

UNIVERSITY SECRETARY

POSITION BRIEF



Lakehead
UNIVERSITY





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APPLICATION PROCESS

Lakehead University has an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2019-2024 with a goal to recruit and retain a diverse workforce as measured by increasing representation of under-represented groups among applicants, candidates and hires. We encourage candidates to self-identify, if they are from an under-represented group, and prefer candidates with the knowledge, competencies and relationships derived from lived experience.

Lakehead University is committed to supporting an accessible environment and will accommodate job applicants with disabilities during the selection process.

This position will be based at the Thunder Bay campus.



University Secretary

Lakehead University

THE OPPORTUNITY

Lakehead University invites applications and nominations for the position of University Secretary.

Reporting to the President and serving as a trusted advisor to the Chair of the Board of Governors, Senate leadership, and the leadership of the Ogimaawin Indigenous Education Council (OIEC), the University Secretary serves as the University's senior governance officer and primary governance expert.

The University Secretary plays a critical role in supporting effective governance, institutional accountability, and informed decision-making across the University. As steward of the University's governance framework, the University Secretary helps ensure the integrity of governance processes and supports the effective operation of Lakehead University's bicameral governance system.

The University Secretary provides strategic leadership and expert advice on governance practices, governance effectiveness, policy development, legislative and regulatory obligations, institutional accountability, and governance risk. Working closely with governors, senators, Indigenous governance representatives, senior administrators, faculty, staff, and students, the University Secretary helps ensure that Lakehead's governance structures operate effectively, transparently, and in alignment with the University's mission, strategic priorities, and commitment to Indigenous partnership.

The University Secretary leads the University Secretariat and is responsible for supporting the Board of Governors, Senate, OIEC, the Chancellor Electoral Board, and their respective committees. The University Secretary ensures that governance processes are conducted in accordance with the Lakehead University Act, University bylaws, policies, and the principles of collegial governance while promoting governance excellence and continuous improvement.

The University Secretary serves as a steward of institutional governance, providing expert advice, governance leadership, institutional memory, and continuity during periods of organizational change and leadership transition.

LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY AT A GLANCE

- 3 Campus Locations: Thunder Bay, Orillia, and Barrie
- Home to over 9,300 students,
- including: 7,708 undergraduate students,
- 1,603 graduate students
- 1,548 international students from 85 countries
- 13% of domestic students identify as Indigenous
- 27 research chairs
- Over 70,000 alumni in 111 countries
- Over 2,000 faculty and staff between two campuses
- Host of the West Campus of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine University

9 Faculties at Lakehead:

- Business Administration
- Education
- Engineering
- Graduate Studies
- Health and Behavioral Sciences
- Bora Laskin Faculty of Law
- Natural Resources Management
- Science and Environmental Studies
- Social Sciences and Humanities

Mission

- To be a comprehensive university that cultivates ethical and innovative thinkers and problem solvers.

Vision

- To empower a local and global sustainable future through transformative learning and community partnership.

Beliefs

- We believe our students, staff and faculty make Lakehead University different. We believe that our students want an innovative comprehensive university where they have the highest chance of success. We believe that our students have the passion and drive to realize their dreams and succeed. We believe that our students want the intellectual freedom to pursue the unconventional. We believe in the diversity that comes from students, staff and faculty of many cultures and nations. We believe that our students, staff and faculty are passionate about both their own individuality and their communities.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [University Governance](#)
- [Report to the Community](#)
- [Strategic Plan](#)
- [Academic Plan](#)
- [Research Plan](#)
- [Indigenous Initiatives](#)
- [Equity, Diversity, Inclusion Action Plan](#)
- [Thunder Bay Campus](#)
- [Orillia Campus](#)

Campus Locations

Lakehead Thunder Bay is located on the traditional lands of the Fort William First Nation, Signatory to the Robinson Superior Treaty of 1850.

Nestled under the shadow of the stoic Sleeping Giant in the heart of the city, our Thunder Bay campus is among the most picturesque in the nation. Many of the University's buildings are grouped around Lake Tamblyn and our residence complexes hug the banks of the McIntyre River.

Fieldwork and hands-on learning are integral to a high number of our programs, taking advantage of the vibrant, natural laboratories right in our backyard. Our northern landscape also presents ample opportunity for world-class outdoor sports and activities. Students here can opt to take a ski break or hiking trip between study sessions and maintain an ideal work-play balance with ease. Over 7,500 students call the Thunder Bay Campus home.

Facilities belonging to a wide array of professional options are located on the Thunder Bay Campus including nursing, kinesiology, forestry, business, engineering, education, social work, law, and medicine.

Lakehead Orillia is located on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg. The Anishinaabeg include the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Pottawatomi nations, collectively known as the Three Fires Confederacy. There are 2000 students (which include undergraduate, graduate, and international) enrolled at the Orillia campus.



Lakehead Orillia offers a unique interdisciplinary studies option, combining the arts and sciences, as well as programs in business, education, and social work.

This fall, Lakehead University will also launch the **Barrie STEM Hub in Barrie, Ontario**. Lakehead was recently ranked 6th on *Maclean's* 2026 list of Canada's Best Primarily Undergraduate Universities and tied for 1st in Ontario among institutions in this category. The university has a strong reputation for innovative programming and cutting-edge research. It offers a wide range of undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs, along with select diploma options, designed to support student success across disciplines.

KEY AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Governance Leadership and Strategic Advice

- Serves as the University's principal advisor on governance matters to the President, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board of Governors, Senate leadership, OIEC leadership, governors, senators, and senior administrators.
- Acts as the University's primary governance expert and promotes governance excellence across the institution.
- Provides strategic advice regarding governance structures, governance effectiveness, institutional accountability, governance risk, and decision-making processes.
- Supports effective bicameral governance by fostering communication, coordination, and alignment among the Board of Governors, Senate, OIEC, and the administration.
- Promotes strong and productive relationships among the Board of Governors, Senate, OIEC, senior administration, and the broader University community.

- Anticipates governance, procedural, and policy challenges and provides proactive advice and solutions to institutional leaders and governing bodies.
- Monitors emerging governance trends, legislative developments, and sector best practices and advises institutional leaders regarding their implications for the University.
- Provides institutional continuity and stewardship of governance processes during periods of leadership transition.

Support to Governing and Advisory Bodies

- Ensures the effective coordination, support, and administration of the Board of Governors, Senate, OIEC, the Chancellor Electoral Board, and their respective committees.
- Serves as Secretary to the Board of Governors, Senate, and OIEC.
- Advises governing bodies and committees on procedural matters, governance principles, legislative requirements, bylaws, and policy frameworks.
- Works closely with the President, Board Chair, committee chairs, Senate leadership, and OIEC leadership to ensure the timely consideration of matters within the University's governance framework.
- Supports governing bodies in fulfilling their fiduciary, strategic, academic, and policy responsibilities.
- Coordinates governance processes related to presidential searches, chancellor searches, elections, appointments, and other governance activities.
- Ensures the effective flow of information among governing bodies and their committees.
- Supports orientation, education, development, and ongoing governance training for governors, senators, and committee members.
- Ensures that decisions of governing bodies are made in accordance with applicable legislation, University bylaws, policies, and established governance processes.

Governance Administration and Records Management

- Oversees the administration of governance processes, including meetings, elections, appointments, and committee operations.
- Ensures that governance documentation is complete, accurate, accessible, and appropriately maintained.
- Maintains the official records and archives of the University's governing bodies.
- Preserves institutional memory and governance precedents and provides historical interpretation of governance practices when required.
- Oversees systems and processes that support governance activities and preserve institutional knowledge.
- Ensures compliance with privacy, records management, and transparency requirements.
- Maintains the confidentiality of governance deliberations and sensitive institutional matters.

University Policy Framework

- Oversees the University's policy framework and related governance processes.
- Provides guidance regarding the development, review, interpretation, and implementation of University policies and bylaws.
- Works collaboratively with policy owners and institutional leaders to identify policy gaps, ensure timely policy review, and maintain alignment between policies, governing legislation, and institutional priorities.

- Supports policy owners and senior leaders in maintaining a current, effective, and accessible policy framework.
- Promotes consistency, accountability, and appropriate delegation of authority across institutional policies and governance documents.

Senior Administrative Support

- Serves as a key liaison among the President, Executive Team, Board of Governors, Senate, and OIEC.
- Provides governance advice and support to senior leaders on matters requiring Board, Senate, or OIEC consideration.
- Supports institutional planning and decision-making by ensuring appropriate governance pathways are followed.
- Responds to requests for governance information, interpretation, and advice from members of the University community.

Leadership of the University Secretariat

- Provides strategic leadership to the University Secretariat.
- Establishes priorities and service standards for governance support functions.
- Recruits, develops, mentors, and evaluates Secretariat staff.
- Fosters a culture of professionalism, service excellence, collaboration, and continuous improvement.
- Supports succession planning and organizational effectiveness within the Secretariat.
- Ensures the delivery of high-quality governance services to the University's governing bodies and stakeholders.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES

The successful candidate will be recognized for their integrity, objectivity, sound judgment, discretion, and ability to build trusted relationships across diverse constituencies.

We recognize that no candidate is likely to possess every qualification listed below. Lakehead University encourages applications from individuals whose experience, skills, and perspectives will enable them to excel in this role and contribute to the University's continued success.

- Significant progressively responsible experience in governance, university administration, public administration, legal affairs, board relations, or a related field.
- Demonstrated experience supporting or advising governing boards, councils, senates, or other complex decision-making bodies.
- Experience within a university environment and an understanding of bicameral and collegial governance.
- Demonstrated ability to provide sound judgment and strategic advice to senior leaders and governing bodies.
- Strong understanding of governance principles, board effectiveness, policy development, institutional accountability, and decision-making processes.

- Knowledge of relevant legislation, governance frameworks, and regulatory requirements affecting Canadian universities.
 - Demonstrated experience advising on policy development, policy interpretation, and governance frameworks.
 - Working knowledge of parliamentary procedure and meeting governance practices.
 - Excellent analytical, organizational, and problem-solving abilities.
 - Exceptional written, verbal, and interpersonal communication skills.
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- Proven ability to build credibility and trusted relationships with governors, senators, Indigenous governance representatives, faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders.
 - Demonstrated ability to maintain procedural integrity while fostering respectful and collaborative relationships.
 - Ability to bring clarity to complex issues and support effective decision-making in a consultative environment.
 - Demonstrated commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, reconciliation, and respectful engagement with Indigenous communities.
 - Exceptional judgment, diplomacy, discretion, and integrity.
 - Strong leadership and people-management skills.

A bachelor's degree is required.

A graduate degree in law, public administration, governance, higher education leadership, business administration, or a related field is preferred.

Professional education or certification in governance, corporate secretarial practice, parliamentary procedure, policy development, or a related discipline is considered an asset. Governance designations such as ICD.D, C.Dir., GPC.D, or equivalent governance credentials are considered assets.



BIOGRAPHY - Dr. Gillian Siddall, President & Vice-Chancellor

Dr. Gillian Siddall became President and Vice-Chancellor of Lakehead University in July 2023. Since returning to Lakehead, she has focused on strengthening a culture of collaboration, respect, and shared purpose across the university community while positioning the institution to serve communities across Northern Ontario and Simcoe County and ensuring the long-term sustainability of its campuses and regional initiatives.

Under her leadership, the university launched a new institutional strategic plan, *Evolution: Lakehead University's Strategic Plan 2025–2030*, which sets a clear direction for the future with priorities focused on transformative student experiences, people and culture, financial sustainability, and strong community and industry partnerships. Her presidency has also seen the expansion of Lakehead's regional presence, including the establishment of the Barrie STEM Hub, creating new opportunities for students and strengthening partnerships across Simcoe County.

A major milestone during her presidency has been advancing the Collaborative Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Program (CDVMP), a landmark partnership between Lakehead University and the Ontario Veterinary College at the University of Guelph. Designed to train veterinarians for the North, in the North, the program represents the first expansion of veterinary education in Ontario in a generation and will welcome a cohort of 20 northern students each year.

Dr. Siddall previously served as President of Emily Carr University of Art + Design and earlier as Vice-President Academic and Provost at OCAD University. She first joined Lakehead in 1998 as a faculty member in English and later served as founding director of the Teaching and Learning Centre and as Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities.

She holds an Honours BA and MA from the University of Guelph and a PhD from Western University. A scholar of Canadian literature, her research explores musical improvisation within and beyond literary contexts. Outside of her academic work, Dr. Siddall is an accomplished jazz vocalist and choral singer and a co-founder of the Guelph Jazz Festival.

LIVING IN THUNDER BAY

With a population of 107,909, Thunder Bay is the largest city by population in Northwestern Ontario and with 2200 hours of sunlight each year, it's the sunniest city in eastern Canada. The city is often referred to as the "Lakehead", or "Canadian Lakehead", because of its location at the end of Great Lakes navigation on the Canadian side of the border.

Thunder Bay is home to a variety of music and performance arts venues including the Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra, the only professional orchestra between Winnipeg and Toronto. It is also home to the Thunder Bay Art Gallery which has a collection of national significance and specializes in the works of Indigenous artists.

Thunder Bay's proximity to the wilderness of the Boreal Forest and the rolling hills and mountains of the Canadian Shield allow its residents to enjoy its natural beauty and engage in active lifestyles. With 150,000 lakes and rivers in the area, it is the Gateway to Northwest Ontario. There are many world-class attractions and historical sites to explore in Thunder Bay such as the Fort William Historical Park. This historical park is also home to one of the largest telescopes in Central Canada located on site in the David Thompson Astronomical Observatory. Thunder Bay is also home to the iconic Terry Fox Monument which commemorates cancer research activist Terry Fox's Marathon of Hope.

For more information on things to see and do in Thunder Bay, please follow the links below:

[Things to See and Do](#)

[Parks and Scenic Views](#)

[Winter Recreation](#)

[Shopping and Dining](#)