

2018-2023 STRATEGIC PLAN

Discussion Document

CONFIDENTIAL Draft Document
March 2, 2017

Context

Over the last four years, Lakehead University has successfully implemented its 2013-2018 Strategic Plan, “Nurturing a Passion to Lead”. As we enter the final year of the Plan and reflect on accomplishments to date, we must also look at the future and start to plan the course for the next five years.

To that end, Lakehead University’s Board of Governors has initiated the development of the 2018-2023 Strategic Plan. Over the past few months the Board has contemplated the evolving environment in which Lakehead University operates and has focused on identifying major directions that build on the themes in the current Strategic Plan.

As the Board develops the 2018-2023 Strategic Plan, it will consult with the University community, as well as the communities it serves, and invite them to help shape the future of Lakehead University.

This document will form the basis of discussion with these stakeholder groups.

Changing Environment

The environment in which Lakehead University exists is changing. The technology and workforces of tomorrow need to be anticipated as much as possible.

The provincial, national, and global landscapes are being transformed by technology, changing how people live, work and learn. The rise and accessibility of technology, robotics and artificial intelligence is expected to disrupt the global economy in the coming years. As the “fourth industrial revolution” gains traction, an estimated 40% of jobs will be displaced as technology replaces many routine physical and mental tasks. Meanwhile, jobs that require “soft skills” like creative thinking and problem solving are expected to gain prominence.

A broad range of industries across multiple sectors have identified the need for ongoing reskilling of their workforce.¹ Competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, interpersonal skills and entrepreneurship are becoming increasingly important, not only for new entrants to the workforce, but also for existing workers who will require education throughout their careers to keep pace with technological advances in the workplace. Those most at risk of displacement due to their lack of such competencies are typically in lower income brackets with limited post-secondary education.

Governments are grappling with how to address the risk posed by this forecasted displacement and to lay the foundation for participation in the future economy while employers are developing strategies to identify and bridge projected skills gaps.

Education has been identified as the most important policy lever to mitigate the social risk posed by this change and develop the skills required in the workforce while industry is looking to education for support with ongoing skills development.² This presents a great opportunity for universities, while also posing some challenges:

- Student demographics will change as an increasing number of students will be from an older demographic (35-54), juggling work, family and personal commitments that may drive their curriculum delivery needs.
- A growing number of industries may seek tailored certificate programs or sponsored content to grow the specific skills they require in a short time frame, which could result in driving competition in post-secondary education.
- Governments will increasingly expect faster transition of graduates into the workforce and responsiveness from the post-secondary sector to meet the evolving learning needs of the broader society.
- Finally, competition may increase as mass open online course (MOOC) providers continue to develop and refine their business models by offering a range of options including post-secondary degrees, post-baccalaureate certificates, "stackable" credentials, digital badges and nanodegrees that are starting to gain recognition in specific sectors.³

All of these changes will impact what academic pathways people will choose in the future, how they will participate in academic and training programs, and will play key roles in influencing how post-secondary institutions will operate. The issues outlined above are just a sample of the matters being contemplated by the Board as Lakehead University develops its next Strategic Plan.

¹ World Economic Forum, "The Future of Jobs: Employment, Skills and Workforce Strategy for the Fourth Industrial Revolution", January 2016.; The Brookfield Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, "The Talented Mr. Robot: The Impact of Automation on the Canadian Workforce", June 2016.; Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee, *The Second Machine Age*, Norton & Company, New York, 2014.

² The Economist Radio, "Money Talks: Davos in the Spotlight", January 17, 2017

³ University Herald, "Working Adults Benefit From Online Education, Here's Why", February 13, 2017; The Economist, "The Return of the MOOC: Established Education Providers v. New Contenders", Special Report: Lifelong Education, Jan 14, 2017.

Provincial Environment

In alignment with global trends, the Government of Ontario is responding to the changing needs of Ontario's economy with a strategy focused on higher education and industry partnerships.

Specifically, the provincial government is focusing on developing a highly skilled workforce across Ontario, today, and into the future. This strategy places increasing emphasis on the value of access, partnership and experiential learning in post-secondary education through⁴:

1. Improving **access** to postsecondary education by making it easier to navigate the system. This includes equitable access for all students, multiple entrance pathways, flexible admissions criteria and programming, and focusing on students who may benefit from additional support to access and succeed at university.
2. Improving **partnerships between universities and industry** within the context of developing a highly skilled workforce, supporting economic development and community revitalization, building research capacity, and supporting customized training, innovation and entrepreneurship locally, regionally and internationally.
3. Focusing on **student outcomes** through high-quality teaching and learning practices to help prepare students for the workforce, including experiential learning opportunities and development of critical skills including critical thinking and problem solving, innovative thinking and working in teams.
4. Ensuring the post-secondary sector is **financially sustainable** and able to deliver on this mandate through the introduction of a revised funding formula and new Strategic Mandate Agreement.

Sector Constraints

While the opportunity exists for universities to play a large role in developing the future workforce provincially, nationally and globally, Canadian universities, including Lakehead, are facing four fundamental challenges⁵:

1. Universities are experiencing **downward pressure on revenues** resulting from changing demographics, a fiscally constrained government environment, and increasing political focus on the cost of tuition.

⁴ Premier of Ontario, "September 2016 Mandate Letter: Advanced Education and Skills Development", September 23, 2016; Premier's Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel, "Building the Workforce of Tomorrow", June 2016.

⁵ Education Advisory Board, "The Changing Canadian PSE Landscape", Presented to Council of Ontario Universities, November 2016.

2. Universities are experiencing **upward pressure on costs**, primarily driven by increasing salary costs, maintenance of aging infrastructure, inflation and the need to invest in research and technology.
3. Given these financial pressures and recognizing enrolment is the primary revenue source for post-secondary education providers, **recruitment is becoming increasingly competitive** among universities, colleges and private sector providers with remote campuses in Canada or online offerings (i.e. MOOCs).
4. Universities are under increasing **pressure to demonstrate the value proposition** of a post-secondary education to government, students, parents and public. As a result, provincial funding is starting to move away from an enrolment based model to incorporate a focus on student learning and employment outcomes.

Key Considerations

As Lakehead looks at the key themes outlined above, questions arise that will inform the University's future strategy. These include:

- What is Lakehead's local role within Northwestern Ontario and Simcoe County in terms of learning, scholarship, research, local partnership and economic development? What is Lakehead's global role in these areas?
- What steps does Lakehead need to take to position itself as accessible and adaptable today, tomorrow and in the future?
- Who are Lakehead's future students? What are their future needs? How does the University attract them?
- What are the opportunities for expanding stackable credentials, certificate programs, and nano-degrees?
- What opportunities exist to expand experiential learning?
- How should the University create and strengthen international research opportunities, building on Lakehead's growing reputation for research excellence?
- What investments are required today, to prepare for tomorrow?

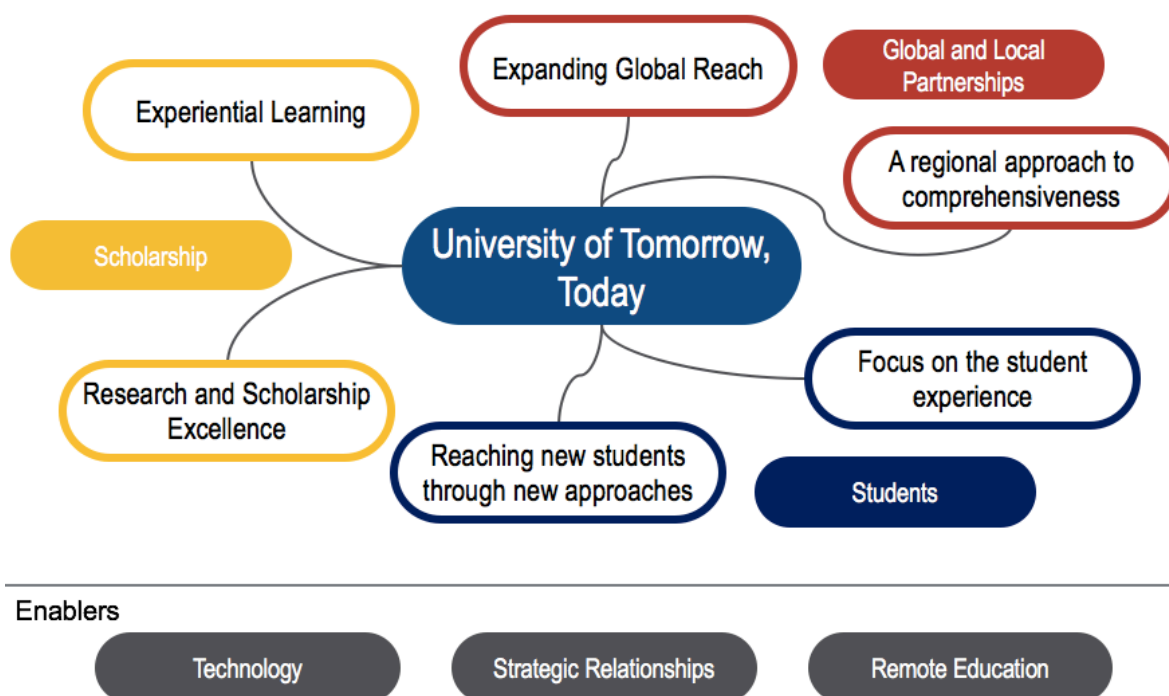
Looking to the Future: Building the University of Tomorrow, Today

The current Strategic Plan, "Nurturing a Passion to Lead", enables Lakehead University to respond to the emerging opportunities outlined above, and helps position Lakehead for the future.

Over the past four years, Lakehead University has made considerable progress in achieving the goals set out in the 2013-2018 Strategic Plan while recognizing there is still more to do.

Looking to the next Strategic Plan, discussions with the Board were developed around a vision to build the “University of Tomorrow, Today”.

As depicted below, this included three key themes: scholarship, students and global and local partnerships, as well as key enablers that include technology, strategic relationships and remote education.



This vision takes into account Lakehead’s local and regional role, as well as its expanding global presence, recognizing the value of the comprehensive programming Lakehead offers in Northwestern Ontario and Simcoe County while also recognizing the need for differentiation within an increasingly competitive provincial and national landscape.

It acknowledges the gains Lakehead has made in research and scholarship excellence, and continues to recognize excellence in scholarship as a priority in the future. This focus on scholarship recognizes the increasing importance of experiential learning as students seek opportunities to apply their learning through research projects, field school, capstone projects, co-ops and internships, and community service projects, while answering employers’ growing desire for graduates with this experience. And this vision identifies the opportunity for study abroad and faculty exchanges as Lakehead University becomes increasingly diversified and global in the breadth and depth of its research and scholarship capacities and needs.

Finally, the vision of the *University of Tomorrow, Today* recognizes that Lakehead's student body is changing. Our current student population is increasingly diverse, comprised of students from Northwestern Ontario, Simcoe County, the Greater Toronto Area, and further abroad as we see a rise in the number of international students coming to our campuses. Going forward, this diversification will only continue to expand as we see an increasing need for lifelong learning. A greater proportion of our future students may be juggling careers, personal and family demands while seeking education.

To achieve this vision, the Board has identified the need to acknowledge the increasing opportunity presented by technology in teaching, learning and research, the need to develop strategic partnerships both locally and globally to facilitate research and scholarship, as well as the opportunity to expand access to Lakehead's programming through remote education.

Setting Lakehead's Future Direction

Within this context, the Board will build on the themes in the 2013-2018 Strategic Plan while looking to build the *University of Tomorrow, Today*. Below is an overview of the current strategic actions, along with some discussion questions to help inform the future strategic plan.



NURTURING SCHOLARSHIP

2013 - 2018 STRATEGIC ACTION: Lakehead University will be recognized for the excellence of its scholarship, the cohesive integration of teaching, learning and research, the fostering of intellectual freedom, and the incorporation of disciplines into an integrated, multidisciplinary framework

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:

1. What is Lakehead's role as a comprehensive university within Northwestern Ontario and Simcoe County in terms of learning and scholarship?
2. How should Lakehead respond to the changing social and economic needs for skills development and life-long learning?
3. What are the opportunities for expanding experiential learning, faculty exchanges and study abroad?
4. What is required to maintain Lakehead's success as the number one research university in its category in Canada?
5. How should Lakehead create and strengthen international research opportunities?

GUIDING MILESTONES FOR CONSIDERATION:

- Develop and deliver high quality academic programs including degrees, certificates and other programming required to meet the needs of a highly skilled workforce today and into the future

- Recruit, retain and support students, faculty and staff who are committed to the pursuit of excellence in scholarship
- Enhance professional and pedagogical support for teaching and learning
- Increase research, scholarly and creative activity
- Enhance collaborative and community-engaged scholarship activity and promote knowledge mobility (i.e. outside the academy)
- Increase overall research funds received by 2023 to [\$X TBD]
- Develop Centres of Excellence that contribute to scholarship by leveraging Lakehead's existing expertise
- Provide a rich learning environment that incorporates all forms of experiential learning (High Impact Practices)
- Encourage students to think critically and develop an inquisitive mind



LEARNER-CENTRED STUDENT EXPERIENCE

2013 – 2018 STRATEGIC ACTION: Lakehead University students will be offered a unique experience that combines opportunities for an active lifestyle with integrated student supports in a collaborative learning environment. As a result, the modified graduation rate will increase by 3% during the life of this plan.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:

1. What should the student experience look like at Lakehead in the future, both inside and outside the classroom?
2. To what extent should experiential learning be incorporated into the curriculum? How?
3. How can the University better equip students to successfully transition into the workforce?

GUIDING MILESTONES FOR CONSIDERATION:

- Develop and celebrate clear vision of experiential learning at Lakehead that includes the diversity of opportunity offered (field school, community placement, co-op, internships, hands on learning, research)
- Develop an administrative unit dedicated to supporting, funding, coordinating and celebrating experiential learning locally, regionally, and globally
- Develop and implement a framework for experiential learning with a goal of achieving student participation rate of 100%
- Align teaching pedagogy with experiential learning with a focus on employment of graduates
- Enhance experiences inside and outside the classroom
 - Extracurricular activities

- Student supports (including campus amenities and technology supports)
- Health and wellbeing
- Gathering places for students on campus
- 1st year class size
- Safe environment
- Strengthen partnerships with Confederation College and Georgian College to develop innovative and accessible programming in Northwestern Ontario and Simcoe County with a focus on student mobility



GROWTH & CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

2013 – 2018 STRATEGIC ACTION: Lakehead University will achieve overall enrolment in excess of 10,000 students by 2018. As a result, Lakehead University will be broader, deeper, and more sustainable.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:

1. How should Lakehead harness the combination of growth and capacity development to ensure increasing quality of education at Lakehead?
2. Who are Lakehead's future students on the Thunder Bay campus? On the Orillia campus?
3. How should Lakehead position itself as accessible and adaptable to meet the needs of students today, tomorrow and into the future?
4. How can Lakehead increase opportunities for students facing education barriers (i.e. first generation, Indigenous, rural/remote)?
5. How should Lakehead respond to an increased need for student mobility?

GUIDING MILESTONES FOR CONSIDERATION:

- Increase overall enrolment to 10,000 students by 2023 to provide excellence in all programming required to deliver on Lakehead's social mandate
- Increase international enrolment to 2,000 students by 2023
- Continue increase opportunities for students facing educational barriers with specific focus on
 - First generation students
 - Indigenous students
 - Northern/rural/remote students
 - Students from Simcoe County
- Fostering alumni relationships
- Continue to maintain, develop and revitalize Lakehead's campus community and infrastructure to support growth and meet the needs of students today and into the future



- Continue to develop effective partnerships with local College partners

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2013 – 2018 STRATEGIC ACTION: Lakehead University will engage in authentic and meaningful partnerships with individuals, alumni, Indigenous communities, NGOs, governments, businesses and associations with whom we share a common vision and interest

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:

1. What is required to effectively engage with local communities - what should Lakehead's role be and how do we deliver on it?
2. How should Lakehead develop alumni relationships locally, nationally and internationally?
3. What is required for Lakehead to develop strong partnerships with local industry partners?

GUIDING MILESTONES FOR CONSIDERATION:

- Develop a "Knowledge Commons" or "Knowledge Community" through which the University maintains and showcases music, art, artifacts, culture, language and indigenous knowledge on behalf of the community
- *Treat the "Knowledge Community" as a focal point for the development and expansion of partnerships that simultaneously expand scholarship and engage the community (carried forward from 2013-2018 Plan)*
- Continue to engage and develop a strong relationship with Indigenous communities
- Continue to foster and develop the relationship between Lakehead's varsity teams and the community
- Continue to develop alumni relations to increase the number of alumni actively engaged with the University
- Revisit and renew the Achievement Program
- Undertake a significant fundraising campaign



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

2013 – 2018 STRATEGIC ACTION: To contribute to and support the social and economic prosperity of Northern Ontario and Simcoe County communities through research, education, knowledge transfer, the training of highly-qualified personnel, commercialization, and Centres of Excellence.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:

1. How should Lakehead support regional economic development?
2. What development or partnership opportunities exist over the next 5-10 years locally, nationally and internationally that should be a focus for Lakehead?
3. What is required for Lakehead to take on this role?
4. What opportunities exist to leverage existing partnerships to expand economic development locally, nationally, or internationally?
5. How can Lakehead work with Indigenous communities to support innovation and development in a culturally appropriate way?

GUIDING MILESTONES FOR CONSIDERATION:

- Develop strategic community-based partnerships with a focus on supporting economic development, building capacity, developing experiential learning opportunities and creating of jobs for graduates.
- Connecting with industry
 - Research and partnership
 - Helping local entrepreneurs innovate and succeed
 - Experiential learning
- Steward ongoing development of technology-based industry in partnership with local industry
- Partner with Indigenous communities to support innovation and development in a culturally appropriate way
- Leverage existing partnerships i.e. Northern Policy Institute to advance local research

Next Steps

Over the next few months the Lakehead University Board of Governors will be engaging with the University community, as well as the communities it serves, to gather input and feedback to inform this strategic plan. Members of the community can also participate in the development of Lakehead's strategic plan by completing a survey [\(link\)](#).

Your input will help shape the University's 2018-2023 Strategic Plan, providing a five-year road map for the University and setting a direction for the future.

Strategic Plan 2013-2018: Achievements

Over the past four years, Lakehead University has made considerable progress in achieving the goals set out in the 2013-2018 Strategic Plan.

Nurturing Scholarship - Lakehead has been ranked the #1 undergraduate research university in Canada in 2015 and 2016. Over 80% of students identify their experience at Lakehead contributed to development of critical thinking skills that are required in today's workplace and over a quarter of undergraduate students have actively participated in research with a faculty member.

Lakehead continues to develop and foster Centres of Excellence, including building an entrepreneur centre that will further connect scholarship and the community.

Learner-Centred Student Experience - Over 81% of Lakehead's undergraduate students have participated in a form of experiential learning such as a co-op, field school or research with a faculty member. Over 94% of our graduates are employed within 2 years of graduating, with almost all reporting they are applying skills they learned at university in their jobs.

Growth and Capacity Development – In 2016/17, Lakehead had 8,284 students enrolled in degree programs across both campuses. Lakehead's graduate student body continues to grow and the international student body has increased 40% over the year to 975 international students on campus.

The University is implementing Strategic Enrolment Management to better align recruitment and retention strategies and to identify strategic areas of development.

Community Engagement - Over the past 5 years the student population on campus has changed. While Lakehead continues to be the university of choice for Northwestern Ontario, a third of all students are now from the Greater Toronto Area and an increasing number are international.

Economic Development - Lakehead is continuing to engage with our local communities and plays a key role in helping people access university education. Over 50% of Lakehead University undergraduate students are first generation; approximately 11% of Lakehead's student body self-identify as Indigenous.

These accomplishments are the result of planning and effort by all members of the University Community.

\$20.5M

Received in external research funding
in 2015/16

#1

Undergraduate Research University
ReSearch Infosource 2015 & 2016

8,284

students enrolled in fall 2016/17

56%

of students are first generation
(neither parent has a university degree)

11%

of students self-identify as Indigenous

1,043

full-time grad students in fall 2016/17

975

international students (including ELP and
exchange) on campus in fall 2016/17

81%

94%

of undergraduate students are employed
2 years after graduation

23%

of Alumni are engaged with the
university

\$366M

Economic impact of Lakehead's
operating expenditures

