



# President's Report to Senate

February  
2024







# Office of the President

## Updates on Presidential Initiatives and Activities

### Lakehead Orillia Expansion

Throughout January, the Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis continued to work with the Provost, specific Deans, and the Orillia Academic Committee to inform multi-year enrollment planning in Simcoe County. The month saw work focused on Education, Science and Environmental Science, and Engineering to support ongoing conversations with the Ministry, Georgian College, and municipal partners. This process is iterative and ongoing.

### Collaborative DVM

Joint working groups consisting of representatives from the University of Guelph and Lakehead University continued to meet throughout January. Members from both institutions also met with government officials to review planned timelines, issues, and risk management, all the while emphasizing our collective commitment to enhancing veterinary education in Northern Ontario. This ongoing government engagement is key to supporting the program's progress, emphasizing our collective commitment to enhancing veterinary education in Northern Ontario. I look forward to sharing further developments as we move forward with the initiative.

### Gichi Kendaasiwin

While a strategic plan to advance Gichi Kendaasiwin's realization is being developed, a planning circle of Indigenous faculty, staff and key community members is also being established. Meetings have been set, or are in progress, for me to meet with Brian Davey, CEO of the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation Economic Development organization, as well as with Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, local chiefs, and education directors.

## International Student Winners

At the Fall 2023 International Student Welcome Day event in the Hangar, a group of new international students were lucky winners of the "Coffee with the President" prize draw.

On January 26, Dr. Siddall met with 4 international students to hear about their experiences and impressions of Lakehead and their programs. Over coffee and butter tarts, the students shared their backgrounds, their remarkable journeys to Thunder Bay, and their impressions of the university and the community.



*From left to Right: Jo Krisko, Director, International Student Services, James Aldridge, Vice-Provost (International), Alamin Hossain, Bangladesh - MSc Computer Science In Artificial Intelligence, Dr. Gillian Siddall, President and Vice Chancellor, Thi Thuy Tien Tran, Vietnam - MSc Computer Science (Course), Samira Zarei, Iran - MSc (Electrical & Computer Engineering) - Course and Jasleen Kaur - India - MA (Economics) - Course*





## Lakehead Women's Soccer

On Friday, January 26, 2024, the Lakehead Women's Soccer team participated in the 2024 OCAA Indoor Soccer Invitational Exhibition Tournament hosted by George Brown College. The Thunderwolves had an excellent tournament (even beating the host team) but lost in the semifinals in a penalty shootout.

## Thrive Week

Our 5th annual [Thrive](#) week was a great success with over 1,200 students, staff and faculty attending events across both campuses. Thrive is an initiative that began at UBC as a conversation between colleagues about the importance of reducing the stigma associated with mental health. It has since grown into a movement celebrated at campuses across Canada, providing opportunities for important conversations about mental health to take place. The event brought our whole campus community together to build connections, learn, and have fun!

## Deputation to Orillia City Council

On January 29, Dr. Linda Rodenburg and Dr. Rebecca Heffernan presented a deputation to Orillia City Council on the Orillia campus and its impact on the communities it serves, as well as its plans for the region moving forward.

[Click here to view to deputation, including questions from members of Orillia City Council.](#)

## Celebrating this year's WellU Mental Health Champions

Professors, Teaching Assistants, and staff play vital roles in supporting and advancing student mental health. The WellU Champions for Mental Health recognizes and celebrates those in our Lakehead community who create supportive learning environments where student mental health is valued and supported. Champions are nominated by those whom their work matters most: Lakehead students.

Congrats to our [2024 WellU Champions!](#)



### Thunder Bay Campus

- Patricia Johnson from Student Accessibility Services
- Krista McAllister from Student Success Centre
- Joel Symonds from Student Affairs
- Mx. Mohit Dudeja from the Faculty of Education
- Lori Kapush from the Faculty of ORPT
- Dr. Leigh Potvin from the Faculty of ORPT
- Dr. Keira Loukes from the Faculty of ORPT
- Dr. Hao Bai from Mechanical Engineering
- Dr. Taryn Klarner from the School of Kinesiology
- Dr. Mike Campbell from Chemistry
- Dr. Erin Pearson from the School of Kinesiology
- Bonnie McDonald from Gender and Women's Studies
- Alexandra Hudyma from Mathematical Sciences
- Isi Medina from Residence Life
- Aaliyah Stewart from Residence Life

### Orillia Campus

- Tess Casole Buchanan from the School of Social Work
- Professor Charles Manners from the Criminology Program
- Lori Anne Beneteau from Dana Hospitality
- Professor Hilton Bertalan from the Criminology Program
- Elizabeth Adams from Residence Life
- Dr. Michelle McKee from Student Health and Wellness
- Dr. Florin Pendea from the Departments of Sustainability Sciences and Geography & the Environment
- Alisia Johnston from Student Accessibility Services
- Ashley McLetchie from Residence Life

[\*\*Click here to see what students said about the champions and what the champions had to say about their role in well-being on campus.\*\*](#)



## Health and Wellness for Lakehead Orillia Students

Students on the Orillia campus are now able to access a number of resources for health and wellness. They can access primary health care through a nurse practitioner on site (in partnership with Soldiers Memorial Hospital and the Couchiching Ontario Health Team Care Clinic). Students can also access the Central Clinic in Orillia that is open to the community, as well as counselling services provided through Catholic Family Services (CFS). CFS provides counselling services for students both in-person on campus and virtually. Students can also access the CFS location in Orillia outside of the services arranged through Lakehead. However, if students go through Lakehead they are prioritized. There are also clinics for flu shots, COVID shots, and other health screening services available.

Our new wellness programming is an important part of Lakehead's Health Promotion Strategy that positively encourages the uptake of healthy behaviours among our student population, including health education and strengthening life skills. Frazer Philips, Lakehead Orillia's new Indigenous Cultural Wellness Facilitator, is assisting in incorporating Indigenous wellness into this programming.

## Office of Indigenous Initiatives Updates

Indigenous Initiatives (Orillia) provided a professional development opportunity to the Student Affairs Team by supporting and advising their new Indigenous Learning Book Club. The book club members will be reading two books: *Indigenous Writes* by Chelsea Vowel and *True Reconciliation* by Jody Wilson-Raybould. This is part two of a professional development opportunity on Building Relationships with the Land & Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous Initiatives hosted a Winter Feast on January 24, 2024, as part of Thrive Week. The day included a beading workshop, lunch, and a sweetgrass basket making workshop. Winter Feast allowed students to learn about Indigenous student services, meet other Indigenous students and the Indigenous Lakehead community, and connect with Career & Co-op Services if they had any questions about Lakehead's OpenText Indigenous Internship opportunities.



# Academic Excellence

## Big Ideas: Farhan Ghaffar on improving banked blood storage systems

While we go about our daily lives, researchers at Lakehead University's Orillia campus are busy exploring ways to improve our communities. Big Ideas with Lakehead University Orillia gives you a glimpse inside their innovative work.

Meet **Farhan Ghaffar**, an assistant professor in Lakehead University's Department of Electrical Engineering in the faculty of engineering. Ghaffar joined the electrical engineering department in August 2019 as a member of the [Lakehead-Georgian Partnership \(LUGC\) program](#) working out of the Barrie campus of Georgian College. His area of research is radio frequency (RF) circuits, antennas and system design with wide-ranging applications: biomedical systems, autonomous vehicles, smart wireless technologies, space and satellite communications.

Big Ideas with Lakehead University Orillia is a partnership with Metroland Media. This article was originally published on [Simcoe.com](#) on Sunday, Jan. 7, 2024.

[Click here to read media release](#)



## Lack of climate education 'a missed opportunity'

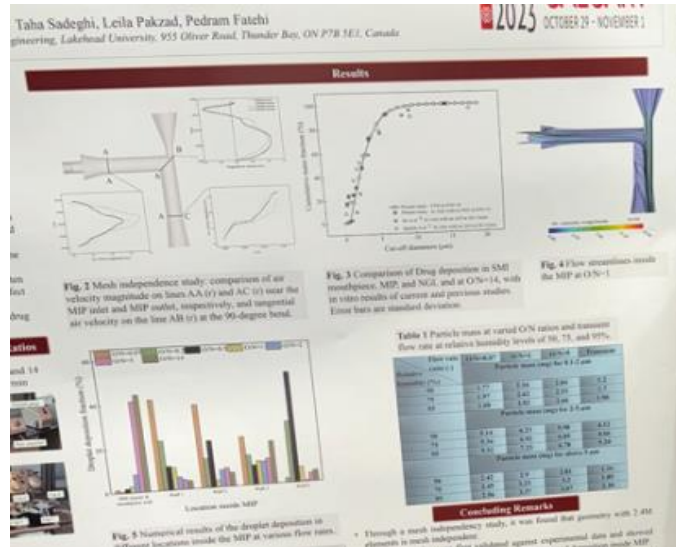
Education researcher and professor **Ellen Field** was featured in a December 9 CBC report on climate change education. The article, which includes a video as well, offers a quick portrait on how climate change education fares across Canadian jurisdictions, how prepared teachers feel in teaching it and whether a climate strategy is a priority for school boards.

[Click here for the media release...](#)

## Canadian Society for Chemical Engineering student wins Best Poster Award

**Taha Sadeghi**, PhD candidate in the Faculty of Engineering, was awarded the Best Poster Award during the Canadian Society for Chemical Engineering Conference in Calgary.

Sadeghi's research is focused on "Experimental and Numerical Study of Aerosol Drug Delivery in the Human Respiratory Tract using Soft Mist Inhaler (SMI) Devices." In the Multiphase Flow Research (MFR) Laboratory, founded and directed by Dr. Leila Pakzad, he has published two journal papers and two more manuscripts are in progress.



He received his master's degree from Iran Polymer and Petrochemical Institute (IPPI). He is doing his PhD in the biotechnology program under the supervision of Dr. Pakzad and Dr. Pedram Fatehi from the Department of Chemical Engineering.

The Natural Sciences and Engineering Council of Canada (NSERC) funded this research. The faculties of engineering and graduate studies have also supported his project. The supercomputer and the technical assistance provided by Lakehead University have endorsed the numerical section of his research project.





## Local and Global Partnerships

### Lakehead University and St. Joseph's Care Group - Establishment of a Research Ethics Board of Record Agreement

A new research ethics agreement between Lakehead University and St. Joseph's Care Group (SJCG) has recently been established. The agreement reduces the duplication of work for researchers at Lakehead University and NOSM U looking to use the resources of SJCG and will help to avoid duplicate processes, including duplicate applications and duplicate Research Ethics Board (REB) reviews. Lakehead University's REB will accept the REB approval provided by SJCG. The collaboration illustrates the growing bond between our two institutions, especially pertaining to research.

### Office of Community Engagement and Lifelong Learning (CELL)

The Winter 2024 certificate session of the Ontario Master Naturalist Program launched on January 11, 2024. 31 learners were welcomed. More information can be found [here](#).

CELL's Third Age Learning Lakehead (TALL) program is now accepting registrations for its upcoming lecture series. This winter's TALL lecture series on Exploring Ethics in a Complex World will focus on key ethical issues impacting our daily lives, such as bioethics, corporate social responsibility, and environmental ethics. The series opens February 14th.

### Alumni Initiatives – the Resiliency Project

On January 22, 2024, Lakehead's Alumni Office launched The Resiliency Project; an online platform for alumni, current students, staff, and faculty that serves as a dedicated safe space for mental health discussions, fostering connections, and actively participating in health and wellness events. The launch included a series of 5 events done in partnership with Shift Collab, a national virtual therapy practice. Over the week more than 110 participants enjoyed the wide variety of event topics. Participants were taken on a tour of the forum and encouraged to continue to engage within it. The project will continue to grow, and new content will be added frequently to encourage participants to continue to engage and talk about mental health and wellness.

# Entrepreneurship and Innovation

**Save the Date: 19th Annual Research and Innovation Week**



Lakehead University's 19th Annual Research & Innovation Week's planning is well underway, and we're pleased to return to an in-person event. The events (e.g. workshops, student poster/oral presentations, and speaker panels) will run from February 24 to March 1, 2024, on the Thunder Bay campus and from March 5 to March 6, 2024, on the Orillia campus. We invite all to attend the events occurring during these exciting weeks. To learn more about the events, please visit [our website](#) for more information.

## ***Ingenuity Ascend Accelerator Program Sees Largest Number of Applications***

Ingenuity received 28 applications to the Ascend Accelerator Program, the largest number of applications to date, including 5 from Orillia. The applicants had the opportunity to pitch their business ideas to a panel of judges, and four ideas were selected to move forward, one from our Orillia campus.

The Ascend Accelerator Program begins January 29 and runs for 10 weeks. During that time, Ingenuity provides \$5000 in start-up funding, mentorship, and delivers knowledge-based workshops. During the 10-week program, the participants are taken through the steps to launch or grow their business idea. In the previous three cohorts, Ingenuity has supported 12 business ideas, nine of which are still either actively pursuing their business idea or have moved to revenue generation.