

Lakehead

UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC PLAN
2012–2017

ABRIDGED VERSION 2012



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An academic plan looks to the future and builds on the past. Lakehead University has a strong past on which to build, and this Academic Plan envisions a bright future for Lakehead as a comprehensive, research-intensive university, recognized nationally and internationally for excellence in teaching and learning.

Established in 1965, Lakehead offers a diverse range of undergraduate and graduate programming with nine faculties: Social Sciences and Humanities, Science and Environmental Studies, Business Administration, Education, Engineering, Natural Resources Management, Health and Behavioural Sciences, Law, and Graduate Studies. The new Faculty of Law will welcome the charter class on the Thunder Bay Campus in the fall of 2013. Lakehead's Thunder Bay campus is home to the west campus of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) – a joint initiative of Lakehead and Laurentian Universities – which graduated its first cohort of 55 doctors in May 2009. The Orillia campus offers an interdisciplinary undergraduate program in arts and sciences, as well as programs in business, education, and social work.

Lakehead University prides itself on the quality of teaching and the student experience, and there are many indications that we should indeed be proud. Student-teacher ratios are favourable, average class sizes are small, and the percentage of full-time faculty with doctoral degrees is high. Student evaluations of teaching performance consistently indicate that our instructors are highly regarded by their students. External reviews of our undergraduate and graduate programs are generally strong. However, achieving excellence in teaching requires ongoing reflection and meaningful assessment, as well as strategic use of resources to support teaching and learning. Meaningful and reliable indicators of teaching excellence need to be identified so that the achievement of goals in this area are unambiguously stated, tracked, and disseminated.

Following strong support from the academic community, the 2012-2017 academic plan was approved by the Lakehead University Senate in March 2012.

Lakehead University's research activities are a testament to its growing commitment to become one of the top 25 research-intensive universities in Canada. With nine Canada Research Chairs, nine research centres, 31 graduate programs, and a doubling of external research funding within the last few years, Lakehead's sustained development in this area is clear. Given our recognition of the value and expertise that faculty who are actively engaged in creative and scholarly work bring to their teaching, we are in a position to further strengthen the quality of undergraduate education by enhancing the integration of research and teaching.

Lakehead University's core strengths and future opportunities are clearly linked to our unique geographical positioning in Northwestern Ontario and Central Ontario. As a regional university, we have been necessarily responsive to the needs of our northern rural and remote communities. Our connections to community are explicit and ever expanding as we move to enhance relationships and student learning opportunities while embracing our role as a vital contributor to economic development.

Lakehead University must play a role in helping to increase dramatically the proportion of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (Aboriginal) students who are academically prepared to go to University. Not only do Aboriginal students present Lakehead with an opportunity for growth, but Lakehead has a long-standing social obligation to these students, enshrined in the institution's mission statement to serve the educational needs of the Aboriginal population in Northern Ontario, and now, Central Ontario as well. We will need to ensure we offer quality programs, ensure access, and provide the necessary academic support services to successfully recruit and retain Aboriginal students, and at the same time reach out further to potential students in the Greater Toronto Area, the rest of Canada, and internationally.

Our commitment to social justice also extends beyond Aboriginal issues. Respect for diversity is integral to social justice. At Lakehead University, diversity is reflected in its people, its programs, and its curriculum. We understand diversity to be complex, referring not only to the identities of individuals, but also to the rich variety of perspectives, ideologies, and scholarly traditions one should expect to find at a university.

In March 2011, the Academic Planning Committee posted the Academic Plan Consultation documents which described Lakehead University today, presented a vision for the next five years, and proposed five academic priorities with sets of associated strategies. Based on the review of feedback received over the course of subsequent consultation periods, in writing and through numerous small and large group discussions among faculty, staff, students, university committees, academic units, and other stakeholder groups, Academic Action Plans were designed to guide Lakehead University's decision-making in the following five priority areas.

ACADEMIC PRIORITIES:

- 1 Achieve Excellence in Teaching, Learning, and Research**
 - High Quality Undergraduate and Graduate Programs
 - Engaged and Successful Students, Faculty, and Staff
 - Intense Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activity
- 2 Extend Community Engagement and Outreach**
- 3 Strengthen our Commitment to Social Justice**
- 4 Enhance our Support of First Nations, Métis and Inuit (Aboriginal) Students**
- 5 Expand our International Reach**



SETTING THE STAGE

An academic plan looks to the future and builds on the past.

Lakehead University has a strong past on which to build, and this Academic Plan envisions a bright future for Lakehead as a comprehensive, research-intensive university, recognized nationally and internationally for excellence in teaching and learning. The Academic Plan is designed to guide Lakehead University's decision-making and priorities over the next five years with this long-term vision in mind. This plan encourages the University to be ambitious and innovative while working within the fiscal constraints that will be faced.



The following key principles inform and guide this plan's priorities and strategies as it looks to that future:

Lakehead University is fully committed to providing innovative, high-quality programs that attract students, faculty, and staff from Ontario, Canada, and the world, recognizing that these individuals enrich our communities.

Lakehead University embraces its role of serving the regional populations associated with its campuses in Thunder Bay and Orillia, offering programming that enables students living in these regions to achieve their educational goals on and off campus, and empowers them to make a positive difference in their communities.

Lakehead University recognizes the distinctiveness of our two campuses and its responsibility to serve different stakeholders in these regions. We are committed to addressing both the challenges and opportunities that arise from distinctiveness in ways that will allow both Thunder Bay and Orillia to thrive and fulfill our University's vision and mission.

Teaching and research are inextricably linked and Lakehead University is committed to excellence in both. Lakehead University believes that its professors at both campuses should engage in both teaching and research.

Research and other scholarly activities are defining characteristics of a University and Lakehead University recognizes the importance of basic and applied research, and scholarly and creative activities.

Strong graduate programs are fundamental to advanced research and in many disciplines graduate students are essential components of the support structure for teaching and research activities.

As it continues to develop as a comprehensive university with nationally recognized professional programs, Lakehead University is committed to maintaining its core strengths in arts and science.

Lakehead University is committed to social justice, which, in keeping with our strategic mission, begins with recognition of Aboriginal realities.

Lakehead University is committed to educating students who are well prepared to make significant contributions to the economy, and to contribute to issues of social justice and environmental sustainability, locally, nationally, and globally.

Lakehead University is committed to enhancing educational opportunities for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (Aboriginal) populations.

By engaging in service to the institution, profession, and other communities, the teaching, research, and learning experiences at Lakehead University are enriched.

Process is, of course, vital to the success of any academic planning activity, and the Committee affirms the following principles:

Academic planning is an integrated process that occurs at the levels of Senate, Departments/Schools, and Faculties.

Lakehead University is committed to collegial governance in all aspects of its planning and operation.

Academic planning should be fiscally responsible and supported by appropriate administrative processes.

The Academic Plan affirms the commitment to the Academic Charter as stated in the 2005-2010 Strategic Plan:

- All students should have equal opportunity to study in learning environments that are funded sufficiently to meet prevailing disciplinary standards;
- All full-time faculty should have workloads and resources that provide them with equal opportunity to meet their teaching, research, and administrative obligations;
- All Senate approved programs, as well as the Library and Part-Time Studies, should have funding sufficient for them to meet disciplinary standards, and where applicable, accreditation requirements.

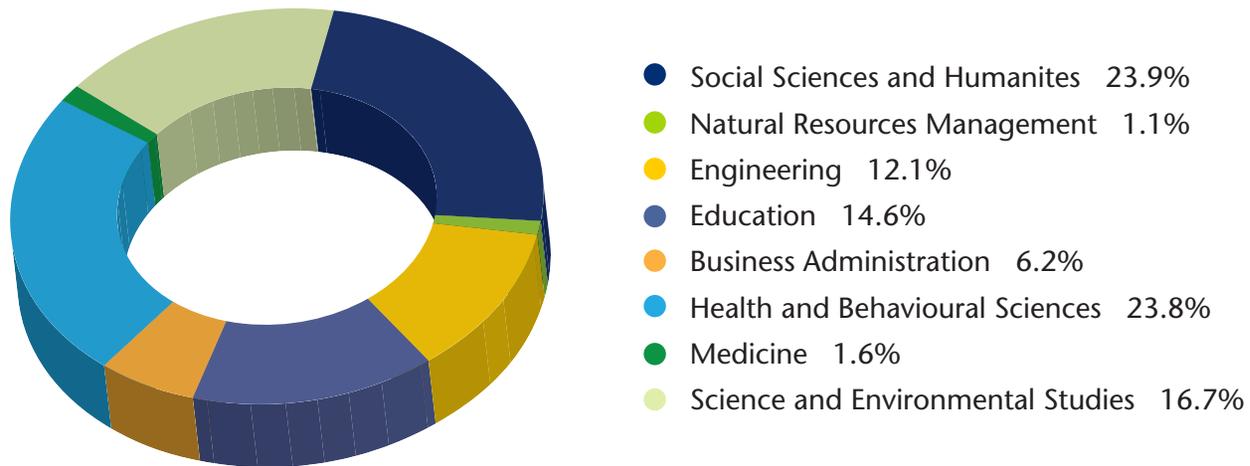


LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY TODAY

Established in 1965, Lakehead University offers a diverse range of undergraduate and graduate programs with nine faculties: Social Sciences and Humanities, Science and Environmental Studies, Business Administration, Education, Engineering, Natural Resources Management, Health and Behavioural Sciences, Law, and Graduate Studies. The new Faculty of Law will welcome the charter class on the Thunder Bay Campus in the fall of 2013. Lakehead's Thunder Bay campus is home to the west campus of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) — a joint initiative of Lakehead and Laurentian Universities — which graduated its first cohort of 55 doctors in May 2009. The Orillia campus offers an interdisciplinary undergraduate program in arts and sciences that may be taken concurrently with education, as well as programs in business, social work, and consecutive education.

LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY'S RESEARCH ACTIVITIES ARE A TESTAMENT TO ITS GROWING COMMITMENT TO BECOME ONE OF THE TOP 25 RESEARCH-INTENSIVE UNIVERSITIES IN CANADA.

**2010-2011 FULL-TIME UNDERGRADUATE
ENROLMENT BY FACULTY (HEADCOUNT)²**



² Data is from Institutional Analysis and Government Relations

2010-2011 ENROLMENT (HEADCOUNT) AND DEGREES, DIPLOMAS, AND CERTIFICATES AWARDED, EMPLOYEES, FACULTY, AND ALUMNI ³

2010/2011 ENROLMENT

as of November 1 reporting date

| | |
|-------------------------|-------|
| Thunder Bay Campus | 7,729 |
| Full-time Undergraduate | 5,652 |
| Part-time Undergraduate | 1,477 |
| Full-time Graduate | 577 |
| Part-time Graduate | 23 |

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| Orillia Campus | 976 |
| Orillia Full-time Undergraduate | 877 |
| Orillia Part-time Undergraduate | 95 |
| Orillia Graduate | 4 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of Aboriginal Students (Self-declared) | 815 |
| International Undergraduate | 87 |
| International Graduate | 53 |

| | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Total Enrolment | 8,705 |
|------------------------|--------------|

DEGREES, DIPLOMAS, & CERTIFICATES AWARDED

(2010 calendar year)

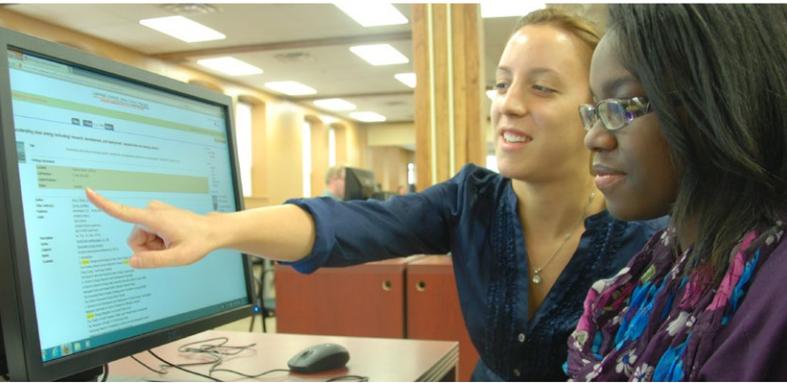
| | |
|--------------|-------|
| Certificates | 33 |
| Diplomas | 87 |
| Bachelors | 2,610 |
| Masters | 230 |
| Doctorates | 8 |

| | |
|--------------|--------------|
| Total | 2,968 |
|--------------|--------------|

2010/2011 EMPLOYEES, FACULTY, AND ALUMNI

| | |
|---------------------|--------|
| Full-time Employees | 715 |
| Part-time Employees | 1,135 |
| Full-time Faculty | 314 |
| Alumni | 48,398 |

³ Data is from Institutional Analysis and Government Relations (as per the Report to the Community, Interdisciplinary Studies/HBASc enrolment is split equally between Social Sciences and Humanities and Science and Environmental Studies)



TEACHING AND LEARNING

Lakehead University prides itself on its teaching excellence and the delivery of a quality learning experience, and there are many endeavours that we should indeed be proud of. In terms of facilities, a large variety of classroom and theatres are equipped as “smart classrooms,” and a newly renovated Learning Commons located within the Chancellor Paterson Library, Heritage Place, and the Orillia Academic Building provide students with a state-of-the-art environment in which to study and work. Student-teacher ratios are favourable, average class sizes are small, and the percentage of full-time faculty with doctoral degrees is high.⁴ Student evaluations of teaching performance consistently indicate that our instructors are highly regarded by their students. External reviews of our undergraduate and graduate programs are generally strong. Some of our faculty are actively involved in scholarship related to teaching and learning, and many instructors have been recognized with nominations for Lakehead University *Contributions to Teaching* and *Distinguished Instructor Awards*.

The University’s commitment to excellence in teaching was made evident in the 1999 Strategic Plan, which recommended the establishment of an Instructional Development Centre to provide support for faculty and graduate students engaged in teaching at the University. This recommendation was supported by past academic plans, and the Centre was established in 2005. Since its inception, the Centre has coordinated and offered workshops, developed a website with online resources, provided one-on-one consultation, mounted an annual symposium on teaching and learning, offered support for curriculum revision to academic units, and has supported the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee in its mandate to advise Senate on ways to enhance teaching and learning.

Lakehead University also has a long history of providing learning opportunities through its Office of Continuing Education and Distributed Learning (CEDL), and the number of students who have been able to take advantage of the courses offered online continues to grow. CEDL offers a wide range of options including online courses, videoconferencing, web streaming, print-based courses, and some classes available at off-campus sites. At the program level, there are certificates and degrees available entirely at a distance with courses offered according to a distinct schedule and sequence of courses leading to defined learner outcomes.

⁴ 2010/2011 Institutional data is available at <http://bolt.lakeheadu.ca/~analysis/>



From CEDL's initial days of three courses being offered through a print-based format, course and program offerings plus delivery options have grown significantly. From 1745 full course equivalents (FCEs) in 41.5 courses in 2001-02, last year's FCE registrations totalled more than 7070 in approximately 200 courses. Programming options have included seven certificates, two undergraduate degrees, and three graduate degrees delivered through distributed learning. It is important to note, however, that the demand by instructors for support for courses taught using distance and/or distributed modes of delivery now outweighs available resources.

An important development supporting Lakehead's commitment to being a learner-centred university was the opening of the Learning Commons in the Chancellor Paterson Library (Thunder Bay), in Heritage Place (Orillia), and in the new Academic Building (Orillia). The Learning Commons provide attractive spaces for students to gather over coffee, form study groups both formally and informally, use wireless internet, and access the many resources available to them at the library. It is a significant step for Lakehead University to offer this kind of environment and students have made extensive use these facilities since they opened. In addition to the library resources that have always been available to students, the Paterson Library Commons houses two additional resources to support student learning: the Lakehead University Math Assistance Centre (LUMAC) and the Writing Centre. LUMAC was established in 2009, and was initially located in the Braun Building. It moved into the main floor of the Chancellor Paterson Library in 2010 and is now part of the Learning Commons. It offers workshops on topics such as statistical analysis and quadratic equations, and in the winter of 2010 alone it offered 273 hours of tutoring to 57 students with a total of 226 student visits. The Centre is coordinated by a faculty member and staffed by senior level math students. The Centre is currently working on the development of some online tutoring services.

The Writing Centre was established in Thunder Bay in 2011 as a result of work initiated by the Senate Academic Committee, and it is also located in the Learning Commons. The Thunder Bay campus Centre offers one-on-one tutoring, provided by the Centre Coordinator and trained graduate students. During the first term of operation (winter 2011), the Centre serviced 67 students for a total of 121 student visits that took place during 87 hours of tutoring. During the fall of 2011, the Centre serviced 91 students for a total of 209 student visits. The Centre works closely with both the Instructional Development Centre and the Student Accessibility Services. In 2012, the Centre will encourage new writing across the curriculum (WAC) initiatives, including developing a writing pedagogy course and a series of WAC workshops. An existing on-line Writing Centre is also under revision. On the Orillia campus, the Writing Centre is operated via the Ontario Student Work Study program, with a student coordinator, student tutors, and the support of a faculty representative. Resources have been compiled and one-on-one training sessions for peer editors are delivered each fall. Over the course of the 2010 academic year, the Centre serviced a total of 224 student visits. The Orillia campus Writing Centre will continue to offer student services as part of a work study program.



While Lakehead University has reason to be proud of its achievements in teaching excellence, there are some indications that there is still room for improvement. Results from national surveys including the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC), Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey (CGPSS), and the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE) provide useful data for us to address going forward. Certainly, some of the results from these surveys are very positive. Eighty-nine percent of our students graduating with undergraduate degrees are satisfied or very satisfied with the overall quality of education received (CUSC, 2009). Ninety percent agree or strongly agree that their academic learning experiences at Lakehead University have been intellectually stimulating (CUSC, 2009). Ninety percent of the graduating undergraduate students agree or strongly agree that they are satisfied with the quality of teaching. While such surveys are not always a reliable indicator of students' actual experience, we would be unwise to ignore them as one indicator of satisfaction, as well as an indicator of the extent to which we are fulfilling our own mandate to engage students in active learning.

The preliminary results from the Ontario University Graduate (Employment) Survey 2008 released in July 2011 reveal that once again the employment rate for graduates of undergraduate degree programs at Lakehead University two years after graduation is higher than the average employment rate for graduates of undergraduate degree programs in the Ontario University System. Two years after graduation in 2008, the employment rate for graduates of undergraduate degree programs at Lakehead University was 94.5%, compared to 93.8% for the Ontario University System. Six months after graduation in 2008, the employment rate for graduates of undergraduate degree programs at Lakehead University was 94.3%, compared to 91.7% for the Ontario University System.

Lakehead University is equally committed to excellence in teaching and in research. While the data provided from surveys like those mentioned above provide a useful but limited measure of excellence in teaching, there are no metrics available for measuring teaching excellence that are parallel to those currently used by the University to measure research excellence, such as the Research Infosource ranking and measurement of publications. Nonetheless, we should carefully consider the information we have and encourage the development of other metrics to measure and encourage excellence in teaching and learning. We know, for example, that a number of faculty members are already engaged in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), that is, engaging in research and scholarship on their own teaching practices and innovations to assess their efficacy. Such scholarship ranges from requesting informal feedback from students to fully developed research projects submitted for Research Ethics Board approval. This kind of work allows faculty to monitor the effectiveness of their teaching strategies in concrete ways that can strengthen current practices and develop new and innovative ones.

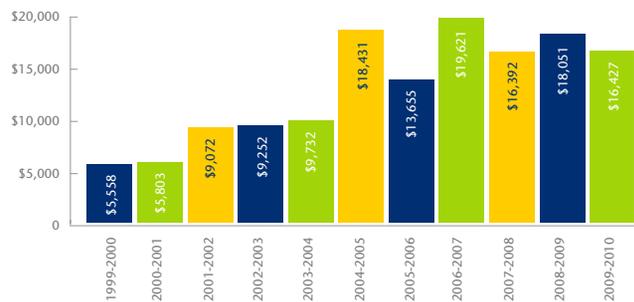


RESEARCH

Lakehead University's research activities are a testament to its growing commitment to become one of the top 25 research-intensive universities in Canada. Currently, Lakehead has nine Canada Research Chairs, nine research centres/institutes dedicated to specific research intensive areas, 31 graduate programs, and has seen a doubling of external research funding within the last few years. However, it is the research endeavours themselves that create the framework that will support our vision of becoming a global research leader: the people, the resources, and the partnerships that constitute research productivity at Lakehead University.

There are many types of, and approaches to, academic research and thus many ways of measuring productivity. Lakehead values both "basic" or curiosity-driven research where the impacts may take some time to be realized, and applied research whose relevance is more immediately obvious and its impact more easily measured. Importantly, these basic and applied programs often intersect to create emerging opportunities that are multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and/or interprofessional in nature.

TOTAL LAKEHEAD RESEARCH INCOME 1999-2010
(IN THOUSANDS)

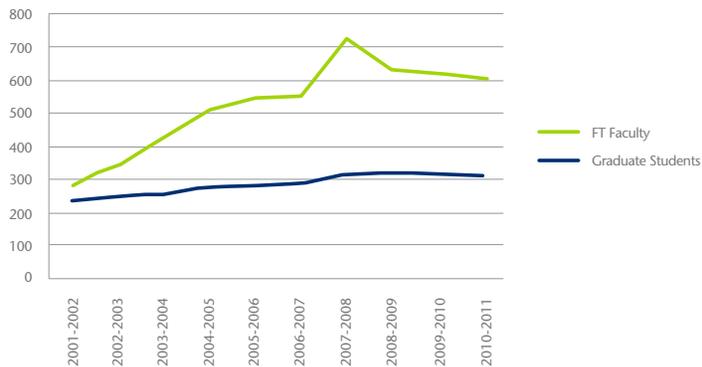


Research Funding

Lakehead received on average \$7.9 million of research funding annually during the years 1999 - 2004. From 2004 to 2010, the average annual research funding received by Lakehead increased to \$17.1 million. Research Infosource Inc. uses as one of its rankings faculty member research intensity, which is defined as total research income per full-time faculty position. In 2002, Lakehead ranked 37th among Canadian universities in this category.

In 2009, our ranking had increased to 31. The last two years have also witnessed the awarding of Lakehead University's first Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Community University Research Alliances (CURA) and Major Collaborative Research Initiatives (MCRI) grants, as well as a CIHR Aboriginal Health Intervention Grant. This funding has supported a total of 42 projects worth \$7,383,980 (not including matching funds from the Province of Ontario).

NUMBER OF FACULTY (FT) AND GRADUATE STUDENTS (PT AND FT) AT LAKEHEAD 2001-2011



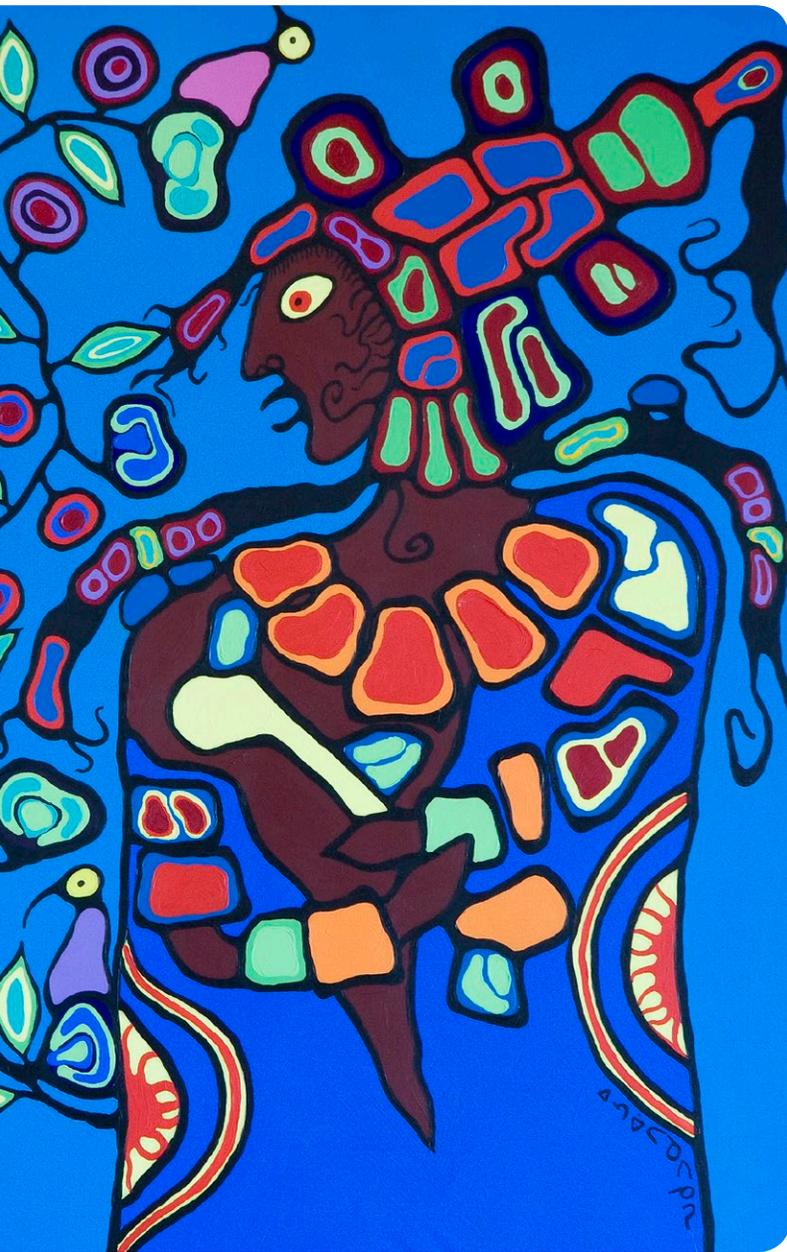
Research Capacity

Lakehead University has made great strides in increasing its research capacity in the last decade. From 2001 to 2011 the number of full-time (FT) faculty members at Lakehead University increased from 242 to 314. During the same time period, the number of graduate students (both full and part-time) increased from 286 to 604. Another indicator of growth in research capacity is the number of postdoctoral fellows and visiting scholars at the University as this is an indicator of advanced training and collaboration. In 2007, the first year that the Office of Research was tasked with monitoring the number of post-doctoral fellows and visiting scholars at Lakehead, there were a total of 10 visiting scholars and 15 postdoctoral fellows. By 2011, the total number of visiting scholars had increased to 20, while the number of postdoctoral fellows was 36. In addition, since 2007, eight new graduate programs have been developed bringing the total number of graduate programs at Lakehead to 31.

The number of research chairs at the University has also increased. In 2001, Lakehead University was home to three Canada Research Chairs. By 2011, the number of research chairs had increased to nine. Following the support (\$6 million) of the Government of Ontario in 2007, Lakehead University launched a major research initiative: the Biorefining Research Initiative (LUBRI). A Senior Ontario Research Chair with expertise in industrial biotechnology and biorefining was hired as LUBRI’s Founding Director and two endowed Ontario Research Chairs in Biorefining were recruited. Since 2008, Lakehead University has awarded a total of six Lakehead University Research Chairs (two-year terms) in various disciplines. The University has also witnessed a major infusion of infrastructure funding from the Canada Foundation for Innovation.

Research Productivity

One of the fundamental purposes of a university is the dissemination of knowledge, through teaching, publication, and sharing of scholarly and creative activities. Research output at Lakehead University includes books with academic and popular presses, peer reviewed journal articles, professional articles, reports, manuals, conference presentations, music compositions and performances, dance, drama, films, novels, the production and showing of visual art in galleries and installations, patents, policies, and other evidence of collaboration and consultation with government and non-government organizations, Aboriginal communities, and other partners. As a result of our knowledge transfer and mobilization efforts, Lakehead researchers have participated in industry research contracts, invention disclosures, intellectual property protection other than patents, licenses, and start-up companies, and have had an impact on social policy, public thought, culture, medical advances, scientific advances, industrial productivity, and economic development.



Lakehead's research productivity has increased over the years as demonstrated by the Research Infosource Publication Intensity Measure known as "Publication Intensity," which is defined as the total number of publications per full-time faculty (full, associate and assistant faculty positions only were included). It has been estimated that there is, on average, a minimum two-year lag time between research and publication. In 2002, Lakehead University ranked 38th among Canadian universities under the Publication Intensity measure, and by 2009 Lakehead's standing had improved to the 31st rank.

This past year, Lakehead was ranked among the Top 3 Research Performers in the Undergraduate Category by Research Infosource, in the category Research Intensity Growth and Research Publication Growth over the past decade. Based on external research grants received by the three national councils (NSERC, SSHRC, and CIHR), Maclean's magazine in its 2010 publication ranked Lakehead 4th overall in the undergraduate university category. This is a testament to the contributions of Lakehead University's faculty, students, and staff to productivity and concomitant transfer and mobilization of knowledge.

Innovation Management

Knowledge transfer has been occurring at universities in a variety of ways since the institutions were first created over nine centuries ago and increased dramatically with the advent of publicly funded universities in North America in the 19th and 20th centuries. Lakehead University is a dynamic part of this publicly funded university tradition and, as part of its mandate it is committed to promoting knowledge transfer in order to meet the needs of the people of Northwestern Ontario, Simcoe County, and beyond. Traditional methods to transfer knowledge have included teaching, mentoring students, publishing papers, writing books and technical reports, and conducting various forms of community extension services, such as community classes and workshops. Knowledge can also be transferred to others by partnering with industry and other research partners and through the commercialization of certain research outcomes. However, the commitments we have as a publicly funded institution to the people of Ontario and Canada should remain pre-eminent.

As the University continues to expand with increased numbers of faculty members and students, the amount of knowledge transfer activity will grow proportionately. Some forms of knowledge transfer that have recently gained prominence, such as partnering with industry and commercialization of research outcomes, are not widely understood, both within and outside university campuses, and must be examined carefully to ensure their appropriateness within the framework of a publicly funded institution. Limited funding also restricts knowledge transfer. Inappropriate handling and funding of knowledge transfer can be a threat to academic freedom or restrict the transfer of knowledge from researchers to the world.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT— SERVICE WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY AND BEYOND

One of the great strengths of Lakehead University is the research, education, and professional service profile we have developed in our local, regional, provincial, and national communities. Faculty and staff members have engaged in every aspect of community life, both within the University and beyond. Faculty members contribute to the day-to-day operations of the University through their commitment to program, Department, Faculty, and University-level committees, as well as to promotion and recruitment activities such as Program Day, Grade 11 Day, and the Regional Employment Fair. Beyond the University, faculty and staff members regularly engage with professional learned societies, community and nongovernmental organizations, federal provincial and municipal governments, other educational organizations (e.g., schools, colleges, and other universities), as well as other members of our local communities. The expertise and social capital invested in our communities are important to both the fabric of the regions in which we are situated as well as the vitality of our University. Our contributions are diverse and contribute to the general well being of the population in Northern Ontario and Simcoe County.

One feature that has the potential to distinguish Lakehead's research activity is the community-based research that takes place in Northern Ontario and Simcoe County. Such research often includes community members as research participants who participate in defining research questions, methodologies, modes of dissemination, and practical applications of research results. This approach to research is closely aligned with Lakehead's commitment to, and support of, community service learning, in which students are taught to develop and participate in collaborative community-based research projects.

Alumni have always played a special role in the development of the University and continue to do so with vigour. Alumni are part of our Board of Governors, our senior administration, faculty, and support staff. Alumni and the Alumni Association serve a special role in keeping Lakehead University grounded on educational and societal issues. The extensive links we have fostered in the community have assisted us in preparing our students, enhancing their understanding of life beyond the walls of the institution, prompting them to pursue employment opportunities, and to be aware of and act on their social responsibilities. Our goal is to maintain our existing linkages, partnerships and programs, while at the same time seeking to broaden our reach around the globe.



OUR CORE STRENGTHS

Lakehead University's core strengths and future opportunities are clearly linked to our unique geographical positioning in Northern Ontario and Central Ontario. As a regional university, we have been necessarily responsive to the needs of our northern, and rural and remote communities, offering a comprehensive mix of arts and science degree programs in combination with professional programs at both the undergraduate and graduate level. By our very presence we contribute to the economic growth and development of our regions, as do our graduates who enjoy high employment rates in a broad range of careers. Our connections to community are explicit and ever expanding as we move to enhance relationships, program offerings, and student learning opportunities through articulation, outreach, community service, and experiential learning programs.

Lakehead University provides:

- Choice in strong undergraduate and graduate programs
- Research excellence
- Academic rigour in a caring environment
- Opportunities for experiential, inquiry based, and blended learning experiences
- Small class sizes
- Cultural diversity
- Safe campus environments
- Advanced instructional technologies
- Leadership in environmental sustainability
- Connections to our local and regional communities
- Successful alumni
- Spectacular geographic locations in Northwestern and Central Ontario

With an emphasis on enhanced learning technology platforms and research intensity, we have expanded the quality and quantity of our program offerings to users throughout our region and beyond. We have embraced the opportunity to work with Aboriginal peoples and are now recognized as one of the foremost institutions in the country in this regard.

Over the past, Lakehead has successfully established college/university pathways that have brought new students to the University to complete degrees. We have an opportunity to build on our past successes and to be a leader in enhancing college/university pathways and improving student mobility. This is excellent timing as the government, in partnership with colleges and universities, is committed to putting in place a credit transfer system that is student centred. Their vision for credit transfer is designed to make it easier for students to navigate the postsecondary education system, reach their preferred educational destination faster, and enter or re-enter the labour market sooner.

Lakehead University has a unique identity in the Ontario postsecondary system in that it has a relatively small student body and faculty complement while providing comprehensive programming. Students can choose from an impressive range of programs normally only available at much larger institutions, and yet study in relatively small classes. Students at Lakehead have many opportunities to engage with their instructors in learning experiences in and out of the traditional classroom environment.





IMAGINING THE FUTURE

As a University that has a responsibility to serve its regions, we are resolved to retain and build on our existing “comprehensiveness” over the next five years and to meet the challenges that we have identified. Lakehead University will continue to offer a breadth of programs which includes a mix of professional degree programs including both Medicine and the new Law degree program. We will be learner-centred, regionally, nationally, and globally connected, and have both undergraduate and graduate programs.

Lakehead University's Academic Priorities

1. Achieve Excellence in Teaching, Learning, and Research:
 - High Quality Undergraduate and Graduate Programs
 - Engaged and Successful Students, Faculty, and Staff
 - Intense Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activity
2. Extend Community Engagement and Outreach
3. Strengthen our Commitment to Social Justice
4. Enhance our Support of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (Aboriginal) Studies
5. Expand our International Reach

We will also deliberately address the need for depth in our faculties, programs, and curricula by making careful decisions about where to invest limited resources to support enrolment growth and to ensure the quality of academic programs. The case for investments must be made at the academic unit and faculty levels, and requires faculty and staff engagement. Lakehead is committed to excellence in teaching, learning, and research, and developing professional skills, technical expertise, and artistic creativity. We will continue to prepare graduates to thrive in a competitive job market.

Our two-campus University will continue to provide multiple opportunities for responding through our programs, our research, and our service and community outreach activities to the regional needs we are faced with both in Northern and Central Ontario. Lakehead University will uphold the commitment to educating students who are recognized for leadership and independent critical thinking and who are aware of their social and environmental responsibilities. First-generation⁵ and mature learners will be welcomed and supported at Lakehead University. The University will strive to be a leader in furthering the educational aspirations of Aboriginal peoples.

Financial sustainability at Lakehead University is required in order to continue to commit to quality in undergraduate and graduate program development and delivery, innovation in scholarship, teaching and learning, and to address diversity in and outside of the classroom experience. In turn, a continued commitment to quality is required for financial sustainability. Lakehead University will make every effort to meet its goals guided by the Strategic and Academic Plans, as well as by a long range development plan for both campuses that is within our financial means. Efforts will be increased to optimize revenues through enrolment, special mission related grants, research, fundraising, and a variety of creative external initiatives.

Lakehead is committed to social justice both within the University and beyond. Social justice refers to the belief that the world should be organized in ways that not only allow for, but proactively promote equity, fairness, and dignity, as well as solidarity of community members across societies and cultures. Proponents of social justice work to address inequities based on existing differences (such as income, race/ethnicity, religion, gender, ability, sexual orientation, age, political beliefs etc.) as well as on other emerging grounds of discrimination. Social justice interrogates and attempts to change the social conditions that prevent some people from having access to decent housing, food, education, and employment. Social justice encompasses the belief that all members of society should have the opportunity to flourish, be valued and cared for, feel a sense of dignity in their everyday lives, and participate in their worlds as empowered social agents.

At Lakehead, we will work to create the conditions whereby all people can flourish and continue to actively combat all forms of oppression and discrimination. Given our regional and national context, central to our commitment to social justice is respect for Aboriginal worldviews and knowledge, recognition of the historical and current problems facing Aboriginal peoples, and a clear intention to tackle these issues proactively.

5 Lakehead University defines a first generation student as a student for whom neither their mother nor their father has obtained a university degree.

Six Research Priorities

- Advanced Systems and Technologies
- Cultures, Societies, and Social Justice
- The Environment and Natural Resources
- First Nation, Métis, and Inuit (Aboriginal) Research
- Health Research Across the Life Span
- Northern Studies

It is important to note that the areas of research priority outlined above do not represent the full scope of our research expertise or total research capacity.

But our commitment to social justice also extends beyond Aboriginal issues. Respect for diversity is integral to social justice. At Lakehead University, diversity is reflected in its people, its programs, and its curriculum. We understand diversity to be complex, referring not only to the identities of individuals, but also to the rich variety of perspectives, ideologies, and scholarly traditions one should expect to find at a university. This diversity should not be merely tolerated, but embraced.

Lakehead University recognizes that vibrancy and growth in research are strongly linked to research-intensive programs where students engage in research both on and off campus, and in both undergraduate and graduate programs. Continuing to strive to reach our aspiration to be in the “top 25” will result in increased participation, intensity, productivity, funding, partnerships, and will enrich the undergraduate and graduate student experience. Acknowledging its role of serving populations of Central and Northern Ontario, Lakehead University will support and invest in basic and applied research, programs, and infrastructure that address local and regional economic development opportunities. Innovation management and economic development activities directly impact the economic vitality of Lakehead’s surrounding regions. Regional licensing and start-up company activity create local jobs for our educated youth, both encouraging them to remain in the region and enticing them to return. In addition, Lakehead’s industry-sponsored research activity supports local industry and provides relevant real world experience to our students, enhancing their learning experience.

There is a clear understanding that research informs the curriculum, and that becoming a critical thinker requires a comprehensive understanding of evidence gained through inquiry. Our undergraduate and graduate programs will be enriched through ongoing reflection and revision, integration of research into the undergraduate and graduate learning experience, and support for teaching and learning development and delivery. We will have to develop meaningful metrics to assess and track our performance in teaching and learning and as a learner-centred university.

All research, scholarly, and creative activities will be valued by Lakehead University. However, Lakehead University recognizes that in order to become one of the top research-intensive universities, there are benefits to focusing on priority research areas where we have competitive advantages and strengths. The six research priorities⁶ have been refined through a process of consultation led by the Senate Research Committee and present opportunities for interdisciplinary research and/or partnerships with not-for-profit organizations, governments, and the private sector. In addition, these areas provide opportunities to access resources such as Canada Research Chairs and Canada Foundation for Innovation grants. Priority research areas present foundations on which to develop new graduate programs, especially at the PhD level, and are described in greater detail in **Appendix 1**.

6 Research Priorities were introduced as part of the 2007-2012 Strategic Research Plan.



Lakehead will build on its existing participation in the global community through increasing the presence of international students and faculty on our two campuses and engaging in global projects and partnerships. The ability of Lakehead to work with the local and global communities of which it is part, and to connect these communities together through collaborative learning, will be facilitated through its use of advanced technologies.

By addressing regional social and economic challenges and emerging economic opportunities located in our regions, the University will strengthen its relevance to its major stakeholders. Internationally, Lakehead will actively pursue publically funded community-based technology transfer and economic development, research dissemination to institutions all over the world, as well as partnerships with international networks and institutions. Over the period of this Academic Plan, our alumni, faculty, and staff will be encouraged to engage as Lakehead University ambassadors.

We recognize the role that University stakeholders and the community play in environmental stewardship. This is an important responsibility, one that we share as a collective, and one that will carry the institution and our community partners into the future. As one example of our stewardship, Lakehead University is committed to excellence and innovation in green technologies providing creative solutions related to issues of climate change, alternative forms of renewable and clean energy, recycling and sustainability. A focus on green technologies will support the establishment of interdisciplinary graduate programs which link disciplines such as engineering, forestry, business, health, and science. Green technology-added values will further link our Thunder Bay and Orillia campuses and the regions beyond. There are a number of other interdisciplinary and community-based initiatives at Lakehead that have been and/or can be pursued.



FRAMING THE FUTURE

Over a period of 14 months, the Academic Planning Committee met regularly and facilitated and/or participated in more than 45 meetings with members of the academic community, including individual consultations, small group discussions, committee visits, and open forums. The Committee collected and synthesized numerous written submissions, utilized current and past institutional data, and were informed by university reports and plans from across the country and beyond. The work resulted in a vision that is positive, yet realistic.

As a result of the University Community's input and commitment to the academic planning process, Academic Action Plans were developed that will serve to guide the University's efforts over the next five years. The University's progress towards established benchmarks will be tracked and reported on regularly.

A summary of outcomes planned for each of the Academic Priorities is presented in Appendix 2.

APPENDIX 1:

Description of the Revised Research Priorities – Prepared by the Senate Research Committee (2012)

Advanced Systems and Technologies

Advanced systems, comprising integrated hardware, software, and communication links, form an essential fibre in modern society and are particularly important for our economy and environment. As examples, the efficiency of paper mills, electric power stations, renewable energy and its penetration into the electricity grid, mineral exploration, and extraction operations can be enhanced significantly through advanced systems. Isolated industrial facilities could be fully automated and controlled from a central location via real-time monitoring achieved through innovations in fiber laser technology, and with technological advances in remote sensing devices and reliable communication links. Information and communications technology, control systems, along with advanced computing technologies, mobile computing for learning and health-related applications, and robotics stand to make a difference in our world.

Similarly, research conducted in environmental biotechnology, biomedical and molecular biotechnology, as well as in material science and nanotechnology can have a significant impact on society. Integration of biotechnology research (broadly defined as the use of living organisms, or cellular and bio-molecular processes, to make new products, solve problems, or provide new methods of production) with advances in material science stemming from research in the traditional sciences is crucial to harness the full potential of these and other

related research areas, and could result in significant advances in the biomedical field and industrial applications.

A significant group of faculty members from various Faculties work in these areas. As well, undergraduate and graduate students, post-doctoral trainees, and visiting research engineers/scientists are engaged in research activities related to various aspects of advanced systems and technologies. Several laboratories and research centres provide the necessary infrastructural support and interdisciplinary focus to foster innovations and research in these research areas. Research is typically supported by grants from NSERC, CIHR, CFI, OIT, and FedNor.



Cultures, Societies, and Social Justice

Lakehead University has a strong tradition of research focusing on the complex ways in which cultures and societies around the world develop, communicate, and organize themselves. Much of this research aims to contribute to social justice, which refers to the belief that the world should be organized in ways that allow for and promote equality, fairness, dignity, and solidarity between community members and across societies and cultures. Proponents of social justice work towards addressing inequalities based on differences such as income, race, gender, ability, and sexual orientation. These inequalities can include restricted access to health care, education, suitable housing, legal services, resources including healthy food and clean water, freedom of thought, political liberty, and basic human rights. Social justice is achieved when all members of society flourish and when all people are valued and cared for, feel a sense of dignity in their everyday life, and can participate in their worlds as empowered social agents.

Researchers working at Lakehead University not only examine pressing issues facing societies today but also important forces shaping cultures and societies such as popular culture, the arts, communication, education, politics, globalization, the past and our relation to it, and the future and our hopes for it. Research in this priority area includes those who are active in the field of cultural production itself through their creative and performance activities and also those who engage in text-based analysis and criticism.

Researchers working in this area, from a broad variety of disciplines, have a strong history of attracting Tri-Council funding and faculty members in the creative disciplines have received both Canada Council and Ontario Arts Council funding. Researchers in this area also bring in substantial research funding from organizations such as FedNor, the Canadian International Development Agency, the International Development Research Centre, and the Trillium Foundation. Lakehead University researchers have established strong ties to local and regional community and development organizations, and to international scholarly organizations.



The Environment and Natural Resources

Interdisciplinary research with application to the environment and the natural resource sector has emerged as a strength given Lakehead University's locations. The Thunder Bay campus is situated in the boreal forest, one of the largest ecosystems on earth, and in the Lake Superior watershed; the Orillia campus is situated in Central Ontario where different land uses abound (e.g., agriculture, housing, recreation, industry). For both regions an important challenge is to maximize the many opportunities the land affords while reconciling various conflicting activities and preventing environmental degradation. Hence, research to maximize the enjoyment derived from the environment while supporting resource discovery, extraction and sustainability, and environmental health, is vital. Such research contributes to the social and economic aspects of the environment and transcends the regional boundaries of the University.

Lakehead University researchers are known as experts on a range of areas related to the environment and natural resources. Examples include: climate change, community resilience, ecology, environmental biotechnology, environmental education, environmental health, environmental literature, environmental psychology, food security, green chemistry, mining and exploration, mitigation and adaptation, nature-based tourism, outdoor recreation, parks and protected area management, water quality, watershed protection, and wildlife conservation. New knowledge to address environmental, social, and ethical challenges, and to enhance natural resources discoveries, is valuable to various stakeholders.

Furthermore, research in areas such as bio-fuels, environmental assessment, environmental and site remediation, mining and exploration, resource stewardship, sustainable forest management, value-added and non-wood forest products, and urban forestry, are useful to industry and resource-based communities.

Over 50 researchers at Lakehead University work in this area and have an excellent record of research funding and publications; these researchers often work in interdisciplinary teams and have a strong history of collaborative work with the private sector, government, and the community. These researchers have been very successful in attracting external research funding from the Tri-Council as well as from local industry and other organizations (e.g., UNESCO, Living Legacy, Forestry Futures, CFI).



First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (Aboriginal) Research

Lakehead University recognizes the importance of advancing Aboriginal (First Nation, Métis and Inuit) research at Lakehead University. The prominence of the Aboriginal agenda in the University's mission statement is an indicator of continued efforts to build capacity in Northern Ontario, in particular, and to join the provincial and national focus on northern and Aboriginal opportunities and challenges.

The impact of Aboriginal research focused on community needs in areas ranging from the arts to health, education, science, land management and culture, is far reaching. The revitalization of Aboriginal languages, culture, and self-governance currently underway can only be strengthened by community-based research efforts which are encouraged by the new Tri-Council Policy Statement on Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples of Canada. In addition, northern ecosystems will be protected and the economy enhanced by the addition of highly trained personnel in new and emerging fields of study. Such tangible returns will include employment, training, and further educational and research opportunities for Aboriginal communities.

Over 30 researchers at Lakehead University are involved in research projects and/or partnerships with Aboriginal communities. Financial support typically comes from the national research councils and other federal and provincial agencies. Regional sources, including the private sector and foundations, also support Aboriginal research and the development of research capacity. These research

efforts are strengthened by Aboriginal representation in all aspects of University governance, and particularly through the Ogimawin Aboriginal Governance Council, and by the appointment of an Aboriginal Research Facilitator in the Office of Research. Further, research strength exists in community-initiated collaboration with Aboriginal organizations and communities, and in established and emerging Aboriginal programs. Lakehead University has one of the highest Aboriginal student enrolments for any university in Canada and is committed to have Aboriginal research as one of its priorities.



Health Research Across the Life Span

Researchers in this area aim at making a concrete difference in the health of our communities. The research covers the age continuum, from children to older adults, underscoring that health in old age is often determined by one's health in youth. The research is also focused on the health continuum, from healthy individuals to those with special needs or with poorer health status, and ultimately to those at the end of life. The research conducted also has a focus on Aboriginal and Northern/rural issues, calling attention to the fact that Northwestern Ontario offers considerable challenges to the maintenance of good health.

Faculty members and trainees from various departments and faculties of Lakehead University are involved in health-related research. While health research is already vibrant at Lakehead University, its potential for growth and for the development of fruitful partnerships, both within academe and with government and private partners, is considerable, and is reflected by on-going discussions to develop new graduate and undergraduate programs.

The research is supported with research grants from national research councils and other foundations. Several of the University research centres are directly involved in the study of health-related issues. New partnerships are continually developed with community partners (e.g., St. Joseph's Care Group, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre) to enhance health research and its translation. Through the activities of the University researchers and their partners, health research will continue to grow at Lakehead University, and will provide tangible societal benefits for the region and beyond.

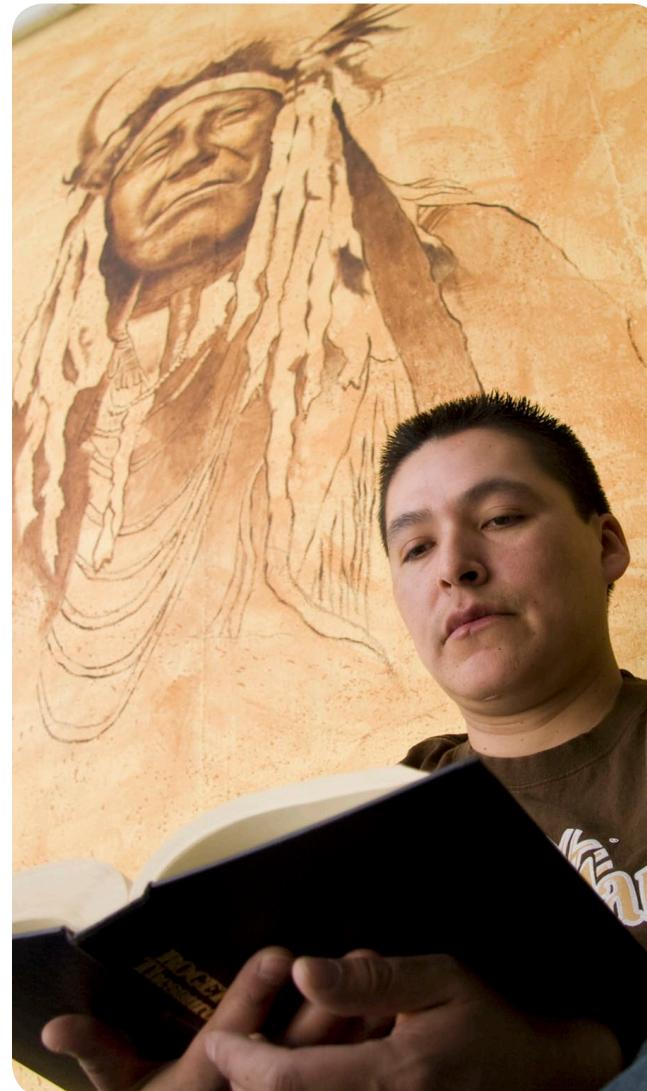


Northern Studies

Northern-based research has always been a cornerstone of Lakehead University and has added a distinct element to its identity. Originally limited to Lakehead University's regional mandate to serve northern communities, the scope of such research is now international, encompassing the entire circumpolar north. There is a growing need to increase our commitment to northern research to deal with emerging regional, national, and international issues, including the areas of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit issues, education, health, law, sustainable development, and resource management.

Our reputation and expertise in the field, the location of our institution, and our key position in national and international organizations are all indicators of the potential and importance of northern research at Lakehead University. Programs and initiatives from within the University and through the activities of the relevant research centres also assist northern research. Through our role in national and international partnerships such as the University of the Arctic, researchers at Lakehead are empowering northerners and northern communities through advocacy, education, and shared knowledge.

Researchers working in the area of northern studies contribute significantly to the University's growing reputation as a research-intensive institution, having been highly successful in attracting external funding from the Tri-Council, as well as from other federal, provincial, and territorial funding agencies.



APPENDIX 2:

Academic Plan: Priorities and Associated Outcomes

Overview

- Connects to our strategic directions
- Builds on our strengths
- Responds to the realities and challenges we face as part of the post-secondary system
- Presents a vision for the next five years that is focused on five academic priorities — strategies and actions plot the path necessary to accomplish these priorities
- Key outcomes describe our academic priority targets

Academic Priorities

1. Achieve Excellence in Teaching, Learning, and Research

- 1.1 High Quality Undergraduate and Graduate Programs
- 1.2 Engaged and Successful Students, Faculty, and Staff
- 1.3 Intense Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activity

- Learner-centred, regionally, nationally, and globally connected
- Approved and accredited professional programs
- Preparation of graduates who will thrive in a competitive job market
- Development of new Provincial, National, and International student pathways – College to University, University to University
- Increased research intensity, productivity, funding, and partnerships
- Enriched student experience through the integration of research into undergraduate curricula
- Renewed focus on the student experience — progress measured and tracked
- Resource investment based on enrolment growth and program quality

2. Extend Community Engagement and Outreach

- Enhanced economic vitality of Lakehead's surrounding regions through innovation management and economic development activities
- Active database of faculty/staff who are consulting in community development areas
- Annual forums and workshops that include multiple community stakeholders
- Expanded Community Service Learning initiatives
- University telepresence in rural, remote, and Aboriginal communities.

3. Strengthen our Commitment to Social Justice

- Respect for diversity reflected in our people, programs, and curriculum
- Lakehead students graduate with at least one course that incorporates Indigenous Knowledge and/or Aboriginal content, and faculty and staff participate in Indigenous Knowledge seminars
- Scholarly dialogue on social justice across campus and in the community

4. Enhance our Support of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (Aboriginal) Students

- Enhanced student support services
- Increased satisfaction on Aboriginal Cultural & Support Services (ACSS) student survey
- Active Nanabijou Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement Program (NAGE), promoted nationally
- Opening of the Gichi Kendaasiwin Centre — a community, academic, and cultural support centre

5. Expand our International Reach

- Successful international recruitment strategy
- Faculty-led internationalization of the campus and curricula