

President's Report to Senate

Major Highlights

Wireless Technology

As mentioned in the last report, a campus-wide survey, involving students, faculty and staff was undertaken in September of this year as part of the consultative process on wireless. Over 8500 votes were cast, representing more than 75% of eligible participants. They voted overwhelmingly in favor of introducing WiFi at Lakehead with 94%. Although this was a survey and not a referendum, I am taking the results seriously and have asked my direct reports to begin to develop a sustainable and affordable plan for introducing wireless to the campus.

Enrolment

The official count date for students for the Fall term is at November 1, 2010. While the final count has not yet been completed, indications are that Lakehead has met its enrolment targets. In fact, the Thunder Bay Campus has grown slightly over last year (approximately 2%) and Orillia has substantially exceeded its targets. The total headcount for Lakehead will be just over 8500.

Research

Research Infosource provides regular comparisons of the research achievements of Canadian Universities. I will have some exciting news to announce at our next meeting.

Sustainability

Task Force on Revenue Allocation

The Acting Vice-President Academic and Provost recently announced the Provost's Task Force on Revenue Allocation. This eight member task force will be assigned the job of finding a method of allocating revenue which gives credit to all the faculties for the students they attract, and the courses they provide, in a transparent and effective manner. Currently funds from the government, which are based on students, and tuition fees combine for by far the majority of the University's revenue but there is no effective way of splitting the credit for that revenue between the faculties who attract the students and the departments which provide the courses. The task force will be trying to find a formula that meets this goal. It has been asked to report by the end of March.

Increasing External Revenue

This month's presentation on the Strategic Plan will be on the Strategy "Increasing External Revenue." Lee Gould, the VP Advancement, will be talking about how the Office of Advancement is going to be involved in improving the University's long-term sustainability through fund-raising.

On October 20, the Orillia campus hosted the Orillia Chamber of Commerce's "Business after Five"--a local business networking meeting--at the New Academic Building. Over 100 business owners and representatives participated. This event was followed by Orillia Mayoralty debate in the large lecture theatre in the New Academic Building. The debate was co-sponsored by Soldier's Memorial Hospital and Lakehead University. This was the first "public" event in the theatre.

Infrastructure

The Federal government's infrastructure funds, used by Lakehead for a number of improvements, including reinforcing Lake Tamblyn and a new Learning Commons in the Library, had a very specific deadline. Projects had to be complete by Spring 2011 or the funds would not be released. Lakehead is proud to announce that all of our projects are completed or near complete. The installation ceremony, in fact, is planned for the recently renovated PACI building and the learning commons is already being used by our students. A Grand opening for the Learning Commons is being planned for January 27, 2011.

Orillia hasn't even paused for breath since opening its new building last month. Construction for a student residence is proceeding at a rapid pace and is on schedule for completion late next summer while a request for proposals for the Cafeteria/Bookstore building at University Avenue has gone out and a site visit for recommended proponents will occur in early November.

Comprehensiveness of the Academy

Academic Plan

The Academic Planning process was officially launched at the September meeting of the Senate Academic Committee. Plans are currently being developed to complete a full consultation process during the 2010-11 winter term.

Report on Differentiation

The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) recently released a report recommending that universities specialize in the areas where they do best and that this specialization should be incorporated into their accountability structures with the Government. This approach is very controversial and is already being opposed by the Ontario Council of University Faculty Associations and the Ontario chapter of the Canadian Federation of Students. I will be discussing this report and its implications with the Board several times over the next year.

Research

Research Grants

A number of SSHRC grants presented to Lakehead faculty members and graduate students over the last year were recently announced. The grants total \$701,791.

Thirteen Lakehead University researchers have received NSERC funding, with grants over the next five years totalling \$1,761,341 across diverse areas of study which span the faculties of Natural Resources Management (formerly the Faculty of Forestry and the Forest Environment), Science and Environmental Studies, and Engineering.

Findings from the ice hockey skill development and injury awareness program Play It Cool, a Lakehead University research evaluation initiative that began six years ago, were recently showcased at the Mayo Clinic's two-day Sports Medicine Center Ice Hockey Summit: Action on Concussion conference in Rochester, Minnesota. The Play It Cool research team is led by Dr. Bill Montelpare and includes Dr. Moira McPherson, Dr. Lori Livingston, and Dr. Susan Forbes (Project Manager) from Lakehead University, as well as researchers from York University, the University of Toronto, the University of New Brunswick, and Acadia, Queen's, and Brock Universities.

Research Chairs

Drs. Philip Fralick (Geology) and Harvey Lemelin (Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Tourism) have been selected as the newest of six Lakehead University Research Chairs.

Lakehead recently signed a Collaborative Health Research Partnership affiliation agreement with Thunder Bay Regional Research Partnership in April 2010. Together we will create up to eight tenure-track Research Chair positions that will be held within various departments at Lakehead. Scientists who are appointed to these Chair positions will have access to university and hospital research facilities and be aligned with a proposed graduate program in Medical Biophysics.

Community Research

Connie Nelson's work with the Food Security Network was highlighted in a recent book Getting Wisdom describing the growth of Community Research and Community Service Learning in Canada. When one adds to this the number of SSHRC grants that were related to community research, Mary Lou Kelly and Holly Prince's work on pastoral care that was highlighted last month and the work Doug West and his colleagues are doing with their Humanities 101 program it is very clear that Lakehead's teachers and researchers are becoming national leaders in finding new connections between the community and the academy.

Diversity

Internationalization

On October 18, Ambassador Wenshen Chen, Chinese Minister-Counsellor of Education Affairs, visited Lakehead's Thunder Bay campus and was escorted to various campus facilities by Vice-President (Research) Rui Wang and President Brian Stevenson.

Aboriginal Services

I have been invited to meet with the representatives from a number of aboriginal organizations over the last while and intend to continue this. It is stimulating and exciting as I begin to see the connections between the university and the aboriginal communities. For example: the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives has been approached to partner with NAN and Indian and Northern Affairs to host a two day Treaty 9 and Treaty 3 Symposium at Lakehead University on February 23 & 24, 2011 and we have recently created a position for an Aboriginal Research facilitator.