

Office of Aboriginal Initiatives Highlights: May – August 2012

Acting Vice-Provost (Aboriginal Initiatives), Yolanda Wanakamik

New hire, Yolanda Wanakamik began on August 20. Yolanda is Ojibway from the Whitesand First Nation and is alumni of Lakehead University, Political Science. Yolanda previously came from the position as the Outreach/Recruitment Officer in the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives. In the new role Yolanda has engaged several departments/faculties/staff in introducing and familiarizing various ongoing projects and initiatives. Participated in Senior Management Team retreat at Hazelwood Conservation Area with a focus on Integrated Strategic Planning. Continued support with the Achievement Program in collaboration with Department of Athletics and University Advancement and the Kendaasiwin Project.

Aboriginal Recruitment/Outreach Activities, Joyce Waswa

New hire, Joyce Waswa began on August 27. Joyce is Ojibway from Eabametoong First Nation and is alumni of Lakehead University Education. Joyce will focus on engaging Aboriginal high school students as well as mature learners this coming year. As part of this Joyce will begin by joining the “Road Warriors” on the Aboriginal Post Secondary Information Program (APSIP) tour this September.

Aboriginal Liaison Advisor (Orillia), April Jones

As a part of annual planning April participated in the Orillia Student Affairs (OSA) annual strategic planning day. Aboriginal Elder, Gertie Beaucage will be coming to do a welcome to the students and participate in an Aboriginal student meet and greet. Elder Beaucage facilitated a 4 hour cultural awareness session with 9 members of the OSA staff.

April participated in the Henvey Inlet First Nation Education Fair and the Métis Heritage Celebration in Oshawa. Attended the annual APSIP general meeting/training session – planning for the upcoming recruitment season, data collection and management, recruitment style, and communications and marketing. Met one on one with two prospective students to discuss opportunities at Lakehead.

Planning for the upcoming academic year includes current student cultural supports, events, Elders in Residence and the teaching series.

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

New hire, Bryanna Scott began on July 20. Bryanna is Métis from Treaty 3 (Fort Frances) area and is alumni of Lakehead University. Bryanna has a Masters Degree in Public Health, an Honours Bachelor of Social Work and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology, all from Lakehead University.

Stephanie Ritch has returned to the Aboriginal Counsellor position as of August 20. Stephanie is Ojibway and grew up in Northwestern Ontario and is alumni of Lakehead University. Stephanie has an Honours Bachelor of Social Work degree from Lakehead University. Stephanie will focus on individual counselling and supports for learners on an appointment and walk in basis. Stephanie can be found in the student lounge and also in the Aboriginal Education space and the Native Nurses Entry Program area, from time to time.

Hiring is currently underway for the Métis Student Liaison and the Nanabijou Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement positions.

In August, students were assisted with funding, scholarships, bursaries and registration for classes for the school year. An Elder's Council year end appreciation day was held May 22. A year end Sweat Lodge ceremony was held in honour of our students. An Elder's Memorial tree planting ceremony took place at our Sweat Lodge Site on July 12 in collaboration with Northern Ontario School of Medicine. With approximately 60 people in attendance, Five Elders, Josias Fiddler, Curtis Hopkins, Richard Lyons, Joe Morrison and Greta Moskatay-Wenene were honored for their dedication and commitment to Lakehead University and NOSM. The Medicine Garden and Community Garden Plots continue to flourish with nurturing by the ACSS team.

Aboriginal Research Facilitator, Annette Schroeter

The Research Rendezvous with the Métis Community Resource Document has been created and distributed to workshop participants for consideration of research and partners further discussion.

Assisted Dr. Eli Nix and Dr. Marina Ulanova (NOSM) with initial phase of research involving recruitment for urban Aboriginal volunteers for the Immunological basis for increased burden of invasive bacterial disease among First Nations in Northern Ontario.

Native Access Program, Suzanne Tardif

New hire, Suzanne Tardif began work with the team May 15. After familiarizing herself with the program Suzanne worked toward expanding the Native Access Program Steering Committee (NAPSC), updated and revised the terms of reference. In recruitment efforts Suzanne attended career fairs in Thunder Bay and Pays Plat. In collaboration with the Native Nurses Entry Program and Outreach/Recruitment Officer held an on campus information day about access programming. Finalized NAP class schedule, developed curriculum for University Transitions. Reviewed 26 prospective applications, accepting 19 students to the program for 2012.

Respectfully submitted by:

Yolanda Wanakamik, Acting Vice-Provost (Aboriginal Initiatives)