

ABORIGINAL INITIATIVES HIGHLIGHT REPORT

JANUARY 2012

(Covering period from November 13, 2011 – January 6, 2012)

Aboriginal Recruitment/ Outreach Activities

High School Friendship Circle Lunches & Aboriginal Mentorship Program

- Hammarskjold High School – First lunch was held on November 14th with Christopher Mushquash, PhD from the Department of Psychology. Our second session was cancelled due to illness and the third session is on Thursday, January 12th with Sandra Cornell, Native Nurses Entry Program.

Royal Bank and Lakehead University Wrap Up Celebration

- On December 1st in collaboration with the Office of the President, a wrap up celebration ensued with 200 students attending a day on campus and a Special Convocation Ceremony presenting Dr. Phil Fontaine with an honorary doctorate of laws.

Global Vision- Junior Team Canada

- On November 21st we partnered with Global Vision to host a one day seminar/forum. Youth between the ages of 15-25 and business community leaders to assist in the development of a business plan. The idea is to have a local approach to engaging Ontario's First Nations and Aboriginal Youth in a global leadership and entrepreneurship program, involving mentorship and real life business experience. Approximately 35-40 students attended.
- As a result of this partnership a 3rd year student was able to attend an information session at Going Global in Toronto at this time to learn about the initiative and help recruit students.

Orillia Campus

In November, April Jones was transferred to the Orillia Campus as the Aboriginal Liaison Advisor.

Highlights of her activities include:

- Meetings with various faculty and staff members to become acquainted with the Orillia Campus.
- Initiated meetings with various Community Members, Elders, Band Administration and Simcoe County District School Board Principal for FNMI Education.
- Coordinated Elder's Traditional Teaching Series starting January 19th.
- Rama student group coming to visit January 18th.
- Aboriginal Student Meet and Greet – January 16th.

Native Access Program Outreach/Recruitment Events

- Attended Chiefs of Ontario Education Conference.
- Attended Manito Ahbee Aboriginal Trade Show & Festival in Winnipeg (over 350 stops at Lakehead booth, Audrey DeRoy, Aboriginal Alumni will be featured in Wawatay newspaper).
- Presentation for AERC (Aboriginal Employment Resource Conference).

Aboriginal Cultural and Support Services (ACSS)

Academic

- ACSS hired (3) Aboriginal Peer Mentors to assist in student retention (Education, Nursing).
- November 2011 – There were 142 Aboriginal students in their first year who were called by our Nursing Peer Mentor to provide support and promote ACSS.
- ACSS coordinated several academic tutoring sessions for Aboriginal students with the Writing Assistance Centre, Student Success Centre, Faculty and Aboriginal Peer Mentors.
- October 24th & 26th ACSS did presentation to IL 1100/2805 (47) students.
- There were (4) Aboriginal Post Secondary Education visits to ACSS –(1) Pic River,(2) Couchiching, (3) Seven Generations & (4) Bill C-3 & C-31.

Workshops sessions for students

- Organized (3) Bursary Application workshops for Fall/Winter Bursaries (40 participants).
- Thunder Bay Counselling Centre presented a financial information session on preparing financial budget for winter holiday's (3) participants.
- Employment Agencies – Lynx and RBC had a "Meet and Greet" in Student Lounge (26) participants.
- ACSS mass emailed all students about Assembly of First Nation virtual online workshop on Post-Secondary issues for December 12th, 2011.
- ACSS, LUNSA, NAGE organized a Holiday Party for our Aboriginal students, friends and family (55) participants – November 27th, 2011.
- ACSS coordinated a gift and food hamper draw to our students in financial need with Aboriginal staff, faculty and community partners. There were (15) gifts and (4) boxes of food given to students and their families.
- November 30th – attended LUNSA Open House in SC0019B.

Cultural Programming

- Janine Landry our Métis Student Facilitator assisted with the following events:
 - a) Métis Student Facilitator Meet and Greet (6) participants
 - b) Louis Riel Day – Raising of Métis Flag City of Thunder Bay
 - c) Prospective Student events - met (5) Métis High school students
- ACSS hosted (3) pot lucks for (150) students.
- ACSS organized (4) Sweat Lodge Ceremonies and a naming ceremony in one of the sweats. A total of 52 students participated.
- Elders In Residence program continues to have Elders present (3-4) times a week with 5-6 student visits a day.
- One of the Elders facilitated a workshop and built a traditional teaching lodge with (16) student volunteers.

Aboriginal Counsellor/Liaison

- Kim Bortolin, Aboriginal Counsellor/Liaison will be holding office hours at the Bora Laskin Building to be more accessible to the Faculty of Education Aboriginal Students. She will be in the

Kinoomaagegaamig Native Student Lounge, every Wednesday morning starting in January and ending April 4th, 2012.

Personal Support (includes academic, financial and transitional)

- 67 student appointments.
- 13 referrals were made to Student Health and Counselling, Student Success Centre, Elders and external community resources.
- November 14 – Coordinated HIV/HepC Information Presentation (12 students in attendance).
- November - Coordinated 2 Stress Workshops with Student Success Centre (10 students in attendance).

Nanibijou Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement (NAGE)

Fay Zoccole has been hired as the NAGE Coordinator in October and has been getting acquainted with her role and responsibilities. She has established contact with Dr. Hicks from the Faculty of Graduate Studies and the Coordinator of the Support for Aboriginal Graduate Education (SAGE) program at University of Toronto to gain insight on how to enhance the NAGE program. As well, she has begun to establish contact with Graduate students and 3rd and 4th year students. Some activities organized include:

“Meet and Greet” for 3rd and 4th year students to provide information on Graduate Studies and to offer support to students who wish to go on to graduate work. Dr. Hicks, Dean of Graduate Studies provided information on programs and the process for applications etc. Jessa Bear, a student in Masters of Education Program shared her personal journey. Approximately 20 students attended the session.

December activities included:

- A Family Holiday Brunch in partnership with Aboriginal Cultural and Support Services. A total of 30-40 people were in attendance
- Christmas Dinner with a group of 8 NAGE students, and their partners

The feedback was positive and people made connections with each other. Students felt inspired to meet other First Nation and Métis students in pursuit of their studies in Masters and PhD programs.

There are 58 Aboriginal Graduate Students currently in Graduate Studies. 45 are in Masters programs and 13 in PhD programs.

Native Access Program

- Kim Bortolin, Counsellor for Aboriginal students and previous NAP student Leona Rae were guest speakers in NA1191FA.
- Bursary & Scholarship workshop delivered for NAP students.
- General Science: Ethnobotany Tour at Fort William Historical Park.
- As of Dec. 2011, there are 11 NAP students remaining, (1 officially withdrew for medical reasons).
- On-going monthly instructors meetings & NAP Steering Committee.

- NAP Winter feast held Fort William Curling Club for lunch & curling.

Indigenous Knowledge and Public Education

Aboriginal Scholar in Residence

The Office of Aboriginal Initiatives engaged Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux as Aboriginal Scholar in Residence for the month of October. The residency was a great success. Dr. Wesley-Esquimaux guest lectured in several classes in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, the Department of Indigenous Learning, the Faculty of Education, the Department of Aboriginal Education, and other key faculties.

In addition, as part of a joint Lakehead University & RBC Royal Bank Aboriginal Outreach Project Speakers series, she addressed Aboriginal students in the following local high schools; Hammarskjold, Superior, Westgate, Churchill, Dennis Franklin Cromarty, St. Ignatius and St. Patrick. She spoke to approximately 550 students total with several varied presentations ranging from, Protecting Indigenous Rights, Aboriginal People and Art and Reconciliation. Each presentation was delivered based on the course/classroom lesson planning.

Other presentations delivered by Dr Wesley-Esquimaux during her residency included:

- Keynote speaker at *Ayaminaaniwan-Having a Voice* Round Table
- Seven Generations Education Institute Community Forum
- Guest presenter at the Lakehead University Senate Meeting
- Brown Bag Faculty Lunch & mini workshop
- Presentation to Research Ethics Board on Oct 21

Indigenous Knowledge Film & Speaker Series

In partnership with the Faculty of Education, Aboriginal Education, Biindigaate Film Festival, RBC and Royal Bank of Canada Community Outreach initiative hosted an Indigenous Knowledge Film and Speaker series. Films featured included:

- Reel Injun with panel discussion by Dr. John Hodson, Michelle Derosier and Rachael Mishenene
- Memere Metisse followed by fiddler, Pierre Schryer and a panel discussion by Wendy Landry, Senator Bob McKay and Dr. Greg Lowan

Workshop: Integrating Aboriginal content into curriculum

In collaboration with The Office of Aboriginal Initiatives, The Instructional Development Centre and the Senate Teaching and Learning committee, hosted a workshop on “Integrating Aboriginal Content into Curriculum” during the teaching and learning week in December at Lakehead University. Carrienne Agawa presented on the topic: Aboriginal Worldview – How to utilize it within your Curriculum.

This is a valuable resource that is available and can be used by any faculty member who wishes to incorporate Aboriginal content into their courses.

Aboriginal Research

Marlene Brant Castellano was brought to Thunder Bay as part of the education programming on Aboriginal Research issues for Lakehead University Faculty and students. Her presentation *Enabling Respectful Relationships: The Approach of TCPS2, Chapter 9 to Research Involving First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples* was held on Thursday, November 17.

Matawa First Nations and Lakehead University members met to discuss research initiatives, needs and issues on December 9. Discussions will continue later in January to further develop research plans and education programming. Matawa First Nations have declared an interest in developing a MOU with Lakehead University.

Eli Nix, working with Dr. Marina Ulanova at NOSM, has won a Post-doctoral Fellowship (\$38,000/year for potentially 2 years) through the Indigenous Health Research Development Program.

Other

George Ward Art Collection

In November, a media event was held featuring several pieces of Aboriginal Artwork that was donated to the University by George Ward, (former owner of the Landmark Inn). Mr. Ward donated over 600 pieces of Aboriginal Artwork and had requested that the Art collection be named after Chief Roy Michano from the Pic River First Nation. Mr. Ward was acknowledged and celebrated for his donation and Chief Roy Michano was honoured for his long standing and effective career as an Aboriginal leader.

AI Open House

- The Office of Aboriginal Initiatives hosted an open house which was well attended. Approximately 90 people were in attendance.

Fort William First Nation

Two projects have been initiated with the Fort William First Nation.

- A Research project headed by Dr. Harvey Lemelin, from Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Tourism. The research will be developed in collaboration and partnership with the Chief and Council focusing on tourism from an Aboriginal perspective engaging Aboriginal youth and the community.
- A Faculty of Education course “Culturally Responsive Urban Aboriginal Education (CRUAE) a special Honours project course. Professor Lisa Korteweg will be collaborating with the Fort William First Nation Chief and Council for a series of class visits for her class of 27 non Aboriginal students. This project will provide the students with experiential learning on a number of topics, including: local history; language, spirituality, cultural practices and identity; environment, food, land; self-determination, governance and law; art, music, and cultural expression; well being and health; and teaching approaches that are culturally responsive for learning these topics. Through a holistic and community interactive process, students will gain much meaningful knowledge, insight and skills.

Respectfully submitted by:

Beverly Sabourin, Vice-Provost (Aboriginal Initiatives)