

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

Aanii, Hello, Bonjour,

The 2024-2025 academic year is off to a great start with many orientation activities. I'd like to thank all those who made these incredible events possible. I had the pleasure of engaging with many of our wonderful students, attending move-in weekend, soccer games, the pep rally, and many welcome events - Orientation Week is so memorable.

I love when our students stay engaged after they graduate! I have started meeting regularly with our incredible graduates and donors. It is so encouraging to hear how Laurentian positively impacted their lives, and how they want to help move us forward. If there is a former student with whom you stay connected and that you would like me to meet, please reach out to Tracy MacLeod, and the University Advancement team who are organizing these meetings for me. In addition to my Sudbury meetings, I have begun meeting with graduates in other cities.

The graduate who kicked off my alumni meetings this academic year was Zach Courtemanche, whom I would officially like to welcome as our Alumni Representative on Senate! It has been a pleasure to get to know Zach, and I know alumni will be well represented on the Senate with his leadership.

I am also thankful to those of you who participated in our Community Update on September 11, where we provided updates on the University's Strategic Plan, the Transformation Plan, the Academic and Research Plans, as well as Francophone and Indigenous initiatives related to our tricultural mandate. Over the course of this academic year, I will continue to bring updates to Senate on the implementation of the Strategic Plan at the institutional level, and the Provost and Vice-President Research will keep Senators apprised of the work on the Academic and Strategic Research Plans, respectively.

### **Congratulations**

I'd like to recognize one particular staff member who distinguished himself as one of Canada's 126 Paralympians who recently competed in Paris, Lance Cryderman. We have some incredible people here at Laurentian! Please congratulate Lance when you see him on campus.

Congratulations to Dr. Tammy Gaber, Director and Associate Professor at the McEwen School of Architecture, whose team created an exhibition about the sacred spaces designed by the Aaltos that will be featured at the Alvar Aalto Museum (A2 Museum) in Jyvaskyla, Finland. Ten McEwen School of Architecture students and two alumni will be traveling to Finland with Dr. Gaber to build and launch the exhibit later this month.

There has been much buzz around the "Snobots" of late. This new Laurentian robotics team recently won big at the FIRA RoboWorld Cup in Brazil. Computer Science Students Austin Barrett and Nicolas Pottier competed as the Snobots team with their humanoid robot named Polaris. They won four gold medals, a silver medal, and placed first overall. Congratulations to Austin, Nicolas and to their dedicated supervisor, Dr. MC Lau! We look forward to seeing what is next for robotics at Laurentian!

Over the summer, three professors were recognized for their exceptional contributions within their field and I would like to acknowledge their success.

- **Dr. Andrew McDonald**, Full Professor at the Harquail School of Earth Sciences at Laurentian, celebrated his fourth Hawley Medal. This medal is awarded to the authors of the best paper to appear in *The Canadian Journal of Mineralogy and Petrology* in a given year. He co-authored the paper, “Trace Element Characteristics of Tourmaline in Porphyry Cu Systems: Development and Application to Discrimination”.
- **Dr. Michèle Minor-Corriveau**, Associate Professor, School of Speech-Language Pathology, received recognition from the International Dyslexia Association - Ontario for her exceptional creativity, commitment and expertise in creating the course “*Les fondements essentiels à l’enseignement de la lecture, de l’écriture et de l’orthographe (FEELÉO)*” which is already having a positive impact on the development of structured literacy in Ontario’s French language and immersion schools.
- **Dr. Elizabeth Carlson-Manathara**, Associate Professor in the School of Social Work, was recognized by Senator Mary Jane McCallum on behalf of the Senate of Canada for a book she co-authored, *Living in Indigenous Sovereignty* and her collaborative film project, *Stories of Decolonization*. Dr. Carlson-Manathara was invited to speak on a panel discussion on building trust and working toward a better shared future between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples at the Victoria Forum 2024 last month in British Columbia.

Congratulations to Drs. McDonald, Minor-Corriveau, and Carlson-Manathara, whose accomplishments demonstrate the many positive impacts that our faculty members have as teachers, scholars and knowledge mobilizers.

## Enrolment

The recent preliminary enrolments see an increase in the number of new intake domestic undergraduate students (+5%), a result of an increase in both students entering directly from Ontario high schools (+7%) and students entering as mature and/or transfer students (+4%). In contrast, we are currently seeing a decrease in the number of domestic students entering graduate programs (-5%). Overall, we are seeing a slight year-over-year decline in the total student population (-1%) due to a reduction in the number of returning domestic students. This is a significant issue that we will all need to do everything we can to address by supporting students through every part of their academic journey. To enhance our student support, we plan to hire more academic advisors, streamline processes, and remove barriers wherever possible.

## Academic Leadership

Since our last senate meeting, we have the pleasure of welcoming many new senators, including new academic leaders including:

- Dr. Malcolm Campbell, Provost and Vice-President Academic
- Dr. Parvinder Arora, Dean of the Faculty of Management
- Dr. Jennifer Scott, Dean of the Faculty of Education and Health
- Dr. Alain Simard, Dean of Graduate Studies and International

These new leaders benefit from the efforts of those who fulfilled their duties prior to their arrival, including:

- Dr. Brenda Brouwer, Interim Provost and Vice President Academic
- Dr. Luc Lagrandeur, Associate Dean, Faculty of Management
- Dr. Alain Gauthier, Associate Dean, Faculty of Education and Health
- Dr. Tammy Eger, Vice-President of Research

### **Campus Events**

September is a very busy month for events on campus, but there are two in particular that I'd like to highlight. La Journée des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes on September 25th will see multiple activities as we celebrate this important day. The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30th will be headlined by three speakers and multiple activities in the Indigenous Sharing and Learning Centre. I encourage you all to participate and join us for these opportunities to celebrate Laurentian's tricultural identity.

### **Sale of Properties**

We have been working collaboratively with the Province to complete the sale of real estate assets. We are regularly meeting with them in order to establish the details of the transaction, which include the lease agreement, specific questions related to each property, and insurance, among other items. There are many elements to this transaction and we are making progress towards our goal of completing the sales in a timely fashion. Both Laurentian and the Province understand that these transactions are critical to resolving our outstanding debts to our creditors, and we are committed to concluding them by the November 2025 deadline.

I look forward to working with Senate over the coming year to support our academic mission.

Sincerely,

Lynn Wells  
President and Vice-Chancellor