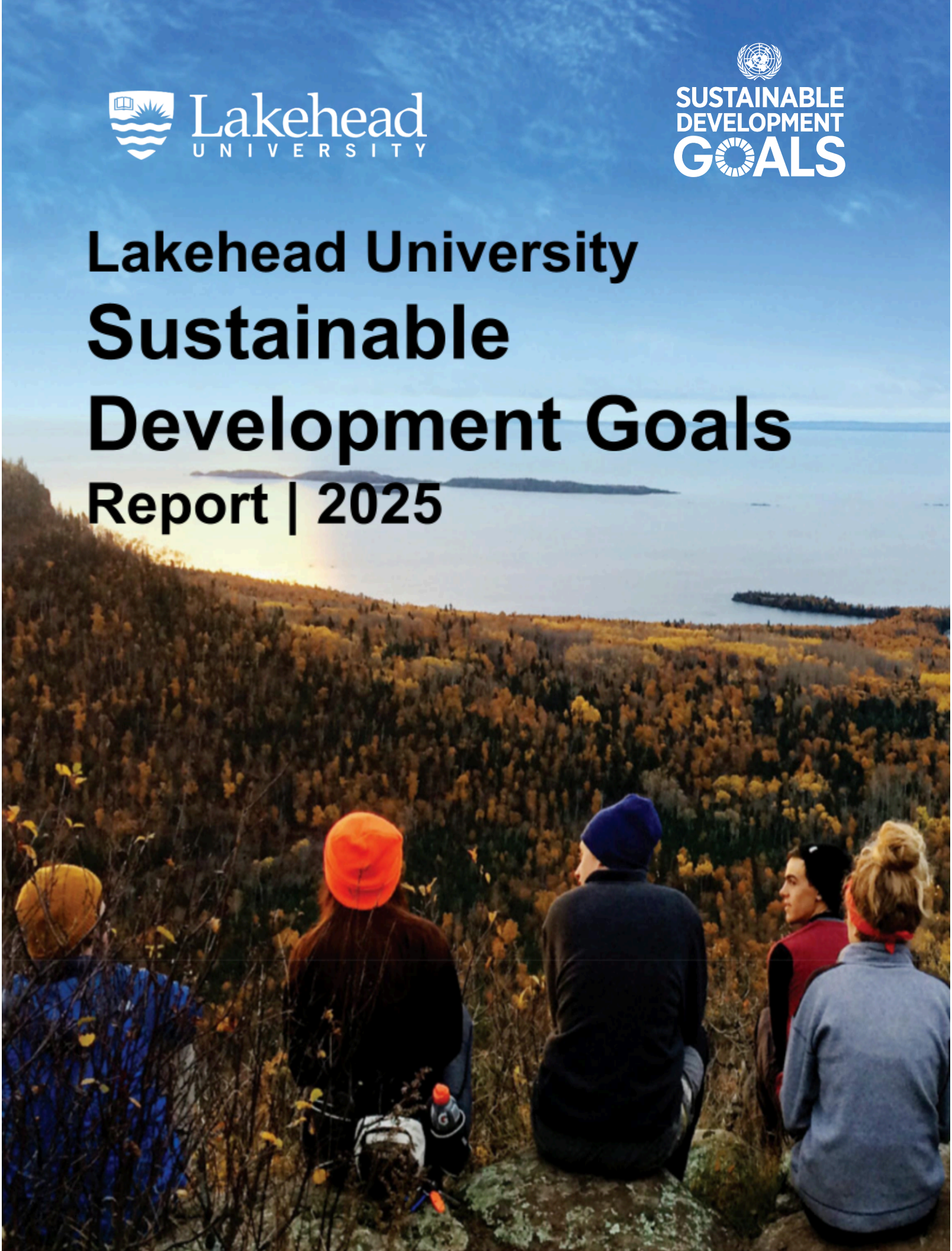


Lakehead UNIVERSITY

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Lakehead University Sustainable Development Goals

Report | 2025



Lakehead University's 2018-2025 Strategic Plan and 2019-2026 Academic Plan both articulate the University's longstanding commitments to advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Specifically, Lakehead's Academic Plan acknowledges that many social, economic, and environmental changes are magnified in the communities Lakehead serves, presenting real world challenges that Lakehead is well positioned to help address through innovative approaches to teaching, learning, research, and expanded community partnerships that are focused on developing the next generation of leaders equipped with the skills and experience required to address global challenges.

This presents an opportunity for Lakehead to develop regional education ecosystems in Northwestern Ontario and Simcoe County through expanded partnerships that align to these "grand" societal challenges, positioning Lakehead as a beacon, both locally and globally, as a leader in sustainability, social justice, and Indigenous education.

Lakehead's locations in Northwestern Ontario and Simcoe County provide a unique and profound perspective on the multi-dimensional aspects of sustainability, including human and ecological health, culture and Indigenous rights, social justice, secure livelihoods, and workplace well-being. Lakehead's Thunder Bay campus is situated beside one of the world's largest freshwater lakes, Lake Superior, and next to the boreal forest, uniquely positioning it to contribute a northern voice to critical discussions on sustainability.

Lakehead University recognizes the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals requires cross-sector collaboration. Success is dependent on a collective working together to advance solutions through sharing of resources, knowledge and expertise, and development of innovative partnerships to advance pioneering solutions to these global challenges.

Finally, recognizing the importance of knowledge exchange in support of advancing the goals, included in this report is an overview of how Lakehead is advancing each of the SDGs through data, measurement, partnerships, and operations.

SDG 1: No Poverty

Lakehead University's campuses are located in regions in which the median income is below the provincial and national average. As one of the largest employers, post-secondary institutions and economic hubs in Northwestern Ontario and Simcoe County, Lakehead University has a direct impact on the economic and social resiliency in the regions it serves.



Our societal impact focuses on our research on poverty and support for impoverished students and marginalized members of our local community.

Research and Innovation

Local: Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research (CRaNHR)
The Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research (CRaNHR) at Lakehead University conducts research on social determinants of health, including food security, health-care access, and inequities affecting rural, northern, and Indigenous communities. Through community partnerships in Thunder Bay, CRaNHR's research helps inform local policies and practices that address barriers linked to poverty and support improved health equity.

Regional & National: Lakehead University & Area Food Strategy
Dr. Charles Levkoe serves on the Executive Committee of the Thunder Bay & Area Food Strategy, bringing together municipalities, public health, Indigenous organizations, producers, and community partners to influence regional food policy and improve food security across Northwestern Ontario. The research contributed to the Thunder Bay + Area Community Food System Report Card, which tracks 119 indicators across seven pillars, including food access, infrastructure, procurement and production

In 2025, Dr. Charles Z. Levkoe, Professor in Lakehead University's Department of Health Sciences and Canada Research Chair in Equitable and Sustainable Food Systems, co-authored the publicly available report Understanding Food Systems Governance in a Changing World: The Canadian Food Policy Advisory Council. The report examines the Council's role in advising the federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada on food policy implementation, highlighting opportunities and challenges in participatory governance. The research explores how collaboration among government, researchers, and civil society can strengthen democratic decision-making and contribute to more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable food systems.

Global: International Collaboration on Youth Development and Policy Engagement
In 2025, Lakehead University advanced international collaboration on youth development, skills training, employment and policy engagement through Dr. Gary Pluim's Educational Transfer Between Small States of the Commonwealth research project. Working with Ministries of Youth and Education in Commonwealth countries and the Commonwealth of Learning, the project

supports the development of youth-worker training courses and micro-credentials to strengthen professional capacity and improve support for young people. Lakehead also hosted the Global Citizenship Summit for Youth Voice, Policy, and Action, bringing together participants from 12 countries to exchange perspectives on global challenges, civic engagement and youth participation in decision-making. By strengthening youth workers' capacity, supporting pathways to employment, promoting socioeconomic inclusion and encouraging youth participation in decision-making, these initiatives address structural factors associated with poverty, including barriers to skills development, youth unemployment and unequal access to economic opportunities.

Teaching and Student Life

Achievement Program
Lakehead University's Achievement Program creates a pathway to post-secondary education for students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. Delivered in partnership with local and regional school boards, the program provides mentorship, academic support, and first-year undergraduate tuition for eligible students who remain in the program through high school, helping to reduce financial barriers and expand access to higher education. In 2024 - 2025, there were 464 active students participating in the Achievement program across 41 schools in five school boards.

Indigenous Student Services Centre
Lakehead University's Indigenous Student Services Centre supports the success and well-being of First Nations, Inuit and Métis students by providing culturally supportive academic, career, personal and financial services. Students have access to academic assistance, mentorship, cultural programming, Elder support, and guidance with scholarships and bursaries, creating a welcoming environment that recognizes and celebrates Indigenous identities, cultures and communities.

Creating Pathways to Higher Education
Lakehead's commitment to reducing poverty begins before students arrive on campus. 9% of domestic undergraduate students were enrolled in unique access programs in 2024–25, including Gateway, the Indigenous Nursing Entry Program and the Indigenous Transition Year Program. These programs provide pathways for students who may face academic, geographic or socioeconomic barriers to traditional university admission, helping expand access to post-secondary education and its long-term economic benefits.

Holistic and Equitable Admissions
The Bora Laskin Faculty of Law takes a holistic approach to admissions, recognizing that applicants come from diverse backgrounds and may have experienced different personal, educational, and socioeconomic circumstances. By not imposing minimum GPA or LSAT requirements or assigning fixed weights to individual components of the application, the admissions process considers the applicant as a whole.

Reducing Financial Barriers Through Entrance Scholarships

Lakehead University's Entrance Scholarship program helps reduce the financial barriers associated with pursuing a university education. In 2024–25, eligible domestic students entering directly from high school were automatically considered for Academic Entrance Scholarships, with awards ranging from $750 to $4,000 per year for up to four years, depending on academic achievement; students with an average of 95% or higher could receive free tuition for up to four years. These renewable awards provide students with financial support throughout their studies and help make post-secondary education more accessible.

$11+ M
in scholarships and bursaries are provided by Lakehead annually to support student access (2024/25)

Ensuring bottom financial quintile student success

Lakehead University seeks to admit students from the bottom 20% of the household-income distribution, reflecting the socioeconomic characteristics of the communities it serves in Northwestern Ontario and Simcoe County. As an access-focused institution, Lakehead considers financial need, educational background, and regional demographics in its approach to recruitment and admissions.

95%
of domestic undergraduate students face one or more barriers to accessing post-secondary education (2024/25)

In 2024–25, 54% of domestic undergraduate students came from rural or northern communities, while 41.3% received OSAP based on financial need. In addition, 9% of domestic students were enrolled through unique access programs, and 4% were admitted with lower entering averages based on potential. These pathways help reduce financial, geographic, and educational barriers to university access for students from under-represented communities.

Lakehead University reduces financial barriers to post-secondary education through its Youth in Care Tuition Waiver. The program provides eligible current and former youth in care from Northwestern Ontario and Simcoe County with tuition and associated fee support for up to four years of undergraduate study. Applicants must meet the program's admission and financial-need requirements. The initiative specifically targets students who may face additional barriers to accessing and completing higher education.

Lakehead also provides targeted financial and academic support through the Lakehead University Work Study Program (LUWSP), which offers eligible undergraduate students paid employment opportunities to help offset educational expenses while gaining professional experience. Eligibility includes demonstrating financial need or receiving provincial student financial aid, alongside academic and enrolment requirements.

In addition, Lakehead's Student Success Centre provides academic support through peer mentorship, writing assistance, academic skills workshops, individual advising and transition programming. The mySupport program further connects students with academic, career, mental health, financial, cultural and accessibility resources based on their needs. These services help

students navigate university life, address barriers to academic progress and access appropriate support throughout their studies.

Direct Financial Assistance for Students
In 2024–25, Lakehead University provided just over $2 million in undergraduate domestic bursaries to help students manage the cost of their education. Bursaries are non-repayable financial awards primarily based on demonstrated financial need, providing direct assistance to students who may otherwise face financial barriers to pursuing or completing their degrees.

Lakehead also provided additional targeted assistance to students experiencing financial hardship, including $4,810 in grocery gift cards and $750 in Bookstore gift cards. Financial Aid further supports students who cannot afford graduation costs by waiving graduation fees, helping ensure that financial circumstances do not prevent students from participating in this important milestone.

Outreach

Accessible Mental Health Services
Lakehead University Psychology Clinic provides in-person and virtual psychological services across Northwestern Ontario while training graduate clinical psychology students. Services include psychotherapy, psychological assessments, workshops, and free mental health support for health and social service providers.

Advancing Access to Justice
Lakehead University Community Legal Services (LUCLS), operated through the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law, provides free legal services and public legal education to low-income and underserved residents across Northwestern Ontario. Supervised law students assist clients with matters including criminal and provincial offences, tenant rights, employment law, civil disputes, and Small Claims Court, while also providing legal information, advice, and community presentations to improve access to justice.

Supporting Access to Legal Services
Through Pro Bono Students Canada (PBSC), Lakehead law students provide free legal information, research, and support to individuals, community organizations, courts, and tribunals. Under the supervision of lawyers and legal professionals, students contribute to projects that address a range of legal and social issues affecting underserved communities. By providing accessible legal information and practical support at no cost, the program helps reduce financial barriers to legal services and strengthens access to justice across Northwestern Ontario.

Community-Based Health and Wellness
Compass North is a student-led clinic that provides accessible health services, health promotion workshops, and community-based research to support underserved populations in Thunder Bay. In collaboration with Lakehead University, NOSM University, and local community organizations, the clinic provides students with opportunities to gain hands-on experience while helping

address local health needs. Its outreach focuses on improving access to health information and services and supporting the well-being of individuals and communities who may face barriers to traditional health-care services.

Supporting Entrepreneurship and Innovation
Lakehead University's Ingenuity business incubator provides space, resources and educational opportunities to help entrepreneurs develop business ideas and support business growth. Its publicly documented services include workshops, competitions, makerspace equipment, a media room and guest speakers.

Additionally the Office of Innovation, Partnerships and Economic Development (IPED) provides free and low-cost resources to aspiring entrepreneurs on Lakehead University campuses, including mentorship, business start-up support, legal assistance, makerspaces, workshops, and partnerships with local organizations through the Ingenuity Ascend Accelerator. The program provided up to $5,000 per business idea to support eligible business-development costs. Six student-led start-ups completed the program in 2024–2025.

Global Reach

Lakehead University Student Refugee Program
Lakehead University is an institutional partner of the World University Services of Canada (WUSC) Student Refugee Program, which supports young refugees pursuing higher education in Canada. This program is unique in its direct link to post-secondary education and involves collaboration with local campus-based committees and student unions to raise funds and awareness for the program on their campus and in their community. Since its inception there have been over 20 refugee students sponsored from around the world, providing them with the opportunity to start a new life.

Administration and Operations

Bottom Financial Quintile Admission Target
Lakehead University supports access to higher education through the Academic Support Access Program (ASAP), which provides an entry pathway for eligible applicants whose academic averages fall slightly below the required admission average. The program combines admission access with academic advising, skill development, workshops and peer mentorship to help students transition successfully into university.

Lakehead University is committed to increasing enrolment among students from the bottom 20% of household income earners in Canada. Progress toward this institutional objective is monitored through the Board of Governors, the Common University Data Ontario (CUDO) reporting process and Lakehead's multi-year accountability agreement with the Government of Ontario. In 2024–25, Lakehead reported that its participation-rate target was achieved, with

participation rates of 4.70% in Ontario, 3.57% in Simcoe County and 2.12% in Northwestern Ontario.

SDG 2: Zero Hunger



This societal impact focuses on universities' research on hunger, teaching on food sustainability and commitment to tackling food waste and addressing hunger among students and local communities.

Lakehead University actively supports efforts to end hunger, improve food security, and promote sustainable agriculture locally and globally through research, education, and community engagement.

Research and Innovation

Lakehead University Agriculture Research Station
In 2025, Lakehead University Agricultural Research Station (LUARS), led by Dr. Muditha Heenkenda, advanced sustainable agriculture through drone technology, artificial intelligence and remote sensing to monitor crop health, predict yields and improve fertilizer use. This research helps farmers adapt to unpredictable weather, reduce costs and minimize environmental impacts. By developing crop varieties suited to northern growing conditions, LUARS supports regional agricultural productivity, rural economic development and long-term food security.

Lakehead University Environmental Laboratory (LUEL)
The Lakehead University Environmental Laboratory (LUEL) provides accredited environmental testing and research services that support environmental monitoring, natural resource management, and scientific innovation across Northwestern Ontario. Through water quality analysis, soil and sediment testing, toxicology, wetland and wild rice research, and partnerships with Indigenous communities, government agencies, industry, and researchers.

Advancing Sustainable Food Systems Through Research and Practice
The Sustainable Food Systems Lab runs with support from Lakehead University as a hub for academic and community-based practitioners engaging in sustainable food systems research and action. It aims to build meaningful relationships that enable knowledge sharing between research, policy and practice with an ultimate goal of healthy, just and sustainable food systems for all.

Teaching and Student Life

Eliminating Hunger on Campus
The Lakehead University Food Security Committee is a cross-campus committee that works to identify food security challenges, coordinate campus-wide initiatives, and develop sustainable solutions that improve access to nutritious, affordable, and culturally appropriate food. It supports programs such as emergency food assistance, subsidized fresh-food initiatives, and

cooking and food-literacy workshops to help ensure students have reliable access to healthy food.

The Food Security for Students project at Lakehead University works to reduce student hunger by improving access to affordable, nutritious food. The project provides programs such as meal support, cooking classes, fresh food initiatives, and emergency food assistance through collaboration among students, staff, and researchers.

Lakehead University works to reduce student food insecurity through coordinated food-security programs, emergency food assistance, affordable food initiatives and regular access to meals and fresh food. During the 2024–2025 academic year, the Food Resource Centre recorded 1,153 visits from 334 unique individuals, with an average of approximately 200 students supported each month.

Programs offered through the Food Resource Centre during 2024-2025 included:

- Free Soup Fridays: Approximately 30 students were provided with soup each week from September to March, excluding December.
- Fresh Market: $5 Discount Coupons (505 coupons total) were distributed to students for use at the Fresh Market, which operated bi-weekly. The Fresh Market was also open to staff and faculty, providing access to fresh, locally grown and affordable produce on campus.
- Emergency Meal Program: 178 students accessed emergency meal support through gift cards or coupons for The Study, Outpost or campus cafeterias.
- Good Food Box: 30 subsidized $5 food boxes were provided each month from September to March, excluding December.
- Grab-and-Go Lunches at PACI: Approximately 40–60 students accessed lunches each month from September to March, excluding December.

Lakehead's division of Aramark continues to support students on campus through their leadership in food donation. Aramark provides a soup lunch weekly to students via the Food Resource Centre, sponsors 2 full meal plans for students in the World University Service of Canada (WUSC) Student Refugee Program, and is now expanding upon these efforts.

Hands-On Food Systems Education and Sustainable Learning

Lakehead University's Farm Lab provides hands-on, experiential and place-based learning focused on food literacy, sustainable food systems and equitable access to healthy food. Lakehead students, particularly B.Ed. students gain practical experience in garden-based learning, food justice, sustainable gardening and school food education, preparing future educators to help students understand where food comes from and how sustainable food systems contribute to healthier communities.

Meal Plans

Lakehead University provided students, faculty, staff and visitors with access to food options through its on-campus dining services and food outlets. Campus dining services offer a variety

of healthy and affordable meal and snack choices, while residence meal plans provide students with a structured way to access food and manage meal expenses during the academic year.

Outreach

Strengthening Food Security Through Research and Community Action
Lakehead University partners with the Food Security Research Network (FSRN) in Thunder Bay. The network supports research, knowledge sharing, and community-based action to improve access to safe, nutritious, and sustainable food while addressing the social, economic, and environmental factors that contribute to food insecurity.

Experiential Learning for Sustainable Food Systems
Lakehead's LU FarmLab provides hands-on learning opportunities that connect students with sustainable food systems, agriculture and environmental education. Through experiential activities such as gardening and outdoor learning, students develop practical knowledge about sustainability and the relationship between food, communities and the environment.

Community Garden Initiative
Lakehead University's Campus-Community Garden brings together students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members to grow fresh produce, share gardening knowledge and strengthen connections to local food systems. In 2026, the garden was renamed Mama Aki Miijim ("Mother Earth Food") following guidance from Lakehead's Elders Council. The garden provides accessible growing opportunities for the broader community while promoting food production, sustainability and food security.

Grow Your Own Lecture Series
Lakehead University has offered Grow Your Own community learning sessions designed to help participants develop practical knowledge and skills for growing their own food. The sessions have explored topics such as plant science, soil health, ecology, gardening techniques and growing food in a changing climate. The series provides accessible educational opportunities for community members while encouraging local food production, sustainable gardening practices and greater food self-sufficiency.

LUARS Farmer Education and Research Knowledge Transfer
During the 2024–25 reporting period, Lakehead University Agricultural Research Station (LUARS) a total of 258 participants attended LUARS educational and training workshops, while 67 tours, farm consultations, meetings, events and training activities were delivered. The program reported adoption of 23 best management practices, varieties or other research outputs by northern farmers/agricultural operations.

Seeds of Change: Promoting Seed Sovereignty and Sustainable Food Systems
In 2025, Lakehead University's Sustainable Food Systems Lab partnered with local organizations, including Roots Community Food Centre, Superior Seed Producers and the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority, to host Seeds of Change: Discussion and Tour.

The event explored seed sovereignty, food-related cultural knowledge and community food production. Through collaboration among researchers, seed producers and gardeners, the initiative promoted seed preservation, knowledge-sharing and more resilient, sustainable food systems to support long-term food security.

Administration and Operations

Lakehead University provides sustainable food choices at both its Thunder Bay and Orillia campuses. Campus dining services provide vegetarian and vegan options, alongside gluten-free, kosher and halal choices. Menus are updated electronically on a weekly basis and identify vegetarian and vegan options using dietary icons. Lakehead's Sustainability Plan also commits to increasing plant-based meals and reducing reliance on conventionally produced animal products.

Reducing Food Waste
Since 2023, Aramark has been coordinating regular food donations to the Food Resource Centre by way of Second Harvest's Food Rescue App. These donations will continue to support emergency food access for Lakehead students and promote a more sustainable campus by reducing waste.

Second Harvest reported that these donations represented $3,368.40 in donated food value and provided the equivalent of 840 meals to people in need. The donations were also associated with an estimated 2,157 kg of greenhouse gas emissions diverted and 735,840 litres of water saved.

Sustainable Food Choices
Lakehead University Food & Conference Services and its food-service providers provide sustainable and diverse food choices across both the Thunder Bay and Orillia campuses. Campus menus are updated electronically weekly and use dietary icons to help students and other members of the university community identify vegetarian, vegan, low-carbon, and healthy food options, as well as gluten-free and dairy-free choices.

These menus feature the following icons for diners to choose from to address a variety of dietary needs:

	Vegetarian
	Sustainable seafood

	Vegan
	Eat Well
	No-Gluten
	No Dairy
	Halal
	No Dairy

Lakehead's Sustainability Plan supports increasing the availability of plant-based meals and reducing reliance on conventionally produced animal products in dining services. The University also incorporates sustainable food systems into its dining operations through plant-based and locally sourced foods.

Sustainable Food Procurement

Lakehead University incorporates sustainability into food procurement through its Sustainability Plan, Procurement Policy and contracted food-service providers. Approximately 8% of food procurement has been sourced from local suppliers, with opportunities for local purchasing influenced by seasonal availability and the shorter growing season in Northwestern Ontario.

Lakehead's Sustainability Plan supports sustainable, third-party verified food products, increased sustainably sourced foods, and purchasing from local community-based producers where reliable supply is available. Contracted providers also incorporate local products where feasible, including local meats and vegetables at the Orillia campus.

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being



This societal impact focuses on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all ages.

Lakehead University recognizes that ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being at all ages is essential to sustainable development. Lakehead supports good health and well-being through the development of health human resources, by conducting extensive research and outreach related to health in the regions we serve, partnering with local, regional and national partners, and by reviewing and changing our own practices.

Research and Innovation

Local: Health Research and Innovation Partnerships
Lakehead University works closely with the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre and the Thunder Bay Regional Health Research Institute to advance health research, medical innovation, and patient care in Northwestern Ontario. Faculty, clinicians, and students collaborate on research in areas including medical imaging, chronic disease, Indigenous health, and rural and northern healthcare.

National: Centre for Education and Research on Aging & Health
The Centre for Education and Research on Aging & Health (CERAH) at Lakehead University is an interdisciplinary research centre dedicated to improving the health, well-being, and quality of life of older adults. CERAH works to advance research, education, and knowledge mobilization in areas such as healthy aging, dementia care, palliative care, Indigenous health and aging, and age-friendly communities. CERAH supports innovations that enhance healthcare services and promote healthy aging globally.

National: EQUIP@Action
Lakehead University's EQUIP@Action research centre collaborates nationally with Wounds Canada and the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) to improve healthcare equity and chronic disease care across Canada. Through initiatives such as the Digital Storytelling Repository, patient experiences help inform healthcare education, clinical practice, and national health reporting, including CIHI's work on diabetes-related amputations. These collaborations ensure patient voices contribute directly to healthcare policy and system improvements

Global: Improving Indigenous Youth Mental Health
In 2025, Lakehead University researcher Dr. Chris Mushquash co-led a national initiative that received $10.8 million in additional funding to improve Indigenous youth mental health. The four-year project supports culturally grounded, accessible services by bringing together

Indigenous youth, Elders, Knowledge Holders and service providers to address barriers to care and promote equitable mental health outcomes across Canada.

Teaching and Student Life

Indigenous Nursing Entry Program
Lakehead University's Indigenous Nursing Entry Program (INEP) is an access pathway designed to prepare Indigenous students who do not meet the regular admission requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program. This program prepares First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students for careers in nursing through culturally informed education and academic support. The eight-month access program combines Western and Indigenous approaches to healthcare while providing students with foundational science courses, professional nursing orientation, field placements in Indigenous health settings, academic advising, tutoring, Elder support, and cultural programming.

Compass North
This student-led clinic provides essential health services and conducts research in collaboration with registered health professionals from Lakehead University, NOSM University and community organizations. Their projects include various health promotion workshops on a wide range of topics, including mental health, diabetes management, healthy eating and oral health. These workshops aim to empower individuals with valuable knowledge and skills to improve their overall well-being.

Student Health and Wellness
The Student Health and Wellness Office supports student health and academic success through comprehensive health promotion initiatives focused on education, prevention, and advocacy. In collaboration with students, faculty, and community partners, the office provides a range of services and programs, including health education, physical activity promotion, nutrition support, mental health and peer support, immunization services, sexual health resources, and wellness programming.

To support Indigenous students and promote cross-cultural understanding among students and staff, the Office of Indigenous Initiatives also coordinates an “Elder in Residence” program which invites an Indigenous elder or knowledge keeper to provide traditional knowledge, cultural guidance, cultural teachings and counselling to students and staff.

Lakehead provided students with free, short-term counselling through Student Health and Wellness during 2024–2025, alongside mental-health promotion and wellness programming. In 2024, Lakehead also recognized WellU Mental Health Champions nominated by students for supporting mental health, belonging and health-promoting behaviours.

Sexual and Reproductive Health Care Services for Students
Lakehead University provides students with access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, information and education through Student Health and Wellness at its Thunder Bay

and Orillia campuses. During 2024–2025, services included sexual-health education, STI/STBBI testing, birth-control information and services, pregnancy testing and reproductive-health support. Registered full- and part-time students were eligible to access Student Health and Wellness medical services. In Orillia, appointments with the Nurse Practitioner were available to students at no cost.

Lakehead also provided sexual-health education and prevention programming during 2024–2025. In February 2025, Student Health and Wellness offered confidential STBBI testing through its “Pee for Poptarts” initiative and provided students with the opportunity to meet with the Nurse Practitioner to discuss sexual-health questions. The Office of Human Rights and Equity also delivered education and training sessions addressing consent, healthy relationships, sexual and gender-based violence, and related support and reporting processes.

Outreach

Psychology, Mental Health and Wellness Services
Lakehead University Psychology Clinic provides high-quality psychological services in-person and virtually throughout Northwestern Ontario. The clinic’s services include individual, couples, and group-based psychotherapy, psychodiagnostic assessments, psychoeducational/ learning assessments and workshops. The Lakehead University Psychology Clinic is able to offer those providing health and social services no-cost individual and group-based psychological support.

Promoting Physical Activity and Youth Leadership
In partnership with ActiveU, Achievement Program students are eligible to register for 1 free week of summer camp. The camp day includes recreational, hands-on educational activities and cultural programming for kids in grades 4 – 8. Snacks, lunch, and transportation from home schools are all provided at no cost. Lakehead University is committed to enhancing community health and expanding nutrition and wellness education through the Achievement Program.

The Reach Up Northern Community Sports & Leadership Program is an initiative by Lakehead University Athletics that sends varsity athletes and coaches to remote First Nation communities in Northern Ontario to provide sports clinics, physical activity training, and leadership mentorship for youth.

Supporting Cancer Research
Lakehead University Athletics supports cancer research and local care through annual "Think Pink," "Shoot for the Cure," and "Spike for the Cure" events. Since 2009, these student-athlete initiatives have raised over $90,000 for breast cancer research and the Northern Cancer Fund.

Health Research and Institutional Partnerships
Lakehead University maintained collaborations with health-sector organizations including the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, Thunder Bay Regional Health Research Institute, Wounds Canada and the Canadian Institute for Health Information. These partnerships

supported research and knowledge mobilization related to medical imaging, chronic disease, Indigenous health, rural and northern health care, healthcare equity and patient experiences.

Healthy Kids HOME: Improving Child and Family Health Equity Through Community-Based Support
In 2025, Lakehead University highlighted findings from its Healthy Kids HOME (Health On the Move for Equity) initiative, a community-based program supporting children and families in equity-deserving neighbourhoods. Through neighbourhood hubs and family education sessions, the five-year project provided access to cooking classes, food cupboards, counselling, physical activity and mental health education. Nearly 20,000 children and family members accessed services through three neighbourhood sites, helping improve health literacy, nutrition knowledge and family well-being while addressing health inequities.

Administration and Operations

Health and Wellness Policies
Lakehead University's Student Mental Health Policy supports a healthy, inclusive, and supportive environment for students by promoting prevention, early intervention, accessible services, and collaboration. The policy takes a whole-campus approach and recognizes the importance of culturally informed supports, including those for Indigenous students.

Lakehead University prioritizes health and wellness in its operations. To protect our community's health and well-being, Lakehead maintains a smoke-free environment on all our campuses and properties.

Health and Wellness Strategies
Lakehead University is committed to supporting the mental health of its students and staff through a holistic health and well-being approach. Lakehead University's Wellness Strategy acknowledges that prioritizing health and wellness interventions is key to promoting success within the classroom and workplace.

Lakehead University's five-year strategic plan, Shaping the Evolution, identified employee well-being as a strategic priority across Lakehead's community, which works to align supports for employee well-being and become a wellness leader in developing and engaging in initiatives that contribute to a healthy and accessible workplace.

Community Access to Sports Facilities
Lakehead University supports community health and physical activity by providing access to athletic facilities, recreational programs and sports opportunities. At its Thunder Bay campus, facilities include the C.J. Sanders Fieldhouse, Wolf Den and Hangar, which offer gymnasiums, fitness areas, a swimming pool, indoor track and outdoor sports spaces. Outdoor volleyball courts and the soccer field are available to the public free of charge on a first-come, first-served basis. In Orillia, students benefit from access to recreational facilities through partnerships with

community providers. These opportunities encourage active lifestyles, support participation in sport and strengthen connections between the university and surrounding communities.

Employee Mental Health Promotion

Lakehead University continued mental-health promotion activities for employees through its wellness programming. In January 2024, Lakehead held its fifth annual Thrive Week, providing activities and resources intended to help members of the Lakehead community explore pathways to better mental health. Lakehead's Wellness Strategy also identifies employee well-being as a strategic priority.

SDG 4: Quality Education



The societal impact focuses on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and fostering lifelong learning opportunities.

Lakehead University places a strong emphasis on quality education and lifelong learning. Through innovative teaching approaches, equitable access and research excellence, Lakehead University fosters a diverse and inclusive educational environment.

Research and Innovation

Teaching Commons
Lakehead University's Teaching Commons promotes quality teaching and strengthens teaching and educational leadership capacity in support of student learning. It advances evidence-informed, innovative, and inclusive teaching practices through professional development, curriculum support, and initiatives that enhance teaching and learning across the university.

Centre of Education and Research on Positive Youth Development
The Centre of Education and Research on Positive Youth Development (CERPYD) advances research, training, and community partnerships that promote positive youth development and educational success. CERPYD enhances learning opportunities by supporting evidence-informed practices that foster youth well-being, engagement, and inclusive educational outcomes.

Commitment to Research Integrity
Our Research Integrity Policy reflects Lakehead University's commitment to fostering research and scholarly practices grounded in honesty, transparency, fairness, respect, accountability, and ethical conduct. It guides researchers in upholding these values throughout all stages of the research process.

Teaching and Student Life

Lakehead University is committed to fostering an educational environment grounded in fairness, inclusion, and equitable access, reflecting the principles of the Human Rights Policy and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives, which work to remove barriers, promote respect and belonging, and ensure all members of the university community have the opportunity to succeed.

Continuing Education at Lakehead
The Office of Community Engaged Lifelong Learning (CELL) and Third Age Learning Lakehead (TALL) offer a variety of programs, courses and workshops in a variety of areas to meet the needs of Lakehead's surrounding communities. TALL has delivered more than 100 public lectures since its establishment, addressing topics including climate change, misinformation, aging in place, music and artificial intelligence. The program provides educational opportunities and social connection for community members beyond Lakehead's enrolled student population.

Humanities 101 is a community-based outreach program that ensures community members who love learning have access to a university-level educational experience despite financial or social barriers.

Learning Among Indigenous Communities
Lakehead University's Niijii Indigenous Mentorship Program provides educational programming and mentorship for Indigenous youth across Northwestern Ontario. The program connects university students with Indigenous high school students through science, culture-based activities, and positive learning experiences that encourage pathways to post-secondary education.

Outreach

Expanding Access to STEM Education
The Let's Talk Science program connects educators and young learners to deliver a variety of science, technology, engineering and mathematics experiences at no cost. Let's Talk Science actively cultivates curiosity and engagement in STEM subjects within local schools and throughout the broader community.

Superior Science is a student-run, non-profit program that sparks children's interests in science, engineering and technology through fun, hands-on activities. Based at Lakehead University, Superior Science's philosophy is learning through hands-on, interactive experiences. Since 1999, this program has continued its goal of promoting awareness of science by offering a variety of outreach programs throughout Northwestern Ontario. In 2024-2025, Superior Science reported reaching more than 5,000 youth annually through summer camps, school workshops, community outreach and Indigenous community outreach. Programming included all-girls STEM programming and barrier-free coding and technology programming, supporting access to STEM education for diverse groups of young learners.

Public Resources for Lifelong Learning
Lakehead University provides access to educational resources and learning opportunities that extend beyond the campus community. Through its libraries, public lectures, outreach programs, and online resources, Lakehead supports lifelong learning by enabling community members to engage with knowledge, research, and educational materials.

As part of Lakehead's 60th anniversary activities, the University hosted the President's Public Lecture Series, providing free educational opportunities to the wider community through lectures

featuring university researchers and thought leaders. The lectures are held at the Thunder Bay and Orillia campuses, livestreamed, and made available online for on-demand viewing, allowing individuals who are not enrolled at Lakehead to access academic knowledge and engage with current issues.

Lakehead University's libraries are open to community members and visitors, providing access to library collections and on-campus resources. These services support lifelong learning, independent research, and access to academic information for individuals beyond the university's student population, helping extend educational resources and learning opportunities to the wider community.

Free Online Educational Resources for High School Students
Lakehead University offers Lakehead Lessons, a collection of free online educational resources designed to support high school students in their learning. These resources provide access to subject-specific content and learning materials beyond the university's enrolled student population, helping students explore academic topics, strengthen their knowledge, and prepare for postsecondary education.

Administration and Operations

Equitable Access to Lifelong Learning
Lakehead University's lifelong-learning and community education activities were supported by institutional commitments to equity, inclusion, accessibility and the removal of barriers to participation. Lakehead's Human Rights Policy and EDI initiatives establish principles of equitable access and inclusion for members of the university community. These principles support the delivery of community education and lifelong-learning activities through programs such as Third Age Learning Lakehead, the Office of Community Engaged Lifelong Learning and public educational outreach.

SDG 5: Gender Equality



Our societal impact focuses on gender equality as a fundamental human right, and a foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.

Through various initiatives, Lakehead University aims to create an inclusive and diverse environment that fosters gender equality and allows students to strive to create a brighter future and contribute to a more equitable and just society.

Sustainable Development Goals by the numbers:
In the 2025 academic year, **57%** of students starting a degree at Lakehead were women.

Additionally, **31%** of our senior academic staff are women.

33% of STEM graduates are women.

80% of Medicine graduates are women.

67% of Arts & Humanities/Social Sciences graduates are women.

Research and Innovation

Research Examining Sexual Assault and Barriers to Justice for 2SLGBTQ+ People
Lakehead University researchers Dr. Jodie Murphy Oikonen, Dr. Karen McQueen, Ainsley Miller, and Dr. Lori Chambers have contributed to research examining sexual assault and the barriers to justice experienced by 2SLGBTQ+ individuals. This research explores the experiences of people affected by sexual violence and the challenges they may face when seeking support or justice. By examining these issues, the research contributes to a better understanding of gender-related inequalities and the experiences of people who face additional barriers because of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

Research on Campus Sexual Assault Prevention Initiatives
In February 2025, Lakehead University hosted a research showcase featuring Dr. Karen McQueen and Dr. Jodie Murphy, focusing on a qualitative systematic review and meta-synthesis of students' experiences with campus sexual assault prevention initiatives. This research examines how students experience prevention programs and provides insight into how universities can improve their approaches to addressing sexual violence.

Research Developing a Framework to Prevent Gender-Based Violence
Lakehead University's Dr. Helle Møller, Oriana Rodriguez, Nana Nyarkoa-Oduro have been involved in collaborative research and public-health initiatives focused on addressing the root causes of gender-based violence. Work involving public-health partners aims to develop a

framework to support coordinated action and evidence-informed approaches to prevention. By connecting research with public-health practice, this work can help organizations better understand the factors contributing to gender-based violence and identify approaches to prevention and intervention.

Teaching and Student Life

Lakehead University recognizes that equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging are fundamental to its educational mission and essential to fostering an environment of academic excellence, innovation, and success for all members of its community.

52%
of domestic undergraduate students are first generation (neither parent has a degree) (2024/2025)

Policies of Non-Discrimination Against Women and Transgender People
Lakehead University has several policies and procedures that promote a respectful, inclusive, and safe campus environment and address discrimination, harassment, and sexual violence. These include policies such as the Diversity Awareness Policy and the Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Policy, which outline the University's commitment to preventing discrimination and harassment, as well as the processes available to report, respond to, and address concerns within the Lakehead community.

Lakehead University's Pride & Gender Equity Centre promotes visibility, inclusion, and support for 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and advocates for gender equity across campus. The Centre provides resources, educational programming, and safe spaces where students, staff, and faculty can access support, participate in community-building initiatives, and help foster a campus environment that celebrates diverse identities and works to prevent discrimination and harassment.

Policy Supporting Women's Applications, Entry and Participation
Lakehead University continues to implement institutional policies and planning frameworks supporting women's applications, entry and participation in higher education. Lakehead's Strategic Plan, Academic Plan and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan identify participation of underrepresented groups, including women, as an institutional priority. The University's Human Rights Policy, Diversity Awareness Policy and Employment Equity Policy provide additional mechanisms to address barriers to participation and promote equal opportunity.

Women's Access through Scholarships
Lakehead University supports women's access to higher education through targeted entrance scholarships designed to encourage participation in fields where women have been historically underrepresented, including engineering, business, health and behavioural sciences, and forestry. These initiatives complement the University's broader scholarship, bursary, and awards program, which provides more than $11 million annually to students, helping reduce financial barriers and expand educational and career opportunities for women.

Women in Law Society: Mentorship, Networking and Community Engagement
Women in Law Society provides a supportive space for women in Lakehead University's Bora Laskin Faculty of Law to build connections, share experiences, and discuss issues affecting women in the legal profession. The society creates opportunities for networking, mentorship, professional development, and engagement with the broader community through connections with organizations such as the Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre and the Elizabeth Fry Society.

Supporting Women and Gender-Diverse Participation in Sport
The SHINE Program is a six-week exercise program tailored for women by women. Participants will be encouraged to engage in exercise at the campus gym three times a week for 30 minutes, as informed by their private facility tour and exercise guide/handout.

Lakehead Women in Sports Association focuses on promoting women-identifying and non-binary athletes in sport and recreation.

Outreach

Expanding Opportunities for Girls
Lakehead University supports girls' participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) through community outreach programs and educational initiatives. Go ENG Girl and Go CODE Girl provide interactive opportunities for girls in Grades 7–11 to explore engineering, coding, and related fields while learning from female professionals, academics, and students. These initiatives are complemented by the Superior Science Girls STEM Club, which offers additional opportunities for girls to engage with STEM through hands-on learning and exploration. Together, these programs help build confidence, introduce girls to female role models, and encourage future participation in fields where women have traditionally been underrepresented.

INSPIRE is a one-of-a-kind event designed to connect Grade 8 girls with community organizations that promote physical activity and sports held at Lakehead University. This exciting event aims to inspire young girls to explore new activities and discover the many benefits of lifelong physical fitness.

Feminisms at the Lakehead: Gender Equality and Social Justice
Lakehead University hosted feminist speaker events in 2024–25, bringing together students, community members, scholars, artists, and activists to discuss gender equality, human rights, racism, sexual violence, and social inequality. Events such as *Feminisms at the Lakehead* and the *Feminist Dialogues Speaker Series* provided opportunities for education, dialogue, and engagement on contemporary gender and social justice issues.

Administration and Operations

Child Care
Lakehead University Thunder Bay campus is home to the Nanabijou Child Care Centre and provides childcare for children ranging from infancy to school age (up to age 72 months). Preference is given to Lakehead University students, staff, faculty and alumni.

The Lakehead University Student Union has created a childcare grant called the Childcare Bursary, which is used to support students, recent mothers and caregivers needing assistance with childcare expenses to attend university courses.

Parental Leave
Lakehead University supports employees in balancing work and family responsibilities through its Workplace Leave of Absence Policy, which provides eligible faculty and staff with access to maternity, parental, adoption, and other legislated leaves. The policy outlines employees' rights and responsibilities, ensuring job-protected leave in accordance with applicable legislation and collective agreements while supporting a healthy and inclusive workplace.

Tracking enrolment and representation
Lakehead University monitors student success through institutional performance indicators, including the six-year graduation rate of first-time, full-time undergraduate students and the participation of underrepresented groups in specific programs. The University's public Gender Equality reporting identifies graduation outcomes as an important measure of student success and supports ongoing attention to gender equity in higher education. These efforts align with institutional priorities outlined in the 2025–2030 Strategic Plan, the 2024–2026 Academic Plan, and the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan. Through targeted outreach, scholarships, academic advising, tutoring, mentoring, peer support, and expanded work-integrated learning opportunities, Lakehead works to reduce barriers to academic achievement and promote equitable pathways to graduation.

Institutional metrics provide insight into female enrolment at both the university-wide and program-specific levels, while regular reporting to the Board of Governors keeps gender equity, inclusion, and student success visible within institutional oversight. Together, these monitoring practices, strategic commitments, and student support initiatives demonstrate Lakehead's broader commitment to tracking student outcomes, strengthening equity, and advancing gender equality.

SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation



Lakehead University engages in research and projects focused on water quality, conservation and equitable access to clean water resources. By studying local and global water systems, Lakehead University contributes to innovative solutions for water-related challenges.

This societal impact focuses on the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

Research and Innovation

Local: Lake Superior Watershed Restoration
Dr. Stewart has played a key role in advancing the North Shore of Lake Superior Remedial Action Plans, contributing scientific expertise and guidance to projects that address environmental degradation and promote long-term watershed health. Dr. Stewart collaborates with local governments and Indigenous communities to translate scientific research into practical shoreline restoration and water quality improvement strategies.

Local: Aquatic Toxicology Research Centre
Lakehead University's Aquatic Toxicology Research Centre advances freshwater protection through research on contaminants, aquatic ecosystems, and water quality. The Centre's work helps assess environmental risks, understand impacts on freshwater resources, and support evidence-based approaches to protecting sustainable and healthy water systems.

Regional: Lake Superior Living Labs Network
The Lake Superior Living Labs Network has evolved out of a partnership between Lakehead University, the University of Minnesota-Duluth, Lake Superior College, Algoma University, and several non-profit organizations, businesses, First Nations and tribal governments to protect freshwater ecosystems, improve water quality, and advance sustainable water management across the Lake Superior region.

National: Freshwater Research, Microplastics and Water Security
Dr. Michael Rennie, Director of the Aquatic Toxicology Research Center and Canada Research Chair in Freshwater Ecology and Fisheries, led Lakehead University's Community Ecology and Energetics Lab in research at the IISD–Experimental Lakes Area examining microplastic pollution, invasive species, and contaminants. The findings support evidence-based water security and environmental policy, strengthening freshwater management at regional and global levels.

Global: Research Collaboration for Freshwater Conservation
Lakehead University advanced international freshwater research through an expedition to Superior Shoal in Lake Superior, led by Dr. Michael Rennie as chief scientist. Conducted aboard the Blue Heron the team investigated the shoal's unique aquatic ecosystem and biodiversity to inform conservation strategies for Lake Superior and other threatened large-lake environments. This cross-border research collaboration contributes to freshwater ecosystem protection, biodiversity conservation, and evidence-based approaches to sustainable water management.

Teaching and Student Life

Water Resource Education
Lakehead University offers a 4-year comprehensive Water Resource Science degree program which focuses on water resource management, water conservation, water quality analysis and sustainable aquatic stewardship practices. This program is training the next generation of water management and stewardship professionals contributing to the sustainability and protection of aquatic ecosystems.

Rain Garden
The Braun Building Rain Garden transformed underutilized campus land into the Lakehead Stormwater Management Demonstration and Engagement Site, reducing urban stormwater runoff, protecting Lake Superior water quality, and creating habitat for butterflies and insects. The project also serves as an experiential learning and community engagement space, with 11 undergraduate and graduate students participating in a three-part workshop series led by EcoSuperior and Lakehead University on stormwater management, native plants, and rain garden design. Students contributed candidate designs that helped shape the final site.

Outreach

Great Lakes Coastal Cleanup
Lakehead University partnered with the City of Thunder Bay and EcoSuperior to support the first Great Lakes Coastal Cleanup, bringing together community members, researchers, and partners to protect the Lake Superior shoreline. Led in part by Lakehead Postdoctoral Fellow Kennedy Bucci, the initiative included shoreline cleanup efforts and waste audits to better understand plastic pollution and inform strategies for prevention, education, and long-term freshwater protection.

Raising Awareness Through World Water Day
Lakehead University brought freshwater education directly to the community through its inaugural World Water Day celebrations in March 2025. The public event brought together students, employees and members of the Thunder Bay community to learn about the importance of protecting and respecting water. The program included teachings and stories from Elder Vicki Pavis about the Water Walkers and explored challenges related to access to clean

and safe water. The event provided an opportunity to connect Indigenous knowledge, research and community education around the importance of freshwater.

Lakehead University's Contribution to Off-Campus Water Conservation
Dr. Rob Stewart, an associate professor in Geography and the Environment, leads the Freshwater Coastal Management Research Group and coordinates Remedial Action Plans along Lake Superior's Canadian north shore. These initiatives work with communities and other partners to identify pollution, monitor water quality, restore degraded aquatic environments, and address emerging threats to freshwater ecosystems.

Lakehead researchers also collaborate with Indigenous communities and partner institutions to investigate environmental changes affecting Lake Nipigon, including the impacts of hydroelectric development, sedimentation, and nutrient pollution. Through research, restoration activities, and community engagement, the University contributes to protecting regional freshwater resources, improving aquatic ecosystem health, and supporting the long-term conservation of lakes and watersheds beyond its campuses.

Administration and Operations

Water Management & Treatment
Lakehead University's wastewater is treated through the municipal wastewater treatment facilities serving its Thunder Bay and Orillia campuses. The University follows municipal sewage and stormwater discharge requirements, as well as applicable provincial environmental standards, to ensure that wastewater leaving University facilities does not pose a risk to human health, infrastructure, or local ecosystems. These measures also help prevent hazardous or obstructive substances from entering local water systems.

Lakehead complements municipal wastewater treatment with campus-level water conservation and stormwater management measures. These include rain gardens, bioretention areas, bioswales, green infrastructure, native and drought-tolerant landscaping, and other measures designed to reduce runoff and prevent pollutants from entering local waterways.

Lakehead University uses native and drought-tolerant plant species in campus landscaping to reduce the need for supplemental watering. Examples include the Braun Building Rain Garden, bioswales at Orillia, bioretention landscaping and native plantings incorporated into campus outdoor learning spaces. These landscapes also support stormwater infiltration and pollution reduction.

Lakehead University's internal policies and procedures support local watershed protection by promoting responsible waste management and preventing contaminants from entering municipal sewer systems. Through training, hazardous materials management, and coordinated campus-wide collection and disposal practices, the University helps reduce environmental risks and protect local water resources.

Water Reuse and Conservation Policy
Lakehead University's Sustainable Building Policy promotes water conservation and water reuse through resource-efficient building design, natural stormwater management, green infrastructure and xeriscaping. The University continues to explore opportunities to increase water reuse and reduce its overall water footprint.

Water Consumption
Lakehead University monitors campus water consumption through water meters and municipal billing data. Water-use data are reviewed to identify changes in consumption, building performance, anomalies and opportunities for conservation. In 2024, Lakehead installed backflow-prevention devices on the five main feeds to the Thunder Bay campus to improve water-system efficiency, protect the municipal water supply and reduce unaccounted-for water loss.

Academic Year	Total Water Use (m3)	Campus Population (FTE)	m3/person
2022-2023	251,859	9,736	25.87
2023-2024	51,376	10,431	4.93
2024-2025	84,290	10,729	7.86

Building Standards and Policies
Lakehead University’s Conservation and Demand Management Plan applies building standards and policies to minimize water use, energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions on campus. The University's Sustainable Building Policy incorporates LEED principles relating to water conservation and sustainable site design. Lakehead also uses water-efficient fixtures, low-flow plumbing, water audits and water-use assessments to identify opportunities for reducing water consumption.

Lakehead University is Reducing Single-Use Bottled Water on Campus
Lakehead University’s Orillia campus supports the reduction of single-use plastic through its Bottled Water Free Campus approach. The University also promotes sustainable and water-conscious options on campus; we have more than 20 drinking fountains and free bottle-fill stations

Hazardous Waste and Water Pollution Prevention
Lakehead University's Hazardous Waste Disposal Standard establishes procedures for the safe handling, storage and disposal of hazardous waste. These procedures help prevent chemicals and other contaminants from entering municipal wastewater systems and local waterways.

SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy



This societal impact focuses on ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.

Energy is central to nearly every major challenge and opportunity the world faces today, and access to energy for all is essential. Lakehead University is actively promoting and supporting clean energy initiatives through research, outreach, and by changing our own behaviours and practices in areas including investments and usage.

Research and Innovation

Local: Exploring Solar and Geothermal Energy for Northwestern Ontario's Climate
In 2025, Dr. Basel I. Ismail and Anjali Nagi researched the optimization of solar photovoltaic panel tilt angles for hybrid solar-geothermal heat pump applications in Northwestern Ontario. Their study addresses the challenge of designing renewable energy systems that perform effectively in regions with cold winters and distinct seasonal conditions. By examining how solar panel positioning can improve energy generation when integrated with geothermal heating, the research explores ways to make renewable energy systems more practical for local buildings.

Regional: Biorefining Research Institute
Lakehead University's Biorefining Research Institute (BRI) supports research into technologies that convert renewable resources into useful products, including potential biofuels and alternative energy sources. Its work involves collaboration with industry, academic institutions, government and First Nations partners, including organizations connected to the forestry and natural resources sectors. This research has regional relevance in Northwestern Ontario, where forestry and resource-based industries are important to the economy. By exploring ways to use forest biomass and other renewable resources more efficiently, the institute supports innovation in the regional bioeconomy and the development of alternatives to conventional fossil-based products and energy sources.

Regional: Green Process Research Center
The Green Process Research Center (GPRC) is a hub for local and international researchers to develop green technologies, sustainable products and processes that can help transform chemical industries and reduce environmental impacts. Through these research activities and partnerships, Lakehead contributes expertise and innovation relevant to clean energy and energy efficiency

Global: Federal Research Support for Wind-Energy Technologies
Dr. Mohammad Nasir Uddin research is on renewable energy, with a particular focus on improving wind turbine efficiency and developing power systems that support the transition away from fossil fuels. As director of Lakehead University's Renewable Energy, Power Systems and Drive Research Lab in Barrie, he applies his expertise in electrical engineering and motor-drive technologies to renewable electricity generation. His work is globally relevant because improving wind energy technology can help increase renewable electricity production, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support the development of more sustainable energy systems. His research contributes to efforts to make clean energy technologies more efficient and practical for wider adoption.

National: Clean-Energy Research and Electric Vehicle Technology Development
In 2025, Lakehead University advanced clean transportation technology through research led by Dr. Apparao Dekka in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. His research focuses on the design and development of powertrain technologies for heavy-duty electric vehicles, addressing the high costs associated with electric vehicle production. By developing more affordable and energy-efficient technologies, the project aims to strengthen Canada's electric vehicle industry, support wider adoption of electric vehicles and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The research also contributes to training highly qualified personnel with the specialized skills needed to support the growth of Canada's clean transportation sector.

Teaching and Student Life

Supporting Low-Carbon Innovation and Sustainable Entrepreneurship
Lakehead University's Office of Innovation, Partnerships, and Economic Development (IPED) and Ingenuity support start-ups developing technologies and solutions that contribute to a low-carbon economy. Through incubation programs, workshops, mentorship, workspaces, equipment and start-up funding, Ingenuity helps students, faculty and community members turn innovative ideas into viable businesses, including ventures focused on sustainable packaging and solar-powered devices.

The Ingenuity Ascend Accelerator builds on Lakehead's clean-technology entrepreneurship support by providing students and recent alumni with up to $5,000 in non-repayable funding for early-stage business ideas in forestry and the bioeconomy. The program supports ventures that use renewable biological resources to develop sustainable solutions in areas such as energy, agriculture, packaging and waste reduction. By helping entrepreneurs develop and commercialize these innovations, Lakehead promotes sustainable business growth and contributes to a more resource-efficient, low-carbon economy.

Environmental Management and Clean Energy Education
Lakehead University's Master of Environmental Management, offered through the Faculty of Natural Resources Management, prepares students to address complex environmental and natural resource challenges. The program integrates sustainable resource management, climate change, economics, and environmental policy, with opportunities to explore clean and

renewable energy through electives, research, and initiatives such as the Biorefining Research Institute.

Lakehead University's Master of Science in Environmental Engineering prepares graduates from engineering and related natural sciences to develop effective solutions to environmental challenges facing communities and industries. The interdisciplinary program combines advanced study and research in areas such as biorefinery and bioenergy production, greenhouse gas reduction, water resource management, waste and wastewater treatment, and sustainable materials. Students benefit from research opportunities and specialized laboratory facilities to address complex environmental issues such as climate change, water security, and energy sustainability.

Outreach

Community Education
The Lakehead University Office of Sustainability and the City of Thunder Bay hosted a panel discussion titled "Electrify Your Future". This event was free to the public and provided information on basic heat pump technology, available rebates, and the ability to discuss heat pump advantages with homeowners and service providers within the City of Thunder Bay.

Collaborative Action Toward Community Net-Zero Emissions
As a member of the Advisory Group of the City of Thunder Bay's Net-Zero Strategy, Lakehead University is committed to collaborative action to address energy use and greenhouse gas emissions as a feasible pathway to achieve community-wide net-zero emissions by 2050.

Administration and Operations

Sustainable Building Standards and Energy Efficiency
Lakehead's Sustainable Building Policy requires that all retrofits and major renovations of existing buildings adhere to the energy efficiency standards required by the internationally accepted third-party Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system. Lakehead University incorporates LEED standards into its campus development, with the Lakehead Orillia campus achieving LEED Platinum standards and the Thunder Bay campus' CASES building certified LEED Silver.

Lakehead University's commitment to improving building energy efficiency is outlined in its 2019–2025 Sustainability Plan and Sustainable Building Policy. The Sustainability Plan commits to reducing building energy consumption and increasing the use of clean and renewable energy. It identifies measures such as building retrofits, LED lighting upgrades - Library LED lighting replacement project in 2025, energy metering and management, and building recommissioning. Implementation is overseen through the Sustainability Executive Advisory Committee and Sustainability Stewardship Council. The Sustainable Building Policy further supports energy-efficient building improvements by requiring major renovations to meet LEED standards.

Solar Energy and Renewable Power Generation
Lakehead University's University Centre features a rooftop solar array that supports the University's transition to clean energy. The 70-panel system began generating electricity in 2018 and supplies renewable power directly to the building, helping offset electricity used for lighting and kitchen operations.

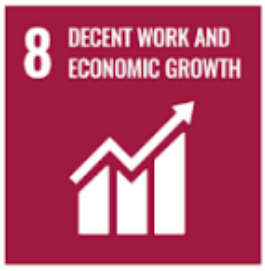
Carbon and Energy Management
Lakehead University's approach to carbon management combines operational energy conservation with the measurement and reduction of emissions associated with its investments. Through its Conservation and Demand Management Plan, the University monitors energy consumption, energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions, establishes reduction targets, and identifies opportunities to improve the efficiency of campus energy and heating systems. These measures support efforts to reduce energy use and the carbon emissions associated with university operations.

Lakehead also has a formal process for measuring, monitoring and reducing the carbon intensity of its endowment investment portfolio. As a signatory to the Investing to Address Climate Change Charter, the University commits to regularly assessing portfolio carbon intensity, setting reduction targets, evaluating progress and publicly reporting results. Using December 31, 2019, as its baseline, Lakehead established a target to maintain portfolio carbon intensity at least 40% below baseline levels by 2030. The University measures carbon intensity using the weighted average carbon intensity of its endowment holdings, with Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions data sourced through Morningstar/Sustainalytics. Its report documents a 51% reduction from the baseline measurement to the latest reported period and notes the transition to fossil-fuel-free pooled funds in 2022. Together, these operational and investment-related measures demonstrate Lakehead's commitment to monitoring emissions, implementing reduction strategies and tracking progress toward its carbon management objectives.

Our Pledge for Carbon Neutrality
Lakehead University has signed the Investing to Address Climate Change: A Charter for Canadian Universities, committing to responsible investment practices that address climate change. The Charter includes commitments to responsible investment frameworks, measuring and reducing portfolio carbon intensity, regularly evaluating and publicly reporting progress, and incorporating climate-related objectives into investment manager performance assessments.

By December 2022, Lakehead University had completed its divestment from fossil fuels, achieving this milestone ahead of schedule and becoming the sixth Canadian university to take this step. Lakehead continues to demonstrate climate leadership by monitoring the impact of its divestment and keeping stakeholders informed about its responsible investment practices.

SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth



This societal impact focuses on promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.

Lakehead University offers comprehensive career services, internships, co-op, and experiential learning opportunities that help develop the necessary skills and knowledge needed to succeed in employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. Through research and engagement, the university provides input into economic development initiatives and strategies that promote sustainable growth and decent work.

Community Impact

Prosperous Economy
Lakehead University is one of Thunder Bay & Orillia's top employers.

In 2024-25, Lakehead University's total impact on Ontario's GDP was $4.73 billion

- Lakehead contributed $2.7 billion annually to the economy of Northwestern Ontario
- Lakehead contributed $2.2 billion annually to the economy of the City of Thunder Bay
- Lakehead contributed $355 million annually to the economy of the City of Orillia

Teaching and Student Life

Student Career Development
Lakehead University offers a wide range of opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to gain work experience and develop career-ready skills through experiential learning, co-operative education, internships, and employment programs. Students can participate in Lakehead's Co-operative Education program, which integrates classroom learning with paid workplace experience. Depending on the program, students can complete work terms ranging from four to 16 months, providing opportunities to apply academic knowledge in professional settings. Co-op positions must provide full-time, paid work experience and meet minimum work-term requirements. Additionally, the Lakehead University Work Study Program (LUWSP), provides eligible undergraduate students with part-time or full-time employment and mentorship opportunities.

Students can also access Career Zone programming, including career exploration, networking, job-search support, and skill-building opportunities, while initiatives such as Entrepreneurial

Co-op allow students to develop and launch their own businesses with mentorship and financial support.

Administration and Operations

Advancing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
Lakehead University's Equity Office measures, tracks, and reports our employment representation rates to Statistics Canada to better ensure gender parity, as well as pay scale equity, among our staff.

Staff and Faculty Compensation
Lakehead University adheres to provincial labour laws and regulations concerning staff and faculty compensation, including Ontario's minimum wage requirements. The local living wage, determined with consideration for the needs of a family of four, is established at $21.10 per hour in Northern Ontario, home of the Lakehead Thunder Bay campus, and $24.60 in Grey Bruce Perth Huron Simcoe, home of the Lakehead Orillia campus.

While Lakehead complies with the province's minimum wage laws, it's essential to note that all unionized positions, including faculty, graduate assistants, technical staff and professional staff in non-unionized roles receive compensation that exceeds the minimum wage as detailed in Lakehead University's Salary Information guidelines. In addition, Lakehead University has invested in a comprehensive benefits package for eligible employees.

Investing in Our Employees
Lakehead University's total compensation for faculty and staff includes salary, comprehensive benefits, pension plans, and wellness and employee support programs. The University provides opportunities for professional and career development through Teaching & Learning & initiatives, employee resources, and a tuition waiver benefit that supports eligible employees and their families in pursuing further education. Lakehead also promotes pay equity and transparency by publishing salary grids and collective agreements, conducting regular pay equity reviews, and publicly disclosing salary information in accordance with Ontario's public sector requirements.

Employee Rights and Representation.
Lakehead University recognizes employees' rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining, including women and international staff. Through its Human Resources department, the University provides access to information on employee unions and associations and their corresponding collective agreements. These agreements outline employment terms and conditions, including compensation, benefits, working conditions, and processes for addressing workplace concerns. This framework supports employees' ability to access representation and participate in collective bargaining, promoting fair employment practices and the protection of labour rights across the University.

Supporting Fair and Equitable Workplaces
The Office of the University Ombudsperson provides an independent, confidential, and impartial resource for the Lakehead University community. The Ombudsperson offers information and guidance to students and employees regarding their rights and responsibilities, assists with concerns and complaints, and promotes fairness and procedural equity in University decision-making.

The Office of Human Rights and Equity plays a crucial role in safeguarding the well-being of Lakehead University's community members. This office offers support and monitors compliance with discrimination in the workplace. It actively raises awareness about the detrimental effects of discrimination and harassment through various programs and initiatives.

Gender Pay Equity Policy, Measurement and Elimination of Gender Pay Gaps
Lakehead University has a publicly documented commitment to pay equity and the elimination of gender-based salary differences through its Faculty Employment Equity Policy and Gender Equality initiatives. The Faculty Employment Equity Policy commits the University to identifying and eliminating salary differentials resulting from gender bias through study, analysis and action. It also provides for annual reporting on progress to the President.

Lakehead's public reporting further describes monitoring gender equity in faculty compensation, including publishing salary data by gender through Statistics Canada's University and College Academic Staff System. The University also identifies its Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan as part of its broader approach to employment equity.

Promoting Employment Equity
Lakehead University's Human Rights and Equity Office supports the University's commitment to employment equity through policies, programs, and initiatives that promote equitable recruitment, hiring, retention, and professional development. The University's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (2019–2024), Accessing Excellence Together, outlines goals and strategies to recruit and retain a diverse workforce, address barriers in hiring and advancement, and strengthen EDI training and support for employees.

SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure



This societal impact focuses on building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation.

Lakehead University recognizes the significance of this societal goal, and its pivotal role in driving economic growth, fostering technological progress and supporting our mission to build a sustainable future.

Lakehead University's total research income increased 4% to $28 million from 2023 to 2024. Additionally, 8 university spin-offs established at least 3 years ago are still active.

Research and Innovation

We are proud to be a research-intensive university with a strong commitment to addressing challenges facing Northern Ontario, Canada, and communities around the world. Lakehead University supports innovative research through its dedicated research centres, institutes, and partnerships across areas including Indigenous research, health, environmental sustainability, freshwater ecology, and northern and rural studies. Our research community includes 11 Canada Research Chairs and nationally and internationally recognized researchers whose work contributes to meaningful social, environmental, and economic impact.

Lakehead University is a major contributor to economic development and innovation across Northwestern Ontario and beyond. In 2024–25, Lakehead received 31 million in external research funding and maintained 260 research partnerships with municipal, not-for-profit, business and industry, and Indigenous organizations.

The University also contributed an estimated 4.73 billion annually to Ontario's GDP, including 2.7 billion to Northwestern Ontario. Through research, innovation, entrepreneurship, and community partnerships, Lakehead continues to support economic growth and the development of new ideas, technologies, and industries.

Leading Research for a Sustainable North
Lakehead University researchers Dr. Sudip Rakshit and Dr. Chris Southcott have been appointed international research Chairs with the University of the Arctic (UArctic), a network of more than 200 universities, colleges, research institutes, and other organizations focused on education and research in and about the North. Dr. Rakshit's research explores sustainable resource recovery, waste reduction, and circular bioeconomy processes, while Dr. Southcott

examines how resource development can better support the sustainability and well-being of Northern and Arctic communities.

Teaching and Student Life

Student Entrepreneurship and Innovation
Lakehead University supports student innovation and entrepreneurship through initiatives that help students turn ideas into businesses and develop the skills needed to succeed as entrepreneurs. Ingenuity, Lakehead's first student business incubator, provides students with workshops, competitions, mentorship, prototype development, makerspace and media resources, and access to community partnerships. Its Ascend Accelerator is a 10-week program that helps students and recent alumni move early-stage ideas toward viable businesses, with mentorship, business development training, networking, and up to $5,000 in funding available per business idea. In 2024–25, six student-led start-ups completed the program, representing sectors including artificial intelligence, agriculture, construction technology, and wellness.

The University's Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship Research further supports research and education in areas including start-ups, commercialization, social entrepreneurship, healthcare innovation, and economic development through business creation. Together, these initiatives contribute to Lakehead's goal of fostering an entrepreneurial culture and supporting innovation and economic development in Northwestern Ontario and Simcoe County.

Lakehead also offers a Certificate in Entrepreneurship for students from non-business programs, as well as a Certificate in Global Entrepreneurship at the Orillia campus, giving students opportunities to build entrepreneurial knowledge and skills alongside their academic programs. Through its Entrepreneurial Co-op, eligible students can receive a $5,000 award, mentorship, and professional support while developing and launching their own business for academic credit.

Administration & Operations

Commercialization and Economic Development
Lakehead University supports the translation of research and innovation into economic and community applications through its innovation, entrepreneurship and economic-development activities. The Office of Innovation, Partnerships and Economic Development provides support for technology transfer, intellectual property, industry research partnerships and economic development.

In 2024–25, these activities were complemented by Lakehead's Ingenuity student incubator and Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship Research, helping connect research, entrepreneurship, business development and regional economic development.

Global Reach

Lakehead University is home to a diverse network of research centres, institutes, and specialized research groups addressing some of Canada’s and the world’s most pressing challenges. Research spans areas including climate change and environmental sustainability, freshwater ecology, Indigenous and Northern issues, health and aging, rural and remote communities, social justice, and sustainable resource development. Through interdisciplinary and international collaboration, Lakehead researchers contribute knowledge and solutions that support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and address the unique needs of Northern communities.

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities



The societal impact focuses on reducing inequalities and ensuring no one is left behind. It envisions communities that are free of discrimination and have access to equitable opportunities and where students from diverse backgrounds have equal access to quality education and opportunities for personal growth. By fostering a sense of community, Lakehead University looks to bridge the gap between different socioeconomic groups and empower students to overcome barriers to achieve their full potential.

Research and Innovation

Anishinaabe Kendaasiwin Institute
The Anishinaabe Kendaasiwin Institute (AKI) advances Indigenous education, research, and community engagement at Lakehead University. The Institute supports the recognition and integration of Anishinaabe knowledge, perspectives, and ways of knowing, while promoting greater inclusion, cultural understanding, and equitable participation in post-secondary education and research.

EPID@Work
EPID@Work Research Institute examines inequities in workplace health, injury, disability, and employment experiences. Its work considers how factors such as employment conditions, workplace environments, and equity, diversity and inclusion can influence workers' health and well-being, supporting evidence-based approaches to reduce disparities and promote more equitable workplaces.

Teaching and Student Life

Removing Barriers to Post-Secondary Education
To support students who might not meet regular or mature student admission criteria, Lakehead University offers the Indigenous Transition Year Program, an Indigenous Nursing Entry Program, and an Indigenous STEM Access Program (ISTEM) that provides opportunities for Indigenous students to pursue a university education in an academically, socially and culturally supportive environment.

Lakehead University also delivers community-based outreach programs, called Humanities 101 and Humanities 201, for community members who have a love of learning and face financial or social barriers to experience a university-level educational experience. These programs do not provide entry into Lakehead University but provide opportunities to various educational opportunities and paths.

Tracking Underrepresented Student Enrolment and Access
Lakehead University measures and tracks the representation of underrepresented student groups through its institutional strategic planning and annual reporting processes. The 2025–2030 Strategic Plan, under Expanding Student Opportunity and Success, identifies Metric 3, “Enrolment of under-represented student groups at all levels of study,” as an indicator of institutional progress.

Supporting First-Generation and Rural Students
Lakehead University plays an important role in expanding access to post-secondary education for students who may experience intergenerational or geographic barriers to university. In 2024–25, 52% of Lakehead students were first-generation students, meaning neither parent had a university degree. In addition, 54% of domestic undergraduate students came from rural or northern communities, reflecting Lakehead's role as an accessible university serving Northwestern Ontario, Simcoe County and other rural and northern communities.

Connecting Students and Communities
Lakehead University’s Indigenous Student Services Centre provides a welcoming and supportive space for Indigenous students, offering culturally relevant services, academic support, advising, and opportunities to connect with Indigenous communities and traditions. The Centre helps foster a sense of belonging and supports students throughout their university experience.

Lakehead also provides opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds to build connections and community through student services, cultural programming, peer support, and campus events. These initiatives create welcoming spaces where students can connect with others, celebrate their identities and cultures, and access resources that support their success and well-being.

Supporting Accessibility and Inclusion
Lakehead University supports students with disabilities through accessibility services, individualized accommodations, and resources designed to reduce barriers to participation and academic success. The University works with students, instructors, and staff to provide appropriate academic accommodations and promote an accessible learning environment. Lakehead also offers financial assistance and other support to help address barriers that may affect students’ ability to participate fully in university life.

The Student Health and Wellness Centre serves as a hub for students of various support services, including counselling, mentoring and peer support programs. Notably, we also provide access to TalkCampus, an anonymous app available to Lakehead students. This app facilitates peer support and offers a professional crisis support helpline.

Indigenous Mentorship, Counselling and Support Programmes
Lakehead provides targeted, culturally relevant support for Indigenous students through the Indigenous Student Services Centre, which offers specialized services to support academic success and student well-being.

The University's Niijii Indigenous Mentorship Program connects Indigenous elementary and high school students across Northwestern Ontario with experienced Lakehead undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate student mentors. Through school visits, hands-on learning activities, science experiments, cultural programming and campus experiences, the program helps students explore academic interests, learn about potential career pathways and build confidence in pursuing post-secondary education. Niijii also incorporates career guidance and healthy-lifestyle learning, helping students better understand their educational options and the support available to them.

Furthermore, the Elder in Residence program offers students, faculty and staff access to an Indigenous Elder or Knowledge Keeper who shares traditional knowledge, cultural teachings and guidance, including counselling and support.

Community Impact

A Call to Action
In 2024–2025, Lakehead University supported initiatives that raised awareness of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people and encouraged education, remembrance, and collective action. In May 2024, Lakehead's Orillia campus hosted Moose Hide Campaign Day, bringing together students, community members, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants for drumming, singing, walking, and discussion focused on ending violence against women and children.

In September 2024, Lakehead further advanced its commitment to Indigenous visibility and reconciliation by unveiling an Every Child Matters outdoor art installation and raising the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Survivors' Flag on its Thunder Bay campus.

Lakehead also continued its broader commitment to Indigenous-led learning, reconciliation, and community engagement through initiatives that recognize Indigenous experiences and strengthen awareness of issues affecting Indigenous communities. The University's work includes ongoing attention to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ crisis and the Calls for Justice through its reconciliation activities and Indigenous programming.

Supporting Equity, Rights and Inclusion

The Office of Human Rights and Equity (OHRE) at Lakehead University promotes and protects the human rights of students, employees, and volunteers by fostering an equitable, diverse, and inclusive university community. The Office provides confidential information, consultation, and support related to human rights, discrimination, harassment, accommodations, and sexual and gender-based violence, and supports community members in understanding their rights and available options.

Administration and Operations

Accessibility and Removing Barriers
Lakehead University is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive environment for students, employees, and visitors with disabilities. The University's Accessibility framework includes policies, procedures, accessibility plans, and resources designed to identify and reduce barriers to participation. Student Accessibility Services (SAS) works collaboratively with students, faculty, and staff to provide individualized academic accommodations and supports for students with temporary or permanent disabilities and medical conditions. Accommodations may include alternate-format materials, assistive technology, additional time, alternate testing arrangements, and other measures that help remove barriers while maintaining academic requirements.

Lakehead also provides information on accessible services, policies, accessibility standards, and feedback mechanisms through its central Accessibility webpage, including its Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and AODA compliance reporting.

Creating Inclusive Spaces
Lakehead University incorporates accessibility and inclusive spaces into its residence and campus environments. Accessible residence accommodations are available, including townhouses with an accessible bedroom, wheelchair-accessible washroom, accessible kitchen features, wide entrances, and other features designed to support students with mobility needs. Lakehead also provides dedicated Indigenous spaces within its residence environments. At the Orillia campus, the Office of Indigenous Initiatives and Maawnjigamig Academic Success Zone are located within the Residence Building and provide welcoming spaces for Indigenous students, including designated areas for smudging, access to cultural and academic supports, and opportunities to connect with Elders and the Indigenous community.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Human Rights Committees and Offices
Lakehead University's Office of Human Rights and Equity provides institutional support and oversight for human rights, equity, diversity, inclusion and discrimination-related matters. As outlined in Section 5 of the University's Human Rights Procedures, the Office is responsible for providing information and consultation, delivering education and training, investigating and resolving reports of discrimination, and promoting equity, diversity and inclusion across campus.

Lakehead also identifies an Accessibility Committee and its chair on its public accessibility webpage, demonstrating additional institutional structures supporting accessibility and inclusion.

Together, these offices and committees contribute to the development and implementation of policies, programs and educational initiatives that promote an equitable, inclusive and respectful campus community.

Accessible Facilities and Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Lakehead University's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, reviewed and revised in January 2025, outlines the University's commitment to identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility. The plan recognizes accessibility and inclusion as ongoing institutional priorities and is reviewed periodically to support continued progress. By incorporating accessibility into institutional planning, Lakehead demonstrates its commitment to creating an inclusive campus environment and supporting equitable access to university facilities and services for people with disabilities. The plan provides public documentation of the University's accessibility commitments and its responsibility to improve accessibility across its campuses.

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities



This societal impact focuses on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

Lakehead University is committed to addressing various urban challenges, including urbanization, infrastructure development, sustainable transportation and environmental sustainability, to create cities and settlements that provide a high quality of life for all. The university will continuously engage with local and surrounding communities to promote sustainable practices.

Research and Innovation

Research Centre for Sustainable Communities
Lakehead University's Research Centre for Sustainable Communities brings together interdisciplinary researchers to better understand the environmental, economic and social factors that influence community sustainability. Through research spanning environmental sustainability, political economy and social justice, the Centre supports innovative approaches to complex community challenges and contributes knowledge that can help build more sustainable and resilient communities.

Supporting Housing Access in Thunder Bay
Lakehead University works with community organizations to address housing insecurity and support inclusive housing solutions in Thunder Bay. In 2025, Lakehead contributed to the Thunder Bay Point-in-Time Count with local partners, helping identify the scope and complex causes of homelessness. Through the 2022–2027 Poverty Reduction Strategy, Lakehead also contributes research, data and student perspectives to affordable housing initiatives and community planning.

Exploring Innovative Housing Solutions for Northern Communities
Lakehead University researchers have investigated innovative modular home designs to improve housing quality and address chronic housing shortages in Northern Indigenous communities. This research, led by Dr. Ahmed Elshaer, explores how alternative approaches to housing design can respond to the unique needs and challenges faced by communities in Northern Canada.

Teaching and Student Life

Honouring Indigenous Cultures and Knowledge

Lakehead University provides welcoming spaces that foster belonging, cultural connection and community for Indigenous students and the broader University community. These include Niijii House, the Gakina Nindinawemaaganag (All My Relations) Indigenous Student Lounge on the Thunder Bay campus, and the Maawnjigamig Indigenous Student Lounge on the Orillia campus. Outdoor spaces, including the Sweat Lodge, tipis and Indigenous Garden (Gitigaan) sites, provide opportunities for ceremony, cultural activities, land-based learning and connection to the land.

These spaces support Indigenous ways of knowing and being while creating opportunities for students, faculty, staff and community members to participate in teaching, learning and cultural activities. Together, they contribute to Lakehead University's ongoing commitment to reconciliation and to creating an inclusive campus environment where Indigenous cultures, traditions and knowledge are recognized and reflected in campus life.

Pedestrian Priority and Student Safety
Lakehead University prioritizes pedestrian access through a network of multi-use paved and unpaved paths connecting campus facilities and surrounding trails. The Thunder Bay campus includes an accessible tunnel system that supports year-round pedestrian movement and a pedestrian underpass providing a safe crossing beneath a campus roadway.

Lakehead University's Safe Walk initiative provides students, faculty and staff with an added layer of security when travelling across campus. Available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, the service dispatches a security guard to accompany individuals to their destination on campus, particularly when they are walking alone or when visibility is limited.

Supporting Safe and Affordable Housing
Lakehead University is committed to supporting students in accessing safe and affordable housing. First-year domestic and international students who apply by the annual deadlines are guaranteed on-campus housing, with residence halls, apartments and townhouses available. Lakehead also provides off-campus housing resources, roommate matching, and guidance on leasing and housing-related matters. In 2024, Lakehead partnered with SpacesShared, connecting students seeking affordable housing with community members offering spare rooms.

Student Housing Policy
In 2025, Lakehead University strengthened its institutional approach to student housing through its Student Housing Policy, which addresses safe, affordable and suitable housing for students. Lakehead guarantees on-campus housing for first-year domestic and international students who apply by the applicable deadlines and provides residence halls, apartments and townhouses. The University also provides off-campus housing resources, roommate matching and housing-search support.

Public Sustainability Education
Lakehead University provides public sustainability education through a virtual 360° sustainability tour showcasing campus projects, including stormwater management, habitat restoration, research and the Climate Action Park. The tour was developed with support from the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks' Great Lakes Local Action Fund, the Lake Superior Living Labs Network, the Thunder Bay North Shore Remedial Action Plan and Lakehead researchers and students.

Community Impact

Using Research to Strengthen Local Communities
Lakehead University works with the City of Thunder Bay and community partners through CityStudio Thunder Bay to address local challenges and support community planning. The initiative brings students and researchers together with municipal staff to work on real-world projects, including housing and homelessness, GIS mapping, economic development, health equity and community safety. Through applied research and data-driven projects, Lakehead contributes knowledge and practical solutions that help inform local decision-making and strengthen the resilience of the community.

Opening Our Campus
Lakehead University welcomes the public to engage with many of its educational, cultural and recreational spaces. Community members can access the University's library resources, athletics and recreation facilities, cultural events, exhibitions, lectures and campus green spaces. These spaces provide opportunities for lifelong learning, recreation and cultural engagement while strengthening Lakehead's role as a community hub in Thunder Bay and Orillia.

Celebrating the Arts and Cultural Engagement
Lakehead University's Lakehead Arts Integrated Research (LAIR) gallery provides the public with free access to seven gallery spaces across the Thunder Bay campus. Established in 2014, the galleries showcase artwork by Lakehead students, alumni, faculty and staff, creating opportunities for community members to engage with art as a form of inquiry, research and learning. Each year, the University also invites the public to student exhibitions, including the 40th Annual Juried Student Art Exhibition and Honours Student Thesis Exhibition, held at the Thunder Bay Art Gallery in 2025.

Lakehead University supports the local arts community through diverse public performances and cultural programming. Through LUMINA (Lakehead University Music in Action), the Department of Music hosted several concerts during 2024–25, providing students and community members with opportunities to experience music and the performing arts, often free of charge or for a small fee or donation.

Public Art and Reconciliation

In September 2024, Lakehead University unveiled an Every Child Matters outdoor art installation and raised the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Survivors' Flag on the Thunder Bay campus. The installation provides a visible public reminder of the experiences of residential school Survivors and the University's ongoing commitment to reconciliation.

In 2024, Lakehead University hosted the Indigenous Veterans of Treaty #3 exhibit, a collaborative exhibition highlighting the experiences and contributions of Indigenous veterans from Treaty #3 and Métis communities. The exhibit brought together artifacts and photographs from the Thunder Bay Military Museum and provided members of the university and broader community with an opportunity to engage with Indigenous military history and heritage.

Public Access to Libraries and Publications
Lakehead University provides public access to its libraries, collections, and publications, supporting community learning and lifelong education. Through the University's Alumni and Visitors Library Services, members of the public can access library resources and services on campus, subject to applicable access procedures and borrowing policies. This allows community members to benefit from Lakehead's educational resources beyond the student and faculty populations.

Knowledge Preservation and Culturally Grounded Learning
In 2025, Lakehead University supported public access to local history and cultural knowledge through its partnership with the Thunder Bay Museum's public lecture series. These free public lectures explore a range of historical and cultural topics, providing opportunities for community members to learn about Northwestern Ontario's history, traditions, and shared experiences. Many lectures are recorded and made available online, extending access to this knowledge beyond in-person audiences. Topics presented in 2025 included Indigenous cultural traditions, regional social history, and the history of local institutions.

Lakehead University hosted the 35th annual Indigenous Cultural Traditions Club Powwow, held March 7–9, 2025. Open to the public at no cost, the event celebrated Indigenous cultural heritage through traditional drumming, singing, dancing, giving thanks, arts and crafts, and a traditional feast. By creating opportunities for community members to experience and participate in these traditions, the Powwow helped support the continued sharing and transmission of Indigenous cultural practices across generations.

Lakehead University received an investment from Canada Life in 2025 to advance Indigenous learning through the Gichi Kendaasiwin Constellation. This initiative supports Indigenous-led learning and culturally grounded educational experiences, strengthening opportunities for Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and teachings to be shared within the University community.

Administration and Operations

Promoting Sustainable Transportation

Lakehead University encourages students, faculty and staff to choose sustainable transportation options that reduce emissions and support healthier commuting. Initiatives include subsidized public transit, cycling infrastructure and storage, pedestrian pathways, and 16 electric vehicle charging stations available to students, employees and visitors. Lakehead also participates in the 2024 Active Commute Challenge; participants collectively travelled 2,645 kilometres using active transportation, avoiding an estimated 556 kg of greenhouse gas emissions. This initiative encourages the University community to choose active and sustainable modes of transportation and reduce their environmental impact.

Public Green Space and Community Access

Lakehead University's campuses provide extensive publicly accessible green spaces that support recreation, learning and connection with nature. The Thunder Bay campus spans 116 hectares, with approximately 35% covered by trees and another 40% consisting of lawns and other green spaces. The campus connects to several public trails, including a section of the Trans Canada Trail, and offers river paths and cycling and walking routes for community use.

Both Lakehead campuses feature community gardens and publicly accessible green spaces, where students, staff and community members can grow fruits and vegetables. The public is also encouraged to explore the campuses through self-guided sustainability tours, walking and cycling trails, and geocaching opportunities. In addition, free virtual tours of the Thunder Bay and Orillia campuses allow members of the public to explore Lakehead's campuses and extensive green spaces remotely.

Supporting Flexible and Sustainable Work

Lakehead University offers Alternate Work Arrangements (AWAs) to support employee flexibility, work-life balance, and workplace well-being. Under its published guidelines, eligible employees may request arrangements such as remote work, flexible start and finish times, compressed workweeks, or reduced workloads in exceptional circumstances. Requests are considered individually, based on job responsibilities, operational requirements, and service needs, and require supervisor approval.

The University identifies several potential benefits of these arrangements, including improved employee engagement, inclusion, retention, and reduced commuting and associated environmental impacts. Remote and hybrid work options can help reduce the need for daily travel while allowing employees to maintain their work responsibilities.

Sustainable Building Standards

In 2025, Lakehead University reviewed its Sustainable Building Policy, which requires major renovations and retrofits to meet energy-efficiency standards established through the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system. The policy establishes LEED Gold as the standard for new buildings in Thunder Bay and LEED Platinum for new buildings in Orillia. The policy applies across both campuses and incorporates considerations related to energy, water, materials and occupant health.

Adaptive Reuse and Sustainable Campus Development

Lakehead University continues to reduce the environmental impacts associated with new construction by investing in the renovation and adaptive reuse of existing campus infrastructure. Recent major renovations and retrofits include the Wolf Den Athletic Facility, Bora Laskin Faculty of Law and the Centre for Advanced Studies in Engineering and Sciences (CASES). These projects improve existing facilities while supporting more efficient use of campus infrastructure.

SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production



This societal impact focuses on ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns. Lakehead University recognizes the importance of promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production among students, faculty and staff to reduce environmental degradation, resource depletion and climate change. To achieve this goal, Lakehead University has implemented measures such as waste reduction and recycling programs,

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Sustainable Development Goals by the numbers:
37% of waste was recycled

Research and Innovation

Aquatic Toxicology Research Centre
Lakehead University researchers are contributing to a better understanding of plastic pollution and its impacts on freshwater ecosystems. Research through Lakehead's aquatic toxicology and freshwater ecology programs examines contaminants, including microplastics, and their effects on aquatic environments. Work connected to the IISD–Experimental Lakes Area and the Lakehead University Aquatic Toxicology Research Centre helps advance knowledge that can inform pollution prevention, environmental monitoring, and the protection of freshwater resources.

Lakehead University Environmental Laboratory (LUEL)
Lakehead University's Lakehead University Environmental Laboratory (LUEL) supports research and environmental decision-making through specialized testing and analysis of environmental samples. Established in 1995, LUEL provides multi-parameter environmental testing and is ISO 17025 accredited. Its work supports the identification and monitoring of contaminants in water and other environmental media, contributing to improved understanding and management of environmental risks.

Teaching and Student Life

Reusable Containers
Lakehead University promotes sustainable consumption by reducing single-use waste and improving campus waste management. Through reusable dining initiatives and centralized

recycling systems, the university encourages students, faculty, and staff to adopt more environmentally responsible practices.

Lakehead University is dedicated to enhancing its sustainability efforts through a campus-wide reusable container program for takeout food and beverages. Students, faculty and staff can enroll in a free app-based program called Cano which tracks their use of reusable containers. When participants return their containers, they earn rewards that can be redeemed for food and drinks in the cafeteria.

Lakehead University incentivizes students, faculty, and staff to bring their own reusable mugs by offering discounts at participating on-campus food service locations. Additional initiatives, including trayless dining and the use of reusable dining ware in campus cafeterias, help reduce reliance on single-use plastics and minimize waste generated through food services.

Waste Diversion
On the Thunder Bay campus, Lakehead University has implemented a centralized waste and recycling program that replaces individual office and classroom bins with shared collection stations. This initiative eliminates more than 25,000 single-use plastic bags annually while encouraging better waste sorting and increasing the university's overall waste diversion efforts.

During 2025, Lakehead University tracked waste and recycling across its campuses, recording 876.45 metric tonnes of waste and 324.55 metric tonnes of recycled material. Lakehead transitioned to a waste collection provider using on-truck measurement technology, improving the accuracy of institutional waste data and allowing the University to better monitor waste streams and identify opportunities for increased diversion.

Community Impact

Lakehead University uses beverage dispensing systems as an alternative to individually packaged beverages. Bevi usage has resulted in 23,750 bottles and cans avoided, representing an estimated 1.99 tonnes of CO_2 emissions avoided.

Helping Students Give Unwanted Items a Second Life
Lakehead University provides students with resources to help them responsibly manage unwanted belongings when moving off campus or leaving the university community. Rather than sending usable items to landfill, students are encouraged to sell, donate, reuse, or recycle clothing, furniture, household goods, books, sporting equipment, electronics, and other materials.

The university provides information on local organizations and services where students can donate gently used items, including clothing, furniture, appliances, books, sporting equipment, and non-perishable food. Students are also directed to appropriate recycling and e-waste collection locations for items that cannot be reused. These resources help extend the useful life

of products, reduce unnecessary landfill waste, and make affordable goods available to members of the broader community.

This approach complements initiatives such as Wolfie's Closet by encouraging students to consider reuse and donation before disposal, supporting Lakehead's broader commitment to waste reduction and sustainable consumption.

Zero Plastic Waste
Lakehead University's Orillia campus supports the reduction of single-use plastic through its Bottled Water Free Campus approach. By encouraging the use of reusable water bottles and providing access to water refill stations, the campus helps reduce reliance on single-use plastic water bottles and the amount of plastic waste generated through campus activities. This initiative complements Lakehead's broader waste reduction and recycling efforts and encourages students, faculty, and staff to adopt more sustainable everyday practices.

By monitoring waste generation and recycling across campus, Lakehead can measure the impact of its waste reduction and recycling initiatives. These efforts have helped decrease the amount of waste sent to landfill and divert significant quantities of plastic and other recyclable materials from local landfills.

Administration and Operations

Lakehead Procurement
Lakehead University's commitment to sustainability extends beyond our campuses and encompasses outsourced services and the supply chain. Lakehead's practices align with Supply Chain Ontario, the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, and the Broader Public Sector (BPS) Procurement Directive, which sets out essential procurement guidelines for the responsible use of public funds under Ontario's Broader Public Sector Accountability Act. These documents outline our expectations for ethical sourcing, reduced environmental impact, and fair labour practices in the supply chain.

Lakehead University is compliant with the principles and practices outlined in the BPS Procurement Directive, and Lakehead University's Procurement Policy (last updated in 2018, and is currently undergoing review with updates implemented following the completion of provincial legislative revisions) provides further clarity on the directive, including sustainable considerations and minimization of waste.

Lakehead Sustainability Report
Lakehead University publishes an Annual Sustainability Report which addresses the university's progress toward achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. This report complements the progress monitoring of Lakehead University's Sustainability Plan (2019-2025) and is regularly updated to reflect ongoing efforts and accomplishments. The report includes updates on energy and water consumption, waste diversion rates, sustainable transportation, ethical procurement, and progress toward specific SDG-related goals.

Waste Disposal and Recycling Policy

Lakehead University's Waste Centralization Program, introduced at the Thunder Bay campus in February 2023, supports the University's commitment to reducing waste sent to landfill and increasing recycling. Developed with the Office of Sustainability, Physical Plant, and the Sustainability Stewardship Council, the program standardizes waste collection through centralized sorting stations for containers, paper, and landfill waste. Educational signage and consistent bin placement encourage proper sorting, reduce recycling contamination, and help divert recyclable materials from landfill. The program supports the objectives of Lakehead's Sustainability Plan (2019–2024), which identifies reducing recyclable materials sent to landfill and incinerators as a waste-management priority.

SDG 13: Climate Action



This societal impact focuses on taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Lakehead University recognizes its role in acting to address climate issues through research, partnerships, and stewardship in its behaviours such as reducing carbon use, knowledge creation and exchange, and education.

80.5% of the university's electricity was from low-carbon sources for the 2025 academic year.

Research and Innovation

Building Climate Resilience

Lakehead University researchers are studying how Northern Ontario's forests, wetlands and watersheds respond to a changing climate. Research examining the role of microorganisms in soil, water and plants is helping researchers understand how ecosystems respond to climate change and how important natural systems such as boreal forests and wetlands can support climate resilience and carbon storage.

Developing Technologies to Reduce Emissions

Lakehead University is advancing research into technologies that can help reduce greenhouse-gas emissions and air pollution. In 2025, Dr. Ebrahim Rezaei received Ontario Research Fund support to establish a Laboratory for Climate Change Mitigation and Air Pollution Control. The laboratory's research includes converting carbon dioxide into syngas and developing technologies to treat industrial air pollutants, while providing students with training in emerging environmental technologies.

Supporting Climate Adaptation

Lakehead University researchers contribute expertise to regional climate adaptation efforts, including work with the City of Thunder Bay's Climate Adaptation Working Group. Research and knowledge-sharing help inform planning for climate-related risks such as extreme weather, flooding and wildfire smoke, while supporting communities in preparing for the impacts of a changing climate.

Teaching and Student Life

Lakehead incorporates climate change and sustainability into teaching through programs and courses that connect students with environmental challenges facing Northern Ontario. Programs in Environmental Management, Environmental Sustainability, Geography, Natural Resources

Management and Indigenous Learning provide students with opportunities to explore climate change, environmental stewardship, resource management and sustainable development.

Learning from Northern Ecosystems
Lakehead's location in Northwestern Ontario provides a unique environment for sustainability education. Students can learn directly from the region's forests, wetlands, lakes and other ecosystems through field courses, research projects and experiential learning. These experiences help students understand the impacts of climate change on northern environments while developing practical skills for environmental management and adaptation.

Preparing Educators for Climate Action
Dr. Ellen Field of Lakehead University's Faculty of Education is leading a two-year national project to accelerate the integration of climate change education into teacher education programs across Canada. The project supports faculties of education in strengthening climate-related curriculum, policies and programming, helping prepare future educators to bring climate literacy and action into classrooms across the country.

Student Climate Advocacy
In 2025, Lakehead University students continued to demonstrate their commitment to climate action through student-led protests calling on major Canadian banks to reduce their financing of fossil fuel projects. The campaign encouraged dialogue about the relationship between financial institutions, fossil fuel investment and climate change, while providing students with an opportunity to advocate for responsible investment and stronger climate action beyond the classroom.

Community Impact

Connecting Through Climate Action
In 2024–2025, Lakehead University provided opportunities for students, staff and community members to engage with climate action and sustainability. Activities included Sustainability Walks, and the Active Commute Challenge with participants travelling 2,645 km through active transportation and helping avoid approximately 556 kg of greenhouse-gas emissions.

Supporting community climate planning
Lakehead University contributed expertise to the City of Thunder Bay's Net-Zero Strategy and Climate Adaptation Working Group, helping connect university research and knowledge with municipal planning for emissions reduction, climate adaptation and community resilience.

Connecting research with the community
The Lake Superior Living Labs Network brings Lakehead together with universities, Indigenous communities, governments, businesses and NGOs across the Lake Superior watershed. Through public workshops, seminars, field schools and other activities, the network connects research with community climate action and environmental stewardship

Supporting Indigenous Communities During Climate-Related Wildfires
In June 2025, Lakehead University supported more than 700 members of Sandy Lake First Nation who were evacuated due to the Red Lake 12 wildfire in northwestern Ontario. The University provided temporary accommodation on its Thunder Bay campus while residents awaited transportation to host communities, with residence, catering, operations, conference, and security teams working together to support their needs. Lakehead also organized sports, arts, and cultural activities for evacuees, including children and families. This response demonstrates the University's role in community resilience and emergency support for Indigenous communities affected by increasingly severe wildfire risks

Global Reach

Advancing Climate Resilience through Indo-Pacific Research
Lakehead University's Indo-Pacific Scholarships and Fellowships for Canadians (IPSFC) project connects Lakehead researchers with universities across the Indo-Pacific, including the Republic of Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Fiji and Vanuatu. Led by Dr. Brigitte Leblon and Dr. Glenda Bonifacio, the multidisciplinary project examines how climate change affects natural and social environments, including risks from natural hazards and the gendered impacts of climate change adaptation and mitigation. Through international research collaboration and knowledge exchange, the project brings Lakehead's expertise in natural resources and environmental research into global efforts to build climate resilience and support sustainable development.

Administration and Operations

Climate Action, Energy Management and Responsible Investment
Lakehead University completed its commitment to divest from fossil fuel companies in December 2022, becoming one of the first Canadian universities to take this step. In 2024–2025, Lakehead continued to advance responsible investment practices and monitor the impact of its divestment, aligning its investment decisions with its broader sustainability and climate-action commitments.

Lakehead University tracks energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions across its Thunder Bay and Orillia campuses and reports this information annually under Ontario's broader public sector requirements. Through its Sustainability Plan 2019–2025, the University has continued to identify opportunities to improve energy efficiency, reduce emissions and increase the use of renewable energy. Lakehead's University Centre rooftop solar array also contributes renewable electricity to campus operations.

Lakehead University contributes to regional climate action through its involvement in the City of Thunder Bay's Net-Zero Strategy, supporting community efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and work toward net-zero emissions by 2050. Through this collaboration, Lakehead connects its institutional sustainability efforts with broader municipal climate goals.

Greenhouse Gas and Carbon Monitoring

Lakehead University measures and reports its operational carbon intensity and maintains annual Carbon Intensity Reports. Carbon Intensity Reports are available for 2023, 2024 and 2025, providing a basis for monitoring changes in the University's carbon footprint over time.

SDG 14: Life Below Water



This societal impact focuses on conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.

Through strategic partnerships with governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations, Lakehead University will leverage collective expertise to drive innovation and impact marine conservation initiatives to foster environmental stewardship and raise awareness among members of the community.

Research and Innovation

Protecting Freshwater Ecosystems

Lakehead University researchers are contributing to efforts to understand and protect the health of Northern Ontario's freshwater ecosystems. Research into the increasing occurrence of blue-green algae, or cyanobacteria, is helping identify the environmental factors contributing to harmful algal blooms and potential approaches to mitigation. A 2025 blue-green algae mitigation project also focused on planting native vegetation to improve water quality, reduce nutrient loading and enhance shoreline areas.

Advancing Freshwater Conservation and Water Security

Lakehead University researchers are working to protect freshwater ecosystems and improve the health of the Lake Superior watershed. Dr. Robert Stewart, Associate Professor in Geography and the Environment and Water Resource Science, leads the Freshwater Coastal Management Research Group, which examines water and sediment quality, watershed pollution, stormwater and the management of freshwater coastal environments. His research focuses on water security and protecting watershed and coastal environments throughout the Lake Superior Basin.

Monitoring Aquatic Ecosystems

Lakehead's Aquatic Toxicology Research Centre (ATRC) conducts regulatory testing and monitoring of the effects of industrial effluents on aquatic organisms. The Centre uses organisms such as rainbow trout and Daphnia magna to assess the effects of industrial discharges and support environmental protection. Lakehead identifies the ATRC as part of its work to minimize damage to aquatic ecosystems, particularly in Northwestern Ontario and the Great Lakes region.

Blue Justice Research and Community-Led Fisheries Sustainability

Lakehead University's Blue Justice research explores equity, sustainability, and the rights and well-being of coastal communities and small-scale fisheries, particularly across the Laurentian

Great Lakes watershed. Through interdisciplinary research and community partnerships, the initiative examines fisheries governance, Indigenous self-determination, food sovereignty, and environmental justice. Key projects include documenting the cultural, political, and ecological importance of Batchewanaung Anishinabek fisheries and developing case studies on community-led responses to challenges facing Great Lakes fisheries.

Teaching and Student Life

Training Future Water Leaders
Lakehead University's Water Resource Science program provides students with specialized education and hands-on experience in freshwater science and management. The four-year program focuses on water quality, conservation, aquatic ecosystems, watershed management and environmental policy. Through field-based courses and research in Water Resource Science and related environmental programs, students study lakes, rivers, wetlands and watersheds and develop practical experience in water sampling, environmental monitoring and aquatic ecosystem assessment. The university's location on the shores of Lake Superior provides a unique natural laboratory where students can connect their academic studies with real-world challenges facing freshwater ecosystems.

Education about Aquatic Ecosystems
Lakehead University, in collaboration with Confederation College, provided Indigenous youth with hands-on learning through the Aki Kikinomakaywin Camp. The program connected STEM education with Indigenous knowledge and relationships to land and water, including freshwater ecosystems, water management and conservation.

Lakehead supported environmental education through the Ontario Master Naturalist Certificate Program, which provides training for individuals interested in environmental stewardship. Program content includes wetlands and water conservation, supporting community knowledge and stewardship of local ecosystems.

Community Impact

Community Action for a Healthier Lake Superior
Through the Thunder Bay Remedial Action Plan (RAP), Lakehead University works with government, community organizations, researchers and local stakeholders to improve the health of Lake Superior. The RAP provides opportunities for community involvement in addressing environmental concerns in the Thunder Bay Area of Concern, including habitat degradation, pollution and aquatic ecosystem health. This work connects university research with local action and helps communities play a role in the long-term protection and restoration of Lake Superior.

Helping Communities Protect Local Water

Lakehead University's Rain Garden Demonstration provides a practical example of how the university helps community members take action to protect freshwater. The demonstration site shows how rain gardens can reduce urban stormwater runoff and help protect Lake Superior water quality. Members of the public can visit the site to learn how rain gardens work and how similar stormwater-management practices can be incorporated into their own properties.

Protecting and Restoring Lake Superior's Aquatic Ecosystems

Lakehead University researchers have contributed to understanding the health and recovery of aquatic ecosystems in Northwestern Ontario. Research on Blackbird Creek and Jackfish Bay, a Great Lakes Area of Concern connected to Lake Superior, has documented the environmental impacts of industrial wastewater and the ecosystem's response following the closure of the Terrace Bay pulp mill. Researchers Robert Stewart and Tim Hollinger have monitored water quality in the area since 2008, providing important evidence of changes in aquatic conditions. Following the mill's closure in 2024, researchers observed clearer, oxygen-rich water and the return of trout fry to Blackbird Creek, demonstrating the resilience of freshwater ecosystems when pollution pressures are reduced.

Supporting Great Lakes Research and Collaboration

In 2024, Lakehead University's Lake Superior Living Labs Network brought together researchers, Indigenous communities, organizations and other partners through a virtual summit focused on the Lake Superior watershed and the importance of protecting freshwater resources. The summit provided an opportunity to share knowledge, research and perspectives on the environmental challenges facing the Lake Superior basin, while highlighting the shared relationships and responsibilities connected to the watershed. By creating opportunities for collaboration and knowledge exchange, the Network supports a more integrated approach to understanding and protecting the health of Lake Superior and its surrounding freshwater ecosystems.

Exploring Superior Shoal to Advance Lake Superior Conservation

Lakehead University biologist Dr. Michael Rennie led a research expedition to Superior Shoal, an underwater mountain in Lake Superior, to investigate its biodiversity and ecological importance. Working with researchers and conservation partners, the team used underwater remotely operated vehicles and acoustic monitoring to study fish populations, including lake trout, and the shoal's unique ecosystem. The research will help inform conservation strategies to protect Lake Superior and other large-lake environments from threats such as climate change, pollution, and overfishing.

Global Reach

Dr. Michael Rennie's freshwater research at the IISD–Experimental Lakes Area (ELA) contributed to broader efforts to understand and address threats to aquatic ecosystems. His Community Ecology and Energetics Lab investigated the effects of microplastic pollution, invasive species and contaminants on freshwater ecosystems, generating evidence that can support environmental policy and water-security decision-making. Lakehead University identifies

this work as contributing to regional and global water-management solutions, demonstrating how research conducted in Northwestern Ontario can inform broader approaches to freshwater protection and sustainable aquatic-resource management.

Administration and Operations

Preventing Water Pollution
Lakehead University has policies and procedures for the safe handling, storage and disposal of hazardous materials. These requirements help prevent chemicals and other contaminants from entering municipal wastewater systems and local waterways. Training and established disposal procedures support the protection of aquatic ecosystems, local watersheds and surrounding communities.

Reducing Plastic Waste on Campus
Lakehead University implemented multiple measures to reduce plastic waste and prevent plastic pollution. The Orillia campus prohibits the sale of single-use plastic water bottles under its Bottled Water Policy. Lakehead also promotes reusable mugs and dining ware and operates centralized waste and recycling at the Thunder Bay campus. The centralized system eliminates the need for more than 25,000 single-use garbage bags annually. Additional recycling and e-waste collection activities support waste diversion and responsible material management.

Sustainable Seafood Policy
Lakehead University's food-service provider, Aramark, maintains a Sustainable Seafood Policy covering fresh, frozen and shelf-stable wild-caught and farm-raised seafood. The policy requires responsible sourcing practices designed to conserve aquatic ecosystems, improve traceability and support sustainable seafood production.

Designated Fish Sanctuary and Aquatic Wildlife Protection
Lakehead University is located adjacent to a designated fish sanctuary along the McIntyre River in Thunder Bay. Under the Government of Canada's Ontario Fishery Regulations, 1989 (SOR/89-93), the protected area includes the waters of the McIntyre River between the footbridge on Lakehead University's property and two dams upstream at the foot of the artificial pond on university property. This designation establishes fishing restrictions within the specified area to help protect fish populations and aquatic wildlife, supporting the conservation of the river's ecosystem and biodiversity.

SDG 15: Life on Land



This societal impact focuses on protecting, restoring, and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably managing forests, combating desertification, and halting and reversing land degradation and biodiversity loss.

Lakehead University incorporates sustainability principles into the curriculum, research initiatives and campus operations in an effort to contribute to advancing solutions to ensure the health and resilience of terrestrial ecosystems for generations to come.

Research and Innovation

Understanding Woodland Caribou and Boreal Ecosystems
Lakehead University researchers are contributing to research on woodland caribou, one of the most iconic species of Ontario's boreal forest. Research examines caribou populations, habitat use and movement, as well as how forestry, roads and other landscape disturbances influence the species. This research provides information that can support conservation planning and sustainable forest management in Northwestern Ontario.

Lakehead's Living Laboratories
Lakehead University's Jack Haggerty Forest and Legacy Forest provide living laboratories for research into sustainable forest management. Researchers and students use these forests to examine how different forest-management practices affect forest ecosystems and long-term sustainability. The research helps improve understanding of how forests can be managed for resource production while maintaining ecological functions, biodiversity and healthy terrestrial ecosystems.

Claude E. Garton Herbarium
The Claude E. Garton Herbarium (LKHD) at Lakehead University conducts research and monitoring at the Greenwood Lake Conservation Reserve, a unique remnant of old-growth white pine forest in Northwestern Ontario. Research at Greenwood Lake has included tree surveys and monitoring of white pine regeneration. A research survey found that mature, approximately 200–300-year-old white pines continue to dominate portions of the reserve, while recruitment of young white pine is minimal. The research established a baseline for future monitoring and identified concerns about the long-term regeneration and conservation of this old-growth forest

Teaching and Student Life

Learning about Ecosystems Through Education and Research
Lakehead University provides students with a range of opportunities to study ecosystems, biodiversity, natural resources and environmental sustainability through undergraduate,

graduate and doctoral education. Undergraduate programs including Biology, Environmental Studies, Natural Resource Management, Sustainability Sciences, Outdoor, Recreation & Tourism and Water Resource Science provide students with opportunities to explore environmental systems and the relationships between people and the natural world. At the graduate level, students can pursue research in areas including Biology, Environmental Studies, Environmental Management, Forestry and Forest Management, while doctoral studies are available in Natural Resources Management and Forest Science.

Learning on the Land
Lakehead's commitment to experiential learning includes opportunities for Indigenous youth to connect with science, culture and the land. In collaboration with Confederation College, Lakehead hosts the Aki Kikinomakaywin Camp, meaning "learning on the land." The week-long program offers hands-on STEM and arts learning while exploring Indigenous knowledge, biodiversity, ecosystems and environmental stewardship.

Sustainability and Foraging Programs
The Office of Sustainability offers free educational programs, including sustainability and foraging walks, that engage students and the public in learning about Lakehead University's natural environment, local ecosystems, biodiversity, and sustainable practices. These hands-on programs provide opportunities to explore the campus and surrounding environment while learning more about sustainability and the importance of protecting local natural spaces.

Campus Biodiversity Research
In 2024–25, Lakehead Natural Resource Management students conducted research examining biodiversity on the Thunder Bay campus, including an undergraduate thesis reviewing ground beetle biodiversity. This research contributes to understanding terrestrial species and biodiversity within the university's own campus environment and provides opportunities for students to participate in field-based ecological research.

Lakehead University Farm Tours and Garden Education
Lakehead's Agricultural Research Station (LUARS) conducts research on crop production, weed and pest management, crop rotation, and agricultural development in Northwestern Ontario. Lakehead also supports community education through sustainable agriculture research, seed-saving initiatives, and short-season gardening outreach.

Lakehead University's Farm Lab at the Orillia campus provides hands-on educational opportunities that connect students and community members with sustainable agriculture, food production, and the natural environment. Through guided garden tours, school field trips, and educational programming, participants can learn about growing food, gardening practices, and the importance of sustainable local food systems. These activities encourage environmental awareness, promote food literacy, and provide opportunities to explore how food is produced and how communities can support more sustainable approaches to food production.

Community Impact

Connecting Youth with Science and Nature
Lakehead also provides opportunities for younger learners to explore science and the natural environment. Nature Explorers with Technology (NEWTs) is a nature exploration and science program for youth aged 15–19, jointly run by the Thunder Bay Field Naturalist club and Lakehead University's Faculty of Science and Environmental Studies. The program encourages participants to explore the natural world while developing scientific skills and an appreciation for local biodiversity.

Restoring Forests and Habitat on Campus
Lakehead University staff, faculty and students planted approximately 300 white spruce, white birch and poplar trees on the Thunder Bay campus. The initiative was supported by EcoSuperior, Lakehead's Office of Sustainability, the Thunder Bay Remedial Action Plan and the Lake Superior Living Labs Network. The project was designed to reduce forest fragmentation, increase species diversity and support forest succession. Planting in the Climate Action Park also expanded the riparian buffer, reduced the amount of lawn requiring mowing and contributed to habitat restoration along the river.

Ontario Master Naturalist Program
Lakehead's Ontario Master Naturalist Program provides community members with hands-on learning about Ontario's biodiversity and natural environment, including plants, insects, birds, wetlands, geology and ecosystems. Through field-based education and practical experiences, participants develop the knowledge and skills needed to better understand and monitor local species and habitats. The program also encourages participants to share their knowledge within their communities and become active stewards of Ontario's natural environment, supporting greater awareness and conservation of local ecosystems.

Global Reach

Supporting Global Forest Adaptation
Lakehead researchers played a central role in FORSCALE, an international research network focused on helping forests adapt to climate change. Funded by Germany's Eva Mayr-Stihl Foundation, seven Lakehead professors from the Faculty of Natural Resources Management contributed to research spanning tree genetics, ecosystems, policy and land-use planning.

Administration and Operations

Approximately 8% of food procurement has been sourced from local suppliers, with opportunities for local purchasing influenced by seasonal availability and the shorter growing season in Northwestern Ontario.

Lakehead University supports responsible and sustainable food sourcing through its food service partnerships with Aramark and Dana Hospitality. These providers incorporate sustainable sourcing practices that consider environmental stewardship, ethical and responsible procurement, animal welfare, human rights, and sustainable agricultural and fishing practices.

Lakehead works with its food service partners to support sustainable consumption, reduce the environmental impacts of food procurement and operations, and advance responsible purchasing practices across its campuses.

SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions



This societal impact focuses on how universities can support, and be, strong institutions in their countries and promote peace and justice. It explores universities' research on law and international relations, their participation as advisers to the government and their policies on academic freedoms.

Lakehead University recognizes the importance of upholding the values of democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights.
Through the fields of criminology, law and social justice, Lakehead equips students with the knowledge and skills needed to address conflict resolution, social inequalities, and human rights violations while promoting peace and justice.

Research and Innovation

Local: Expert Advice to Local Government: Workplace Injury Prevention
In 2025, Lakehead University researcher Dr. Kathryn Sinden collaborated with the City of Thunder Bay to identify workplace injury risks among municipal employees in physically demanding roles, including transit, operations, and emergency services. By analyzing workplace injury data and assessing occupational hazards, the research identified key risk factors and provided evidence to support the development of an injury-risk management strategy. The findings helped inform potential prevention measures, including a targeted stretching program.

Regional: Indigenous Law and Justice
The Mino-waabandan Inaakonigewinan Indigenous Law and Justice Institute is an academic research unit based out of the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law at Lakehead University. The Institute was launched in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #50, which calls for the creation of Indigenous law institutes to support access to justice for Indigenous people and to revitalize Indigenous laws.

In 2025, Law professors Monique Woolnough and Larissa Speak examined the ethics and impacts of Lakehead's Indigenous land-based learning curriculum. The curriculum introduces first-year law students to Indigenous legal orders through ceremonies, art and sharing circles led by Elders and Indigenous community members

National: Research on Rural Non-Profit Capacity and Regional Community Services
In 2025, Lakehead University researchers Dr. Yuanyuan Wu and Dr. Olakunle Akingbola collaborated with more than 25 rural non-profit organizations in central Ontario to examine how

financial and human resource constraints affect their operations and ability to serve their communities. Supported by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council grant, the research aims to identify operational challenges and explore solutions to strengthen the sector's capacity to address social needs. The findings may help inform regional planning and decisions related to rural community services and non-profit sustainability.

National: Expert Advice on National Environmental Education Policy
In 2025, Lakehead University Associate Professor Dr. Ellen Field served as lead consultant in developing Canada's National Framework for Environmental Learning, a federal initiative supported by Environment and Climate Change Canada. Her work included reviewing environmental education policies across provincial, national, and international jurisdictions and identifying policy gaps and promising practices. She also contributed to developing national learning principles, outcomes, and indicators through consultation with educators, researchers, Indigenous leaders, government representatives, and community partners. This work demonstrates Lakehead's contribution of specialized expertise to inform national education policy and strengthen environmental and climate change learning across Canada.

Teaching and Student Life

Student Governance
Lakehead University recognizes the Lakehead University Student Union (LUSU) as a democratic student organization. Students at the Thunder Bay and Orillia campuses elect an executive committee and board of directors through referendums. LUSU represents student interests, informs university services and supports student participation, advocacy and community activities.

Educating Future Leaders in Justice and Governance
Lakehead University's Bora Laskin Faculty of Law prepares students to understand and respond to complex legal, social and governance issues. Through its emphasis on Indigenous law, access to justice and experiential learning, students develop the knowledge and skills needed to contribute to fair and effective legal systems.

Lakehead University's Criminology program provides students with a practitioner-oriented education in the Canadian criminal justice system, with three core areas of focus: social justice and human rights, law and legal institutions, and forensic science and criminalistics. Students can explore topics such as policing, cybercrime, youth crime, forensic psychology and death investigation, preparing them for careers in law enforcement, corrections, victim services and justice administration.

Human Rights and Equity
Lakehead University's Office of Human Rights and Equity delivered 11 education and training sessions, 24 orientation and information sessions and six additional prevention initiatives related to sexual and gender-based violence during 2024–25. The Office also maintained reporting and resolution processes for discrimination, harassment and human-rights concerns. During

January–April 2025, Lakehead recorded 10 reported racism or hate incidents and reported an average response time of three days and average resolution time of 20 days.

Community Impact

Expanding Access to Justice
Lakehead University Community Legal Services provides free legal services to low-income residents of Northwestern Ontario, including residents of Thunder Bay, Fort William First Nation, Nipigon, Marathon, Schreiber and Greenstone. Services include support with minor criminal offences, provincial offences, tenant rights, small claims and civil disputes, and employment law. The clinic provides an important community resource for individuals who may otherwise face barriers to accessing legal representation.

Advancing Indigenous Human Rights
Indigenous Law Students Association (ILSA) participated in the Indigenous Human Rights Program in partnership with the Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre. Students supported the relaunch of a human rights legal clinic providing free legal information, summary advice and public legal education related to discrimination and human rights law for Indigenous communities in Thunder Bay.

Indigenous Representation in University Governance
Lakehead University's Ogimaawin Indigenous Education Council (OIEC) provides a formal mechanism for Indigenous community participation in university governance. During 2024–25, OIEC held four scheduled meetings between October 2024 and April 2025. The Council includes representatives from surrounding Indigenous communities and has representation on Lakehead's Board of Governors and Senate. OIEC serves as an advisory council to the President and a formal channel of communication between Indigenous communities and the University.

Administration and Operations

Transparent and Accountable Governance
Lakehead University's governance structures included representation from students, faculty and staff. The Senate included undergraduate and graduate student representatives, while the Board of Governors included student, faculty and staff representation. During 2024–25, the Board continued to make formal appointments to governance bodies, including the appointment of a staff member and an Indigenous representative to OIEC for subsequent terms.

Protecting Human Rights
Lakehead’s Human Rights Policy and related institutional processes provide a framework for addressing discrimination, harassment and other human rights concerns. These measures support a safe, respectful and inclusive environment and reinforce the university’s commitment to fairness, dignity and equal treatment.

Commitment to Free Expression & Academic Freedom and Responsible Research
Lakehead University's Freedom of Expression Policy supports an environment where students, faculty and staff can share ideas, question perspectives and engage in open debate. The policy protects the right to express and challenge views, supporting academic freedom, diverse perspectives and informed dialogue.

Lakehead strengthened research-security support while maintaining its commitment to academic freedom. During 2024–25, the University invested in a Research Security and Data Management Specialist to help researchers identify and mitigate research-security risks and comply with federal and provincial requirements. Lakehead's research-security framework explicitly recognizes the importance of maintaining researchers' academic freedom and capacity for innovation

Government Relations and Public Policy
The Office of Government Relations at Lakehead University supports communication, collaboration and advocacy between the university and governments at the municipal, provincial and federal levels. The office works to advance Lakehead's interests within the public policy and legislative environment through advocacy and government relations, policy analysis and strategic planning, relationship building, and legislative engagement.

Lakehead University established a Research Chair on Caribou Populations in Ontario to support the Caribou Conservation Stewardship Program, which forms part of a conservation agreement between the governments of Ontario and Canada. The Chair's research direction is informed by a steering committee involving Indigenous communities and organizations, municipalities, environmental groups and representatives of Ontario ministries.

Institutional integrity and accountability
Lakehead University maintains publicly available policies and governance mechanisms supporting institutional accountability, financial oversight, risk management and ethical decision-making. These include Board Finance and Operations Committee and Board Audit and Risk Committee terms of reference, conflict-of-interest provisions and other institutional policies. Lakehead also publicly reports its annual operating budget and audited financial statements.

Stakeholder Engagement
Lakehead University's 2025–30 strategic planning process incorporated input from more than 1,200 stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff and community partners. This consultation helped inform the University's priorities and future direction, demonstrating a structured mechanism for internal and external stakeholders to contribute to institutional decision-making.

Ethical and Responsible Research
Lakehead University is committed to conducting research in an ethical, responsible and accountable manner. The Research Ethics Board (REB) reviews research involving human participants to ensure that projects meet established ethical standards and protect the rights, safety, dignity and wellbeing of participants. The REB applies the core principles of respect for

persons, concern for welfare and justice, while ensuring that researchers consider potential risks and benefits throughout the research process.

SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals



This societal impact focuses on strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development.

Lakehead University understands the importance of a collaborative effort for advancing knowledge exchange and cooperative strategies with government agencies, community organizations, industry partners, Indigenous communities, citizens in the communities we serve and other academic institutions. By seeking expertise, resources, and best practices to address complex global issues, Lakehead University is dedicated to advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Lakehead University has 12 research centres and institutes advancing collaborative research and knowledge exchange to address societal challenges at the national and international level.

Research and Innovation

Global Research Connections
Lakehead's research extends beyond Northwestern Ontario through international collaborations, research partnerships and knowledge-sharing networks. The University is a member of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Canada, connecting Lakehead with universities, research centres and organizations working internationally to advance practical solutions to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Lakehead researchers also contribute to international research and knowledge mobilization on issues including climate change, sustainable communities, water, food systems, health, Indigenous knowledge and environmental sustainability.

Research with Societal Impact
Lakehead University's research responds to real-world challenges and community priorities, translating knowledge and innovation into meaningful outcomes beyond the university. Through collaborations with municipalities, Indigenous communities and organizations, not-for-profit groups, businesses, industry and government, Lakehead researchers work across disciplines to address complex issues affecting communities locally, nationally and internationally. These partnerships create opportunities to share expertise, develop practical solutions and strengthen the connection between research and the people and communities it serves.

Through initiatives such as Research and Innovation Week, Lakehead brings researchers, students, community members and partners together to showcase research and encourage dialogue around emerging issues. Research highlighted through these activities spans areas such as artificial intelligence, climate change, Indigenous housing, environmental sustainability, health and community development.

Indigenous Partnership Research
In 2024-2025 Lakehead had 102 Indigenous partnerships, and Dr. Anna Koné Péfoyo, Department of Health Sciences received the Indigenous Partnership Research Award recognized a collaborative project involving Lakehead University, Athabasca University, Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority, Matawa First Nations Chiefs Council and Waasegiizhig Nanaandawe'iyewigamig. The project examined the impacts of COVID-19 on Indigenous communities.

Teaching and Student Life

Social Justice Education
Lakehead University's Social Justice Studies program prepares students to examine complex social issues and understand the factors that shape inequality, human rights and social change. Through interdisciplinary study, students explore issues such as social justice, equity, human rights, Indigenous perspectives and community development, developing the critical thinking and analytical skills needed to engage with complex challenges. The program encourages students to consider how knowledge can be applied beyond the classroom and supports the development of informed, engaged citizens who can contribute to more equitable and inclusive communities.

Preparing Students to Create Positive Change
Lakehead University supports students in developing the leadership, collaboration, critical-thinking and problem-solving skills needed to contribute to their communities and address complex challenges. Through leadership development, volunteering, student organizations, mentorship and community involvement, students have opportunities to put their learning into practice and develop skills beyond the classroom. Programs such as LVLup Leadership Development and the Co-Curricular Record recognize and support students' engagement in leadership, governance, volunteering and other activities, helping prepare graduates to make meaningful contributions to society.

Giving Tuesday
Lakehead also participated in Giving Tuesday on December 3, described by the University as a global day of giving. The Lakehead community raised more than $300,000 from more than 350 donations, with contributions coming from Canada, the United States, China, the UK, Finland and New Zealand. The funds supported student financial aid, including scholarships and bursaries.

Lakehead–University of Guelph Partnership
Lakehead University and the University of Guelph established a collaborative Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program focused on addressing veterinary education and service needs in Northern Ontario. The partnership brings together Lakehead's Thunder Bay campus and the Ontario Veterinary College and includes the development of a new animal education facility. The initiative is supported by a $10-million philanthropic investment from Kim and Stu Lang to address a specific northern community need.

Indigenous Youth Engineering Partnerships
Lakehead University partnered with Civiconnect, Fort William First Nation, Gambler First Nation, the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers and Lakehead's Office of Indigenous Initiatives on a three-year initiative designed to create pathways for Indigenous youth into engineering. Supported through NSERC's PromoScience program, the initiative brings together university, Indigenous community and professional partners to provide educational and career pathways for Indigenous youth.

Community Impact

Strengthening Community Partnerships
Lakehead University works with communities, Indigenous organizations, governments, not-for-profit organizations, businesses and industry to address challenges and create positive change. Through research partnerships, experiential learning and community-engaged initiatives, the University brings together academic and community knowledge to develop solutions that respond to local and regional priorities. This approach strengthens relationships between Lakehead and the communities it serves while creating opportunities for students and researchers to contribute their expertise to real-world issues.

Truth and Reconciliation Leadership and Indigenous Community Engagement
Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux advances Truth and Reconciliation through education, advocacy, relationship-building, and collaboration with Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities across Canada and internationally. As Canada's first and only Truth and Reconciliation Chair, established by Lakehead University in 2016, she works to raise awareness of the impacts of residential schools, foster healing, and build bridges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Her contributions include working with Indigenous leaders to advance Indigenous self-determination and treaty rights, contributing to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and serving as Chair of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation's Governing Circle. She also promotes knowledge exchange internationally, sharing Canada's reconciliation experiences with partners in Norway, Sweden, Finland, Taiwan, and Brazil. At Lakehead, she established the Niijii Mentorship Program, connecting university students with Indigenous high school students across Northwestern Ontario to provide academic support, encourage postsecondary participation, and strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities.

Community-Based Research and Collaboration

Lakehead University continues its collaboration with CityStudio Thunder Bay, bringing together post-secondary institutions, municipal government and community organizations to address local challenges and advance community priorities. Through this partnership, Lakehead students and faculty work alongside City of Thunder Bay staff and community partners to apply academic knowledge and research to real-world municipal and community issues. The initiative provides students with opportunities to contribute fresh perspectives, develop practical recommendations and gain hands-on experience while supporting projects that respond to local community needs. By connecting academic expertise with municipal priorities, the partnership encourages knowledge exchange, strengthens relationships between the University and local government, and supports the development of practical solutions that benefit the broader community. In 2025, the initiative entered its third and final year as a pilot project.

Global Reach

Shaping Lakehead's Future
Lakehead University's EvoLUtion 2025–2030 Strategic Plan connects the University's priorities with global sustainability efforts and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Under the Advancing Our Societal Impact theme, Lakehead commits to strengthening its role as a local and global leader in sustainability, climate action, social justice and Indigenous education. The plan also emphasizes building and strengthening partnerships that contribute to meaningful progress toward the UN SDGs, connecting Lakehead's institutional priorities with broader global efforts to address shared challenges.

Global Citizenship Summit
Lakehead University's Orillia campus hosted the Global Citizenship Summit for Youth Voice, Policy, and Action, bringing together more than 30 young people from around the world, including participants from Botswana, Guyana, Fiji, the Bahamas and Malta. The summit focused on global issues including climate change, the environment, technology, employment and peace. Participants engaged in panels, podcasts, focus groups and reflection activities and visited Rama First Nation. The event was organized by Lakehead researcher Dr. Gary Pluim in collaboration with the Ontario Council for International Cooperation, with support from several Lakehead members.

International Mining Knowledge Exchange
In 2024–25, Lakehead's Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Mining and Exploration hosted the Centre's International Ni-Cu Symposium. This conference brought together approximately 125 geologists from around the world for technical presentations, knowledge exchange and field activities. The Centre also developed research partnerships involving industry, government and other universities, providing a platform for international expertise to be shared with Lakehead researchers and students.

Administrative and Operations

Strategic Mandate Agreement
Lakehead University's Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA) is a public agreement between the University and Ontario's Ministry of Colleges and Universities. It establishes shared priorities and outlines Lakehead's commitments in areas including research partnerships, community engagement, sustainability, social justice, Indigenous research, and health and well-being. The agreement reflects a formal partnership between the University and the provincial government to align institutional priorities with broader public objectives.

Driving Progress Toward the SDGs
Lakehead University has continued to embed the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across its research, teaching, partnerships, operations and community engagement. The University's EvoLUtion 2025–2030 Strategic Plan provides a renewed framework for this work, with Advancing Our Societal Impact identified as one of its four strategic directions. This priority includes strengthening Lakehead's role as a local and global leader in sustainability, climate action, social justice and Indigenous education, while developing partnerships that accelerate progress toward the SDGs.

Lakehead's commitment to the SDGs is also reflected in its participation in the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rantings, which assess universities against the UN SDGs using measures related to research, stewardship, outreach and teaching. Lakehead has continued to participate in the rankings to measure and communicate its progress and identify opportunities for further action.

The University's SDG work extends across all areas of its community. Researchers contribute to global challenges such as climate change, clean water, sustainable communities, food security and health, while students engage through experiential learning, community initiatives and international opportunities. Lakehead also works with Indigenous communities, governments, non-profit organizations, businesses, international institutions and other universities, creating opportunities to share knowledge and develop solutions to complex challenges.

Lakehead University is a member of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Canada, a national network connecting universities, colleges, and knowledge institutions to advance sustainable development through research, collaboration, and shared learning. As part of the broader international SDSN network, this membership connects Lakehead with institutions working to address global sustainability challenges and advance the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. Participation provides a platform for knowledge exchange and collaborative research related to sustainable development.

Through these efforts, Lakehead connects its institutional priorities with a broader global framework for sustainable development. Its approach recognizes that achieving the SDGs requires collaboration across sectors and borders, and that universities have an important role to play as educators, researchers, community partners and contributors to positive social and environmental change.