

President's Report to Senate – May 18, 2012

COMPREHENSIVENESS

Fulbright Canada Opportunities for students and faculty

Dr. Michael Hawes, the Executive Director and CEO of Fulbright Canada, was in Thunder Bay last week for a series of meetings promoting the Fulbright Program at the University.

Dr. Hawes reviewed the opportunities that are available to graduate students and senior academics through the Canada-U.S. Fulbright Program, and those available to undergraduate students through its Killam Fellowships Program.

In addition, Dr. Hawes shared Fulbright Canada's recent success in offering new and exciting opportunities for its grantees and Alumni to engage with their local communities in collaborative projects, programs, and events that have a lasting and beneficial impact on the community.

As part of the two-day visit, Dr. Hawes and President Brian Stevenson travelled to the University of Minnesota Duluth, to meet with officials to discuss collaborative programs. Dr. Stevenson hopes Dr. Hawes' visit will lead to an MOU with Fulbright in the future. [Learn more about Fulbright Canada - the Foundation for Educational Exchange Between Canada and the United States of America.](#)

Geologists Rock Thunder Bay

Adventurous scientists from all branches of geology are in Thunder Bay this week for the 58th Annual Meeting of The Institute on Lake Superior Geology (ILSG). Approximately 200 delegates from Canada, the United States, and as far away as Finland and the United Kingdom are here to explore Lake Superior's diverse geologic formations.

"Within ½ hour of Thunder Bay, there is everything from 1.1 billion-year-old gabbroic rock formed when North America tried to split apart, to 2.7 billion-year-old Archean rock," says Lakehead's Dr. Peter Hollings, organizer of this year's meeting. "Geologists love the challenge of piecing together the history of the past. It's like a jigsaw puzzle or a really old CSI mystery."

The ILSG runs until Sunday, and features technical presentations and numerous field trips to the surrounding region including the Musselwhite gold mine, the Sibley Peninsula, and Paleo-Indian archaeological sites.

Generous support from 15 local mining companies (including Musselwhite, Cliffs, Osisko, and Stillwater Canada) has enabled the ILSG to offer free registration for students, many of whom will be presenting their research at the technical sessions.

The Institute on Lake Superior Geology is a non-profit professional society with the objectives of providing a forum for exchange of geological ideas and scientific data and promoting better understanding of the geology of the Lake Superior region.

RESEARCH

BIOFOR Conference

The Biorefining Research Institute (BRI) and Lakehead University hosted the inaugural BIOFOR Conference earlier this week.

This new national forum investigating biorefining, bioenergy and the bioeconomy attracted more than 70 participants from Canada, the United States, Brazil, and Turkey. Research and industry representatives attended talks and poster presentations, engaged in discussions, and toured local biomass operations, the BRI, and other University research facilities.

The BRI has made a name for itself working with local industry and using local resources to revitalize Northwestern Ontario's economy. "The present pulp mills will be the biorefineries of the future," BRI Director Dr. Robert Dekker said. "The Atikokan Ontario Power Generation plant, for example, has successfully trialed wood pellets to run its operation and will switch entirely to biomass in 2014."

Pioneering biorefining/bioenergy solutions is not only critical to the region, it is also critical to the economic and environmental health of nations around the world.

The BIOFOR Conference provided biorefining/bioenergy/bioeconomy innovators with the opportunity to share their knowledge and gain new insights into their quest for alternatives to petroleum-based energy sources.

Students were key contributors to the BIOFOR Conference. They attended the talks and created poster presentations.

Major New Funding Awarded

- Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council: 11 new Discovery Grants (each awarded for five years) worth a total of \$1.6 million are awarded to Lakehead faculty members.
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research: Two new operating grants were awarded to Lakehead, worth a total of \$1.2 million (over five years).
- A CIHR/NSERC three-year Collaborative Health Research Partnership Grant was awarded to Dr. Alla Reznik, Department of Physics/TBRRI. The total value of the grant is \$498,000.

New Canada Research Chair joins Lakehead University

Lakehead University is proud to announce its newest Tier 1 Canada Research Chair (CRC) in Bioenergy and Biorefining – Dr. Sudip Rakshit. One of only 12 new CRCs appointed in Ontario, Dr. Rakshit joins the Chemical Engineering Department as the CRC in Bioenergy and Biorefining.

This research scientist excels at transforming both commonplace and unusual materials into potential sources of bioenergy. He is developing innovative methods to convert renewable biomass such as wood and agriculture products into biofuels and renewable chemicals. This makes Dr. Rakshit a perfect fit, as Lakehead University continues to harness forest biomass through the Biorefining Research Institute (BRI).

His biofuel research will advance the growth of the international bioenergy sector and will help strengthen Northwestern Ontario's emerging bioeconomy.

Dr. Rakshit comes to Lakehead from the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Bangkok, Thailand where he was the Vice-President of Research. After seven years in administration, he wanted to re-immers himself in sustainable energy and biofuel research. He is excited about the prospect of working with his University colleagues and regional industry partners to put Northwestern Ontario at the forefront of bioenergy research and the emerging bioeconomy.

***Why Research Matters* Campaign features Lakehead University Profs**

The work of Lakehead University professors Lionel Catalan and Stephen Kinrade is featured in the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) *Why Research Matters* campaign, which launched earlier this week at the Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE) Discovery Conference at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

The new province-wide campaign aims to engender broader and deeper public awareness and appreciation for academic research in order to empower and inspire governments to maintain their support for universities.

It begins with a website and blog that showcases new stories and ideas emerging from Ontario university research. The campaign, which will speak to daily issues and reflect the full diversity of university research, will continue through 2012-2013 with public events held around the province designed to allow the public to engage directly with researchers.

Drs. Catalan and Kinrade have developed a green cement additive that shows the potential to significantly strengthen concrete and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Visit the Research Matters website at www.YourOntarioResearch.ca or follow the campaign on Twitter at [@OntarioResearch](https://twitter.com/OntarioResearch).

DIVERSITY

International

I was in Ottawa earlier this month to visit the Mexican and Brazilian Embassies. I also met with the Saudi Arabian Cultural Attaché, as part of the same trip.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Run, Stroll or Roll a Huge Success

The May 12 *Royal LePage Women's United Run, Stroll or Roll* was a great success for Lakehead's team of dedicated faculty, staff, students, and alumni. More than 75 people participated on behalf of Lakehead, making it the second largest team. Together, they raised more than \$1,800 - the second largest amount collected.

Royal LePage will match Lakehead's pledges which means that \$2,700 will go to the University's Achievement Fund. The Fund was launched last month and is designed to support children who face barriers to education, especially Aboriginal youth, to aspire to graduate from high school and then attend Lakehead University.

Congratulations to the Lakehead team and all those who donated to the Achievement Fund. President Stevenson and his family greatly appreciate your support.

National Recognition for Lakehead University

Lakehead University's Food Security Research Network (FSRN) has been nationally recognized for its dedication to community-service learning. The FSRN received the 2012 Community Service-Learning (CSL) Award from the The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation – an organization committed to building a more innovative, inclusive, sustainable, and resilient society.

Lakehead's FSRN is a collective of students, community members, and University faculty and staff committed to creating sustainable local food systems in Northwestern Ontario. Since 2004, the FSRN has used community-service learning to get students involved in promoting local food marketing, production, and distribution initiatives that positively impact the social and economic health of Northwestern Ontarians.

Community-service learning takes students out of the classroom, allowing them contribute to their communities in tangible ways. Community members and students learn from each other and work together to strengthen their towns, cities, and regions.

“Community-service learning courses provide opportunities for our students to empower people to grow, harvest, and store their own food,” says Dr. Connie Nelson, FSRN Director, and a Professor of Social Work at Lakehead. “The courses examine policy issues such as national seed saving regulations or municipal pollination bylaws that can affect the development of local food systems.”

Dr. Nelson just returned from the McConnell Foundation's National Awards Ceremony in Saskatoon where she accepted the \$7,500 CSL prize on behalf of the FSRN. The

celebration also included the premiere of a video highlighting the FSRN's projects and achievements (<http://vimeo.com/channels/csl>)

She says the money will be used to fund FSRN initiatives and collaborations with community organizations, not-for-profits, and charities. Nelson says that immediate needs include a mobile poultry abattoir and storage facilities for extended access to local foods and processing facilities.

Strategic Plan Consultation

At its April meeting, the Board of Governors approved in principle a draft Strategic Plan for July 2013 to June 2018. At the same time, Board members asked Administration to establish a broad consultation process and to report the results back to the Board. The draft plan, with opportunity for individual input, will be on the website early next week and everyone will be notified of the link in a communications bulletin. Pre-consultation is starting now, but the full consultation process will begin following the Board's June meeting. We look forward to a full discussion with the Senate in the fall.

Orillia Campus Updates

In the news...

Congratulations to the offices of Advancement and Communications in Orillia, who have worked together to create a monthly newsletter, *Lakehead University Orillia Campus Connections*. Distributed both internally to staff and externally to stakeholders, the electronic newsletter is intended to keep stakeholders informed about activities occurring at the university. So far, three issues have been distributed, with the first in March. To see the latest newsletter, go to <http://us4.campaign-archive2.com/?u=40dd33b266a5c122478043df0&id=32b68cb6d0> .

Signs, signs, everywhere a sign...

Lakehead University – Orillia Campus now has external signage on Highway 11 and other feeder roads, pointing the way to the new campus. Plans are underway to seek out potential partners and/or sponsors to erect a digital sign.