

## **Lakehead Appoints New Vice- Provost, Aboriginal Initiatives**

*(Tuesday, February 26, 2013 – Thunder Bay, ON)*

Lakehead University has named Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux as its Vice-Provost (Aboriginal Initiatives). She will assume her new responsibilities, which will be based at the University's Thunder Bay campus, effective July 1, 2013.

“Dr. Wesley-Esquimaux is an excellent choice for Vice-Provost,” said Dr. Rodney Hanley, Lakehead’s Provost and Vice-President (Academic). “Her experience in Aboriginal leadership, community development, and her strategic vision will be invaluable and I am thrilled she will be joining us at Lakehead.”

Dr. Wesley-Esquimaux has held the Nexen Chair in Aboriginal Leadership at Alberta’s Banff Centre for the past four years. She is a Status Only Asst. Professor in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Toronto and an Adjunct Professor at Carleton University.

She is a former Advisory Member of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, a member of the Lake Simcoe Science Advisory Committee, a Lady of the Lake, and an active and engaging media representative.

Dr. Wesley-Esquimaux is interested in environmental and humanitarian causes and is actively engaged in a variety of initiatives across Canada. She co-founded and chairs the Canadian Roots Exchange ([www.canadianroots.ca](http://www.canadianroots.ca)) out of the University of Toronto.

“Appointing Dr. Wesley-Esquimaux is a very positive move for us,” said Lakehead President Dr. Brian Stevenson. “Her vast experience and relationship building skills will help make Lakehead an even more diverse, accepting and open institute of learning.”

“She has dedicated her life to building bridges of understanding, and sees endless merit in bringing people from diverse cultures, ages, and backgrounds together to engage in practical dialogue. Dr. Wesley-Esquimaux is deeply committed to public education and active youth engagement, and she will help us with ambitious Aboriginal plans in the coming years,” Dr. Stevenson said.

In October of 2011, Dr. Wesley-Esquimaux served as Lakehead Thunder Bay's Aboriginal Scholar in Residence. During that time she visited many high schools within Lakehead Public Schools and the Thunder Bay Catholic School Board to do presentations about protecting the environment, celebrating Aboriginal arts, and positive youth engagement.

Dr. Wesley-Esquimaux's teaching and academic writing has focused on historic and intergenerational trauma within the Aboriginal community, and she is a member of the Chippewa of Georgina Island First Nation in Lake Simcoe, Ontario.

"I see Lakehead becoming a primary destination for Indigenous education and research in sustainable resource development and the fostering of equitable economic partnerships, both of which will be essential for northern Canada over the next two decades," Dr. Wesley-Esquimaux said.

Dr. Wesley-Esquimaux understands and believes in the great potential of Aboriginal people – and the wonderful contributions they have made to Canada. She is deeply aware of the challenges that the Aboriginal community continues to face in Thunder Bay and the need for respectful relationships within the city and University.

"I am very aware of the value of positive community relations and the need to build strong and productive conversations between people from diverse populations. Much of my community engagement work has revolved around bringing people together to have tough conversations about history, contemporary issues and the future of our mutual social and political relations," she said.

"My experience, my passion, my commitment and my expertise in speaking, writing, teaching and engaging people will enliven this position and ensure that Lakehead continues to be a destination for education by not only the Aboriginal community, but students from all backgrounds.

"Lakehead has a beautiful campus, a strong faculty, is a recognized and respected research institute, and will continue to be a positive force for Northern education and expertise under my guidance as Vice-Provost," Dr. Wesley-Esquimaux said.

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**Media:** For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact Brandon Walker, Media Relations Officer, at (807) 343-8177.

*Lakehead University is a comprehensive university with a reputation for a multidisciplinary teaching approach that emphasizes collaborative learning and independent critical thinking. More than 8,700 students and 1,850 faculty and staff learn and work at campuses located in Orillia, and Thunder Bay, Ontario, which is home to the west campus of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine. Lakehead University promotes innovative research that supports local and regional socio-economic needs. In Orillia, development*

*continues on building a campus that meets Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) standards. For more information about Lakehead University, visit [www.lakeheadu.ca](http://www.lakeheadu.ca).*