

Report to the Ogimaawin-Aboriginal Governance Council – April to September 2013

Highlights from Aboriginal Initiatives

Community Relations

Revitalization of the Metis MOU is underway with renewed support from Gary Lipinski who will appoint specific contacts from his offices to enliven LU discussions and connections.

A meeting with Mayor Keith Hobbs re: TBay Aboriginal Strategy is being coordinated and AI will strike a partnership with Thunder Bay on 'actioning' this strategy with youth as participants.

A meeting has been set with John Mason, CEDC to form a partnership on future support and dialogue in upcoming and ongoing education and research needs within the Mining Readiness Strategy.

Dennis Franklin Cromarty (DFC) has agreed to work with LU on a student outreach & recruitment plan and to develop an on-campus recreation project and pool use schedule.

DFC will be coordinating an "Amazing Race" for their students on September 18th and Lakehead University is participating as a site for one of the race challenges and donating 20 LU sweatshirts and water bottles.

The VPAI has initiated community outreach and support for the Orillia Campus and is coordinating one week in October and one week in November to visit with local First Nation officials and Education Directors for continuing discussions and revitalization of relations.

The VPAI is coordinating a meeting and renewing relations with Nipissing, Algoma and Laurentian Universities on federal "student education credits" and will update LU as information develops.

Administration

AI is revamping their office structure, hiring new staff, creating a new staff position, and has completed detailed work plans and team calendars for the coming academic year.

AI will now offer graduate recruitment and inspiration, and stronger internal/external partnership development and workforce transitions support across Thunder Bay.

Director, Aboriginal Initiatives, Yolanda Wanakamik

- Organization of AI Team Planning
- Work plan Development
 - Administration
 - Alumni Chapter
 - Graduate Student Recruitment
 - Attended GA session and General Orientation
 - Meet faculty members

- Community Partnership Development
 - Reach Up! Whitesand First Nation
 - School of Nursing Masking Making Sessions
 - Team Achieve
 - Aboriginal Mentorship Program (youth)
 - Website/marketing plan
 - Increase photo library
 - Develop marketing for graduate studies (posters, web and social media)
- Recruitment of Staff
- Finalization of MTCU Student Success Fund
- Development of Graduate student recruitment initiative
- Events
 - VPAI Open House
 - Presidents Dinner
 - Native Access Program Orientation
 - Student Orientation
 - Fall Harvest
- Committee Meetings
 - Admission, Success & Retention
- Conferences
 - Couchiching Institute on Public Affairs, Coming Together as One: Navigating the Relationship Between Indigenous People and Canada, August 8-11, 2013

Academic

The VPAI is exploring the development of several summer and winter Institutes and adult learning opportunities. She is reviewing SSHRC and other funding opportunities and will work closely with several potential partners and supports inside and outside of LU.

The VPAI is assisting in the writing and publication of articles for various initiatives and to promote LU as a destination for Indigenous education – goal = increase Indigenous undergraduate students within 3 years, and Indigenous graduate students within the same timeframe.

The VPAI met with the Dean of the Law School in August, and taught one law class on September 9th

The VPAI is coordinating INDI: 2054-Aboriginal Peoples and Natural Resources for Peggy Smith who is out on leave. The VPAI will also be teaching several classes and managing Course Labs for the Orillia Campus.

The VPAI attended the Lethbridge Mexico/Canada Exchange in June and has followed up with three Mexican universities regarding relationship building and potential site visits.

Aboriginal Outreach & Student Recruitment

The Aboriginal Mentorship Program has been funded and launched – AI will be full partners in this initiative – recruitment and outreach will take the lead.

AI has formed a partnership with DFC, the Multicultural Youth Centre, the Canadian Roots Exchange, and will be inviting Lakehead students to participate in a Thunder Bay wide “Anti-Stigma” Mental Health PSA Project for youth by youth – which will be launched in February 2014. All Aboriginal support services will engage with this project.

AI is developing a student promotion strategy, which will put Aboriginal student faces, stories and activities on rolling screens around campus and highlight role model activities.

The main event for the month of April was Aboriginal Preview day which saw us hosting 140 high school students from grades 10 to 12 from all secondary schools in the Thunder Bay. The students were orientated to the University through information sessions, lunch and a student life expo which showcased more than 30 departments and services.

- Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School (DFC)
- St. Patrick High School
- St. Ignatius High School
- Lakehead Adult Education Centre
- KNET

Aboriginal Youth Achievement and Recognition Awards (AYARA)

Anna Chief sat on the AYARA committee and assisted with fund raising, planning and the event day.

This event recognized over 40 Aboriginal youth for their achievements in a number of categories such as academic, community work, athletic, artistic and activism. The Office of Aboriginal Initiatives also sponsored the Heritage Keepers Award this year which was presented by Vice Provost Cynthia Wesley Esquimaux.

Recruitment

Aboriginal Outreach participated with Admissions and Recruitment in their spring follow up visits.

The number of students attending these sessions was low and Anna only spoke with 3 students in the 4 visits scheduled. There were numerous other recruitment events sprinkled throughout the summer:

DFC Open House

Aboriginal Outreach also met with students one on one to discuss post-secondary opportunities as well as assisted with one on one registration for the 2013-2014 year.

Applicant Open House

Outreach and Recruitment in conjunction with ACSS hosted an Applicant Open House, and staff was on hand and available to new students to assist with registration, accepting offers and tours.

The event was well received by students and they were very thankful to have the opportunity to meet with staff and have assistance with these processes. Due to this it was decided to extend the service to every wed from 1 to 4 until the date of August 14.

Anna Chief made herself available for approximately 2 hours each day to assist ACSS with students accepting offers and class registration, during which time she saw 12 students.

Walking the Path

Anna Chief participated in a week long training session with the Walking the Path program which is facilitated by the Aboriginal Policing Unit of Ontario Provincial Police and received her Certificate. Through different modules, Walking the Path touches on youth empowerment strategies; promotes self-concept, self-esteem and respect for others; and deals with issues such as healing from trauma, abuse and racism, and combating stereotypes, prejudices and biases. This new initiative was used as part of the NOSM summer science camp program. Anna Chief and Amanda Nesbit of Athletics worked with the camp group for 2 sessions on the mask-making unit. The students created masks of themselves and then participated in a reflective sharing group which gave the students the opportunity to share and reflect on who they are and how they are seen by others. It was a very successful event and all students participated in both days.

Tours

Anna Chief hosted tours throughout the summer for various organizations and communities looking to introduce and orientated their students to the University as well as explore undergrad opportunities.

Naotkamegwanning, Sandy Lake, Fort Hope, White Fish Bay.

These communities were given tours of departments such as geology and natural resources as well as a general University tour.

Anna Chief ensured all students were given general University information, along with view books and Aboriginal specific brochures.

Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund (NADF)

Aboriginal Outreach and recruitment worked with NADF to organize 3 half-day visits on campus with presentations specific to educational opportunities for the mining and forestry industries. These presentations were given by the department of Geology and Natural Resources management. Also as part of the on campus experience they received recruitment package which included information on Aboriginal programs as well as a view book. In total we hosted 3 half days totaling 84 potential students from the following communities:

Participants came from Attawapiskat, Kasabonika, North Caribou Lake and Weenusk, Cat Lake, Slate Falls, Neskantaga, and Webequie, Aroland, Marten Falls, and Fort Hope.

Aboriginal Cultural & Support Services

- ACSS participated in the Thunder Bay Applicant Reception on April 24th (7 students)
- ACSS participated in Aboriginal Preview Day on April 25th (140 students)
- ACSS attended a national Wawatay Radio interview through Nishnawbe-Aski Development Fund (NADF) on April 29th promoting Lakehead University and its Aboriginal programs and student supports.
- ACSS participated in a tour with students from Lakewood High School on May 3rd. A presentation on Aboriginal cultural & support services was given.
- ACSS participated in a tour with students from Fort Hope First Nation on May 30th
- ACSS attended National Aboriginal Day celebrations on June 20th and 21st at Marina Park with an information table (75 students).
- ACSS hosted an Applicant Open House on June 26th (26 students)
- Participated in EDGE Orientation on July 4th (10 students)

- Participated in the NADF Youth Career Awareness Project with presentation on Aboriginal cultural & support services on July 16th (36 students).
- Participated in a Native Language Instructors Program presentation to prospective students on July 24th (40 students).
- Participated in the First Nations Natural Resources Youth Employment Program tour and presentation on July 24th (30 students).

Academic

- Attended the HBEd Aboriginal Program Honours Project Presentation entitled Celebrating our Aboriginal Teacher Scholars Research as Ceremony on April 11th (5 students).
- ACSS attended the Nanabijou Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement (NAGE) Ceremony held on April 13th to celebrate the new NAGE Role Model. Rachel Mishenene was selected as this year's role model for 2013/14.

Personal Support (Academic, Financial, Transitional)

- Métis Student Liaison Facilitator held a Métis Student Year-End Luncheon Celebration on April 9th (22 students)
- ACSS provided support for the Ryan McMahon Comedy Event held on April 13th

Cultural Support

- ACSS Beading Circle for "Walking with Our Sisters" continued on Wednesdays during the lunch hour throughout the spring/summer months in the Aboriginal Student Lounge

Other

- ACSS coordinator visited the Orillia campus on April 15-17, 2013 and participated in interviews for the Aboriginal Liaison Advisor
- ACSS staff assisted with invigilating exams for the Student Accessibility Centre
- ACSS staff attended Mental Health First Aid Training on May 1st and 2nd offered through the Student Health & Counselling Centre.
- ACSS attended the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN) "Celebration & Contributions Open House" at Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School on May 7th.
- ACSS participated in the 2012/13 Poulin Award Selection Meetings and Process
- ACSS attended the Matawa Education Department's Post-Secondary Graduation ceremony on May 10th. Numerous students were from Lakehead University.
- ACSS staff attended Fire Extinguisher Training on May 14th.
- Attended the Northwestern Ontario Aboriginal Youth Achievement and Recognition Award on May 16th of which Aboriginal Initiatives was a sponsor for the yearly event.
- Attended Health & Safety Training on May 31st.
- Participated in annual Sweat Lodge Site clean-up and ongoing Medicine Garden maintenance.
- Involved in interview process for NAP Coordinator. New NAP Coordinator is Jerri-Lynn Orr who started on August 6th.
- Currently involved in interview process for an Aboriginal Transition Advisor. This is still in progress.
- Coordinated NAP student interview processes throughout the spring/summer.

- Attended ONECA annual general meeting and was elected District Representative for this academic year.
- ACSS will be hosting an Aboriginal Student Orientation Day on Wednesday, September 11th from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on the patio beneath the President's balcony. This day's events include a bus tour of the city of Thunder Bay.
- ACSS will be hosting our Annual Fall Harvest on Saturday, September 14th from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Sweat Lodge Site.

Native Access Program

- Jerri-Lynn started as NAP Coordinator August 6th, 2013
- 21 full-time students enrolled, 1 part-time, 2 interested in being admitted later this year.
- Met all of the faculty and staff involved in NAP and AI
- Met with different service providers within the Lakehead University community to find out what they offer and how NAP students could be involved (SSC, SAS, SH&C, etc.)
- Involved with interviewing potential students
- Met with NAP students, assisted with registration
- Prepared for NAP orientation, class set-up and moved office to the UC Building
- Planned UT class
- Attended FNNRYEP celebration
- Took NAP students to the Aboriginal Student Orientation (ACSS)
- Attended Ring of Fire Aboriginal Training Alliance at Matawa Building
- Booked and scheduled first NAP Instructor meeting
- Working on putting together NAP Steering Committee

Chi-Miigwetch,

Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux, Ph.D.

Vice Provost (Aboriginal Initiatives)

September 17, 2013