

## **President's Report to Senate October 2024**

Aanii, Hello, Bonjour,

October has already been yet another busy month on campus as many significant events have taken place. In addition to this, we will be able to share an update on our preliminary enrolment, with the final enrolment totals will be confirmed later in the year. The University is also making significant progress in the development of its Academic and Strategic Research Plans, which have begun their consultations.

### **Congratulations**

To start off, I'd like to share a big thank you to the dozens of staff and faculty who volunteered to represent Laurentian University at the Ontario University Fair on October 5 & 6, showcasing our programs and student experience. Laurentian saw a tremendous number of students once again this year and they are surely walking away with a positive reflection on what could await them here on campus.

A special congratulations to Katherine Lehoux for successfully [re-launching the francophone](#) student newspaper, L'Original Déchaîné, contributing to our vibrant campus culture.

Another congratulations to everyone involved in the celebration of the Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes on September 25th, an important event celebrating our francophone community. The event was led by the Association des étudiantes et étudiants francophones (AEF) and we are thankful for their leadership.

On September 30, our campus once again played host to an important community event. We extend our gratitude and congratulations to the team in Academic and Indigenous Programs who organized the symposium for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, fostering meaningful reflection and learning. A heartfelt thanks to our keynote speakers: Traditional Anishinaabe Elders Dr. Shirley Williams and Lorney Bob, and Jason Nakogee, Laurentian University's Truth & Reconciliation Coordinator.

### **Enrolment**

Our preliminary enrolment information continues to evolve as new and returning students update their enrolment status, with final totals available in December. At the moment, we see year-over-year stability in our enrolment with a -0.2% fluctuation. The following enrolment data, based on the first day of class, are being shared with the Laurentian University Board of Governors as part of the October 2024 Board Package:

- Current first day of class preliminary full-time equivalents (FTE) enrolment is stable.
- Domestic enrolment is behind -3%, year-over-year. While there is an increase in new undergraduate student intakes for both on-campus and on-line degree programs, there was also a significant decline in returning students.
- International enrolment is ahead +12%, year-over-year, as a result of the flow-through of returning graduate student enrolment in course-based Master's programs from last year and the spring of 2024.

- The current estimates show a final FTE count of 6,301 +/- 150 on November 1st, 2024, resulting in a shortfall of -120 FTE compared to the overall planned enrolments (-480 domestic FTE and +360 international FTE).
- French Language degree program FTE enrolments are currently up +1%, year-over-year.

## Sectoral Updates

The Ministry of Colleges and Universities has initiated the process to develop the next strategic mandates for Ontario's universities (SMA4), with institutional meetings to take place this Fall and final agreements to be signed off by March. Dr. Malcolm Campbell, Provost and Vice-President Academic, will be leading Laurentian's SMA4 negotiations. There are early indications that STEM programs will be highlighted in this round, and we are preparing to determine how we can best position Laurentian to benefit from this priority. Of critical importance to Laurentian will be the impact of the SMA4 criteria on institutional funding and enrollment, as we strive to reach our assigned corridor.

The federal government has announced additional restrictions on international students coming to Canada. These new changes include a further reduction of 10% on the intake cap for student study permits for 2025. There will also be new restrictions around the Post-Graduation Work Permit Program and work permit eligibility for international students and their spouses. In the Laurentian context, the most significant change is the new requirement for graduate students to be subject to the cap process. We are doing the analyses to determine the possible impacts on our graduate program enrollments going forward. There should be minimal impact in the current fiscal year. The Board will continue to be updated as more information becomes available.

## Academic and Research Plans

To guide Laurentian University's academic activity and the university's research and innovation enterprise, a new Academic Plan and a new Strategic Research Plan are being developed. These plans will be critical to implementing the University's 2024-2029 Strategic Plan: Connection, Innovation, and Impact, ensuring that our priorities, goals, and strategies reflect our commitment to innovation, collaboration, and making a meaningful impact. Laurentian University's Academic Plan will define our educational goals, curricula development, and teaching strategies to enhance learning outcomes and academic excellence. Laurentian University's Strategic Research Plan will define our research priorities, goals, and strategies, with a focus on fostering innovation, collaboration, and impactful research activities.

Critically, the Academic Plan and the Strategic Research Plan are being developed in parallel, in a coordinated fashion. This approach ensures that the plans will be aligned; that they will cross-reference each other; and that they will create synergies by leveraging each other. This coordinated approach is being co-led by the Provost & Vice-President Academic and the Vice-President Research, with advisory groups for each of the two plans.

The development of the Academic Plan and the Strategic Research Plan relies on active input and feedback from the Laurentian University community and external interest holders. To this end, plan development has entered a consultative phase. As of October 1st, in a process being supported by StrategyCorp, [feedback is being sought through surveys](#), targeted discussions, and open fora.

The information obtained from the consultation phase will form the basis of the next phase of plan development, which will entail creation of draft plans, with input from the advisory groups. The draft plans will then be shared with the Laurentian University community for feedback before stewarding the plans through governance approvals. The plan development process is

geared to position Laurentian University as a leading academic and research institution in Northern Ontario, where the success of our learners, researchers, communities, employers, and industry partners is a shared priority.

### **Strategic Plan Implementation**

Since the launch of the Strategic Plan in March, the Executive Team has been engaged in the initial stages of implementation. With my appointment in April, the Provost starting his role in August, and several new leaders joining over the summer, the implementation has been gaining momentum and will progress more quickly now that the full leadership team is in place.

On August 26, the Senior Leadership Team participated in a full-day retreat, at which members reviewed the One-Year Implementation Plan approved by the Board in February. This One-Year Plan includes key initiatives for the first year, with Indicative Progress Measures specified for each initiative.

While some of the initiatives have projected outcomes into a second year, the Implementation Plan does not outline actions or key performance indicators (KPIs) for the full five-year span of the Strategic Plan. The Report of the Auditor General of Ontario includes the following recommendation: "Include key performance indicators that clearly measure the achievement of intended outcomes in the University's strategic plan." The University has committed to the OAGO that it will create KPIs (both qualitative and quantitative) that will be posted regularly on the institutional website.

At the November Senate meeting, I will be presenting a draft set of KPIs for your input. This document will be distributed in advance as part of the Senate package, so please review it in advance of the meeting. There will also be an opportunity to provide feedback on the KPIs on-line in November.

Sincerely,

Lynn Wells  
President and Vice-Chancellor