



Current Aboriginal Initiatives

Programmatic Oversight and Governance:

Vice-Provost (Aboriginal Initiatives)

The Vice-Provost (Aboriginal initiatives) is Lakehead University's senior administrative officer responsible for Aboriginal academic programming, Aboriginal student support services, and Aboriginal community relations. The position was recently redefined and a search is underway to fill the vacancy. The Vice-Provost (Aboriginal Initiatives) reports to the Vice-President (Academic) and Provost, and works together with Deans' Council and Lakehead University Senate (for academic programming), the Vice Provost for Student Affairs (for student support services), and the Aboriginal Management Council (for community relations) to implement Lakehead University's mission-specific commitment "to working with Aboriginal peoples in furthering their educational aspirations." The Vice Provost (Aboriginal Initiatives) heads the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives.

Aboriginal Management Council

The Lakehead University Aboriginal Management Council was founded from the original Native Advisory Committee and constituted into its present form in response to the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training - Aboriginal Education and Training Strategy (AETS) in the early 1990s. AETS is an initiative to increase access for Aboriginal students in Ontario's universities and colleges. AMC membership consists of organizations from the surrounding Aboriginal community who sit in an advisory capacity to the President's Office. AMC has representation on the Lakehead University Board of Governors and Senate.

Aboriginal Management Council Advisors' Committee

This committee was established to serve as a vehicle for inter-departmental communication and liaison with the AMC on matters affecting Aboriginal post-secondary education. Membership includes representation from all university faculties, each Aboriginal-specific program, department, or position, and key administrative positions

Aboriginal Management Council Elders Council

Established to recommend and provide advice and information on traditional knowledge and cultural and spiritual values. The Council assists in the education of the Lakehead University community, especially the students, about Aboriginal languages, culture and traditions. Members conduct certain cultural ceremonies, staff the Elders Lounge in the ACSS for individual visits for a half day each month an/or on request, and act as mediators in the case of conflict over cultural protocols, with the understanding that the protocols of the Council are based on the cultural practices of the Anishinabe of this territory.

Academic Programming:

Department of Aboriginal Education

The Department of Aboriginal Education is working to create a community-based and on campus-cohort stand-alone Honours Bachelor of Education degree specializing in Aboriginal Education and currently oversees the native Teacher Education Program and the Native as a Second Language Teacher Certification and Diploma programs. The Department is chaired by Dr. Stelómethet Ethel B. Gardner. Her research interests are in First Nations education, Aboriginal language revitalization, technology and language renewal, and Aboriginal teacher education. Two new faculty are joining the Department this summer, Laura Lolehawk Buker (Stó:lō from British Columbia) and Sandra Wolf (Ojibwa from North Dakota). Already at Lakehead are Professors Dolores Wawia and Mark Aquash, and Dr. Judy Iseke-Barnes, the Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Education and an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education. Dr. Iseke-Barnes' research involves studying indigenous storytelling as an expression of identity, community, culture, and pedagogy. Kinoomaagegaamig, which means "teaching lodge" or "learning place" offers a home-away-from-home atmosphere for education students and includes a study area and a mini Aboriginal education resource library.

Department of Indigenous Learning

The Department of Indigenous Learning offers an interdisciplinary, cross-cultural undergraduate program that offers a BA, HBA, Minor, and a Certificate. The Department is committed to providing both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students with a fundamental understanding of Aboriginal history, culture and values. It subscribes to the concept that a well-rounded educational experience is acquired through a combination of traditional academic disciplines and culturally relevant/appropriate activities. The Department Chair is Dr. Ruby Slipperjack-Farrell, a novelist well known for incorporating the traditional religion and heritage of her Ojibwa people in her writing. Her department colleagues include Professors Dennis McPherson, recognized for his work in philosophy and law, and Dr. Robert Robson, a trained historian who also studies such contemporary topics as the relationship between the Indian Act and Canadian single industry towns.

Faculty of Forestry and the Forest Environment

The Lakehead Senate has just approved the requirement of a course entitled Aboriginal Peoples and the Forest as part of the HBScF program. This course was developed by Professor Peggy Smith, who has also helped to include Aboriginal issues and values in forest management in Contemporary Forest Issues (a first year course) and Forest Policy and Legislation (a fourth year course). The Sustainable Forest Management Network has provided the Faculty with funding for research and support of graduate students on Aboriginal issues and several members of the Faculty have engaged in recent projects with White Feather and Wabigoon.

Native Access Program (NAP)

NAP is a transition program designed for Aboriginal students who need supplementary education in university entry-level courses to meet the requirements for regular admissions criteria. All students in NAP have access to tutoring, personal and academic counseling, and a culturally sensitive support network designed to create an

environment where students can succeed. Upon successful completion of NAP, students are eligible to apply for admission to continue their studies in selected first year programs at Lakehead University. The program is undergoing some changes during 2006-2007. A revised curriculum and application procedure will be in place for students desiring to enter in Fall 2007.

Native Language Instructors Program (NLIP)

Lakehead University's Thunder Bay Campus, in the heart of Ojibwa country, offers a selection of Native Language courses through the co-operative efforts of the Department of Languages and the Faculty of Education. NLIP offers courses for non-speakers, courses for speakers, and advanced studies in native language. Currently, NLIP also offers an Instructors' Diploma Program (a four-summer program designed for teachers of Syllabic Literacy and Language Arts); and a Native Language Teacher's Certification Program (a three-summer program leading to Ontario certification as a Native Language Teacher of Native as a Second Language). The program occurs regularly in the summer and also offers a wide variety of Native Language courses during the fall, and winter terms.

Native Nurses Entry Program (NNEP)

The Native Nurses Entry Program is a nine-month transition program designed to provide the necessary skills and academic preparation required for successful completion of the four-year nursing degree program or the three-year compressed nursing degree program. The program is based on two semesters of twelve weeks each, as well as a two-week field experience. The student may choose field experiences in their own community or other Aboriginal healthcare settings. The program offers four academic preparatory courses - English, Chemistry, Mathematics and Biology. In addition, three special purpose courses - Communications, Professional Orientation and Study Skills/Logical Reasoning are taken over the University Academic year.

Native Teacher Education Program (NTEP)

NTEP consists of a four-year degree program with teachables in all grade levels with students earning one of a) BA/BEEd General Program, b) BSc/BEEd General Program, c) BA/BEEd Indigenous Learning or d) HBA/BEEd Indigenous Learning. The purpose of the program is to prepare students to meet the social and cultural needs of Aboriginal communities, taking into account such factors as heritage and language. Teachers who have an intimate understanding of Native traditions, psychology, way of life, and language are deemed best able to create a learning environment suited to the habits and interests of the Aboriginal child. The programs are administered by the department of Aboriginal Education, under the direction of the Chair.

Northern Ontario School of Medicine

The Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM), a joint initiative of Laurentian University, Sudbury, and Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, opened its door to students in Fall 2005. From the beginning NOSM engaged the Aboriginal communities of Northern Ontario as part of its mandate to be accountable to the cultural diversity of Northern Ontario. The Aboriginal Affairs Unit of NOSM oversees activity designed to achieve 5 objectives: encourage and nurture Aboriginal students into and through

medical school; acknowledge and respect Aboriginal history, traditions and cultures; access the expertise and resources in Aboriginal communities; establish partnerships with Aboriginal communities; and incorporate into the curriculum the challenges and specific health priorities of the Aboriginal communities. NOSM has enrolled 9 students of Aboriginal ancestry in the first two years of operation. In addition to their training at one of the two main campuses in Thunder Bay or Sudbury, all students complete a compulsory month-long placement in a northern rural Aboriginal community in the spring after their first year of studies.

Superior Science

An outreach initiative wherein the program's coordinators/instructors organize, plan, and travel to remote First Nations in Northwestern Ontario to teach specifically designed science activities in elementary and high schools.

Student Support Services:

Aboriginal Awareness Centre (AAC)

The mandate of the AAC is to provide "an education, lobbying, support and referral service, which is open to all Lakehead University students regardless of ethnic background." The Centre acts as a resource for all students, staff, faculty, and other members of the university community regarding Aboriginal issues, culture, histories, and contributions made by Aboriginal Peoples. (Section 35.1 of Lakehead University Student Union (LUSU) Policy)

Aboriginal Cultural and Support Services (ACSS)

ACSS strives to address the issues of mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being to create a healthy and balanced Aboriginal student-centered experience. ACSS offers confidential academic advising, personal counseling, and referrals. As well, they help co-ordinate tutoring and other learning assistance. ACSS has an Aboriginal student lounge, with a computer lab attached, for studying, visiting or just relaxing.

Lakehead University Native Students Association (LUNSA)

The mission of LUNSA is to (1) promote the spirit of unity among Aboriginal students at Lakehead University through social, cultural, and recreational activities; (2) promote cultural awareness between the Lakehead University Student Union (LUSU) and their associate student clubs and the broader student population at Lakehead University; (3) facilitate peer support and networking among Aboriginal students. All students are encouraged to become LUNSA members, and take part in activities and meetings that are scheduled throughout the year. The LUNSA office is situated within the Aboriginal Resource Centre & Lounge.

Under Development:

Aboriginal Pathways Initiative

Lakehead University is collaborating with Confederation College to seek support from the College-University Consortium Council to enhance Aboriginal participation in post-secondary education. The proposal focuses on improving college-to-university transfer and university-to-college transfer, addressing articulation agreements in both directions.

Centre of Excellence for Curriculum and Aboriginal Teacher Education

A proposal to lead a network of partners in addressing the needs of Aboriginal teacher education in Ontario was submitted in December 2006 by the Faculty of Education to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Education in response to the government's *Aboriginal Education Policy Framework*.

Native Access Program

For Aboriginal students who seek access to Lakehead University but do not meet traditional first-year admission criteria, an application process (paper and personal interview) is being developed for initiating a year-long cohort program for 2007-08 in Science, Math, English, Indigenous Learning and Study Skills similar to the program piloted for 16 students in 2006-07.

Science and Arts Gateway to Education (SAGE)

SAGE is an umbrella program that incorporates the Native Access Program and the Aboriginal Pathways Initiative, as well as the General Year in Applied Science and gateway courses in chemistry and math into a harmonized program supporting access and achievement for First Generation and Aboriginal students. (Lakehead University student population is estimated at 60-70% First Generation learners, and most Aboriginal students are also First Generation learners.) When fully operational, SAGE will include a set of assessment procedures (tests and experiences), advising guidelines, and an assortment of transitional courses that will allow customized pathways or even formal "Educational Plans" to be developed for any student who has identified needs.