

President's Report to Senate December 12, 2023

As we approach the end of 2023 and are well into the exam period, I can't help but reflect on the remarkable journey we have all undertaken together over the past year.

Almost exactly one year ago, Provost Brouwer and I were named as Interim leaders here at Laurentian. We have been honored to be on this challenging journey with you, and thanks to all of you, significant progress has been made. We've successfully attracted excellent talent to strengthen our academic programs, support our bilingual and tricultural mandate, and recruited skilled and experienced leaders to help guide and advance the transformation, and to move the University forward. Much work remains, but so much has been accomplished.

Unfortunately I have no updates on any provincial government action in response to the Blue Ribbon Panel Report. Eight to ten Ontario universities have published op-eds or made similar statements stating that they will be in a deficit position in this year, and speaking of even more serious problems going forward if there is no improvement in the funding regime. COU [Council of Ontario Universities] is escalating its campaign of lobbying to improve funding. OCUFA [Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations] held a conference in Toronto the week before last also addressing the question of how to improve university funding, entitled "Funding Our Future: Keeping Universities Public". I was on a panel "Why Publicly Funded Universities Matter: The costs of funding cuts". Fabrice Colin from LUFA was also at the conference. One other development which has the potential to affect budgets is the federal government's recent announcement that the financial guarantee that international students will need to produce in order to get a visa will go up from \$10,000 to over \$20,000, and also that they may regulate the number of study permits. This latter had no detail, but depending on how that rolls out, it could have a profound effect on any institution's finances.

I too would like to acknowledge the passing of Dr. Ali Reguigui. He had a profound impact on many in our community, creating a remarkable legacy through his many achievements and helping to shape the University's identity over his 33 years as a faculty member. He was one of the architects of the MA interdisciplinaire en études relationnelles, which was recently approved (in 2023) and will launch in Fall 2024. This program is a critical addition to Laurentian's offerings as a French language MA is a requirement for compliance with the French Language Services Act. What most of you won't know is that he was one of the first people I met at Laurentian, when a colleague and I were appointed by CAUT to investigate allegations within the Faculty of Arts here, and he was one of the first people we interviewed, in January 2015.

I wish everybody a restorative holiday break, the chance to slow down a bit, spend some time with friends and family, and I look forward to continuing to collaborate with you all over the next few months.

Operational Transformation

With the Transformation Plan approved at the Board of Governors last month, we are now waiting for approval from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. This approval is necessary in order for us to move forward in a significant way to the next phase, the implementation phase. In the meantime, the review of the ERP (Enterprise Resourcing Planning) continues, supported by Deloitte, as does the planning for the Transformation Implementation Office (TIO) and the transformation work itself, estimated to span 3-5 years, before moving into its eventual steady-state "continuous improvement" phase.

Strategic planning

The Strategic Planning Process is nearing the final stages as we continue to receive feedback on the current draft version of the plan. This process continues at Senate today, and Board members will discuss the draft plan on December 15. It is anticipated that the plan will be finalized by mid-February, where it would be brought back to Senate (February 13) and the Board (February 16). Apart from continuing to refine the draft plan, StrategyCorp is beginning to work on a narrative version of the plan as well as some possible performance indicators, so both quantitative and qualitative ways for us to measure and demonstrate our progress on the plan. Shortly, academic and research plans will start to take shape.

Board of Governors

The Board continues to replenish its ranks, filling vacancies, including LGIC (Lieutenant Governor in Council) vacancies, which require provincial government approval. There are Board meetings this week, with an education session on Thursday afternoon, December 14, and a regular public board meeting Friday morning, December 15, 2023.

Update on senior administrative searches

As you have likely seen from the official announcement, [Laurentian University's 12th President & Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Lynn Wells](#) will begin her work on April 1, 2024. I would like to thank those of you who served on the search committee, as well as many of you who provided feedback through the process.

The search committee for the Provost interviewed candidates over the past few weeks, and the selection process and discussion are ongoing. The searches for the next AVP Financial Services and for the next Associate University Secretary continue. The search for a second legal counsel has identified a preferred candidate, and if all goes well, that person is expected to start sometime in January.

Provost Brouwer would be able to provide more detail on her ongoing searches – Dean of Education & Health, Dean of Management, University Librarian, and AVP Students.

There will be two calls coming out soon. The Joint Committee on Honorary Degrees has recently been formed, so the President's Office can send out the call for nominees for [honorary degrees](#) to be awarded at the upcoming spring convocations. The second is for the Governance Excellence Award, which was approved at the October Senate, see pages 42-43 of agenda package.

I would like to note that we have a [new SGA Executive](#). I'd like to welcome them to their various roles, including in the governance structures in the University.

The final **Townhall** for this term will be held on Wednesday, December 13th from 1-3 pm via Zoom. The agenda is simply for the President and Vice-Presidents to provide updates and respond to questions.

On behalf of the Board of Governors, the President's Office, LUSU, LUFA, CUPE and LUAPSA, we are all invited to get together for a **Festive Gathering**, as a community, to kick-off the holiday season on Friday, December 15th from 2:30-4:30pm in the Atrium. Refreshments will be served, and live French music will be performed.

Congratulations

Thank you to those who participated in the [16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence](#). This is an annual campaign that began on November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and continued until December 10, Human Rights Day. This campaign was an opportunity to call out and speak up on gender-based violence, and to renew our commitment to ending violence against women, girls, and 2SLGBTQI+ individuals.

Congratulations to members of the **Environmental Sustainability Committee**, Avery Morin (behavioural neuroscience student) and Anastacia Chartrand (recent Science Communication graduate), who were recently invited to take the global stage once more, this time at the COP28 UN Climate Change Conference in Dubai, which they attended virtually. [Their presentation can be viewed on YouTube](#).

During **Global Entrepreneurship Week** 2023, November 13th to 17th, The Foundry spotlighted one Laurentian University graduate entrepreneur each day of the week. Alumni in the spotlight were: Kielyn Marrone, Kati McCartney, Christina Visser, David Anselmo, and Karim Omri. Thank you to our staff at The Foundry for this initiative.

Vale has made a 5-year commitment to support the research program of the CFEU @ VLWLC, led by Professor **Jackie Litzgus**. Vale will provide \$960K for the period 2023-2027. This commitment is a testament to Vale's confidence in the **Cooperative Freshwater Ecology Unit's** and Laurentian's upward momentum, and will be the essential leverage for new grant applications and new research collaborations, and an attractive incentive for rebuilding the CRC program.

The annual **Research Infosource Rankings** were released December 7. Laurentian has moved up to 30 overall, from 34 last year. We are the top university in Ontario classified as undergraduate for research income.

<https://researchinfosource.com/cil/2023/top-50-research-universities/list>