

**Report to the Ogimaawin-Aboriginal Governance Council
January 15th – February 14th, 2014**

Highlights from the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives

Vice Provost (AI) Administration

Community Relations

The VP (AI) along with the Outreach and Recruitment Officer, met with Linda Bruins, Coordinator of Evergreen: A United Neighbourhood at their Centre on Heron Street, Thunder Bay. We also met with several youth and gave them cameras so they could participate in the anti-stigma mental health project on January 15th.

Taught a 3 hour class on Community Advocacy at Confederation College on January 16th.

VP (AI) opened a public policy conference at the University of Toronto for speakers Justice Murray Sinclair, John Beaucage, Bob Rae, and several expert panels on January 17th.

VP (AI) participated in a “Women in Power” focus group with Elder Jackie Lavelle and Barbara Nahwegabow, at the Native Canadian Centre in Toronto, on January 18th.

Attended a Statistics Canada meeting at Confederation College and received an update on Aboriginal stats in Thunder Bay, Ontario and Canada on January 20th.

Met with Walter Bannon, Economic Development Director, at Fort William First Nation and confirmed a willingness to partner on initiatives with Lakehead University – Ft. Wm is putting together a Trades Training Institute for their members, but Lakehead will participate in providing support for programming and referring students where appropriate.

Attended and participated in discussions at the Thunder Bay Community Circle – Urban Aboriginal Strategy with ACSS Coordinator on January 22nd.

VP (AI) attended a luncheon with CESME and Matawa on points of interest and partnerships.

Participated in an interview with CBC on research for national issues in the news for Aboriginal Peoples on January 27th in preparation for a CBC documentary to be aired in 2014.

VP (AI) remains an active member of the Blue Planet Committee in Thunder Bay and hosted a panel discussion on January 28th at the Waverley Library screening of “Water Everywhere and Not a Drop to Drink” by the Water Brothers.

Provided training and dialogue on Aboriginal education and issues to the Thunder Bay Catholic School Board (3 hours) on January 29th.

Taught a 3 hour diversity class for the Native Nursing Program (Sandy Cornell) on January 30th.

Met with the LUSU Executive on the Pow Wow planning committee – clarifying roles and responsibilities on January 31st.

Attended a City of Thunder Bay Strategic Planning Committee meeting at Confederation College on Anti-Racism on February 1st.

Attended the ‘Walk A Mile’ film preview on February 6th by ThunderStone Pictures at the Thunder Bay Auditorium. There was approximately 1000 Thunder Bay residents in attendance, a terrific suite of 15 minute films that will do a lot of good across Thunder Bay and the rest of the country.

Delivered a key-note address at the KEKEENAMAWKAYO Conference 2014 at the Delta Winnipeg on February 13th the theme was For Our Children: Learning Happens When Ideas Come Together, and my talk addressed National Perspectives on Change and Implementing “Wise Practices” for Community Development and Engagement.

Vice Provost (AI) Academic

Aboriginal Initiatives provided funding support for four Aboriginal students to attend leadership training, with two attending the Canadian Roots Exchange with the Six Nations of the Grand River and two attending a Youth Forum at Oskayak High School in Saskatoon in March 2014.

VP (AI) drafted and delivered the first academic video-conference with Chiapas, Mexico students (30 participated with Instructors) on Indigenous history in Canada on February 4th, which was translated by International Relations. VP (AI) secured, edited and prepared a slide show on Indigenous medicines and traditional values for Elder Gerry Martin to be delivered in March 2014. The Mayan presentation on Mexican Indigenous history will be delivered on March 4th in room 1010 – ATAC Building.

Have been meeting with Deans and Faculty members regarding the integration of Indigenous content and pre-planning for potential program development in the Department of Business, Engineering, and Education at various times.

Have been speaking to a lot of people inside and outside of LakeheadU about the Common Experience Indian Residential School Student Education Credits and what Lakehead might do to receive a share of available funding, which must be expended on some form of educational programming by October 2014. I have continued to pursue an inclusive discussion on designing and launching a LakeheadU Program for teacher preparedness when moving into teaching positions in Northwestern Ontario remote communities.

Aboriginal Cultural & Support Services

Prospective Students

ACSS led an informal discussion on support services and student resources to six grade 6/7 students and two chaperones from the Saugeen First Nation in the Aboriginal Student Lounge on Thursday, February 6th.

Academic

ACSS in collaboration with the Student Success Centre continues to provide the “Skills for Success Seminars” to Aboriginal students in the Aboriginal Student Lounge. No students

attended a *Time Management Workshop* on January 17th, two students attended a workshop on January 24th on *Note Taking*, one student attended a *Mid-Term/Exam Prep Workshop* on January 31st and three students attended a workshop on *Writing Multiple Choice Exams* on February 7th. ACSS has cancelled the reading/discussion group for *Paulo Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed"* due to lack of student participation. We have reminded students that support services are in place for their use, and if they don't use what is presently in place, they need to inform us about what services will better meet their academic and cultural needs.

Personal Support (Academic, Financial, Social, Transitional)

ACSS hosted a Welcome Back Open House on Wednesday, January 15th for new and returning students. It was an excellent opportunity for students to find out about upcoming events, meet with other students, staff and faculty, and enjoy a light lunch. A total of 28 students were in attendance. On Friday, February 14th, ACSS is hosting a screening for Have-a-Heart Day. Have-a-Heart Day is a campaign to support First Nations children. The goal is to give First Nations children the same chance to grow up safely at home, get a good education, be healthy, and to be proud of their cultures. Students have been invited to join us in the Aboriginal Student Lounge to view a film by Alanis Obomsawin called "Hi-Ho Mistahey" which documents Shannon's Dream.

The Transitions Advisor hosted a workshop on *Self Esteem* on January 15th with 12 students in attendance and on January 29th a *Budgeting* workshop was held with 15 students participating.

Cultural Support

Our annual Winter Feast was held on Wednesday, January 22nd with Elder Ella Gagnon leading a prayer and blessing the food. A total of 47 students were in attendance. A sweat lodge ceremony was held on Wednesday, January 29th. Elder Gene Nowegejick from the Gull Bay First Nation provided traditional teachings, prior to the start of the ceremony, to a group of 11 students. Bannock continues to be available every Tuesday in the Aboriginal Student Lounge and Beading Circles continue to be held every Tuesday with Elder Ella Gagnon. For this period, a total of 11 students spent time beading with Elder Ella Gagnon. Elder-in-Residence Gerry Martin continues to be available for student visits every Wednesday and Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and for the period of this report, Elder Martin provided support to a total of 42 students.

Other

ACSS staff attended a Lakehead University Branding & Marketing Information Session on January 30th. The session proved informative and ACSS will work to ensure compliance with the new branding guidelines in all future communications.

The ACSS Coordinator attended the Walk-A-Mile Film Project on Thursday, February 6th which was an exceptionally well attended event (1000 participants) made up of staff, faculty, students, and community members from both on and off campus. The 5 short films (15 minutes each) gave the audience an opportunity to discuss the history of Aboriginal peoples in Thunder Bay and Canada with the hope of creating better community relations.

Brittany Collins, Education Assistant, Fort William First Nation continues to conduct monthly drop-in visits with her students in the Aboriginal Student Lounge. ACSS is available to assist Brittany with any questions or concerns that may arise as a result of her student visits.

The ACSS Coordinator attended the Thunder Bay Urban Aboriginal Strategy Planning Circle on January 22nd with the Vice-Provost, Aboriginal Initiatives. The purpose of the meeting was to look at setting priorities for the upcoming year with a focus on justice, social services, housing, and employment & training. The TBUAS has done a lot of work in each of these areas and hopes to revitalize its efforts with various initiatives both ongoing and new. The work of the TBUAS is related to the needs of our students and having input into the TBUAS process will ensure that our students' needs are also considered. As with the Interagency Council meeting we've attended, this also proved to be an excellent opportunity to network and share information.

The ACSS Coordinator attended a Board Meeting of the Ontario Native Education Counsellors Association (ONECA) via teleconference on February 5th. An ONECA Lakehead District Meeting will take place in February to update members on ONECA initiatives. The ACSS Coordinator also continues to attend Student Affairs monthly meetings in order to remain current on issues concerning student supports and campus initiatives. The ACSS Coordinator continues to coordinate bi-monthly meetings with First Nation Post Secondary Education Counsellors within the city and with Confederation College staff to discuss issues, upcoming events, joint initiatives, etc. Preliminary plans to assist with a proposed "Education Week" for the next academic year are also underway.

The Aboriginal Transitions Advisor continues to work closely with the Vice Provost, Aboriginal Initiatives to create the Aboriginal Transitions Model for Lakehead University and with ACSS to begin to create/update the Aboriginal Student Handbook in preparation for September. The Transitions Advisor also attended meetings with Evergreen-A United Neighbourhood and Aboriginal Outreach/Recruitment as part of the Anti-Stigma Project. She has continued to have meetings with students either by drop-in or appointment to assist with accessing needed resources, offering guidance, and creating a safe space where they can talk about on-going issues they are experiencing. For the month of January the Aboriginal Transitions Advisor had 10 student visits.

Aboriginal Student Recruitment

Toastmasters

Aboriginal Outreach and Recruitment has taken on the organization and management of a new group of Toastmasters International. January was the first meeting of the new Aboriginal Toastmasters group here at Lakehead University. It has been successful thus far and meetings will be taking place every second Thursday of the month through May.

Anti-Stigma Project Healthy Minds Canada

This project is moving ahead well. Tony McGuire of TheyMedia will be editing and creating the final piece for presentation. The final product will be presented to participants and family on campus and this is set for March 4th in campus Faculty Lounge.

First Nation Post Secondary Education meeting

Aboriginal Outreach & Recruitment participates regularly in First Nation Post Secondary Education meetings. These meetings include representatives from the Aboriginal Funding Organizations, Post Secondary Institutions as well as other Aboriginal training and learning groups.

Items discussed range from issues and updates on Aboriginal Education as well as networking opportunities.

An Aboriginal Education Day was proposed and ACSS and Outreach and Recruitment are currently working with NNEC to decide what a future partnership and mutual event may look like.

Aboriginal Education Day

The idea behind this proposed event day is to bring awareness to local, regional and national issues concerning Aboriginal Education. There has been substantial discussions around how to use this day to further build and strengthen a connection with students, bring parents into education discussions, local organizations, as well as better inform the public.

Lakehead University 2014 Pow Wow

Aboriginal Outreach and Recruitment has been and will continue to participate in meetings and planning and will be assisting and supporting AAC as required. Meetings are currently being held every two weeks, are coordinated by AAC, and internal bookings are now complete. AOR is assisting with the feast. All additional tasks still to be completed have been assigned to the AAC and LUNSA.

Student visits

Meeting with students occur regularly regarding undergraduate applications via email and in person. Spring visits with local high schools are being planned for March, April and May.

AOR will be participating in an Undergraduate exploration day for the NAP program. The students will have an opportunity to meet with a variety of departments to consider their undergraduate opportunities. AOR will be working with ACSS to ensure students have a positive and inspiring experience.

Tours

AOC completed one tour in this report period. Savant Lake elementary visited and toured the Lakehead campus. This event was planned in partnership with Admission Department. Students were given an opportunity to visit the Nursing Lab and the Aboriginal Student Lounge. In attendance were AOR, Bruce Beardy NLIP, Judy Flett, Aboriginal Education, and Victoria Bolduc, Aboriginal Transitions Advisor.

Moving forward AOR is planning a tour campaign which will include communicating with all First Nation schools, elementary and secondary, within our catchment area. AOR's goal is to increase recruitment connections with all Indigenous students.

Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund

NADF's new NODP program is looking to partner with Lakehead University for possible opportunities in youth recruitment activities and training for adult participants. A meeting with the Faculty of Business is being planned for February to discuss the resurrection/revitalization of a former program. NADF's program is designed to inspire youth to consider potential entrepreneurship, and currently works with nine northern communities.

White Cedar

AOR met with the Executive director of White Cedar pharmacy to discuss AOR's participation in a revolving health fair. The fair will be held once a month to educate and offer clients the opportunity to take 'next steps' in the healing process. The hope is to then directly connect clients with post secondary institutions and support organizations.

Graduate & External Relations

Lakehead Community Service

Attended an RFP Food Services Committee meeting and sat on a panel at the Town Hall on February 4th.

Co-facilitated the Toastmasters International, "Storytellers" meeting on January 21st.

Participated and co-hosted the Anti-Stigma Film production meeting with TheyMedia, DFC and Faculty of Education graduate students on January 30th.

Finalized the Mask Making session with both the Native Access Program and the Native Nurses Entry Program. Students participated in a painting their masks as an exercise of self-reflection. Classes were able to share their story of the mask in a sharing circle co-facilitated by NNEP Manager, Sandra Cornell and NAP Coordinator, Jerri-Lynn Orr.

Lakehead Committee Service

February 4 th & 5 th	RFP Food Services Committee
February 8 th	STARS (Sustainability Tracking Assessment Rating System) Committee
January 20 th	Centre for Health Care Ethics Committee

January 23rd

Aboriginal Reference Group Communication Committee teleconference

Graduate Student Outreach

In partnership with Student Success Centre, Anthea Kyle and Library Services, Tracey Zurich and Collections Development/Reference Librarian Trudy Russo hosted two graduate student sessions, Literature Review & Advanced Library Research and guided a tour of the Northern Studies Resource Centre.

Hosted speaker night with Dr. Patricia McGuire entitled Navigating the Course. Patricia spoke of her experience in obtaining her PhD.

In partnership with the Student Success Centre, Barb Parker hosted a Graduate Student Information session.

Met with three prospective graduate students to explore making an application to graduate studies and met with two graduate students experiencing challenges in their program.

Thunder Bay Community; Networking & Collaboration

Invited Tony McGuire, TheyMedia to an orientation session with Frances Harding, Marketing Support to review the new Branding guidelines for future work in media projects.

Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, Obstetrician Gynaecologist and Clinical Researcher, Naana Jumah contacted us to meet on future collaboration.

Met with Social Services Worker Program Professor and Coordinator, Ritch Tatabe.

External Relations

Moderated the Walk-A-Mile film debut question and answer period on February 6th. The event was extremely well attended with approximately 1000 community members from all backgrounds and professions across Thunder Bay, in attendance. The video will be available in mid-March for public purchase.

Please see quote from film producer Michelle Derosier, MSW

“Our objective is to create an engaging and forthright toolkit for building understanding and tolerance,” Derosier said. “We hope these films will help our community develop strategies to create change with regard to the relationship between mainstream society and Thunder Bay’s urban aboriginal population. We also hope these films will inspire our community to see those strategies through.”

Native Access Program

It has been a busy four weeks since the last highlight report! Students are working hard as they approach mid-terms, finalize research, and complete their papers. Currently there are 15 students enrolled in NAP, with 3 now being classified as part-time students. Three students decided they would not be able to catch up assignments in the Indigenous Learning class, and instead of receiving an ‘F’ on their transcripts, they dropped the class. These students are currently on probation, but they have been meeting the conditions of their probation (meeting

with the Coordinator, Jerri-Lynn, once a week, attending classes, handing in assignments on time, etc.). The Coordinator is working hard with these students to make sure they have every opportunity to be successful. Everyone in the program is working hard to get to classes and hand their assignments in on time. The Coordinator has been in contact with instructors, directly supervising students who are on probation, and working hard to ensure NAP instructors and her are always working as a team.

There has been considerable follow up with students who expressed an interest in NAP last year, and several new inquiries from this year. Jerri-Lynn received a list of potential students from Paula Thiessen, the Recruitment Marketing Specialist. Jerri-Lynn also submitted an article to the E-Newsletter that Paula sends out to prospective students and their families. Research has also continued on access programming, to help see the best way we can improve our program here at Lakehead University, with a potential name change to UPP, **University Prep Program** for Indigenous Learners.

Students completed the mask making project alongside Yolanda W. and Anna in the University Transitions course. Students attended Magnus Theatre to see the play *Night*, and they will be doing a performance review on the play for their English course.

Jerri-Lynn attended the Building Bridges presentation held on campus as well as the new Branding meeting, Excel Training part two, Philosophy and Goals of Teaching in Higher Education, and the AI monthly team meeting. She also went to DFC to present NAP, and so far has received one application from this presentation for the new school year. Jerri-Lynn also started the course 'Leadership in Complexity', which is offered through the 180 Institute and Continuing Education.

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Vice-Provost (Aboriginal Initiatives)
February 2014