

President's Report to Senate October 8, 2019

I am pleased to provide this report for the October 8th, 2019 Senate. As we head into October, I am thrilled to see our faculty and students in full form with only a few days until our fall study break. On my part, the past three weeks have been focused on meetings with community members, my first round of Laurentian Board committee meetings and meetings with COU and government officials. We are very fortunate at Laurentian to have an active and engaged Board of Governors providing oversight and stewardship on the business aspects of the University.

In particular, on Friday September 27th, we hosted a visit on Campus by Minister of Francophone Affairs and Transportation, Mme Caroline Mulroney where we had an engaged discussion on the importance of the francophone and bilingual aspects of Laurentian, the value that Laurentian brings to the North and Ontario in supporting the government's objectives. As part of the visit, the Minister had a round table discussion with our students in our francophone programs who spoke passionately about their programs and the importance of government investment in francophone university programming. I believe that the Minister left us with a much-enhanced appreciation for Laurentian, its students and its contribution to Ontario.

On Wednesday and Thursday Sept 25-26th, through a COU forum, I had the opportunity to speak with the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, Mr. Ross Romano, who spoke about the importance of retaining youth in the North amongst other topics. This aligns very well of course with Laurentian's mandate to provide leadership in both the attraction and retention of youth in the North through providing the education they need for rewarding and productive careers. We look forward to hosting Minister Romano on campus in the near future.

Kudos

- Senator Murray Sinclair, former Chief and Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada delivered a very thoughtful and inspiring lecture as part of the Glencore Lecture Series on Thursday, October 3, 2019. He was welcomed to campus very warmly by our Indigenous Student Affairs and Advancement teams. Many thanks to advancement for organizing the event and securing the Senator.
- Orange Shirt day (Sept 30th) attracted a record number of participants for a KAIROS blanket exercise in the Indigenous Sharing and Learning Centre Round Room.
- La journée des franco-ontariens saw a variety of events across the community including what I've heard was a great gathering for the flag raising at the University of Sudbury which I was unfortunately not able to attend as I was away at the COU executive heads/academic colleagues joint session in Toronto.
- Tracy Fleury, our Manager of Accounting and Reporting in the Finance Department is also a very successful professional curler. In fact, kudos go to her as the skip of Team Fleury on the World Curling Tour. Team Fleury has already won an early-season tournament and have since added two second place finishes to their strong start.

- Dr. Shelly Arnott was welcomed to the Vale Living with Lakes Centre as the 2019 Watershed Lecturer.
- The counselling and accessibility team has seen over 800 students since the last week of August. The visits include for counselling, including walk in counselling, and accommodation reviews. At the same time, both teams continue to work on prevention and education organizing resiliency workshops and meeting with students at various events such as Fairs and open houses. Liaison, the Hub, Academic Advising, International Student Services, the Library Front-Desk and all of our student support units have been working with high volumes as well and I'd like to acknowledge their great efforts.
- Thirty-five students have applied for tuition exemption under the youth in extended society care (Crown Wards) program. Applications are currently being reviewed to provide funding to support the equivalent of ten full-time students and is available to students studying full-time or part-time.
- Twenty-two students participated in the 2nd Backpack to Briefcase workshop, entitled "Your Brand Matters". This workshop was facilitated by Scott Simon, RBC Regional Vice-President, Northern Lakes. The Backpack to Briefcase workshop series is made possible by RBC Future Launch

More from Summer

- Dr. Elizabeth Turner, professor of geology at the Harquail School of Earth Sciences, co-authored a paper published in the journal Nature on the oldest reported fossil fungi ever discovered! <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-019-1217-0>. This discovery was also on the front page of the Globe and Mail and was covered by The Guardian, the New York Times, and the Walrus. Dr. Turner was also interviewed on Quirks and Quarks: <https://podcast-a.akamaihd.net/mp3/podcasts/quirksaio-bE9pUjC5-20190524.mp3>
- Dr. Thomas Merritt, from the Chemistry and Biochemistry Department, has been appointed as member on NSERC Awards for Science Promotion Selection Committee for a three-year term.
- The Department of Physics organized and hosted the annual Canada-America-Mexico (CAM) Graduate Student Conference, which took place at LU, on 24 - 27th of July with 90+ delegates from 4 countries, namely Cuba (first time ever), Mexico, the U.S.A., and Canada. The conference was a complete success!
- Over 200 students from Gujarat Technological University (GTU), India visited Laurentian University for a six-week International Experience Program (IEP) from June 12 to July 30. This was the eighth year of successfully running the IEP.
- A bi-weekly CBC radio show called Technology Matters / Video Game Matters hosted by Dr. Aaron Langille from the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science was just renewed for a third season.

First Senate (Sept 17th)

I was impressed by the passion and engagement of Senators at my first Senate meeting in September. The importance of Senate as a strong and engaged collegial forum for academic governance cannot be overstated. I look forward to working with all Senators to build the academic strength, visibility and reputation of Laurentian.

Council of Ontario Universities

On September 25th-26th I attended a COU executive heads/academic colleagues joint session as well as the first COU Ontario Universities summit focused on advocacy and thoughtful leadership opportunities for Ontario's Universities. The joint session with colleagues featured a very engaged discussion around the academic colleagues report. The summit proved to be a useful exercise in developing a sector wide advocacy strategy and understanding opportunities to educate and influence the current government. It also featured an engaged discussion on opportunities for the sector to provide thoughtful leadership for the province.

Ontario Universities Fair

It was great to be able to spend time with colleagues and the whole team at OUF this year. The hard work that everyone puts into this long weekend is remarkable and I am convinced is paying off for Laurentian. I personally wish to express my appreciation to all our volunteers and staff, and in particular to our student and parent volunteers who are so proud of their association with Laurentian.

This year the annual fair attracted 120,000 people, up less than 2% from last year. By contrast, after reviewing all of our collected leads, Laurentian University had a 21.8% increase in unique lead collection at 5,661 collected, up from 4,645 in 2018. We are all hopeful that this impressive increase in interest will translate into enrollments for the Fall of 2020.

SMA3 Update

The MTCU has recently issued updated technical materials which are under review by our team. A reminder that the format of SMA3 is considerably more prescriptive than prior SMA's. The ministry has also laid out its plan for bilateral discussions, which will include two major touchpoints: (1) an in-person meeting, scheduled in late November; and (2) a shorter engagement between Jan 27-Feb 7. It is expected that institutions will submit a provisional draft for review by MTCU by December 17, 2019, and final draft for MTCU review and signature by February 18, 2020. SMA3 agreements must be finalized by March 30, 2020. Shortly, we expect that MTCU will provide a Laurentian-specific pre-populated data workbook to inform our bilateral discussions.

The Provost and Vice President Administration are co-leading a small working team to assemble our first draft. I will be proposing to bring presentation/discussion on our SMA3 draft to Senate in November. The leadership is also committed to transparent collegial consultation with the Laurentian community on the development of the plan. Engagement opportunities will be publicized shortly and I encourage all to participate.

Specific opportunities for positioning Laurentian for maximum success will be better understood once we have received the pre-populated data workbook and have met with the Ministry.

Update on Executive Team Recruitment

The profile for the position of Vice President Research is nearing completion and I expect the final draft will be communicated to the community for final feedback very shortly.

Opportunities to meet with the President

As I discussed in Senate last month, I am committed to providing regular small group and one on one opportunities to meet with community members around topics of interest. I am pleased to announce that the first in what I hope will become a regular series of breakfasts with the President will be held from 8:30-9:30 am on November 1st. Please look for a formal announcement, as attendance will be limited to groups of eight and RSVP will be required to reserve a spot. Please note that in keeping with proper financial stewardship, only a light breakfast will be available, with the focus being on conversation around topics of interest to the participants.

I am also pleased to announce November 4th, from 1-2pm as the first, in what I hope will be, a series of open availability drop in times for members of the community that have items that they would like to speak with me about one on one. Again please look for the formal announcement soon and please RSVP to book a time slot within the hour.