

President's Report to Senate September 2022

September 6th marked the beginning of the fall semester and the start of the 2022-23 academic year, a new year with a full on-campus experience for the first time since fall of 2019. The enthusiasm of students, faculty and staff to return to campus has been outstanding. Orientation/welcome events were well attended and an energy has returned to campus. Throughout orientation and welcome week, there was a feeling of excitement on campus as we welcomed both new and returning students. I want to thank faculty, staff, and student leaders who have worked tirelessly through the past several months to support and encourage students.

While certain health measures remain - and we thank everyone for their support of a safe campus environment for all - I encourage everyone to make the most of your experiences on Laurentian's beautiful campus as we move into the arrival of fall colors.

The 2022-23 academic year represents an inflection point for Laurentian and the opportunity for a new beginning. The senate has a crucial role to play in ensuring a successful year. I thank all senators for investing their time in helping to guide Laurentian University towards achieving its full potential.

Update on Health Measures for Fall of 2022

With COVID-19 still circulating, I would like to thank members of the Joint Health and Safety and Operational Resumption Committees for your continued work to address the risks of COVID-19 on campus. I would also like to express my gratitude to the staff in the Health and Wellness Clinic for all you continue to do to support students, faculty and staff through access to vaccines, testing and guidance on "what to do if you are ill".

Staying up to date on your vaccinations continues to be the best approach to protecting yourself and those around you from COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses. We are fortunate at Laurentian to have access to vaccines on campus. The Bivalent Moderna Vaccine will be available by appointment at Health & Wellness Services, starting September 26, on Wednesdays. Further, beginning in mid-October Health and Wellness Services expects to have the Quadrivalent Inactivated Vaccine which is a publicly funded Influenza vaccine, available. Members of the Laurentian community can book an appointment by emailing, vaccineclinic@laurentian.ca. Later this fall, pop-up COVID-19 and Influenza vaccine clinics will also be offered in the Parker Building (P226) to provide improved access and greater capacity.

Effective September 1, Laurentian also updated its Policy on Face Coverings. After consulting with the Joint Health and Safety Committee, labour leaders and student leaders, with the recommendation from the Operational Resumption Committee, the updated face-covering policy requires masks to be worn in all instructional spaces (classrooms, labs, teaching spaces; studios) where 2m of distance cannot be maintained between individuals. Although not required, we continue to recommend that people make a choice to wear a mask in other indoor spaces if a 2m distance cannot be maintained. The Safety Ambassador program has also continued this fall with a focus on reminding persons entering instructional spaces to wear a mask. For more information please refer to the updated **Mask Use Guidelines**.

All members of the Laurentian community are also reminded to stay home if they are not feeling well. If you have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or other respiratory illnesses, such as influenza, you are asked to stay home until you have no fever, and your symptoms, in general, have improved for at least 24 hours (or 48 hours for gastrointestinal symptoms). Upon return to campus, you are also asked to wear a mask for 10 days from when symptoms started or if you had a positive test date.

If you have questions about when to isolate, you can visit or contact the COVID-19 Assessment Centre on campus. The Centre is also offering Rapid Antigen Tests on-site (or take-home kits) for all individuals and PCR testing for eligible individuals. To learn more about services available through Laurentian's COVID-19 Assessment Centre, email healthservices@laurentian.ca.

Laurentian continues to participate in waste water testing and will advise the Laurentian community if surveillance indicates a potential increase in active cases of COVID-19 on the Laurentian campus. Facilities Services has also activated enhanced cleaning of touchpoints in high-traffic areas. Moreover, all are encouraged to continue good hand-hygiene practices and take advantage of Lysol wipes found in many locations across campus.

Finally, I would like to thank all the faculty, staff and students who are following Laurentian's Policy on Face Coverings and wearing a mask in instructional spaces when they are not able to maintain a 2m distance from others. I commend you for wearing a mask and doing your part to create an extra level of protection against the transmission of COVID-19 in instructional spaces. Your compliance helps to decrease the risk for classmates, faculty and staff who may be immunocompromised or caring for others that may have a greater risk of illness from COVID-19 or the flu.

Significant Dates

A significant date for our memories, September 19, 2022 marked a one-time National Day of Mourning for Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's State Funeral. The flags on campus were lowered as of September 8 to honour the passing of the reigning monarch of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth.

Two other important dates to recognize in September will be events that are core to the University's tricultural and bilingual identity. On September 25 our campus will celebrate La journée des Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes 2022. This day will feature events throughout Greater Sudbury and is one that the Association des étudiantes et étudiants francophones is eager to celebrate. On September 30, our campus will recognize the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Orange Shirt Day, with multiple significant events organized by the Indigenous Students Affairs team. The day will be followed closely by the October 1st start date of Dominic Beaudry as the new Associate Vice-President, Academic and Indigenous Programs. Please consider making time to attend these important events that are truly what makes Laurentian unique.

Enrollment Update

Enrolment numbers for the first day of class in September are now available and are encouraging. As of September 7th, we currently have 7,457 students or 5,581 Fall Full Time Equivalent (FTE), which is 108% and 109% respectively of the estimated enrolments included in the University's financial plan for 2022-23. While the recovery of Laurentian's reputation and the ongoing CCAA process was expected to impact enrolment again this fall, the first day of class numbers suggest we are likely to exceed those estimates. I would also like to emphasize that enrollments in French language programs as well as the proportion of students that self identify as Indigenous remains at historic levels, aligning with Laurentian's bilingual and tricultural identity.

With on-going changes (e.g. CCAA uncertainty, international visa backlog), the credit loading and FTE enrolment is more variable than ever before, where we are seeing some weeks ahead of past years, and other weeks behind the historic behavior. While Laurentian is seeing graduate and international enrolment growth over the planned enrolments, these student groups have the most risk and variability and enrolment numbers will need to be monitored as fall progresses.

It is important to note that between today and the November 1st census date, there will be a lot of registration activity including influence from add/drop (September 16th), final term withdrawal without academic penalty (October 31st) and fall early leaver attrition. Final registration numbers will be available and communicated following reporting to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities in December.

Overall these numbers are encouraging. They demonstrate the continuing importance of Laurentian to the community and emphasize the opportunity for Laurentian to rebuild confidence and serve the next generation of students.

I would like to thank everyone for their efforts, in particular the Provost, Deans and all those involved in recruitment, both faculty, staff and students.

CCAA Updates

The past 20 months have been exceedingly difficult for students, staff, faculty and the entire Laurentian community as Laurentian has sought to address its overwhelming financial challenges under the Companies Creditors Arrangement Act. Entering formal restructuring was the only option available to the University save closing its doors at the end of January 2020.

The process has been long, highly emotional and has impacted everyone in the community. Yet through the dedication of faculty and staff, and the continued engagement of students has allowed the university to navigate through the process. Many changes have occurred - and will continue to occur. However, the light is now firmly shining at the end of the tunnel.

On September 14th, Creditors approved the Plan of Arrangement proposed by Laurentian to settle outstanding claims against Laurentian, which is a crucial step towards a successful exit from the CCAA process.

The next step in the CCAA process towards emergence is the obtaining of an Order from the Court which approves the Plan of Arrangement and authorizes Laurentian to proceed to implement the Plan. A date has been scheduled for that court hearing to approve the Plan, on October 5, 2022. There are various conditions to implementation of the Plan that must be met, and Laurentian and its advisors are working diligently to ensure that those can be completed as quickly as possible. That includes finalizing a loan agreement for exit financing to repay in full the DIP Loan that was made available to Laurentian as part of the CCAA process. We expect that Laurentian will emerge from the CCAA process in November as a restructured university with a solid financial platform for future success. We appreciate all of the efforts undertaken by many stakeholders to give Laurentian this opportunity to reset, and create a more sustainable university the entire community can be proud of.

Looking Ahead Post-CCAA

The emergence of Laurentian from the CCAA process in November will provide the opportunity for the University to establish its path to a successful and sustainable future. Much of the transition will have been achieved but much also remains to be done. Governance review and organizational transformation are critical next steps to position the university for success. With emergence I encourage everyone to look forward, not backward - to look to the possibilities of the future in which Laurentian grows its reputation as a leading University for the North strongly aligned with its bilingual and tricultural values. I wish everyone, faculty, staff and students, the very best for the work that is still to be done and opportunities that you still have before you and for Laurentian to achieve its potential.

Kudos

1. Laurentian University recently welcomed students back to campus, with the commencement of the fall semester. The Orientation team was hard at work to ensure students are provided the best possible access to resources at Laurentian. I would like to sincerely thank our Orientation committee, as well as all other staff, faculty and current students involved in Orientation, for their efforts. I commend all involved in the planning and execution of Orientation, a week-long 'welcome back' filled with many exciting social events that helped foster our university's sense of community. I am happy to report that this year's number of confirmed students represents an increase from 2021. We all look forward to what the 2022-2023 academic year has to offer.
2. Congratulations to all those involved in this year's Shad Laurentian program. In July, Shad Laurentian hosted fifty-six grade ten and eleven Canadian high school students on campus for Shad Canada's twenty-seven day program. Laurentian University is a host university in partnership with Shad Canada, a not-for-profit organization who equip youth to tackle social and economic challenges via a STEAM and entrepreneurial lens. I am delighted that Laurentian had the opportunity to share its beautiful and multi-faceted campus facilities; including our beach, challenge course, residences, Great Hall and more.
3. This summer we also welcomed international students from many areas of the world, with groups of students from both Switzerland and India spending time on campus in August. The India-based cohort of students resumed their visit to Laurentian's campus after a pause of two years. Their stay lasted one month and kudos to the organizing committee, and specifically Dr. Kalpdram Passi for his leadership. Similarly, a group of students from Haute École de travail social et de la santé in Lausanne, Switzerland visited campus for two weeks in August. Their group was well received by the team on campus that was led by Dr. Dominique Mercure.
4. Another group I'd like to acknowledge is the Campus Recreation team. This summer, they made excellent use of our recreational facilities to offer Voyageurs youth summer camps. These camps that began in early July and continued into early September welcomed hundreds of youth to various indoor and outdoor recreational facilities and learning opportunities. I would like to commend all those who contribute to Campus Recreation, including current student staff.
5. I am happy to congratulate the Laurentian University researchers who received \$820,000 in federal Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada discovery grants. Grants that derive from this program typically last for five years and provide the core funding for Canada's top researchers to pursue their most promising

ideas and breakthrough discoveries. Five NSERC grant recipients from Laurentian University and its affiliates include Drs. Brent Lievers, Corey Laamanen, Guangdong Yang, Sujeenthar Tharmalingam, and Chris Verschoor. Laurentian also received an additional \$470,000 to support research in subatomic physics.

6. Laurentian's School of Education also received funding in the amount of \$200,000 from a donation made by Wyona Thompson, Laurentian University alumna, who passed away in June. This donation will create scholarships to reward students for academic merit, bursaries to assist students in financial need, and will provide travel support to students completing placements outside the Greater Sudbury area, with preference given to placements in under-served Northern areas. This new funding will begin supporting students this 2022-2023 academic year. The Laurentian community is truly grateful for this heartfelt donation.
7. I would also like to bring attention to Laurentian's involvement in an \$8.6M national SSHRC Partnership Grant. This project is of unprecedented scale in the design disciplines in Canada involves 14 universities, 70 researchers and over 68 public and private organizations at municipal, provincial and national levels. The aim of this project, "Quality in Canada's Build Environment: Roadmaps to Equity, Social Value and Sustainability," is to address diversity in public environments, urban spaces, buildings and landscapes. We are proud to have Laurentian University's faculty of the McEwen School of Architecture involved in this national cutting-edge research project.
8. Next, I would like to acknowledge Laurentian Ph.D. alumnus, Xuyang Meng, who was awarded the Governor General's Gold Medal for academic excellence at the graduate level. His Ph.D in Economic Geology, belonging to the Mineral Deposits and Precambrian Geology program, focused on understanding the formation of porphyry copper deposits in the early Precambrian eon. I'd also like to acknowledge the late Dr. Jeremy Richards, a former professor affiliated with the Harquail School of Earth Sciences, who passed away in 2019 while supervising Dr. Meng's dissertation. Faculty from Laurentian who supported the completion of Meng's degree mainly include Drs. Daniel Kontak, Pedro Jugo and Ross Sherlock. Dr. Adam Simon. We appreciate each of you and your contributions to student success.
9. I would like to congratulate three inspiring individuals on their new positions of leadership within Laurentian University. First, Dr. Joy Gray-Munro who was named Dean of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Architecture on July 29, 2022. Taking on another leadership position is Dominic Beaudry, our new Associate Vice-President, Academic and Indigenous Programs. Mr. Beaudry will begin his role October 1, 2022. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Scott Fairgrieve who was appointed Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Architecture on August 29, 2022. Best of luck to these individuals in their new positions.
10. Congratulations to Dr. Ashley Scott from the Bharti School of Engineering and Computation received a Mitacs Accelerate Grant worth \$509,000 and an Alliance International Catalyst Grant from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) worth \$24,745 in support of his research program. The Mitacs grant is in partnership with Sudbury INO and will fund over the next four years one industrial postdoctoral fellow, as well as 15 internships for master and doctoral students.

11. Thanks to the support of The Weston Family Foundation, the WCS Canada's Weston Family Boreal Research Fellowship program supports the work of early career conservation scientists. This program is now in its 12th year of supporting the next generation of conservation field scientists. This year, they have 13 fellows working on projects from British Columbia to the far north in Ontario, out of the 13, four are students from Laurentian University:
- Brooke Carroll (MSc candidate, Laurentian University) is studying the potential impacts of highway and transmission line developments on turtles and plants in the Indigenous traditional lands of the Magnetawan First Nation.
 - Nicole Corbiere (MSc candidate, Laurentian University) is looking at the links between permafrost thaw and changes in the amount of inorganic mercury and methylmercury in soils.
 - Adam Kirkwood (PhD Candidate, Laurentian University) is researching the effect of permafrost thaw and related landslides on mercury release to aquatic ecosystems like rivers and lakes.
 - Haley Moskal (MSc Candidate, Laurentian University) is studying aquatic biodiversity recovery in Killarney Provincial Park in Ontario.
12. In late June 2022 the Micro-credential and Non-credit programming unit received a further grant from eCampus Ontario as part of its Virtual Learning Strategy (VLS) in the amount of \$143,000 for digital targeted support. This funding builds on work completed with a previous grant which was awarded to CCL in June 2021 and supports staffing needs to create micro-credentials with faculty, staff and community members in both English and French for End-of Life care and various professional development opportunities to be launched in early 2023.