DIVERSITY

Aboriginal

Orillia Updates

An Aboriginal Elders' Teaching Series recently concluded at the Orillia campus. The weekly series, which ran from January to March 2012, was well received with an average of 40 participants in attendance for each session. The series featured the involvement and leadership from Elders representing local First Nations communities within the region.

A partnership with Georgian College will offer an opportunity to local high school students to learn about postsecondary options through a "Pathways to Education Day" taking place this spring.

Plans are also underway to develop recruitment strategies for Aboriginals in the Southern Georgian Bay area, as well as Métis programming at the Orillia campus for the 2012-2013 academic year.

Student Award to Benefit Aboriginal Entrepreneurs

A team of Lakehead University students has won a prestigious *Entrepreneurs First!* grant from the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC). Lakehead's Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE) beat out 50 other SIFE teams to win a \$2,500 dollar award. Their proposal, *The Aboriginal Economic Development Program*, will help Northwestern Ontario Aboriginal entrepreneurs enhance their business skills and stimulate economic growth in Aboriginal communities. Five other SIFE clubs in Canada were also successful. SIFE is an international organization with more than 1,600 teams, making it the largest non-profit post-secondary student club in the world.

Access

Achievement Program – Dream it, Believe it, Achieve it

Earlier this week, nearly 100 adults and students gathered in the school cafeteria of Sherbrooke Public School for the official signing of the *Achievement Program Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)* between Lakehead University and the Lakehead District School Board (LDSB).

The *Achievement Program* will open doors for students throughout Northwestern Ontario who face major barriers to a university education. The goal is to raise \$10 million in 10 years.

Many First Nations, Métis, Inuit and children from families of low socioeconomic status miss out on the greater career choices and better quality of life that a university education can bring.

Through the *Achievement Program*, children from Grades 4-12 will be able to earn money to go towards tuition fees at Lakehead University by participating in yearly activities. The *Achievement Program* will also include financial support for mature students.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Town Hall

More than 150 staff and faculty attended a Town Hall forum in the Faculty Lounge on March 20. In addition to an update on the Gichi Kendaasiwin Project (please see below), those in the audience were told about a proposal from the Thunder Bay Golf and Country Club to lease University land to develop a driving range.

The golf club would like to lease more than six acres for 21 years less a day. The land in question runs from the Athletic complex to Golf Links Road. In return, the club will:

- provide two athletic scholarships a year, worth \$1,500 each;
- become home to members of the University Golf Team, free-of-charge;
- run two clinics for children who are disadvantaged;
- offer reduced green fees and seasonal memberships to full-time students under 25;
- provide 25 golf passes per year to the University.

Ken Morrison Lecture Series

The 2012 Ken Morrison Lecture Series was entitled: *Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Relations in Thunder Bay: Our Shared Future*. More than 100 people attended this thought-provoking presentation and discussion that explored the City of Thunder Bay's growing Aboriginal population and the opportunities this brings to build bridges and to celebrate the diversity of our community.

Featured speakers included Chief Peter Collins of the Fort William First Nation, Mayor Keith Hobbs, Wendy Landry, Chair of the City Crime Prevention Council and President of the Thunder Bay Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario.

Dr. Stevenson also talked about the Gichi Kendaasiwin Project, outlining its four components:

1. The Building Project
2. The Achievement Program
3. The Nanabijou Child Care Centre
4. The Immersive Telepresence Network

Juried Art Exhibition

The Juried Student Exhibition provides all visual arts students a chance to showcase their best work produced during the 2011-2012 academic year. In recognition of student achievements, awards donated by local businesses and individuals, as well as Deans' Awards and other special commendations, were presented at the Opening Reception on March 16th, including the President's Award of \$200 to Scott Poluyko for *Occupy*, and the Stevenson Family Award to Kyla Pun for *Placebo*, valued at \$250.

Athletic Awards Banquet

Student athletes were honoured for their excellence and dedication at the annual Athletic Awards Banquet. Emma Brightwell (wrestling) and Greg Carter (basketball) were named as Female and Male Athletes of the Year.

Brightwell went undefeated all season and was crowned national champion of the 82 kg division. As a side note, Brightwell was also elected as the next president of LUSU.

Greg Carter led his team to a record-best regular season (20-2) and was named Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) Defensive Player of the Year, and an Ontario University Athletics (OUA) 2nd team All-Star.

Rookie of the Year honors went to Alannah McLean (nordic skiing) and Mitch Fillman (hockey). McLean finished 2nd overall at the Canadian College and University Nordic Championships (CCUNC) nationals and Fillman was named to the CIS All-Rookie team and the OUA All-Defensive team.

Men's basketball veteran Ben Johnson was the recipient of the Hank Akervall award for his excellent performance in three areas: in the classroom as an Academic All-Canadian, on the court setting three-point records (nine in a single game), and in the community, as an ambassador.

Lindsay Druery received the Argus Award in recognition of her record-setting achievements on the women's basketball team over her five-year career, including most rebounds (1,490).

Also, both men's and women's nordic skiing teams were the Ontario and National champions, with Harry Seaton and Andrea Lee being named national Most Valuable Skiers.

Summer Camp in Orillia

Under the direction of the athletics and recreation facilitator (Student Affairs), a new summer camp will be offered at the Orillia campus this summer. "CampU" will provide an opportunity for local children, ages 8 to 13, to experience the University campus. The camp will feature a blend of multi-sport and hands-on education activities during five special themed weeks from July 2 to August.