

## **Office of Aboriginal Initiatives Highlights: November/December 2012**

### **Acting Vice-Provost (Aboriginal Initiatives), Yolanda Wanakamik**

- Attended Aboriginal Education Council Gathering at Brock University, the theme for this year's gathering was around a) leadership and community engagement; b) attraction, retention and completion, c) transitioning in the post secondary education sector and d) accountability and reporting.
- Attended meeting with Deputy Grand Chief Goyce Kakegamic to discuss athletic programming for NAN youth in collaboration with Lakehead Athletics and others.
- Attended the Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Student Business Competition.
- Facilitated a meeting with Lakehead Elder Mark Sault and Dr. Lee Stuesser to provide advice on the design and organization of the restorative justice room at PACI.
- Facilitated Elders Council Meeting with presentation by Mr. Paul Mitchell Architect; the purpose of the meeting was to update the Elders Council and Mr. Mitchell provided the opportunity for the Council to provide input, guidance and direction. Due to winter weather conditions 2 Elders participated.
- Achievement Program collaboration has included consultation with the Department of Athletics in regard to program development and the Office of Advancement on issues of fundraising and campaign development.
- Aboriginal Initiatives is continually finding opportunities to advertise and promote Lakehead University. This month advertisements were placed with Wawatay News, Anishinabek News, Métis Voyageur, Windspeaker, Turtle Island News Winter Education Edition and the Chronicle Journal Website. Additionally, a variety of promotional materials were also purchased in preparation for annual career fairs and student promotion opportunities.

### **Aboriginal Outreach/Recruitment Activities**

- The Aboriginal Outreach/Recruitment Officer Position is currently vacant. Job posting can be viewed at <http://hr.lakeheadu.ca/employment.php?empid=876>.

### **Recruitment**

- High School guidance department visits to update guidance counselors on future prospective student opportunities such as Preview Day, Grade 11 Day and March Break activities.

### **Outreach/Community Engagement**

- Provided support to Athletic Department in the planning for the Achievement Program Orientation. Determined invitation list, activity schedule and letters to parents/guardians.

### **Aboriginal Cultural Support Services (AC-SS), Bryanna Scott**

- ACSS assisted AI with the screening of the *Third World Canada* video on November 15<sup>th</sup>. Many students and community members attended the event which was held in the Bora Laskin theatre. The producer, Andree Cabazon and many participants of the film were also available for discussion on the video.
- A small student holiday gathering took place at the Oliver Road Community Centre on November 24<sup>th</sup> where approximately 30 students gathered with their children and had snacks, played games and did crafts.
- The Student Lounge hours were extended during exams from Sunday to Saturday from 7:30am until 12midnight to accommodate the request from the students for extra study time.
- The Aboriginal Peer Mentor Handbook was completed with hopes of launching this program in January. ACSS also worked on a series of pamphlets (Elder's Council, Sweat Lodge Site and use of Cedar tea) – working on getting these finalized.
- ACSS hosted a small gathering with ONECA – Ontario Native Education Counselling Association on December 3. ONECA spoke with various students, faculty or staff regarding the transitions students face coming to university from small, northern and remote communities. It is hoped that ONECA can record all interviews with video equipment as they hope to publish resources in the future regarding this topic.
- The Elder residence is seeing between 7-9 students each day and these sessions are approximately ½ hour in duration.
- The monthly potluck continues to bring out approximately 50 students.
- ACSS staff is assisting with invigilating exams with the Student Accessibility Centre throughout the month of December.
- Bryanna Scott had accepted a position at Negahneewin College and her last day at Lakehead was on December 19, 2012. I know that Bryanna had a positive impact on Aboriginal Cultural & Support Services and she will be missed by our team.
- Ms. Yolanda Twance has accepted the position of ACSS Coordinator and will assume her new role on January 21, 2013. A formal announcement will be circulated by Communications Bulletin.

### **Métis Student Liaison Facilitator, Heather Cameron:**

- Created a display on Métis culture and identity for the weeks leading up to Louis Riel Day. The display was showcased in the ACSS lounge from November 1 – 16, 2012
- Held an Open-House in ACSS for Métis students on November 12. The Open-House featured the Metis display and films on Metis culture and history, in order to bring awareness to students that the Aboriginal lounge is a space which welcomes all Aboriginal students
- Held a Holiday De-Stressor in the Study on December 5 with the NAGE Coordinator. This get-together welcomed all Métis and NAGE students to relax during exam time and was attended by approximately 15 students.

### **Aboriginal Student Counsellor/Social Worker, Stephanie Ritch:**

- Conducted traditional Aboriginal energy healing sessions by smudging students.
- A total of 43 participated in Beading and Quilting workshops, which is, a weekly cultural workshop run by Aroland First Nation elder Ella Gagnon where student bead a square for a quilt that will go in the Smudging room. It has even been featured in Wawatay News ([http://wawataynews.ca/archive/all/2012/12/13/lu-students-working-aboriginal-quilt-elder\\_23856](http://wawataynews.ca/archive/all/2012/12/13/lu-students-working-aboriginal-quilt-elder_23856)).
- Stephanie, the Aboriginal Student Counsellor and Liaison had 51 counselling sessions. 22 sessions with various Aboriginal students, 27 sessions with NNEP students and 2 sessions with NAP students. Ongoing and continual needs are related to matters such as academic direction, trauma, sexual abuse, addiction, anxiety, food security, nutrition and access to resources and services.
- Met with LUNSA Pow-Wow Committee to commence planning for March 16-18.
- Developed a series of brochures, pamphlets as a resource for students, staff and faculty in the areas of the traditional medicine garden. Currently under review by Marketing Support. Continued promotion of various student support workshops and seminars.
- Organized Dr. Multzers' upcoming Opiate workshop (Jan 15) and Dr. Hill's upcoming Geology workshop (Jan 29).

### **Aboriginal Research Facilitator, Annette Schroeter**

- Planning continues for Aboriginal Research Day during Research and Innovation Week, February 9-15, 2013. Presentations will be given by Sarah Sinclair, PhD student and Dr. Christopher Mushquash on Aboriginal Youth in the Justice System. Denise Golden, PhD student and Dr. Peggy Smith are also considering presentations. Additionally working with the Aboriginal Education faculty to plan programming around language displays/workshops in the agora and possibly for Intercity Mall.
- Nomination deadline for the Aboriginal Partnership Research Award 2013 was December 14, 2012. One nomination was submitted and the Selection Committee will be meeting to confirm the winner of the award.
- Planning with Dr. Robert Mizzi, SSHRC Research Facilitator, to develop a community engagement plan. A goal is to bring faculty and their research into a general public forum such as the Thunder Bay Public Library to involve and inform community members about the work being done at Lakehead University.
- Attended the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings held in Thunder Bay December 4 – 5. Commissioner Murray Sinclair hinted that a major announcement will likely be made within a few months regarding the proposed National Aboriginal Research Centre.

### **Native Access Program, Suzanne Tardif**

- Participated at the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee at Lakehead District Schools;
- Assisted with the screening of *Third World Canada*;
- Presently have 13 active students (five are at risk of failing one or more subjects).

### **Recruitment:**

- With the Aboriginal Education Department and the Aboriginal Outreach/Recruitment Officer attended the Manito Ahbee International Pow Wow and Trade show in Winnipeg, Manitoba; participated in Youth Educational conference for two days (1200 students in attendance);
- Travelled to Sioux Lookout, ON. Met with various agencies (WASHA Adult Education Centre, Tikinagan, Community Building Centre, Friendship Centre);
- Travelled to Bearskin Lake First Nation to meet community and speak with Keewaytinook Internet High School facilitator.

### **Nanabijou Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement Coordinator, Jessa Bear**

- Held the following graduate information sessions: Graduate Studies in Education Information Session, Graduate Studies in Health and Behavioural Sciences Information session, and a general graduate information session with guest speaker Dean Hicks. Potential Master and PhD students attended to get information on how to apply to the programs.
- Coordinated a funding workshop to run immediately after the general graduate information session.
- Created a database of graduate programs offered at Lakehead University with descriptions and admissions requirements at the request of students. It is based on the information present on the Faculty of Graduate Studies' website and will be used in as a section of the upcoming NAGE handbook.
- Office hours continue to be held twice a week with between 1 and 8 students coming in for consultations.

Respectfully submitted by:

Yolanda Wanakamik, Acting Vice-Provost (Aboriginal Initiatives)