



# Ambassadors Northwest

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Presentation by Dr. Gillian Siddall, President & Vice Chancellor, Lakehead University



# Agenda

Looking Ahead: Lakehead Turns 60

The Lakehead Impact: Regional Growth

Shaping the Evolution: New Strategic Plan

Opening Doors: Commitment to Access

Advancing Reconciliation: Gichi Kendaasiwin

Serving the Region: CDVMP





# Looking Ahead: Lakehead Turns 60



- Lakehead University will celebrate its 60th anniversary on July 1, 2025.
- Sixty years ago, Lakehead University was **built by the community for the community**. Sixty years on, Lakehead is evolving to meet the growing needs of the communities we serve.
- At 60, Lakehead University is turning the page on a new chapter, one that is about **growth** and **evolution**. With two major capital expansion projects underway in Thunder Bay, we are building and innovating to meet the needs of the communities we serve.



# The Lakehead Impact: Regional Growth

**\$4.54 Billion**

Lakehead University's total  
economic impact on Ontario's  
GDP



**\$2.57 Billion**

Contributed to Northwestern  
Ontario's economy in 2023-24



**\$2.04 Billion**

contributed to Thunder Bay's  
economy in 2023-24



**42%**

Lakehead grads stay and work in  
the community where they study



A woman with long brown hair tied in a bun, wearing a light grey knit sweater, is focused on painting a large, colorful abstract artwork. She is holding a paintbrush and a small jar of paint. The background is blurred, showing other people in an art gallery or studio setting.

# Shaping the Evolution: New Strategic Plan





# shaping the **EVOLUTION**

Lakehead University's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan

## **Expanding Student Opportunity and Success**

Aim: Expand the number of individuals who pursue and attain a university qualification in the regions Lakehead serves.

## **Sustainable Economic and Community Development and Entrepreneurship**

Aim: Maximize Lakehead's positive regional economic and community impact.

## **Advancing Our Societal Impact**

Aim: Advance solutions to grand challenges affecting society through quality research and scholarly activity.

## **People and Culture**

Aim: Establish Lakehead as a top employer.

## **Financial Sustainability**

Aim: Ensure Lakehead's long-term financial sustainability.





## Opening Doors: Commitment to Access

- Approximately **95%** of Lakehead students face at least one barrier to education – ranging from being the first in their family to attend university to financial constraints and geographic distance from schools in their home communities.
- Lakehead invests in a range of **access supports**, including:
  - Uniquely **accessible pathways**
  - Substantial entrance **scholarship and bursary** programs
  - **Personalized** student support programs
  - Extensive **experiential learning** opportunities to help students build the necessary professional networks to bridge from the classroom to the workplace







## Opening Doors: Commitment to Access

- **Academic Support Access Program:**  
A pathway for students whose academic average falls slightly below the required admission average. Through ASAP, students are surrounded with enhanced resources, including academic advising and mentorship to support their transition into undergraduate studies and university life.
- **Indigenous Access Programs:**  
Lakehead's Indigenous Nursing Entry Program, Indigenous STEM Access Program, and the Indigenous Transition Year Program support First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students' transition to undergraduate studies while respecting their unique cultural and academic needs.
- Lakehead University has one of the largest Indigenous student populations in the country, with **over 12.4%** of the student body at Lakehead identifying as Indigenous.







# Advancing Reconciliation: Gichi Kendaasiwin







# A New Vision for Gichi Kendaasiwin

- A Commitment to Inclusion: Creating a new Indigenous learning space on Lakehead's Thunder Bay campus.
- Indigenous-Led Vision: Developed in collaboration with Indigenous leaders and community members.
- Rooted in Tradition: Ensuring the space aligns with Indigenous needs, aspirations, and cultural practices.
- Strategic Location: Positioned near Lakehead University's sacred site, accommodating up to 60 people comfortably.
- Accessible Design: Walkable, wheelchair-friendly, and conveniently located near parking.
- Purpose-Driven Space: Designed for ceremonies, featuring water access, bathrooms, changerooms, and a kitchen for cooking.







- Indigenous students make up 12.4% of the student population at Lakehead; however, less than .5% of Lakehead spaces are presently Indigenous programmed space.

## Support for Gichi Kendaasiwin

- This project has gained significant recognition and broad support.
- The successful completion of this project will take the support of Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners at the local, regional, and national levels.
- In February 2025, Lakehead announced a \$1 million gift from BMO toward the renewed Gichi Kendaasiwin project.





**Serving the Region:**  
Collaborative Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Program





# Working to solve Northern Ontario's critical veterinary medicine shortage.

- **Meeting a Vital Demand:** Northern Ontario is experiencing a significant shortage of veterinarians, affecting the agri-food industry and pet owners, particularly in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities. The Collaborative Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Program (CDVMP) aims to address this issue by educating veterinarians in the north, specifically for the north.
- **Transformative Partnership:** The University of Guelph's Ontario Veterinary College (OVC) and Lakehead University are collaborating to offer a unique veterinary program that blends world-class education with a deep understanding of the region's unique needs.
- **Funding the Future:** While the Ontario government has committed \$14.7 million – of which \$4.5 million will support Lakehead's capital build requirements, with the remaining amount going to the University of Guelph – additional funding will be needed to develop the necessary facilities at Lakehead University's Thunder Bay campus.
- **Homegrown Solutions:** The program trains veterinary students in northern Ontario, increasing the likelihood that graduates will stay in the region. This enhances access to animal healthcare and supports economic growth.
- **A Historic Expansion:** The CDVMP represents the first increase in veterinary college seats in Ontario in a generation, adding 20 additional spots annually dedicated to northern students.
- **Experiential Learning Opportunities:** Students will gain hands-on experience with local veterinarians, complete elective courses tailored to rural, remote and Indigenous communities, and graduate with a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) degree from the University of Guelph.



**Thank you.**