

Office of Aboriginal Initiatives Highlights: February 25 to April 15, 2013

Acting Vice-Provost (Aboriginal Initiatives), Yolanda Wanakamik

- February through April were busy for the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives (AI) and I would like to extend a Chi-Meegwetch to all staff who supported the many student and community relation activities through this reporting period. With your support Lakehead continues to be a leader in cultural and academic support services.
- On behalf of the O-AGC and the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives the Aboriginal Research Partnership Award was presented to Dr. Scott Hamilton, Jill Taylor-Hollings for their work with the Pikangikum First Nation, Lac Seul First Nation and Ontario Parks in the study of culture heritage in the Woodland Caribou Pikangikum region. The award recognizes projects in which Aboriginal individuals, communities and or organizations have input into the research design and process from which both Aboriginal people and researcher will benefit.
- The Office of Aboriginal Initiatives and Outdoor Parks Recreation & Tourism in collaboration with many community partners hosted internationally recognized conversationalist Paul Born in three community events on February 26th, 27th and 28th (approximately 300 participants over 3 days)
- Lakehead University has been involved in consultations with the Council of Ontario Universities Aboriginal Self-Identification project and the final report was submitted to the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities and a presentation will be forthcoming about the final recommendations.
- AI Staff will be participating in supporting the Office of the Registrar with exam invigilation.
- As my term as your Acting Vice Provost will conclude on July 1st I would like to take this time to say Meegwetch to the many O-AGC members, staff, faculty, community members and students have leant their support in many ways I am eternally grateful and wish you well in future.

Aboriginal Outreach/Recruitment Activities, Anna Chief

Recruitment

- Participated in Admissions and Recruitment Grade 11 Preview Day (500 students).
- Collaborated with NOSM on a tour for 20 grade 9-11 students from Ginoogaming First Nations. Students saw presentations by Geology, the Paleo DNA Lab, ACSS and SSC.
- Attended Matawa Education Conference, recruitment booth set up and saw 50 students.
- Attended Fort William First Nation Mining Symposium (66 students).
- Attended Feathers of Hope Youth Forum Career Fair (50 youth participants). Additionally, co-facilitated a workshop with ACSS on recreation and programming and culture and identity.
- Planning is under way for Aboriginal Preview Day (April 25).

Community Outreach

- 25th Anniversary Pow wow, assisted with Traditional Feast coordination, traditional food donation, pickup and delivery of supplies to cooks and pick up of food. Additionally, assisted

committee with last minute preparations and set up. Assisted with feast coordination on day of event. Assisted with organization of T-shirt order for NOSM LUNSA T-shirts and LUNSA t-shirts.

- Met with Amy Farrell, Lakehead Public Schools and Vern Kimball and Oliver Rusnak of the Catholic Board to plan student participation.

Other

- One on one student meetings to promote graduate studies.
- Attended Safe Talk training and facilitation training for Feathers of Hope youth Forum.
- Aboriginal Youth Achievement Recognition Awards (AYARA) committee meetings to support collaboration on upcoming awards as Lakehead representative.

Aboriginal Cultural Support Services (ACSS), Yolanda Twance

Academic/Personal/Cultural Support

- Average daily number of students visiting the Aboriginal student lounge - 25
- Bannock has been available every Tuesday
- Beading & Quilting sessions held every Tuesday with Elder Ella Gagnon (Feb 26th – 4), (Mar 5th – 7), (Mar 12th – 5) – 16 participants in total. March 26th was the final quilt unveiling - 30 participants (local media in attendance)
- Miichim Nonkom held February 27th - 48 participants
- Powwow 101 held on March 6th with over 100 participants. This event was presented by the Thunder Mountain Singers and showcased the history and various dance styles at powwows. Event was a prelude to the LUNSA Powwow.
- Elder-in-Residence attends on a weekly basis – 32 visits
- “Walking With Our Sisters” Beading Circle held Monday and Wednesday evenings from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. (16 participants)
- LUNSA Powwow held on March 15th - March 17th (25th Anniversary Powwow)
- Spring Feast held on March 20th – 52 participants
- Plans underway for NAGE Role Model Announcement, LUNSA Powwow Committee Thank You Celebration, and Ryan McMahon Comedy Event scheduled for April 13th

Aboriginal Student Counsellor/Social Worker, Stephanie Ritch:

- Counselling sessions with Aboriginal students (48)
- Conducted over a dozen traditional Aboriginal energy healing sessions by smudging students
- Depression & Anxiety Workshop for NAP students held on Feb 25th (11 participants)
- Medicine Wheel Teachings for NAP students with Elder Gerry Martin held on Feb 27th (12 participants)
- Attended Voices of Earth at Community Auditorium on Feb 28th (5 students)
- Coordinated Self-Defense sessions with Gender Issues Centre (Feb 27th – 13), (Mar 3rd – 10), (Mar 6th – 13) – 36 participants in total
- Set up Nutrition Display in the Aboriginal Student Lounge
- Contract concludes April 14th

Métis Student Liaison Facilitator – Heather Cameron:

- Worked on plans for year-end celebration for Métis students.
- Apr 4th – Métis themed walking tour of Fort William Historical Park
- Apr 9th – Métis student luncheon. Invitations will also be sent to members of the Métis Nation of Ontario including Elder Senator Bob McKay.
- Contract concludes April 30, 2013.

Other:

- Participated in Community Conversations held Feb 26th to 28th
- Attended the Matawa Education Conference on March 6th as a presenter.
- Attended the Diversity Breakfast for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on Mar 21st
- Attended the Feathers of Hope Youth Forum as a workshop as a facilitator on Mar 26th
- Attended Student Affairs meeting on March 11th. ASR Sub-Committee is currently putting together a presentation to address some of the issues around the "run around", inconsistency of service, etc. that students often get. They hope to eventually pilot a training program on both campuses for the wider university community.
- Attended Admission, Success, & Retention (ASR) Committee meeting held on March 27th

Native Access Program, Suzanne Tardif

- 13 full-time and 1 half-time student continuing in the program.
- Attended Matawa's "Igniting the Spirit" conference as a presenter.
- Held one class at Fort William Curling club, in conjunction with DFC High School students.
- Supported Faculty of Education and Lakehead Public Schools "Aboriginal Presence in our Schools; A Cultural Guide for Staff" celebration for Lakehead, High School Art students and their parents (140 people);
- Presented the NAP to Superior CVI High School, grade 12 students (10 students).
- Travelled to Sudbury, Four Rising Winds Conference for student promotion (100 students).
- Travelled to Wunnumin Lake and King Fisher Lake for the purpose of Student Promotion (7 students and community members).

Nanabijou Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement Coordinator, Jessa Bear

- Held a Literature Review Workshop that combined traditional, experiential and discussion based teaching styles (5 attendees).
- Held a second Prezi Workshop, to teach the Prezi presentations software as well as basic presentation skills (8 students and one staff member).
- The NAGE Role Model for 2012-2013 was chosen by the selection committee. The Role Model's identity and poster will be unveiled at collaborative End of Year Celebration with comedian Ryan MacMahon in mid April.

Respectfully submitted by: Yolanda Wanakamik, Acting Vice-Provost (Aboriginal Initiatives)