

**Report to the Ogimaawin-Aboriginal Governance Council
September 17rd 2013 – November 8th 2013**

Highlights from Aboriginal Initiatives

Vice Provost (AI) Administration

The AI team met with Mayor Keith Hobbs and several of his staff members and council on October 21st at City Hall, the meeting was fruitful and AI will be participating on the Aboriginal Strategy over the coming year.

The VP (AI) has been working alongside PhD Candidate Denise Golden to coordinate and teach the Aboriginal Peoples and Natural Resources class for Peggy Smith to December 2013.

The VP (AI) is now an active member of the CESME Committee and has been appointed Moderator for the upcoming CESME Conference in December 2013.

The VP (AI) had dinner with the Chief Commission of the Human Rights Commission, Barbara Hall, and took a Native Nursing Student from Sandy Lake to meet the Commissioner. The VP (AI) has made a commitment to students across campus to take them to dinners and community events whenever possible throughout the school year to expose them to people and conversations, which will inspire their academic work.

Attended the Prosperity North Conference at the Valhalla and made contact with several corporate members and requested further contact to discuss paid internships and futures planning for LU students and graduates.

Attended and taught “Storytelling” at an International “Waterlution” conference with 120 youth from across Canada and Europe on the protection of water and water rights, September 27-29th.

Attended the Canadian Association for the Prevention of Suicide (CASP) and the FNMI Pre-Conference as a panel member in Winnipeg to address Suicide amongst Aboriginal Youth.

Spoke at a KAIROS event on Indigenous Issues in Barrie, Ontario on the morning of October 6th to 70 people.

Attended “Indigenous Issues in Post-Secondary Education: Transitions to the Workplace”, hosted by Queen’s University in Toronto, October 6-7th

Hired a graduating MA student as AI’s new Transitions Advisor. This position will take an active role with students, she is young and energetic, and will frame a Lakehead Specific “Transitions Model” over the coming year.

Spoke to the Vandalism of the Lakehead Thunder Bay teepee and engaged written media, CBC, and local television networks on initiating a conversation on social inclusion across Thunder Bay.

Met with DGC Alvin Fiddler and Les Louttit at Nishnawbe Aski regarding the CESME Research Chairs Proposal and building stronger relations between NAN and Lakehead University.

Met with Brenda Small from Confederation College regarding building stronger relations.

Vice Provost (AI) Academic

Spoke to approximately 50 people with Dennis McPherson and Elder Gerry Martin at St. Joseph's Hospital Conference on Traditional Aboriginal Teachings and Health Care.

Joined a SSHRC application on Measuring Knowledge of Aboriginal Cultures with Anne Godlewska at Queen's University.

Spent one week at Lakehead Orillia meeting with Aboriginal Liaison, David Snake, and 3 First Nation communities, Georgina Island, Christian Island, and Moose Deer Point regarding their request for a Lakehead Orillia Aboriginal Language Certification program.

Met with the York Region Principals and Vice Principals regarding their Aboriginal Engagement Strategy successes and met their Transitions and Curriculum Coordinators regarding building relations between York Region High Schools and Lakehead Orillia.

Spoke at an Osgoode Hall, "Homelessness in the World" Conference in Toronto.

Attended and spoke at the "Beyond Green: Earth Day Canada" Youth Summit in Toronto.

Committed to writing a paper with Carolyn Bennett, MD., MP, on Aboriginal Inclusion and Education for November 2013.

Attended the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) Indigenous Faculty Forum in Toronto.

Appointed to the Lakehead Sexual Assault Task Force.

Aboriginal Cultural & Support Services

Prospective Students

ACSS participated in a Matawa Student Orientation on September 27th at the Matawa offices and also participated in presentations to 31 students from Kiikenomaga Kilenjigewen Employment Training Services (KKETS) on October 16th. Arrangements to continue presentations on programs and student support services at the Matawa Education offices have been made for the near future. ACSS attended the City of Thunder Bay, Festival of Services to promote services, programs, and resources available at Lakehead University for Aboriginal students. Twenty-five students visited the table. Lastly, ACSS attended a recruitment initiative at Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School on October 25th and spoke with ten potential students.

Academic

ACSS in collaboration with the Student Success Centre has been providing "Skills for Success Seminars" to Aboriginal students in the Aboriginal Student Lounge. Following are the topics, dates and times for these sessions of which we've had a total of 9 students in attendance:

Note Taking - October 4th and November 12th

Midterm & Exam Preparation - October 8th and November 15th

How to take Multiple Choice Tests & Exams - October 11th and November 5th

Personal Support (Academic, Financial, Transitional)

ACSS held an Open House on September 18th and a total of 58 students attended. The average daily number of students visiting the Aboriginal student lounge is approximately 25. ACSS hosted two Bursary Workshops on October 21st and October 24th but student turn-out was dismal with only 3 students coming to the workshops. The Transitions Advisor has been working at organizing and facilitating workshops on health and wellness for Aboriginal students and is in the process of partnering with Lakehead University Student Health & Counselling to create a talking circle on mental health, wellness and addiction issues to support students

Cultural Support

Bannock, made by Elder Ella Gagnon, is available every Tuesday in the Aboriginal Student Lounge. Elder Gagnon facilitates our Beading Circles, which are also held every Tuesday. These sessions began on October 1st and so far we have had 19 students participating. Our monthly student potlucks, Miichim Noongom, are held every month and on September 25th we had 45 students turn out for this event. Our Fall Feast for students was held on October 23rd with 55 students in attendance. Our Elder-in-Residence Gerry Martin is available for student visits every Wednesday and Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Our Sweat Lodge Ceremonies are being held monthly with Elder Gene Nowegejick from the Gull Bay First Nation. On September 30th, 13 students participated and on October 30th, 10 students participated. The ACSS tipi was vandalized sometime during the month of October. Lakehead University is looking into how to make the sweat lodge site area more secure. An anonymous donor presented ACSS and AI with the following items: a new tipi, sweat lodge cover, hide for drum making, and eagle feathers. A feast to honour these gifts and to acknowledge the anonymous donor's generosity and kindness was held on November 6th with approximately 60 students attending.

Other

ACSS has recently hired an Aboriginal Transitions Advisor. Victoria Bolduc was the successful applicant and commenced her duties on Monday, October 21st. Victoria will work with students to help them transition with various aspects of student life (i.e. high school to post-secondary, remote to urban, undergrad to graduate studies, etc.) She has also been tasked with researching and developing a transitions model for Lakehead University under the guidance of the Vice-Provost, Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux. Victoria's work has begun with creating a literature review and annotated bibliography as the framework for Lakehead University's Aboriginal Student Transitions Model.

The ACSS Coordinator attends monthly Student Affairs meetings in order to remain current on all matters pertaining to students at Lakehead University. Also, the ACSS Coordinator was nominated as the Lakehead District Representative on the Ontario Native Education Counsellors Association (ONECA) Board. The first Lakehead District meeting was held on October 11th and members were updated on communications from ONECA concerning the government's proposed First Nations Education Act. The ACSS Coordinator also attended the ONECA Board Meeting held on October 26th where plans are underway for Lakehead University to host and support ONECA's Round Table Discussions on First Nations Education. The Round Table will be held at the Oliver Road Community Centre on Monday, November 25th from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Posters regarding this upcoming event have been distributed widely throughout the community both on and off campus. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Aboriginal Student Recruitment

APSIP

Participated in week 1 of Aboriginal Post-Secondary Information Program (APSIP) in North Western Ontario region. Anna visited 9 high schools in week one and spoke with over 90 Aboriginal students in grades 9 to 12. Communities visited were Sioux Lookout, Kenora, Dryden, Fort Frances, Red Lake, Rainy River and completed the week with visits to 3 high schools in Thunder Bay.

Anna participated in the first 2 days of the week 2 of APSIP. Week 2 APSIP visited Nipigon Red Rock High School and Geraldton and connected with just over 20 Aboriginal students in grades 9 to 12.

Overall during the 2 weeks of APSIP 640 students visited the tour events, Lakehead connected with a total of 120 Aboriginal students. This included the collection of 120 inquiry cards that were input into the CMS system for ongoing communication and connection with Lakehead.

Week 3 of APSIP was not completed this year but Outreach and Recruitment will be looking at additional outreach activities to connect with students in this weeks place.

Screen Project

Outreach and Recruitment met with Andrew Bingham Manager Converged Networks for Technology Services Centre. Discussed was the Screen project between Conference Services and Aboriginal Initiatives. To date the screen (TV) and work order for the infrastructure are in place. Outreach and Recruitment was given access to the program that will be used for this project moving forward. The project vision is to bring lightness and successful statements to celebrate the works and achievements of Lakehead's Aboriginal community as well as raise the profile of the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives. Faculty, students, alumni, and staff will be featured/recognized. We are also exploring options for photography for the project. A database has been created to track all potential candidates for this project.

Meetings

Outreach and Recruitment has been and will continue to participate in weekly Recruitment and Admissions meetings to ensure there is consistency with the mainstream recruitment efforts and to ensure the Aboriginal Outreach position is current in admission and recruitment policies and new initiatives for 2013/14. Items discussed include recruitment strategies, events, and recruitment communications with prospective students, along with admission updates on policy and internal admissions procedures.

Attended the PDAC, Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada Consultation session at Lakehead University. The session provided the opportunity for discussions between Industry Members, Academia and stakeholders to discuss barriers and gaps in the pathways into the mining and exploration sector. The results of this outreach process will feed into the development of a new five-year operational plan for our HRD program. Discussions were centered around under-representation of key talent groups such as women and Aboriginals, recruitment in grades 9 to 12 to post-secondary in mining and exploration related programs, barriers to post-secondary, access programs, and funding opportunities available through PDAC for field studies programs at the post secondary level as well as student opportunities such as S-IMEW.

Recruitment Events

Outreach and Recruitment attended the Matawa Education Student Orientation. However this opportunity did not allow for connections with students as the event although well planned had an extremely low attendance rate by their students.

Follow up recruitment visit was made to DFC with the new Transition Advisor over the lunch period. A total of 10 students visited the table. The majority of students that visited shared they were not seriously considering post secondary at this time. The students that shared post-secondary plans were exploring College programs.

Outreach and Recruitment hosted students from Matawa KKETs program. 31 Mature students from the program visited the campus and attended a personalized information session with presentations from NAP, NNEP and ACSS. The group also requested to meet with the Indigenous Learning Department and were given a general tour. The group ended their day by attending the on campus career fair coordinated by SSC to connect students with future and potential employers. The KKETs facilitators shared that their students were experiencing difficulty navigating both the University and College services and supports and that many of their previous years students were returning to them looking for assistance and support. They requested a follow up visit be done with ACSS at the KKETs centre, which is currently being planned by the ACSS coordinator.

Attended Fall Festival of Services sponsored by the City of Thunder Bay. I was in attendance with ACSS and had the opportunity to meet with students from DFC as well as Churchill and St. Patrick's. A total of 25 students visited the ACSS/ AI table.

Meeting with NAP class to speak to students about undergrad opportunities. One on one appointment's will be set up with each student.

Follow up visits are currently being booked for Thunder Bay high schools I will be available to Aboriginal students to discuss and explore post secondary opportunities. These visits will be open to Aboriginal students grades 9 to 12.

New Initiatives

Outreach and Recruitment is currently working with and supporting the New Coordinator of AMP, the Aboriginal Mentorship Program. This initiative is set to launch in both the Public and Catholic school boards as well as in the Nipigon-Red Rock High school in January. Outreach and Recruitment is supporting the AMP program, which is being overseen by the Faculty of Science and Environmental Studies Dr. A. Dean. To date assisted with coordination of the call for volunteers, liaised with University of Ottawa to coordinate Science with Impact training scheduled to be held on November 12th, establishing a connection with both school boards, assisting with navigation of various internal Lakehead processes.

Outreach and Recruitment is currently working on an Information Breakfast to be hosted on campus in December for High School Counsellors Aboriginal Achievement Facilitators Teachers and Support staff. This event will showcase and update its attendees on our New Aboriginal Mentorship Program as well as presentations on Aboriginal Awards, Admissions policies and important dates. In addition presentations will be given by NAP, NNEP and ACSS. Attended First Nation Post-Secondary Education Meeting facilitated by Lakehead's ACSS coordinator Yolanda Twance, in attendance were Matawa and NNEC. Counsellors. Outreach and recruitment discussed the possible recruitment and outreach opportunities available with the

communities. Opportunities discussed were videoconference presentations and possible radio opportunities, which are being followed up.

Met with Alan Dickson photographer and Ashley Dokuchie to discuss the long term plans for Aboriginal Initiatives regarding marketing, adds and screen project. The overall vision is to create a unified professional marketing plan, which will begin with the screen project and will develop into web and print. The goal is to raise the profile of the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives and new initiatives within not only the University community but also the community at large, both Aboriginal and Non Aboriginal.

Met with Confederation College recruitment officer and discussed a potential partnership in this year Grade 7-8 preview day. Briefly discussed was a one-day event split between the two institutions, which would help to ensure cohesiveness in content and ensure both pathways to post secondary and articulation agreements could be highlighted. A formal meeting to discuss this further is to be set.

Participated in networking opportunity through the Department of Sociology. Met with Nova Scotia Lawyer Natalie Clifford to discuss new developments in the Duty to Consult and Accommodate legislation. Natalie Martin and Associate met as well as Lakehead University Professor Dr. J. Jarman and a number of Sociology students to discuss the strategies, attitude and practices of government and industry in the area of Duty to Consult. Natalie Clifford is the daughter of Catherine Ann Martin. Early discussions between the Department of Sociology and Aboriginal Outreach about possible opportunity to bring in Catherine Martin to Lakehead University for an open event on campus.

Catherine Anne Martin is an independent producer and the first Mi'kmaq filmmaker from the Atlantic Region. She is a member of the Millbrook Mi'kmaq First Nation Community near Truro, Nova Scotia. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Arts from Dalhousie University, a Master's in Education/Media Literacy from Mount St. Vincent University, and a certificate in Conflict, Negotiations and Mediation from Henson College. Catherine Anne Martin has been making award-winning documentaries about her Nation since 1989, producing several films with her independently owned company, Matues Productions, and also for the National Film Board of Canada. Catherine is the past chairperson of the Board of Directors for Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN).

Combined effort between Aboriginal Outreach and Recruitment and Aboriginal Awareness Centre to host a tour and information session for the Fort William First Nation KKETs class, dates and activities are being discussed.

Exploring the opportunity to of establishing a new Toastmasters program for Aboriginal students. An email has been sent out to self-identified students and the response to this point has been positive. To date we have 11 students who have expressed interest in participating and I am currently exploring requirements and responsibilities of a new group. A tentative date to meet with the students has been set up.

Students

Met with various students one on one to discuss various issues such as program choices, long term goals, funding.

Anna participated in the 1st and 3rd rounds of the Aboriginal Transitions Advisor interviews.

Graduate & External Relations

External Relations

Attended the Ontario Human Rights Commission, Seminar, Policy on Removing the Canadian Experience Barrier and Policy on Competing Rights Workshops (Sept 23/24).

Attended the Nishnawbe Aski-Nation Launch and Learn Business Development Luncheon (Oct 1) to learn about the business and economic development project to empower First Nations to seize business and economic development opportunities.

Attended and spoke at the City of Thunder Bay Ward Meeting regarding the partnership between the City of Thunder Bay and Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre youth complex (Oct 3). The group is looking to the Port Arthur Ukrainian Prosvita Society building to establish a community centre for all youth in the city.

Attended two City of Thunder Bay Anti-Racism Committee meetings (Sept 30/Oct 28). Agenda topics included updates and overview of Hate Crime Awareness Campaign, Respect Campaign, presentations by the Aboriginal Liaison Unit, Journalist for Human Rights and potential partnerships between Diversity Thunder Bay and the Committee.

Attended, Queens University; Indigenous Issues in Post Secondary Education: Transitions to the Workplace Conference (Oct 6/7). Focus was on what we Learned in 2011 and “Where we are Going”, Barriers and Success, Perspectives on Aboriginal Students Graduating from Canada’s Colleges and Universities, Perspectives on Jobs in Canada, Promising Practices, Improving Transitions for Aboriginal Learners.

Met with film producer, Michelle Derosier who is working with the City of Thunder Bay, Walk-a-Mile Project; the goal is to develop a four part documentary film series to address the growing need for educational and training resources that focus on the changing demographics of Thunder Bay and our region (Oct 31).

Attended Confederation College Wiicitaakewin Speaker Series. Wiicitaakewin translates to helping or assisting others. Former National Chief, Phil Fontaine and former Premier of Ontario Bob Rae (Oct 25) led discussions to assist the college community in better understanding the history and current state of Aboriginal and Canadian relations. There was a specific discussion around the Ring of Fire, followed by an open question and answer period.

Attended and networked at the City of Thunder Bay, Fall Feast and Festival of Services (Nov 1). The Fall Feast was created as a community wide feast inviting students and bringing community members together to learn about opportunities and supports in the city.

Attended a shared Aboriginal Initiatives & Aboriginal Cultural and Support Services booth at the Matawa First Nations Student Open House (Sept 27). This was a part of the Matawa student orientation.

Met with Thunder Bay District Catholic School Board Aboriginal Outreach Worker (Sept 30). Janine Landry is new to the role and we discussed potential opportunities for us to collaborate on various initiatives within the AI office such as Aboriginal Preview Day, campus tours, etc.

Attended the Regional Ontario Native Education Counsellor Association District Meeting (Oct 11). I met with our local members who consist of Confederation College, Aboriginal Education, and the Native Nurses Entry Program to discuss upcoming events, opportunities and initiatives.

Graduate Student Relations

Attended Graduate Student orientation sessions to learn how graduate students are being engaged within LU departments and faculties

Hosted an Indigenous Graduate Student “Schmooze” on October 9th in the LUSU Study Coffee House. The session was well attended with brief introductions and a sharing circle with Dr. Wesley-Esquimaux, Dr. Hicks, and Anthea Kyle, Coordinator of the Writing Assistance Centre, and former graduate student Steve Koptie.

I have created a weekly mass email to all Graduate Students about potential opportunities within and outside of Lakehead; where students can find employment and conference opportunities, as well as, highlighting local events and reminders about the various activities occurring in our community.

Other

“Mask Making: Telling Your Story” (Sept 17, 19, 24, 30, Oct 2 & 4). In partnership with the School of Nursing and Department of Athletics, Dr. Michelle Spadoni, Mrs. Karen Poole, Dr. Pat Sevean, Amanda Nesbitt and I facilitated a teaching/learning approach with 209 first year nursing students to explore the concepts of self, other and caring through the artful expression of mask making. The masks represent an artful expression of story. From constructing the masks to creatively painting them and sharing their personal story, the faculty and students were able to learn how to effectively express the story of self and other and discovered the meaning of caring from an ontological perspective by actively, “doing, being and knowing”.

Continued support of the Presidents Initiatives; Team Achieve along with the Department of Athletics, External Relations to collaborate with Lakehead Public Schools who has potentially twenty five new students and families to be enrolled in the program. The total number of students enrolled in the program to date is thirty-eight (38).

Native Access Program

There are currently 18 full time students enrolled in the Native Access Program. Monthly check-in's with students are continually being scheduled with the NAP Coordinator, and in some instances, the Vice Provost (AI), to check on progress, attendance and if they are having any issues, or praise for the program. We have had two monthly instructor meetings so far to communicate student progress.

The first field trip for NAP students was held at Fort William Historical Park, which was an Ethnobotany Tour for the General Science class. Our Elder in Residence, Gerry Martin has been into the NAP University Transition class to present *Medicine Wheel Teachings*, and Anthea Kyle from the Writing Centre has come to present to NAP students on essay writing, book reviews, citing sources, etc. This was a great resource for students. Students also had an introduction to the Library and how to use the library system to find resources.

The NAP Coordinator attended the Seven Generations celebration Dinner, as well as Kanachihih's SAAFE Walk, The Transformative Power of Community workshop, the First Nation's Women's Day in honor of a LU student and the Principals of Instructional Design, held by LU. She also presented the Native Access Program to Indigenous Learning 100 as well as KKETS and met with the Metis Nation of Ontario to see how NAP could be promoted to Metis Students, and how she could learn more about their programming.

The NAP brochure is in the process of being updated and should be ready to roll out within the next couple of weeks. The Coordinator created a 20th Anniversary logo for NAP, and will be ready to roll out the project and celebration details with the brochure, although the anniversary celebration for 2014 is still in the brainstorming stages. An exit questionnaire is being created for students who exit the Native Access Program before completion.

Students have been our number one priority and are being assisted with work and personal concerns when the need arises. Each of them has been directed to the appropriate resources (i.e.; LUSU Food Bank, Student Health & Wellness, etc.). We are continually working as a team in (AI) to create a positive educational experience for every NAP student (i.e.; Cynthia, ACSS, Aboriginal Outreach & Recruitment, Yolanda W., and Ashley).

Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux, Ph.D.
Vice Provost (Aboriginal Initiatives)
November 2013