

Office of Aboriginal Initiatives Highlights: March & April 2012

Aboriginal Recruitment/Outreach Activities

Career Fairs/Open Houses/Grade 11 Day:

The Aboriginal Recruiter attended the NAN Youth Gathering– February 8, 2012; approximately 150 students attended. She also attended 2 Open Houses for Grade 8 students at St. Patrick High School (Feb 8) and Hammarskjold High School on February 16, 2012.

Alumni Chapter/NAGE:

Jointly with NAGE the Alumni Chapter is hosting a Graduate Awareness session in the Faculty Lounge on March 7th from 6:30-8:00 pm. Dr. Phillip Hicks, Dean of Graduate Studies will be presenting opportunities in graduate studies.

Community Outreach:

Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux is in Thunder Bay on and off campus the week of February 29-March 7 speaking to students about strength based best practices that they have followed to get them to where they are today whether that be in high school, university, college or alternative education centres.

McKellar Park Sport & Tour Afternoon

In partnership with the Department of Athletics we organized an afternoon activity session on March 30, 2012 with 28 McKellar Park school students from grade 3-5. The students participated in 2 fun activities of low organization and a campus tour. The group also got to enjoy a snack at the conclusion of the afternoon.

Achievement Fund:

In collaboration with the Achievement Fund committee, several faculties, departments and staff have been contacted by our office to begin discussions about how Lakehead University can be a part of innovative programming on campus. Yolanda Wanakamik has taken the lead on this and works closely with Amanda Nesbitt, Coordinator of Program & Initiatives Lakehead Athletics. They both participated in media launch which occurred on April 11, 2012.

Orillia Campus Aboriginal Initiatives:

The Aboriginal Liaison Advisor is planning an event called “Pathways to Education” for Aboriginal students in the Orillia and surrounding area; includes local Orillia high schools as well as students from communities associated with the Ogemawahj Tribal Council (Rama F.N., Georgina Island F.N., Beausoleil F.N., Alderville F.N., Scugog Island F.N. and Moose Deer Point F.N.). Partnering with Georgian College to show the different post-secondary options and pathways to education; focusing on our own respective programs and services as well as transfer opportunities. This event will be similar to Aboriginal Preview Day held at the Thunder Bay campus the last two years.

She is also working jointly with Georgian College for Aboriginal Post Secondary Information Program (APSIP) tour details for Southern Georgian Bay week (includes Orillia, Barrie, Owen Sound, Cape Croker, Saugeen, Parry Sound and Midland).

Elders’ Traditional Teaching Series continue to have great participation.

- Jan. 26 - Women's Traditional Roles with Elder Gertie Beaucage: 32 people
- Feb. 2 - Men's Traditional Roles with Elder Vern Altman: 41 people
- Feb. 9 - 7 Stages of a Good Life with Elder Hector Copegog: 42 people
- Feb. 16 - Environment and Relationships with Elder Gertie Beaucage: 35 people
- Mar. 1 - Residential Schools with Steve Beaupre: 35 people

Achievements: We have been able to have smudging approved on campus without setting off fire alarms!

Recruitment: There have been two students meet and greets with only two students at the first and one student attending the second. There have been three prospective student meetings and a group of students participating in the Ontario Works Program from Rama. They came on campus for a tour and meeting.

Participation in career fairs at local First Nations communities in the Orillia area continue, most recent ones attended are Rama First Nation and Native Canadian Centre in Toronto for prospective First Nations students in the GTA area. Upcoming fairs happening week of March 5: Georgina Island First Nation, Cape Croker First Nation.

Elders' Traditional Teaching Series continue to have great participation:

- Mar. 8 – 7 Grandfather Teachings with Hector Copegog: 28 people
- Mar. 15 – Métis History and Culture with Senator Ruth Wagner: 41 people
- Mar. 22 – Traditional Therapeutic Models with Elder Vern Altman: 42 people
- Mar 29 – Traditional Feast/Wrap-up

Projects in progress:

The Lakehead University/Georgian College *Pathways to Education Day* planning is underway. The invite list has been changed to just Orillia First Nations and Métis students (Grades 9-12) for the first event. Future events will be opened up to a greater audience.

APSIP plans continue to be developed for the Southern Georgian Bay Area. Meeting with Education Managers and Aboriginal Guidance Counsellors to talk about a different approach to the usual recruitment fair that APSIP coordinates. Georgian and I are hoping to break-up the recruiters into smaller groups so students receive a more in-depth look at the different colleges and universities.

Métis programming planning for the 2012-2013 Academic year is underway. Coordinating with Ginny Gonneau, Métis Workshop Facilitator in Toronto to host events on campus and also connecting with Joanne Parent of the Education and Training Branch in Midland.

Aboriginal Cultural Support Services (AC-SS)

Academic: ACSS organized some academic and social activities to engage with students studying during reading week. A Peer Mentor was available during that week to provide academic support. Over 25 students participated. ACSS also organized several academic study sessions with Writing Centre, Student Success Centre and Peer Mentors. ACSS also provided assistance to 120 students in regards to academic, funding, transitional and cultural support.

Cultural: ACSS partnered with the Education faculty, staff, and students to organize a traditional feast and teachings with Elders from the community at the Bora Laskin Building. This event was a great success with approximately over 100 non aboriginal and aboriginal students participating. The feast was a great cross cultural learning experience and building relationship between students from all walks of life. A former Chief of the Fort William First Nation, Mr. Leonard Pelletier had donated moose meat for the feast and was in attendance.

A successful Sweat Lodge ceremony was also organized by ACSS in March was attended by non aboriginal and aboriginal students. Approximately 32 participated. ACSS also organized monthly pot luck and approximately 70 students participated.

ACSS assisted with Lakehead University Native Students Association (LUNSA) “New Beginnings” Pow Wow on March 17th and 18th that had over 1100 participants, which was a great success.

In addition, the LUNSA “New Beginnings” Pow Wow was broadcast live on NetNewsledger.com via an HD Livestream+ © Internet broadcast.

Through the course of the week leading into the event, and over the weekend, there were three articles published online about the event. Those articles were published on March 11, 17th and 18th. As well a page was created on the site that was the direct menu link to the HD Livestream+ © broadcast.

2774 individuals read those articles.

This resulted in a total of 3978 viewers watching the broadcast. Two of the videos are now online on YouTube and are continuing to generate views.

The sources for the viewers /readers:

Viewers came from across Northern Ontario, Thunder Bay and Toronto. As well there were a number of visitors from Winnipeg, Sudbury, and Montreal.

The bulk of the referrals to the videos came via Facebook.

We have seen some significant growth in readership from Northern Ontario addresses since the broadcast as the James Bay Network has grown as well. We attribute part of that to the bump in interest in the Pow Wow, in addition to the coverage of other issues of interest to our Northern readership.

Shaw 22.86%
Tbaytel 15.02%
K-Net 7.99%
Sympatico 5.59%
Microsoft 4.58%
Rogers Wireless 2.58%
Telus 1.66%
Lakehead University 1.37%

Of interest, the majority of the readers read the pre-broadcast pieces.

As we are finding in all coverage in Thunder Bay and across Northwestern and Northern Ontario, people are very interested in what is coming up, and less interested in reading about what has happened.

Aboriginal Counsellor/Liaison

Personal Support (Includes academic and financial)

- 81 student appointments
- 2 referrals to community resources

Métis Student Liaison: February 16th organized a Métis Meet and Greet, facilitated with Métis Elder Senator Bob McKay, there were 15 participants. On March 19th, 2012, a Métis Identity Learning Circle

was organized with Benny Michaud and Mitch Case who are members of the Métis Nation of Ontario. There were roughly 10 people who attended this informative event, which was open to all faculty, staff and students.

Aboriginal Research:

Research and Innovation Week 2012 – Aboriginal Research Day (Monday, February 13). Aboriginal Research Celebration at 11 am in the Agora featured opening remarks by President Stevenson, Dr. Rui Wang, VP (Research, Economic Development & Innovation) and Beverly Sabourin, Vice-Provost, Aboriginal Initiatives, a Talking Circle with Elder Gerry Martin and Sandra Wolf and 12 Aboriginal Research Posters by faculty and students.

Presentations during the day included: Dr. Harvey Lemelin, *Wabusk of the O mushkegouk: Cree-Polar Bear Interactions in Northern Ontario*, Dr. Sandra Wolf and Dr. Chris Musquash, *What is “Indigenous” about the Indigenous Research Experience?*, Zsolt Toth, RD, MPH, CDE, *Cultural Food Beliefs and Attitudes and their Effect on Acceptance of the ‘Diabetes diet’*, and Dr. Sandra Wolf & students, *The Fourth Fire: Building Narratives of the Fur Trade Era*.

Aboriginal Research Partnership Award 2012 was awarded to Dr. Peggy Smith, Denise Golden, PhD student, Carol Audet, Policy Advisor for the Office of the Grand Chief, Nishnawbe Aski Nation and Grand Chief Stan Beardy, Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

Research Rendezvous with the Métis Community was held Tuesday, April 17, 2012, 9 AM – 2:30 PM to be held in the Conference Centre: Bartley Residence. Lakehead University faculty and students and members of the Métis community were invited to participate in a day of research conversation. Participants were updated on past and current research projects and participated in a conversation to determine Métis research needs. Participants had the opportunity to develop new relationships and research partnerships at this interactive event.

Métis Recognition and Rights. The Time has Come!, Tuesday, April 17, 2012, 3:00 – 5:00 PM, ATAC 1001. Panelists included: Jean Teillet, Pape Salter Teillet; Brenda Macdougall, Chair of Métis Research, University of Ottawa; and Jason Madden, JTM LAW. The event was moderated by Karen Drake. With several significant court cases on Métis legal issues expected in the upcoming months, this panel explored the state of Métis law and research as it relates to the Ontario Métis. Panelists and participants will discuss current developments related to the recognition of Métis and their rights within Ontario.

A **reception** for workshop and panel participants was held in the Faculty Lounge at 5:30 PM.

It has been suggested by a faculty member that a similar event (Research workshop and perhaps a similarly themed panel discussion) be held at the Orillia Campus. Annette and Chris Paci discussed holding this event in the fall of 2012.

A resource document is currently being produced which will feature a description of the Métis Research Workshop, list of attendees and contact information, presentations, etc. This information is intended to be a resource for future workshops/meetings, networking and research planning. It will be distributed to all of the research participants and posted on the Office of Research Services - Aboriginal Research website.

Three follow-up meetings will be held over the next 2 months (May & June) to continue networking and research discussions. The goal is to begin developing at least 1 research project within each of the 3 themes identified at the workshop: Health and Wellness, Land, Resources and Community Consultation and Education and Training.

Matawa health was successful with their LOI for the Health Services Integration Fund (Health Canada). Lakehead University, Office of Research, provided a letter of support and is considered a partner in this proposal. Faculty and staff have been recruited to assist with the main proposal which is due April 4. This project will look at improving after care services and programs for prescription drug abuse/misuse.

Nanabijou Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement (NAGE)

As part of the NAGE program, each year a NAGE role model student is selected and featured in a role model poster as a way to promote graduate studies to Aboriginal students, to recognize and honour accomplishments and to encourage peer mentorship and support. Students who are selected need to be willing to take on the role of peer mentor and advocates for higher education. This year's NAGE role model is Keri Cheechoo. She is a student in the Master of English program. Keri will be honoured at the Aboriginal Graduate Awareness dinner on March 7th at which time she will give a short presentation.

The NAGE Coordinator has been working with Yolanda Wanakamik to organize the Aboriginal Graduate Awareness session. Dr. Phillip Hicks has been invited as the guest speaker to encourage other Aboriginal, Non-Status, Métis and Inuit students in the undergrad to consider applying for programs at the Masters level.

Two First Nation Master's students were sponsored to attend an International Academic Conference in Las Vegas in March. Both students made poster presentations at the conference. On April 5, 2012, these students had also given another presentation on the conference to fellow students, Aboriginal faculty and staff in the Aboriginal Student Lounge. Presentations will also be given to the Ogimaawin-Aboriginal Governance Council at a later date.

Native Access Program

- Attended career fairs in Pic Mobert and Couchiching First Nations.
- Native Access Program Student Success Stories: Where are they now? A full page has been featured in the March issues of Anishinabek and Wawatay News.
- Chili & Bannock Fundraiser in partnership with the Native Nurses Entry Program was held on March 2, 2012 at the Fort William First Nation Health Centre.
- Attended the Matawa Education Conference on February 28, 29th and March 1st at the Valhalla Inn.
- Two NAP Instructors meetings were held (monthly & year-end).
- Native Access Program Year End Gathering took place on Friday, March 30, 2012.
- Planning interviews and selection for the September 2012 is well underway.

Respectfully submitted by:

Beverly Sabourin, Vice-Provost (Aboriginal Initiatives)