

President's Report to Lakehead University's Board of Governors October 9, 2024

As we reconvene for the Annual General Meeting of the Board of Governors, I would like to provide an overview of key activities I have participated in since our last Board meeting in early June. This summer and fall have been an enriching period, full of engagement with various stakeholders, all aimed at moving our university forward.

President's Goals

The following is a list showing the progress of my goals, which will guide our strategic efforts and contribute to Lakehead's long-term success.

GOAL 1: Financial Sustainability

Financial sustainability remains critical to our ability to eliminate the structural deficit and ensure Lakehead's success over the long term. To support these efforts, the President's Advisory Committee on Financial Sustainability has now commenced its work. As we align campus strengths and opportunities with these financial goals, we remain committed to fostering growth and stability within our community partnerships and strategic planning initiatives. Successful negotiation of SMA4 will be key to this goal.

GOAL 2: Building a Culture of Community within a Positive Environment

I am committed to fostering a culture that promotes inclusivity, openness, and collegiality. Special attention will be given to implementing the findings of the Employee Engagement Survey and supporting the University's EDI Action Plan, and to Lakehead's commitment to reconciliation, decolonization and Indigenization.

GOAL 3: Leadership Development & Capacity Building

As we navigate the challenges of a changing academic and financial landscape, I will focus on building a strong leadership team that can guide Lakehead through these changes. Recruitment of key positions becoming vacant, including the Provost and Vice-President (Academic), will be a priority, as will increasing transparency in establishing search committees for senior positions.

GOAL 4: Effective Strategic Planning

The implementation of our current Strategic Plan is in its final year, and we have begun the process of developing the next Strategic Plan (2025-2030). This process will continue to involve broad engagement with the university community and will be crucial in shaping Lakehead's future. I will be sharing the themes that emerged from the consultation sessions later this fall for further consultation.

GOAL 5: Effective Ambassadorship (Brand Management)

As President, I will continue to serve as a passionate advocate for Lakehead University, actively working to enhance and expand our relationships with key stakeholders, including government, industry partners, Indigenous communities, alumni, donors, and philanthropic organizations.

Through strategic engagement, we will ensure that Lakehead's unique strengths and contributions are recognized, fostering new partnerships that not only drive financial support but also create opportunities for experiential learning, research collaboration, and community impact.

Since the last Board meeting in June, I have participated in several activities and initiatives to support these goals and strengthen connections with various parts of our community.

International Student Welcome



This August, I was pleased to welcome nearly 400 international students as part of our International Orientation activities. These students bring diverse perspectives and enrich the university experience for all. The orientation included a formal welcome, cultural workshops, and campus tours, where I had the chance to personally greet many of our new international students and hear their excitement about joining the Lakehead community. In addition, I hosted a meeting with our international recruitment team, which includes recruiters working around the world, in my office, where we discussed their strategy for bringing students to Lakehead from many different countries.

The start of the new school year resulted in positive media coverage telling the story of new students enthusiastically starting their education journey at Lakehead. Here are a few media highlights:

TBT News –

<https://www.tbnewswatch.com/local-news/lu-welcomes-hundreds-of-international-students-9444919>

CBC News – <https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/9.6494315>

CTV News Barrie –

<https://barrie.ctvnews.ca/excitement-builds-as-thousands-of-students-arrive-at-simcoe-county-campuses-1.7019444>

Orillia Matters –

<https://www.orilliamatters.com/local-news/lakeheads-orillia-campus-buzzing-with-energy-as-students-return-9452301>

President's Picnic: Welcoming Domestic Students

Our Annual President's Picnic was another highlight, as we welcomed new and returning domestic students to campus. This event serves as a key moment to foster a sense of community at Lakehead. I had the opportunity to meet with students from across various faculties and hear their thoughts and aspirations for the coming year. Additionally, I also met with all of our domestic recruiters, gaining valuable insights into their efforts and the experiences of prospective students.

Engagement with the Orillia Campus

In mid-August 2024, I spent a week at our Orillia campus to connect with external community members, faculty, and staff. During this time, I hosted a gathering for supporters and friends of the campus; met with donors, and accompanied Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux, Lakehead's Chair on Truth and Reconciliation, to visit the First Nations communities of Georgina Island and Curve Lake to build relationships. I returned to Orillia in mid-September for another week to continue these important discussions, engage with faculty and staff on campus initiatives, and explore further opportunities for growth and collaboration within the Orillia community.

Meeting New Faculty

In late August, I hosted a luncheon event to warmly welcome our new faculty members as part of their orientation to Lakehead University. This gathering provided an excellent opportunity for our newest colleagues to connect with each other, engage with me and meet the Executive Team. We shared insights about Lakehead's values and mission, fostering a sense of community and collaboration among the faculty. It was a delightful

occasion to celebrate their arrival and support their transition into our vibrant academic environment.

Reconciliation Events

On September 9, I attended the unveiling of Lakehead University's Every Child Matters outdoor art installation, honoring residential school survivors, their families, and the children lost. The installation features seven white eagle feathers symbolizing the Seven Sacred Teachings. Alongside the raising of the Survivors' Flag, this event is an important part of Lakehead's commitment to reconciliation and inclusivity. The ceremony also launched a community-based art project and other activities leading up to the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30: www.lakeheadu.ca/indigenous/events



The Orillia campus also hosted a survivors' flag-raising ceremony. Both events were well attended and received positive media coverage. Here are a few highlights:

Thunder Bay:

CBC -- <https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/9.6505470>

TBT News --

<https://www.tbnewswatch.com/local-news/lakehead-university-supporting-truth-and-reconciliation-through-art-9484941>

Nation Talk --

<https://nationtalk.ca/story/lakehead-bridging-truth-and-reconciliation-through-art>

Orillia:

CTV News --

<https://barrie.ctvnews.ca/video/c2987600-survivors--flag-raised-at-lakehead-university>

Barrie Today --

<https://www.barrietoday.com/local-news/breaks-my-heart-residential-school-survivors-honoured-at-lakehead-9467808>

Evolving Partnership Between Georgian College and Lakehead University

Beginning in 2025, we will implement a new guaranteed admission process that allows graduates from Georgian College diploma programs to seamlessly transition into select Lakehead undergraduate degree programs through more than 30 academic pathways. While this initiative guarantees admission to eligible programs, we will shift our focus away from the current model of offering four combined degree-diploma programs and instead concentrate on expanding transfer pathways. The fall 2024 intake will be the final one for these combined programs; however, both institutions will continue to offer diplomas and degrees, with dedicated teams actively developing transition plans. We do not anticipate any staffing implications as a result of this shift. Since 2017, our partnership has facilitated accessible education for 230 transfer students and 550 combined program students, further reinforcing our commitment to delivering quality, market-driven education in the region.

This announcement resulted in the following positive-toned media coverage:

CTV News:

<https://barrie.ctvnews.ca/expanded-partnership-opens-doors-for-georgian-college-students-at-lakehead-university-1.7051497>

Barrie Today:

<https://www.barrietoday.com/local-news/new-focus-lakehead-georgian-adding-more-degree-options-for-students-9570258>

Strengthening International Relations



In September, Lakehead University was honoured to welcome U.S. Consul General Baxter Hunt and his team to our Thunder Bay campus to talk about our leading-edge research and innovation programs including Ingenuity, Lakehead's student business incubator space that supports entrepreneurship. We spoke at length about

Lakehead's innovative Indigenous teacher education program, access programs, language instruction, and so much more. We were proud to share all the ways that Lakehead is driving unique economic growth and opportunities in northern Ontario and beyond.

Engaging with Alumni: Strengthening Connections and Celebrating Achievements

During my week in Orillia in September, I had the pleasure of attending a social event with alumni from Simcoe County. It was a wonderful opportunity to connect with graduates from various fields, hear their stories, and learn about how their time at Lakehead shaped their personal and professional journeys. These conversations further strengthened our alumni network and reinforced the importance of staying engaged with the university. Later, at the Alumni Association AGM, I had the honor of introducing Valerie Pringle, renowned broadcaster and recent Honorary degree Recipient of Lakehead University. Her inspiring words reflected on the most impactful human connections she has experienced over the years and the valuable lessons she has gained from those interactions.

Advancing Lakehead University's Brand

In addition to the media highlights shared throughout the report, the following stories highlight additional recent coverage with a positive impact:

NASA challenge wraps up at LU Orillia

CTV News Barrie

<https://barrie.ctvnews.ca/nasa-challenge-wraps-up-at-lu-orillia-1.7064204>

International students at Lakehead University are learning about Canada's Indian residential school system

CBC News

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/9.6520892>

DNA test helps identify sailor from doomed Arctic expedition

BBC News

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cnvd51q130lo>

CBC News

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/franklin-expedition-dna-1.7332987>

Lakehead prof says iconic 9/11 image helps frame view of history

Village Media

<https://www.collingwoodtoday.ca/local-news/lakehead-prof-says-iconic-911-image-helps-frame-view-of-history-9504725>

These kids learn from the forest, as their teacher aims to weave climate education into more lessons

CBC News

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/climate-education-teacher-training-1.7333717>

Lakehead students team up to pull a school bus

TBnewswatch

<https://www.tbnewswatch.com/success/lakehead-students-team-up-to-pull-a-school-bus-9609701>

Looking Ahead

As we embark on this new academic year and my second year as President, I am filled with optimism and enthusiasm for what we can achieve together. The goals are ambitious but attainable, and I look forward to working closely with all of you to bring them to fruition.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to Lakehead University, and I look forward to a productive and successful academic year.

Respectfully submitted.

Dr. Gillian Siddall

President & Vice-Chancellor