



Report of the President & Vice-Chancellor to Senate

March 17, 2026

Dear Senate colleagues,

It is with tremendous pride that we welcome Tracy Fleury back to campus following her bronze medal win in women's curling at the 2026 Winter Olympic Games in Milano Cortina. Playing under skip Rachel Homan, Fleury and her teammates beat the American representatives 10-7 to win the bronze medal.

While the Laurentian community is growing increasingly accustomed to celebrating Tracy's curling accomplishments, as her team won back-to-back gold medals at the world championships in 2024 and 2025, this is truly a momentous occasion and yet another feather in her cap.

The Laurentian community was invited to share their congratulations with Tracy at a celebration held in her honour upon her return. Thank you, Tracy, for the joy and the memories!

New institutional partnerships

In recent months, Laurentian University has been pleased to join a number of new partnerships that will benefit Sudbury students, staff, and faculty

First, Shingwauk Kinooamaage Gamig and Laurentian University strengthened a longstanding relationship on December 4, 2025 through the signing of a renewed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), reaffirming a shared commitment to Indigenous-led education, reconciliation, and the revitalization of Anishinaabe knowledge systems. A key component of the renewed partnership includes ongoing collaboration connected to the Preservation Project related to the Huron-Robinson Treaty and the Robinson-Superior Treaty settlements, for which SKG and Laurentian University were designated repository partners by the Ontario Superior Court in 2021. The MOU reaffirms both institutions' dedication to protecting Indigenous knowledge in accordance with cultural protocols and ensuring the long-term accessibility of these significant historical documents.

A sincere thanks to the many team members who made this partnership renewal possible, and to those who will be working with SKG on launching the Preservation Project.

Then, on January 14, Laurentian joined with Cambrian College, Collège Boréal, and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine University (NOSM U) to announce the creation of the Sudbury Partnership for Higher Education (SPHE). Established through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the partnership marks a significant milestone in regional collaboration and long-term economic development. It creates a unified alliance to

position Greater Sudbury as a global destination for higher learning, research, and innovation, while strengthening Northern Ontario's educational landscape through collaboration in student recruitment, academic pathways, and research. Together, the partners aim to respond more effectively to workforce needs, demographic change, and global competition, supporting a sustainable future for the postsecondary sector.

The Sudbury Partnership for Higher Education will focus on several key pillars of collaboration, including:

- **Student Pathways:** creating more designed transitions for students moving between the four partner institutions.
- **Promotional Efforts:** coordinating domestic and international recruitment efforts to highlight Sudbury's unique educational advantages.
- **Collaborative Research:** identifying opportunities for joint research projects that benefit the local and global communities served.
- **Shared Services:** exploring potential efficiencies through shared administrative services where appropriate.

Through the Sudbury Partnership for Higher Education, the four partners are taking a coordinated, future-focused approach to building a stronger, more connected, and more resilient postsecondary system for Northern Ontario and beyond.

Provincial funding announcement

On February 12, the Government of Ontario announced that it would be investing \$6.4 billion over four years to support the postsecondary sector's long-term success and sustainability. This investment also includes dedicated funds for northern institutions such as those located in Sudbury. Laurentian joined with its post-secondary partners in Sudbury to recognize the announcement, which is one of the most significant commitments to the sector in recent decades.

Since the announcement, University staff have been working with colleagues in the provincial government to determine the exact financial impact of the announcement for Laurentian. This work is still underway, but we expect that it will be reflected in the budget for the 2026-27 fiscal year that will be approved by the Board of Governors in April.

Students Excel at Mine Rescue Competition

Congratulations to Laurentian University Mine Rescue on winning first place overall at the Intercollegiate Mine Emergency Response Competition (IMERC 2026), which took place here in Sudbury on February 20. Competing against top teams from across Canada and the US, our students showcased incredible skill, teamwork, and resilience across multiple emergency response challenges. The event, hosted at Laurentian, included teams from the University of British Columbia, the University of Alberta, Queen's University, the Colorado School of Mines, West Virginia University, Montana Tech, and the University of Arizona.

Mining Hall of Fame induction ceremony

On January 8, I was fortunate to attend the annual induction ceremony for the Canadian Mining Hall of Fame in Toronto, where Laurentian University donor and former Board member David Harquail was one of the inductees. This is an important opportunity to reconnect with leaders in the mining industry, especially as we continue the development of the Critical Minerals and Mining Strategy.

While in Toronto, I was also able to meet with other benefactors to the University, including executives at IAMGOLD and Kinross.

PDAC 2026

The induction ceremony was followed in March by the annual Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) conference, a significant annual event for Canada's mining community. A number of Laurentian staff and faculty members were present.

Laurentian was pleased to host its annual breakfast on March 2, in addition to attending a number of events throughout the conference. The breakfast served as an opportunity to consult further on the draft Mining Strategy and to engage with industry partners who are keen to partner with Laurentian on mutual goals. We were also fortunate to have a number of ministers in attendance to speak in support of the Mining Strategy and the need for collaboration at this critical moment in Canada's history.

Laurentian also announced two significant donations in support of the Dr. Leo Gerard Chair in Occupational Health and Safety. First, Vale Base Metals and the United Steel Workers partnered to pledge \$450,000 for the Chair. The contribution was made possible through the Joint Occupational Health Committee, a collaborative governance body between Vale and USW Local 6500. By directing these funds to the Centre for Research in Occupational Safety and Health (CROSH), the JOHC is reinforcing its commitment to advancing safety initiatives within Ontario Operations and the broader mining sector. The JOHC co-chairs—Shawn Matthews (Vale) and Raymond Hammond (USW Local 6500)—approved the allocation of these funds.

A second, personal gift of \$250,000 for the Chair was announced from distinguished mining executive Mark Cutifani. A globally recognized leader in the mining industry, Cutifani joined University leaders at the convention for a formal acknowledgement of the gift, highlighting the importance of industry-wide collaboration in protecting the workforce.

These contributions move Laurentian closer to its \$6 million goal to endow the Chair, ensuring that workplace safety research remains a permanent fixture of Northern Ontario's industrial landscape.

Positioned within CROSH, the Chair will focus on mobilizing research, training, and innovation. Dr. Leo Gerard, a proud Laurentian alumnus and former International President of the United Steelworkers, has been instrumental in the growth of CROSH and the development of the CROSH Mobile Lab. The Chair is designed to be a catalyst for innovation and education, particularly within high-risk resource-based sectors. With a \$6 million endowment goal, the Chair will ensure that cutting-edge research and the training of future safety leaders continue in perpetuity.

Black History Month

Our sincerest thanks go to the team in the Equity, Diversity, and Human Rights Office (EDHRO), which coordinated and planned a number of events through February for Black History Month. The schedule included everything from drum workshops and an open mic night to workshops and a conference. In addition to engaging members of both the internal and external Black community, the events even garnered attention from our local CBC outlet. Congratulations to EDHRO and to members of the Black community who played a role in making the month's events a resounding success.

Upcoming events

Finally, mark your calendars for the following events:

- March is the Mois de la Francophonie, with a number of events planned to celebrate Laurentian's strong links to our local francophone community, including a community market fair on March 10.
- Spring Open House is scheduled for March 21 from 930-300. We welcome all members of the University community to come out and welcome our prospective students to campus.
- From March 18 to 22, Laurentian will be hosting the KIN Games, for the first time ever on our campus.

Sincerely,

Lynn Wells
President & Vice-Chancellor