



Lakehead  
UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

April 28, 2017

To the Lakehead University Community,

Yesterday I informed the Board of Governors that I will be stepping down as the very proud President and Vice-Chancellor of Lakehead University as of December 31, 2017. Recognizing how much we have accomplished together and my love for this community, I do this with mixed feelings.

Next year will see the realization of several initiatives we have been working on since I joined this University almost eight years ago. We will have a new strategic plan, a new academic plan, and our first strategic enrolment management plan. We have put the final steps in place for integrated planning and budgeting, and we will be poised to undertake our first ever national and international institutional campaign.

These initiatives will require consistent stewardship over the next decade, and they will require the ongoing support of a president who can shepherd them as they grow and evolve. This will require a longer commitment of time than I am able to make. It is for this reason that I believe it is important for me to step down as your President. The goals we have been working on together are well underway and I feel my mission has been accomplished.

This has been a very difficult decision to make, but I make it, as I always have, with the interests of the University foremost in my mind.

I want to thank our outstanding students, faculty, staff, and alumni. You have made my journey at Lakehead one of the most enriching of my life. You are indeed exceptional and unconventional. Your dedication and commitment to this University have been a constant source of strength and inspiration to me. It has been one of the greatest privileges to serve you all.

Throughout this journey, I have been fortunate to work with an extraordinary Executive Team and the most dedicated and loyal staff in the Office of the President. During a time of unprecedented challenges and difficulties for post-secondary institutions, your devotion, hard work, talent, creativity and good humour have successfully guided us through many trials. We are stronger and more resilient as an institution because of you. I

am indebted to you and grateful for your commitment and loyalty. To our Deans, Chairs, Directors and other senior administrators, I want to express my sincere gratitude for your leadership and guidance. I could always count on you for sound advice and tireless support.

To the members of our Senate and all of our faculty who guide and forge the University's innovative and creative academic programs in an increasingly regulated governmental environment, I would like to express my admiration for your commitment to teaching excellence and your devotion to providing our students a world class education in an environment which is nurturing and supportive of the learning experience. The Lakehead student experience is second to none because of you.

To the members of the Board of Governors, the community volunteers who steer the business of the University through countless hours of work, your dedication and love for the University is a testament to the commitment that our communities have to Lakehead. My special thanks to you and to each Board Chair that I have had the privilege to serve under. No one on the Board works harder and faces more challenges than a board chair. I thank you all for your mentorship and guidance.

To the Chairs and members of the Ogimaawin–Aboriginal Governance Council, I want to extend my sincerest gratitude for guiding our University's continuing efforts to support First Nation, Inuit, and Métis higher education goals. Thank you for teaching me. Thank you for showing me how to dream. Meegwetch.

I want to give special thanks to the Chancellors whom I have had the pleasure of working with during my time as president: Dr. Arthur Mauro and Dr. Derek Burney. Your mentorship, patience and guidance, as well as your tireless work on behalf of Lakehead, has helped to transform us in the past few years. I wish all the best to our Chancellor Elect, Lyn McLeod.

One of the privileges of my role as President and Vice-Chancellor has been to be a part of our two campus's wonderful communities in Orillia and Simcoe County and in Thunder Bay and Northwestern Ontario. From the moment of our arrival, you embraced my family and me and instantly made us part of your own lives with warmth, kindness and generosity. You have done so with unwavering support and countless acts of kindness. You will always be a part of us. To our many community partners, thank you for always supporting Lakehead and working for the betterment of our communities. My special thanks to Confederation College, Georgian College and the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, our prime education and research partners.

As a public university, our support from government at all levels is critical. To our hard-working federal, provincial, county and municipal representatives of all political stripes, present and past, I want to extend my sincerest thanks, not only for helping us with the many challenges and opportunities that we face, but for your commitment to Lakehead's educational, social and economic goals. I have seen up close how hard our representatives work for Lakehead and I want to express my thanks for their work on our behalf.

I also want to express my thanks to the many public servants at all levels of government for their constant help and support, and especially to the Deputy Ministers, ADMs and many other dedicated officials of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development and to the Presidents and staff of the Federal granting councils.

In a time of fiscal restraint and reduced budgets, the generosity of our community, both internal and external, is vital. To the thousands of alumni and donors who give generously and selflessly to the University to help with our many needs, thank you for your faith in us and thank you for not only making us a better university but a more caring and fair one. Your support of our students is particularly welcomed and appreciated. They are at the heart of who we are and your gift to them is a gift for our future. You transform lives. You improve opportunity. You promote equality. Thank you.

Finally, Lakehead University is fortunate to have strong and vibrant First Nation and Métis communities who support us and guide us, who teach us and enlighten us, and who firmly root us in the culture and history of these beautiful traditional lands. You are our moral compass. With one foot planted firmly in the past, our Elders connect us to the meaning of these lands. And with one foot securely in the future, our First Nation and Métis youth unlock our potential as a society because we know that education provides opportunity, economic mobility and the preservation of language and culture. Our Elders and youth give us hope for a future filled with truth and reconciliation, a future where equality, opportunity and social justice can become a daily reality. At the heart of reconciliation there must not only be listening and understanding, action and change, there must be love. Thank you for supporting the University, thank you for reminding us of our social mission and thank you for giving us renewed purpose. You are our past and you are our future.

Since 2010 when I became President and Vice-Chancellor, we have transformed this University. Just think of the many things we have accomplished together, here are some examples:

- we have been named the number one research university in our category in Canada, not once, but two years in a row
- we founded a new Faculty of Law
- we transitioned to Wi-Fi campuses and have a plan to expand it even further
- we appointed the first Indigenous woman in Canada as a Dean of a Faculty of Law
- we have changed the face of our University and promoted diversity by going from fewer than one hundred to over one thousand international students
- we established the first ever Office of Human Rights and Equity
- we established a Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Mining & Exploration (CESME) to play a lead role in economic development by bringing together Northern communities and the mining industry to build better relationships;

- we established the *Active U* program to bring children on campus for summer academic and sporting camps
- we opened our first permanent office in Toronto
- we increased undergraduate enrolment by over 30% at our Orillia campus since 2010
- we have established the most modern immersive telepresence system in Canada to link our campuses for a meaningful and modern learning experience
- we appointed the first ever Chair on Truth and Reconciliation
- in partnership with Wasaya Airways, we established the *Reach Up!* program, where our varsity team members go to northern communities to coach sports and talk about the value of a university education
- we are poised to open a fully renovated Student Central that will be a one stop shop for student services
- we have opened a new and modern International Centre
- we have built a new and modern daycare, more than doubling our capacity
- we have raised \$43 million, a combination of philanthropic and government dollars to support Lakehead University
- we are building a new \$25 million Centre for Advanced Studies in Engineering and Science (CASES)
- we have completed a renovation of PACI which now houses the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law and are near to completion of our \$5 million campaign
- we have opened alumni chapters across the country and in Hong Kong
- we have established the first ever Legacy Society named after our first president so that donors can plan future gifts from their estates
- we established the Achievement Fund program to help children with financial barriers to go to university
- our Faculty of Business has obtained the AACSB accreditation, granted to only 5% of the world's business schools, and is now also CPA accredited
- we have established a new Centre for Innovation & Entrepreneurship
- we reformed our Board of Governors and are the only University in Ontario that has reduced its Board from over 30 members to 17, its committees from 12 to 6
- we became the first university in Canada to implement an Indigenous Content Requirement for all our students
- we have established an open and consultative annual budgeting process
- we have contributed hundreds of millions of dollars to the regions around both our campuses;

- and, most importantly, we have assisted our students--the next generation of leaders—in acquiring the knowledge and skills they will need to secure our future

We have done this and much more.

Over my remaining eight months, there is still much to do and I look forward to continuing to focus my energy and efforts on Lakehead's needs and to ensuring a smooth transition, working with both the senior team and our Board of Governors.

When I turn the page at the end of this year, and move on to the next chapter of my life, know that whatever I do next, I will have the experience and gift of serving as your president in my heart, giving me inspiration and strength. Thank you for the privilege.

Meegwetch,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian J.R. Stevenson". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "B" and a long, sweeping horizontal line that extends across the width of the signature.

Dr. Brian J.R. Stevenson  
President & Vice-Chancellor  
Lakehead University