

EDUCATION EXCHANGE

NEWSLETTER

EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SCIENCE AND MATH TEACHERS

Lakehead Prepares Students for a Teaching Career in China

Lakehead University has signed an agreement with Maple Leaf Schools in China to educate their next generation of Science and Math teachers.

As part of the agreement, select graduates of Maple Leaf International high schools will study for their Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Education degrees at Lakehead, then return to China to work as Math or Science teachers at a Maple Leaf school.

Nancy Gallo, Director of International Student Services, explains that the agreement was created in light of "the Chinese government encouraging schools to hire more national teachers. Maple Leaf Schools partnered with Lakehead University to help realize this goal over the upcoming years."

In the 2016-2017 academic year, Lakehead was pleased to welcome the first cohort of 17 students from Maple Leaf schools.

For these students, coming to Thunder Bay from China was a major life transition. Beginning post-secondary education, adjusting to a new city and culture, and experiencing their first Canadian winter presented significant changes in their lives.

To help with the transition, the students took part in Lakehead's Peer Mentor Program, in which older university students meet regularly with new international students to schedule group outings and cultural activities, and to offer academic support.

"It's about our assisting new international students academically, socially, and personally, to ensure they are having a well-rounded experience," Nancy Gallo says. "Peer Mentors arrange activities like going to hockey games, visiting restaurants with culturally familiar foods, and shopping for affordable winter clothing."

Sijia Liu, who attended the Maple Leaf school in Tianjin, China, notes that she balances out her academic life by going to the University's gym, and she appreciates the Northwestern Ontario scenery *en route*: "The forest and the lake [Lake Tamblyn]



Yuxi Yao and Sijia Liu are enjoying their first year at Lakehead



Future Math and Science teachers: Some of the first cohort of Maple Leaf Education students

at the University are really nice. I like to walk past the forest on my way to the gym, and sometimes I see deer along the way!"

Yuxi Yao, a Biochemistry major who also comes from the Maple Leaf school in Tianjin, has already taken her first course in Education. She says she anticipates teaching will be a challenging, but rewarding, career choice.

"A teacher is always facing new challenges. Being a teacher requires knowing not just what students will learn in class, but also drawing from personal life experiences to help them. I want to be a useful person, and being a teacher will help me achieve that," she explains.

The Faculty of Education warmly welcomes the first cohort of Maple Leaf students!



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We welcome your feedback, ideas, and content suggestions.
Email us at newsletter.education@lakeheadu.ca

Faculty of Education Alumni Profiles *What Are They Doing Now?*



Patti Pella

Vice President Academic, Confederation College, Thunder Bay

Graduate of the Bachelor of Education program, 1990; Master of Education, 1995 (Thunder Bay campus)

I began my teaching career with the Lake Superior Board of Education in 1990, teaching Grade 4 in Marathon, Ontario. The mines were booming and there were 850 students at the elementary school! Eight years later, the mines were closing and I was declared redundant as a teacher, so I applied to be a school administrator. I became Superintendent of Education for the Superior-Greenstone District School board in 2001, and Director of Education in 2006. In 2011, I was seconded to the Ministry of Education to work with the Literacy Numeracy Secretariat, and in 2014, I accepted a permanent position with the Ministry of Education as Regional Manager with the Field Services Branch.

Today, as Vice President Academic of Confederation College, I draw daily upon the experiences and learning of my entire career. I love the vigor and excitement of post-secondary education and the day-to-day connections I make with students. I am passionately committed to the Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation report, and am proud to be a part of an organization that is known as a leader in Indigenous education.

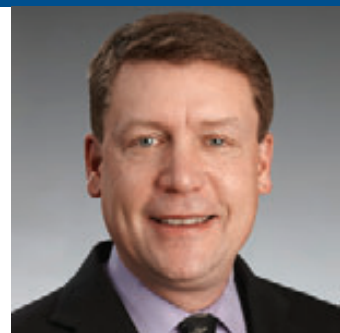
Last fall I attended the Alumni Awards ceremony at Lakehead University and it provoked me to think about what resonated with me in terms of my experience at the University. One memory that stands out was during my first-year exams. I was the kind of student who attended every class, shared my notes, studied hard, and handed papers in early. But somehow I had written down the wrong start time for my Philosophy exam, and I arrived just as my peers were leaving the room. As you can imagine, I was horrified! A staff member noticed my obvious distress and helped me locate my professor. As I explained my story to him, I was sure there was no hope for me to pass the course. But he smiled at me, told me to relax, and said that he would set up a time and place the next day for me to write the exam. This unexpected kindness, understanding, and compassion left a lasting impression on me, and I have tried to be that kind of teacher and leader throughout my career.

I am blessed with a wonderful family who help to keep my feet firmly planted on the ground as I navigate the joys of an amazing career and parenthood! I married my best friend, Danny Pella, and together we enjoy our four children, Grace, Thomas, James, and Michael. The family is complemented by a wide range of four-legged, winged, and finned creatures, including five dogs, two horses, a bearded dragon, chickens, guinea pigs and fish. My next adventure will definitely be about beginning my doctoral studies ... just as soon as the next hockey practice is over!

Larry Hope

Director of Education, Trillium Lakelands District School Board

Graduate of the Bachelor of Education program, 1990; Master of Education, 2001 (Thunder Bay campus)



I am very fortunate in my role as Director of Education at Trillium Lakelands District School Board. I have the privilege of seeing, first-hand, the results of the first-class education system we have in Ontario, and the profound effect that teachers and support staff have on students every day. I have been in the role of Director for nine years now, and the best part of my job is the time I spend in schools – sometimes two or three days in a week. Our teachers are incredibly dedicated and the kids are remarkable. I am convinced we are raising the best generation of Canadians we have ever seen. Our students today have a social conscience and a desire to do well for the sake of doing well in a way that is truly inspiring.

Trillium Lakelands District School Board encompasses the City of Kawartha Lakes, the County of Haliburton, and the District Municipality of Muskoka. We have 41 elementary schools, seven secondary schools, and six Alternate Education and Training Centres. We also have a very large virtual learning centre, where students can complete their high school experience from Grades 9-12.

Prior to my current position, I worked in Northwestern Ontario for 20 years. I began my teaching career in the community of Ignace, outside of Thunder Bay. I taught there for four years and then in Sioux Lookout for five years. I eventually moved to Kenora and worked for the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board. As a teacher I have taught Kindergarten to Grade 8, and I've enjoyed many other rewarding roles in my career, including Elementary Vice-Principal, Elementary Principal, Secondary Principal, Superintendent, and now Director of Education.

Northwestern Ontario is my birthplace, and one of my favourite places in the world. I love the rocks, trees, and water; I love to be outdoors; and enjoy hunting and fishing. Some inspirational teachers had a lasting impact on me while I was growing up in Thunder Bay. This continued during my time at Lakehead University. In the Faculty of Education, Dr. Mary Clare Courtland, my thesis advisor, stood out for me as an exceptionally dedicated educator. She had extremely high expectations of her students, but never asked anything of a student that she herself would not do. When I was working on my thesis, she gave very tight deadlines, but her own turnaround time would be even faster.

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During my career, some of the most significant changes I've seen in education include the increased emphasis on student well-being alongside achievement, as well as the importance of inclusion and the provision of supports for students with special needs. What happens in our schools has such an impact on our students and communities. I see our teachers and support staff going to near-heroic levels to help those students who need us the most. Educators are also working hard to respond to the needs of every type of learner, to ensure their well-being from an academic and personal wellness perspective. Today's educational system is about supporting our students as wholly as possible. Our teachers, staff, administration and programming in Ontario are second to none and I'm extremely proud to be part of such an outstanding educational system.



Jennifer Essex

Grade 1 Teacher/Teacher Leader for Literacy, Sunchild First Nation School, Alberta

Graduate of the Bachelor of Education program, 2010 (Orillia campus)

I am currently working at Sunchild First Nation School in Alberta, just 45 minutes west of Rocky Mountain House. I am now in my fourth year of teaching Grade 1 here, and am also the Teacher Leader for Literacy (part of a group of support teachers who implement best practices in literacy into their instruction).

I love living in this small community! It enables me to get to know entire families. I

also really enjoy having the chance to learn about the First Nations' rich cultural traditions and to participate in them. In particular I appreciate and enjoy drumming, dancing, and singing. I am continuously learning here, and even learning a bit of Cree.

At the school, I am in my fourth year of coaching competitive cheerleading (in previous years I was coaching with fellow Lakehead alumna Elise Petitjean). According to my research, we are the only First Nations cheerleading team in Canada! Our school has won many first place titles and awards, like the Team Sportsmanship Award from the Alberta Cheerleading Association.

During my time here I have become very involved in outdoor activities and have had an opportunity to travel to unique parts of Alberta. My partner and I have a rescue dog, Bingo, and we spent last summer in Banff and Jasper, canoeing in the mountains and camping in grizzly territory. I am a regular geocacher and have taken up golf, fishing, and gardening. There is so much to do here! While being isolated is sometimes a challenge (we are 45 minutes away from the nearest town of Rocky Mountain House, where we buy most of our groceries), the star-gazing is always incredible and occasionally we see the Northern Lights. The chinooks are also very interesting out here, too.

One of the things I took away from Lakehead was the realization that an amazing teacher can have a lot of influence in a student's life. Dr. Sonia Mastrangelo and Dr. Ruth Beatty were two incredible professors who have remained in my life as mentors. They went beyond being teachers to me, and continued helping me long after I left their classrooms and embarked on my teaching career.



Brett Gloor

Grade 5 Teacher, Caribbean International Academy, St. Maarten

Graduate of the Bachelor of Education program, 2015; Master of Education, 2016 (Thunder Bay campus)

I am currently teaching Grade 5 at Caribbean International Academy, an Ontario Ministry of Education certified school on the Dutch Caribbean island of St. Maarten. Having taught overseas for over four years I am no stranger to teaching abroad, but this is my first experience teaching the Ontario curriculum. I am learning just as much as my 13 students this year!

While teaching literacy at a private tuition centre in Singapore, I discovered that teaching was what I wanted to do with my life. So, I enrolled in Lakehead's Junior/Intermediate BEd program, and flew back to Canada in 2014. Lakehead's one-year program was intensive, and I wouldn't have been able to do as well as I did without the teamwork, mentorship, and generosity of the professors, staff, and fellow students.

After graduating from the BEd program I was fortunate to be accepted into Lakehead's Master of Education program and offered a position as a Graduate Assistant. The flexibility of this role gave me a chance to get even more involved at Lakehead, through organizations like LUSU (Lakehead University Student Union) and the University Senate.

I love the diverse community in St. Maarten and there are so many ways to get involved with my school. For example, I am part of the school's SCUBA diving club, which takes students out once a month on diving trips. Also, with 36 beaches on the island, I figured that a snorkel club would be a natural extra-curricular activity, so I started one up! Once a week I take students to local beaches and snorkel spots to practice proper snorkel techniques, diving techniques, marine life and coral identification, underwater photography/exploration, and of course to have some fun.

I would recommend teaching abroad to everybody, especially first-year teachers: the rewards are incredible. It requires working hard, getting involved, and making connections – these are essential for personal and professional success. Perhaps the only

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“problem” with this career path is that you can become spoiled for choice! The world becomes your oyster as you realize you can work in a wide variety of roles and live on any continent you choose. It’s important to find the right location and the right school that fits you, so I would say to prospective international teachers: do your research, know what you want, and then go and get it! You’ll be glad you did.



Jay Dacosta

Grade 2 Teacher, American School of Doha, Qatar

Graduate of the Bachelor of Education program, 2010 (Orillia campus), Master of Education, 2011 (Thunder Bay campus)

I’m a second grade teacher at ASD, the American School of Doha, in Qatar. ASD is the country’s largest and best international school. Since leaving Lakehead I have also taught in Venezuela, Mongolia, and Lebanon, in schools that were sometimes very challenging.

In my international teaching career I’ve had a wide range of experiences. I’ve had fire drills in -40°C and +40°C weather. I’ve seen days of political unrest (in Lebanon), sand storms (in Qatar), Twitter-proclaimed celebration days (in Venezuela), and extreme cold: -50°C (in Mongolia). I’ve experienced a drunk school bus driver on a class field trip, and I’ve taught a lesson about Alexander the Great in Lebanon while looking out at the coast line he walked along 2,343 years before. I’ve taught in a Lebanese school that believed in no technology, and am now teaching in a school in Qatar with a 1:2 iPad to student ratio in second grade and a

touch screen SMART board in every classroom. I’ve had 44 Grade 4 students in a single classroom in Lebanon, and 8 Grade 3 students in Venezuela.

As an international educator you have to be prepared for the unexpected. Being in the first cohort of Education students going through Lakehead’s Orillia program prepared me for this: our classrooms were in an old storefront and the only place to eat was Tim Hortons!

The rewards of international teaching can be great, including seeing the world. Since I graduated in 2010, my wife and I have travelled to 20+ countries. We just had our first son last year, and purchased a cottage in Halliburton, Ontario where we will spend our summers.

The professors at Lakehead are what make the programs. In Orillia, Dr. Ruth Beatty’s vision of mathematics is exactly what I use today. (In fact, I’m working with the U.S. Office of Overseas Schools in adapting a curricular framework for international schools. I’ve been to conferences in Amman, Jordan and Washington, D.C. to work with educators from Barcelona to Shanghai on this project.) Other professors who greatly influenced me were Dr. Sonia Mastrangelo, who encouraged me to go on to the MEd program, and Dr. Paul Berger, who showed me that a teacher can, and should, be flexible with their students. And, I still use ideas like the Macro Models from Dr. Thomas Puk’s class when explaining the natural world.



“We included Lakehead University in our will because we believe in the transformative power of education.”

Dr. Bill Heath, Professor Emeritus, Lakehead University
Ms. Betty Heath, Lakehead Alumna

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Dr. Paul Cormier Successfully Defends Dissertation on Indigenous Living Peace Methodology



Dr. Paul Cormier successfully defended his dissertation, “Kinoo’amaadawaad Megwaa Doodamawaad – They Are Learning with Each Other While They Are Doing: The Indigenous Living Peace Methodology,” in October 2016.

His research explores the deep meaning that land holds for Anishinabeg culture through an Indigenous methodology described as ‘research

by and for Indigenous Peoples,’ using techniques and methods drawn from Indigenous traditions and knowledge.

Dr. Cormier’s research evolved with individuals from his home community: the Red Rock Indian Band, Lake Helen First Nation, in Nipigon, Ontario.

Using sharing circles, a traditional Anishinabeg process for healing, as one of his data gathering techniques, he explains that his research reflects his cultural context and connects land to learning and peace.

“When I started doing my work, I gathered stories about land from Elders. This turned into a description of a way of life through Aki Gakinoomaagewin – Teachings (learning) from the Earth (Land). In Ojibwe, “land-learning” also means Earth, teaching, learning, and peace-building. Our language reflects our culture, where all of these ideas are interconnected.”

Countering Violence with Holism: The Stories of “Ni”

Dr. Cormier’s research examines how applying an Indigenous worldview, known as holism, can be used as an analysis tool to explain the cultural violence toward Indigenous people resulting from European views of the world and ways of conducting research.

“If we assume that research and peace-building are synonymous in Aboriginal contexts, then the solution to addressing the violence lies in designing research with the groups we are attempting to assist. This requires a paradigm shift from the traditional methods of research design to one that emerges from the context of the culture,” he explains.

His dissertation explores this cultural violence through a literary character named “Niiwisagendam,” an Ojibwe word meaning “I’m hurting.” Each chapter opens with a story of the character, named “Ni” for short, that illustrates real-life stories of the participants in his research.

“Ni is a character I created to protect the identities of the people, families, and communities I’ve met. Ni is the story of my life and the lives of too many of my Aboriginal brothers and sisters. Ni can be thought of as the spirit of many Indigenous Nations who live with the legacy and continued violence of colonialism.”



Mona Cormier, Simone Person, and Clifford Deschamps participate in a Sharing Circle

Using Ni to share the stories of Indigenous peoples in Canada, Dr. Cormier simultaneously examined how research and ceremony can be a peace-building process, for people and land together.

Healing through Ceremony

Ceremony was key to Dr. Cormier’s research as a modality of healing and connecting to land.

“We have always had our processes of healing through ceremony,” he says. “Ceremony, which is so deeply connected to the land, is healing. The land is part of who we are – it is in our symbols and in our stories. For example, the drum is the heartbeat of Mother Earth, and the story of how we got the drum connects us to the land.”

His research process thus reflected and drew on ceremony, including a fasting ceremony he engaged in as a pathway to his work.

“A fasting ceremony can best be described as a process of healing through personal reflection and reconnection to the natural and spiritual worlds,” he explains. “Entering these worlds as part of my research, then returning to my traditional homeland and community, kept me grounded through the process.”

Moving Forward and Giving Back

Dr. Cormier aims to disseminate his research widely. He plans to publish his dissertation as a book about Indigenous Living Peace Methodology, and he has already published a series of papers in academic journals in the areas of Peace and Conflict Studies and Aboriginal Education.

To give back to his community, he also shared elements of his research through the Red Rock Indian Band community website (see <http://rrib.ca/>).

“The website includes a link, entitled “Our Culture,” where some of my work is shared. This includes video stories of Elders and community members explaining their family histories in the traditional territory of the Red Rock Indian Band. Another section, entitled “Language Learning,” promotes Ojibwe language learning through lists of words pronounced by community members, reflecting the local dialect of the community,” he explains.

The video and audio elements are also available as a phone app, and conversations are taking place with school boards to use the app in support of the Ojibwe language learning curriculum.

“It is about helping my community: preserving the past to teach the future. I am working locally but also have an eye toward the international, with plans for a future project to examine Indigenous peoples’ involvement in conflicts and peace-building all over the world. Culture, language, land, ceremony, research, and peace-building: these are all interconnected parts of my work.”

Dr. Cormier teaches Aboriginal Education in the Faculty of Education.

“Intellectual Invigoration on Sabbatical Leave”

Dr. Tony Bartley Shares Educational Highlights of his Travels

“Not all those who wander are lost,” J.R.R. Tolkien famously wrote. Indeed, some who wander – such as Associate Professor Tony Bartley, who between September 2015 and May 2016 crossed the Pacific Ocean to visit Hawaii, Samoa, Fiji, New Caledonia, and Singapore, and spent longer periods in New Zealand, Australia, and Japan – find that travel can be an experience in “intellectual invigoration.”

Intellectual invigoration is a term in the Lakehead University Collective Agreement for faculty members who seek to take a sabbatical leave. In this context, it meant that Dr. Bartley and his wife, Dr. Jan MacPhail, a family physician, thrived by traveling to, and spending time in, communities around the Pacific Rim.

Travelling by ship, plane, car, and train, Dr. Bartley’s eight months of travel led him to experience a multitude of natural, cultural, culinary, and scientific wonders. For example, he saw (and heard) glaciers, extinct volcanoes, and the smallest species of penguins in New Zealand; visited the Sydney Opera House and the Museum of Old and New Art in Australia; and experienced capsule hotels, shrines, castles, and a Toyota textile and automotive museum in Japan.

A big part of his travel focus, however, was on the experiences he had as an academic: making contributions and connections with individuals at schools, universities, and conferences, and learning about the educational culture of three distant countries.

New Zealand: Conference Connections

Embarking on a cruise ship and leaving Vancouver in September 2015, Dr. Bartley arrived in New Zealand in early November to participate in the Annual Conference of the New Zealand Association for Research in Education. The theme of the conference was “Emancipation through Education.”

“The conference was held at *Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangī* – an Indigenous educational center focused on promoting, growing, and sustaining Māori language, knowledge and culture in all its manifestations,” he explains. “It led to four days of immersion in New Zealand educational research with an extended focus on Māori and Pacifica education.”

At the conference, Dr. Bartley gave two presentations: *Portfolio Assessment in Pre-service Teacher Education: Changing from ‘Hard’ to Digital Portfolios* (presented as part of the “Assessment in a Digital Age” panel), and *Science and Mathematics Single Sex Classes for At-Risk Boys in a Mixed School*.

He also spent time at the University of Waikato, discussing how approaches from the book he had co-authored on data literacy might be applied to their teacher education program.

He explains that “the faculty members at Waikato, and all of the



Feeding 85-100 year-old long-finned eels at the National Kiwi Centre in Hokitika, New Zealand



Little Blue Penguin, New Zealand

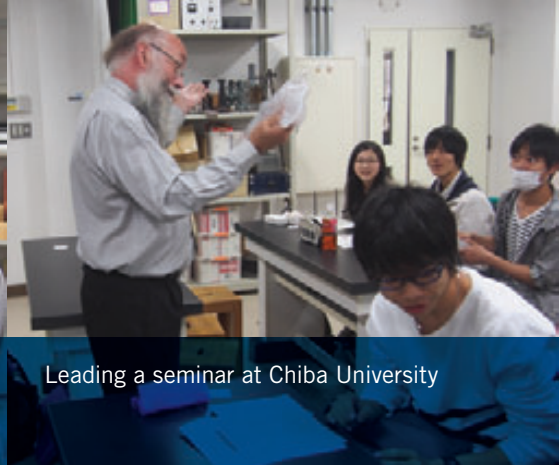
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Working with interpreter Saito-San at the Shizuoka Science Centre STEM Program, Japan



With Dr. Shuichi Yamashita at Chiba University



Leading a seminar at Chiba University

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universities I visited on my sabbatical, were overjoyed to act as host. I spent a day at the University at Waikato and was asked, ‘why not visit longer?’”

Australia: Connecting with Science Education Professors

In January 2016 Dr. Bartley and his wife arrived in Wollongong, Australia during a heat wave.

“January is mid-summer in Australia, and the heat can reach a 41°C daytime high!” he explained.

Although schools were not in session in January, he connected with science education professors, Dr. Garry Hoban and Dr. Wendy Neilsen, at the University of Wollongong.

Bringing in his experiences as a former member of the steering committee for the Ontario Teacher Qualifying Test, he and the professors discussed competency testing and literacy/numeracy testing in pre-service teacher education, as well as promoting teaching science through inquiry.

Regarding his time in Wollongong, Dr. Bartley noted that, “It’s an interesting city in terms of science and technology, in some ways similar to Thunder Bay. There is traditional heavy industry such as the Port Kembla Steelworks, which we were able to visit. We spent time in the strip mill and also a thriving Pacific Ocean port.”

Japan: A Visiting Professor and Classroom Presenter

In February, after a brief visit to Singapore, Dr. Bartley and his wife arrived in Shizuoka, Japan, where he was a Visiting Professor at Shizuoka University for seven weeks.

There, he worked with Dr. Yoshisuke Kumano, who actively promotes Japanese STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education. Dr. Kumano is also the Principal Investigator for the “Future Scientist Program,” a project supporting high-achieving Grades 6-8 students to develop the ability to design, perform, and explain their own scientific investigations.

A highlight of Drs. Bartley and MacPhail’s time in Shizuoka was being the international guests of honour in the culminating student research STEM event, which took place at the Shizuoka Science Museum.

“This was a high stakes event for students (and their parents),” Dr. Bartley notes, adding that Japanese culture places a very high value on science and technology. “After their presentations, students were expected to respond to questions from the judges.”

Dr. Bartley participated in the questioning process and was given the honour of making concluding comments at the end of the day. He also presented a seminar for Dr. Kumano’s research

group at the University, speaking on the topic of “Pre-service Teacher Education in Science at Lakehead University.”

He made further presentations at another Japanese University – Chiba University in the eastern suburbs of Tokyo – where he spent two weeks as the guest of Dr. Shuichi Yamashita. During his time there, he discussed how he promoted open inquiry in science methods courses, and organized a hands-on activity for a science education class of 50 first-year pre-service teachers.

“I wanted to give the Japanese students and their faculty a taste of what my students at Lakehead experience, so I organized an activity called “The Ice Breaker,” he explains. “The objective was to work in teams of three to melt a bag of ice as quickly as possible, without using electricity, water, gas, or any laboratory equipment. This was consistent with the new strong emphasis on ‘active learning’ in science curricula in Japan.”

Dr. Bartley also visited elementary, junior high, and senior high schools during his time in Japan.

Visiting science, mathematics, and English lessons, he made classroom presentations and participated in a formal Lesson Study in a Grade 4 class (Lesson Study is a process in which teams of teachers plan and study lesson instruction collaboratively, to determine what works best for student learning).

Overall, his time in the country was an eye-opening experience about the educational culture in Japan.

“I was really surprised to see that active learning has come to be an almost essential component of education in Japan. Museums, such as The Museum of Musical Instruments in Hamamatsu, and the Edo-Tokyo Museum, were interactive and engaging on many levels. In classrooms, science lessons focused on developing understanding through inquiry, with students as young as Grade 4 having freedom to take their investigations further. I sense that it is a good time to be a science student in Japan.”

Returning to Canada

In April 2016, Dr. Bartley and his wife boarded a ship in Yokohama and set sail for Vancouver. The ship sailed north to Hokkaido, visiting Hakodate Museum of Northern Peoples before crossing the North Pacific Ocean and Bering Sea to Kodiak, Alaska. The ship approached Johns Hopkins Glacier as calving was occurring: to describe it as “spectacular” does not do it justice, he notes. After 19 days at sea, they arrived in Vancouver.

Spotlight on Sheila Wilson

Undergraduate Programs Administrator

Sheila Wilson began working at Lakehead University in 1983, and joined the Faculty of Education in 1985. Affectionately known as “Wilson” to many, she is known around the building for her sense of humour, her say-it-like-it-is attitude, and her flair for fashion, jewellery, and multi-coloured fingernails. After more than 30 years in the Faculty – with plans to stay for a couple more years before she retires – Sheila shared what she enjoys most about her job, the changes she has seen over the years, and her hobbies, interests, and future plans.

A Respectable Ditch Starts a Respectable Career

“I began my career at Lakehead in the Registrar’s office, at a time when all student records were still being processed on paper. It was busy, but we had fun! For the first couple of years I filled in and helped out all over. Eventually an opportunity came up in the Faculty of Education, when one of the support staff was going to be out of town and they needed someone to type a book for Dr. James Angus (a former Dean of Education).

The title of the book was *A Respectable Ditch: A History of the Trent Severn Waterway, 1833-1920* and it was very thick: 472 pages! I typed it on an IBM Selectric typewriter. Jim [Dr. Angus] would go through it, make revisions, and tell me, “Okay, white out one word here, but put in two.” My job would be to find a way to make this work and fit without any of the page numbers changing.

I finished the book quickly and everyone was pretty impressed. Eventually the woman I had filled in for moved to another position, and she encouraged me to apply for this one. I got the job and must have behaved myself for the three months’ probation ... because I was in!

I tend to work quickly and steadily – I don’t like my inbox to have anything in it; it has to be empty. If another member of the support team wasn’t there, or if work wasn’t getting done fast enough, I would do it. That’s how my reputation built up.”

An Expanding Role

“I’ve seen a lot of changes over the years. One is the technology. I started here on an IBM typewriter with the built-in erasing tape. Then came the computers with the big five-and-a-half inch floppy disks, remember those? And then we moved to the three-and-a-half inch floppy, and now the zip drive, and of course email and the internet. I’m old school and don’t like doing a lot with internet, but I really like the secretarial part of my job – formatting letters and graphs and diagrams.

Over the years I have dabbled in all departments in the Faculty of Education. I’m primarily with the Undergraduate Department, but over the years my role has expanded a lot. When I first started there were only two support staff, me and one other lady who provided support for the AQ [Additional Qualifications] and Master’s programs. When she wasn’t around, I got to learn about those programs. I’ve also helped out for many years with organizing



teaching loads and supervision credits, which comes from the Dean’s office, and I help coordinate the contract lecturer hires. And I help out with the Aboriginal Education Department.

One of the best parts of my job has always been working with the students. When I started, we had maybe 175 students in the Faculty. Within six months though, the undergraduate program had already grown a little bigger. I moved from the main lobby area into the office I’m in today, because of the confidential advising work I do with students, like making sure they have the credits and grade point averages needed to graduate.

In my years here I’ve gone through a lot of Deans, a lot of Chairs, and seen the advent of new departments: Professional Development, Aboriginal Education, and the Joint PhD program. Sometimes I find my head swimming because of all the changes to the programs – but you know, this too shall pass” [laughs].

Life and Family in Thunder Bay

“I was born and raised in Thunder Bay. I have two children and three grandsons, and all of my family is here. I usually have at least one grandson on the weekend, and he (my youngest grandson) has got me going to church on Sundays, because he likes Sunday school! So we go to Trinity United Church and Reverend Randy Boyd (Contract Lecturer, Faculty of Education) is the Minister there.

In my free time I like to get out for walks, keep up with my yoga, and enjoy the fresh air we have here in Thunder Bay. I also like to check out crafters around town, and I like fashion and looks that are “different” in terms of style. That’s always been me – painting my nails different colours, wearing two different earrings, adding in more colour, mixing it up. My son is like that too; in high school he had a “fashion squad” and a new hairstyle every few months. He’d style his hair or dress in particular ways just to get people talking. I wonder where he got that from?

I was a single parent when my kids were growing up; they were “latchkey” kids because I used to work a lot of overtime. I’d often work all day, come home and make supper, then come back to work at night, and sometimes on the weekends. I enjoyed my work, and my kids learned responsibility, so it was okay. But in more recent years I have had, I guess you could call it an epiphany: I like my free time! And working on the

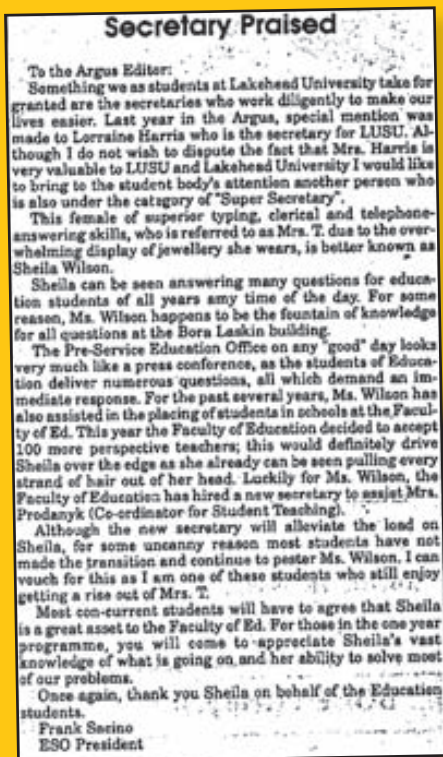
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Sheila and Karen Merkley



2006: Enjoying the sun at [former Dean] Julia O'Sullivan's home: Karen Lambert, Aldina DaRosa, and Sheila Wilson



Sheila the "Super Secretary" was praised in a write-up from the *Argus*, 1988



F: Diana Mason, Uta Hickin, Karen Merkley
B: Aldina DaRosa, Sheila

weekend? It can wait until Monday. You know, before we had computers and email and texting, it waited. So that's my new outlook: I enjoy my free time."

Stella the Pool Shark

"Many people call me "Wilson," and my kids get called "Wilson" ... it's always been that way, and I go with it. But when I shoot pool, my bar name is Stella!

I've been shooting pool ever since I was skipping out of Hammariskjold High School [laughs]. Really! I play league pool twice a week, on mixed teams of women and men. We play at different bars in town. It's a big league and there are different divisions of play. It's always been something I've really enjoyed doing; it's fun and it's competitive. Our teams have gone through different names: The Table Shakers, The Dragon Ladies. Right now we're Chalk 'N Balls.

The incentive in the league is if your team wins, you go to Las Vegas and play there for a week with other teams from Canada and the United States. So over the years I've been to Las Vegas five times, and I've decided that's enough! We would go in June and the heat there is unreal. It was fun, but I prefer the fresh air here at home."

Retirement Plans

"Everybody around here needs to put up with me for a couple more years, because I'm not planning to retire until June 2019. But, you can bet I'll be getting out of here before the next Ontario College of Teachers' accreditation process in fall of that year! [laughs]

When I retire I want to do more snowshoeing, get back into recreational cross-country skiing, and stick to my yoga. And there's this new thing – pickleball – that's sort of like tennis, but you play with a paddle and the ball is full of holes, kind of like Swiss cheese. I'd like to try it. And I'd like buy myself a half-decent bike and do more physical activities all-around.

I'm a little leery that I may get bored without work, so I might look for opportunities to do some data entry part-time. I'd like to help people who aren't on computers yet, or who need information put into a database. I enjoy that kind of work; it doesn't bother me to sit in front of a computer and it's not mentally taxing. I can do straight data entry and don't think about it when I get home, and then I can go back the next day and continue on."

People Are the Most Memorable Aspect of Job

"My career at Lakehead has been really great. The people are the best part of the job and good friendships have evolved over the years. I've seen a lot of people come and go, but I like to keep tabs and stay in touch. For example, I still check in with [now-retired Lakehead professors] Dolores Wawia, Alan Bowd, Doug Thom, Rita Irwin, and Karen Reynolds.

I also really love working with the students. It's neat to see the names of students who have gone through the programs here coming up on lists of principals, superintendents, and higher-ups at the board level. Good for them! And I've seen generations of people go through, as well. For example, I used to work with Dr. Larry Korteweg, Dr. Lisa Korteweg's dad... so Lisa makes me feel really old!

Sometimes former students will come through the building and see me and ask: "Are you still here?!" And I'll look at them and say, "Of course I am! Somebody needs to improve this place!" [laughs]. It's been a great ride."

SCIENCE OLYMPICS

Celebrates Excitement of Science and Engineering



Fun! Science! Teamwork! Feats of Engineering!

Top science students from Northwestern Ontario gathered at Lakehead University in November to participate in the 7th annual Science Olympics, a one-day event that challenged Grades 9-12 students to apply their knowledge of biology, chemistry, math and engineering in creative and fun ways.

A joint venture by Lakehead's Faculty of Education, Faculty of Science and Environmental Studies, and Faculty of Engineering, the Science Olympics featured a series of timed challenges and problem-solving events.

"The Science Olympics is about students demonstrating what they know, and learning at the same time. It's about celebrating the excitement of science and engineering – or what we might call uber-geekiness – in a good way!" explains Dr. Tony Bartley, Associate Professor and one of the event's organizers.

Eighty students from ten schools participated on either a Junior team (Grades 9-10) or a Senior team (Grades 11-12), with each team comprised of four students. Challenges were held throughout the day, with prizes awarded to the top teams at the end of the day.

Problem-Solving through Interactive Learning

The Science Olympics challenges required critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, and hands-on learning. Communication and teamwork were key to the successful completion of each event.

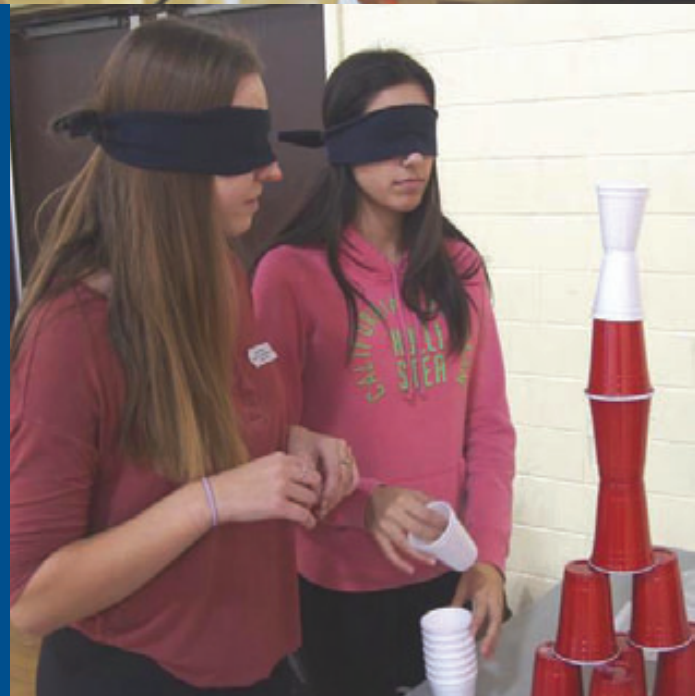
For one event, entitled "Chemical Constructions," students worked together to build 3-D molecular modules, such as sulphur dioxide, out of coloured pipe cleaners.

For another, "Hot Cross Biology," they completed a natural history crossword puzzle that required them to correctly identify items in photographs and real-world materials, such as samples of lichen and fungi.

For the "Fermi Questions" event – named after Nobel Laureate physicist Enrico Fermi, who was famous for his ability to do extremely complex calculations in his head – the teams had 40 minutes to answer 25 math questions through estimation and approximation, without using calculators, computers, or cell phones.

"Using only pencils, students were challenged to answer questions including: 'How much blood is pumped through the average female heart per year?'" Tony explains. "A question like this requires really good mental mathematical skills, as the students needed to come up with an average heart rate per minute, hour, day, and then year ... and factor in that the heart pumps slower at night, for example."

In the culminating afternoon event – "The Queen Bee Challenge" – teams competed to build the tallest tower using only disposable cups and



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Science Olympics Winners, 2016

Congratulations to the top three winning teams in each category!

Junior Team (Grades 9-10) Winners

1. St. Patrick High School: St. Patrick Juniors
2. Sir Winston Churchill CVI: Trojan Juniors
3. Westgate CVI: Westgate Jr. Tigers

Senior Team (Grades 11-12) Winners

1. Sir Winston Churchill CVI: Trojan Seniors
2. Hammarskjold High School: Damsel Falcons
3. Westgate CVI: Westgate Sr. Tigers

a roll of tape. The catch was that two of the team members, the “worker bees,” were blindfolded, and they were the only ones who could build the tower, while others members acted as “queen bees” and provided the verbal instructions.

A Team Effort: Faculty and Students Work Together

Preparing the Science Olympics involved a community of people. The committee was comprised of Dr. Tony Bartley, Dr. John O’Meara (Dean of Education), Dr. Peter Hollings (Interim Dean of Science and Environmental Studies), Dr. David Barnett (Dean of Engineering), and Dr. Sylvie Landry (Administrative Officer, Department of Engineering).

Faculty of Education graduate student Justin Pucci prepared and managed the score spreadsheet, and over 30 students from the three faculties helped to coordinate the day, volunteering as facilitators, time-keepers, and score-keepers for the events. Some of the Bachelor of Education student volunteers were in the third year of helping out with the Science Olympics.

BEd student Matt Valley, whose teachable subjects are Math and Physics, helped to facilitate and mark the “Fermi Questions” event. Watching the students working together was very impressive, he noted.

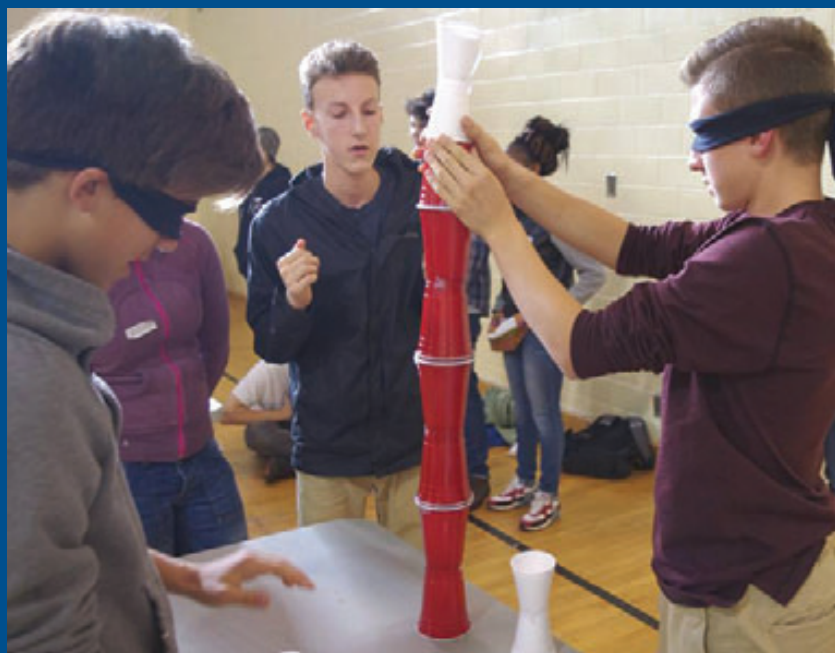
“It was cool to see how they tackled the questions as teams. Some would try to rush through and get answers, while other team members would try to think it through and double-check the math of their teammates. They were all working together, questioning and correcting each other. And to answer those questions quickly ... you need to be so good at mental math and estimating, because the questions are not easy at all!”

He added that “marking the answers afterwards was also pretty amazing, because you could see what students are capable of, and how they were getting many of the answers right.”

The challenge inherent in the events meant students were pushed to apply their knowledge and skills to achieve success.

Dr. John O’Meara explains that the events were about fostering inquiry in science, engineering and technology, and mathematics, but also about having fun while learning.

“In our eyes, success isn’t just about winning, it’s about learning,” he said.



Faculty News and Awards



Dr. Gerald Walton Wins Contribution to Teaching Award

Congratulations to Dr. Gerald Walton on his recent Contribution to Teaching Award!

Dr. Walton teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in social justice education, addressing topics including bullying, violence, gender identity and diversity, sexuality, difference, media culture, and more. When asked about what receiving the award means to him, he shared the following:

"I never aimed to be a teacher. It was never a childhood dream or a higher calling. It wasn't even a desire when I was doing my doctoral studies. The first opportunity to teach came on the heels of completing my PhD. Elation at the offer quickly yielded to debilitating anxiety and crippling imposter syndrome. Fear of failure. Fear of students. It came to a critical point of either jumping in with both feet or backing away and living with regret. Opting for the former, I remember eagerly entering that very first undergraduate class and leaving the room two hours later feeling a mix of relief and hope. The crisis was over.

"Now in the Faculty of Education at Lakehead University, I continue to feel a measure of fear in the lead-up to every course I teach, not in a paralyzing way, but in a way that reminds me that fear and humility are strengths as an instructor. With thanks to the graduate students who nominated me for the award, the Contribution to Teaching Award validates my struggle to get up in front of the room full of students when each and every course begins. A decade of teaching has given me confidence and a love for teaching because of, not despite, angst and self-doubt."



New Book by Dr. Connie Russell and Lakehead Alumna Dr. Erin Cameron Wins Critics' Choice Award

A recent book edited by Dr. Connie Russell and Education PhD alumna Dr. Erin Cameron (Assistant Professor, Memorial University) has won a 2016 American Educational Studies Association Critics' Choice Award.

The Fat Pedagogy Reader: Challenging Weight-Based Oppression through Critical Education (published by Peter Lang) brings together an international roster of highly respected authors concerned about weight-based oppression in formal and informal educational settings.

The first of its kind, the book has been described as "a major achievement of critical pedagogical scholarship ... Absolutely necessary reading and extremely timely."

For more information on the book, visit <https://www.peterlang.com/view/product/30790>



Dr. Sonja Grover Releases New Book and is Co-Investigator on Partnership Development Grant

Dr. Sonja Grover has published a new book with Routledge, entitled *The Responsibility to Protect: Perspectives on the Concept's Meaning, Proper Application and Value*.

This edited book presents the views of various international law and human rights experts on the contested meaning, scope of application, value, and viability of the principle of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). R2P refers to the notion that the international community has a legal responsibility to protect civilians against the potential, or ongoing occurrence, of the mass atrocity crimes of genocide, large-scale war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity.

Dr. Grover is also a co-investigator on a three-year, \$200,000 SSHRC Partnership Development Grant awarded to *The International and Canadian Child Rights Partnership*. She will be doing case analysis on child participation in the context of child refugee protection.

For more information on Dr. Grover's work, visit <http://www.groverbooks.net/index.htm>

