



Report of the President & Vice-Chancellor to Senate

April 21, 2026

Dear Senate colleagues,

On March 26, Laurentian University was proud to announce the appointment of Kristan Straub as its next Chancellor. A visionary bilingual leader and a champion for Indigenous economic sovereignty, Mr. Straub brings a deep personal and professional connection to the University, embodying its unique tricultural mandate.

Kristan's relationship with Laurentian spans generations. An alumnus himself (Hon. B.Sc. Geology '98), he is the grandson of Art and Eva Solomon, who were instrumental in founding the federated Native Studies Program. His ties to the campus are literal and symbolic; at age twelve, he helped his grandfather construct the Apology Cairn on campus, a monument commemorating the United Church's apology to First Nations people and a landmark of reconciliation.

Kristan currently serves as the inaugural President and CEO of the Canadian Indigenous Loans Guarantee Corporation, managing a \$10-billion federal program to support Indigenous equity ownership in major economic projects. His career includes executive roles at Wyloo and Glencore Nickel, where he led the renegotiation of the Raglan Impacts and Benefits Agreement. A proud band member of Henvey Inlet and French River No. 13 First Nation and a fluent French speaker, Kristan embodies the diversity of the Laurentian University community.

Kristan's term will officially begin following an installation ceremony this spring. I'm sure you will all join me in congratulating Kristan on his appointment and welcoming him to his new role. I very much look forward to working with him.

Spring Open House

March 21 was Laurentian's annual Spring Open House, as throngs of prospective students trudged through the snowy streets of Sudbury to visit campus. Once again this year, Laurentian welcomed record numbers of students to campus, with more students registering for the event than ever before.

The Spring Open House comes at a critical moment in the recruitment cycle, taking place after most students have received their offers of admission but before they must confirm their acceptance of those offers or begin registering for classes. It's a great opportunity for prospective students and their families to visit Laurentian's facilities, and meet with staff, faculty, and current students in their program of study.

As always, an event of this magnitude takes a village to organize, and we are all hugely appreciative of the time that staff, faculty, and student volunteers dedicated to helping make sure the day would be a resounding success.

Snowmageddon

I would like to thank everyone for their patience as the University - and the city as a whole - dealt with significant snowfall on March 15 and 16. I appreciate the flexibility of faculty as the University moved classes online where possible to allow for continuity of operations while the roads were dangerous, and of staff as well as we worked from home. Your efforts allowed us all to prioritize the health and safety of the members of our community while continuing to serve our students as much as possible given the circumstances.

I especially want to recognize the hard work and dedication of our facilities, maintenance, and Campus Safety teams, who put in extraordinary efforts to clear the snow from campus and otherwise prepare things for our return. I have heard inspiring stories of staff trudging to work on foot through the snow, working extended hours, and even sleeping on campus. And for every amazing story I have heard, I am certain that there are many others that we have yet to hear. Thank you to all involved for your remarkable efforts during this generational storm.

Congratulations to Steven Beites

Professor Steven Beites and the Institute for Northern Housing Innovation (INHI), which launched last summer, have garnered significant attention in recent weeks. First, the INHI and Beites' research were featured in a [segment on CBC's The National newscast](#) on April 7, in the context of a story about how Canada plans to reach its ambitious target of building millions of new homes in the next five years.

Then, on April 8 Laurentian and the INHI were pleased to host Minister George Pirie, provincial Minister of Northern Economic Development and Growth, as he toured the Ramsey Lake campus and the McEwen School of Architecture, and announced funding from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund to support the INHI.

Finally, the McEwen School of Architecture announced that Professor Beites has received the award for Best Full Paper at the 2026 Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) Annual Conference in Chicago for his research entitled 'Technology, Ecology and the Housing Crisis'. This award recognizes the Best Full Paper on outstanding peer-reviewed research and on its contributions to research, scholarship, and creative excellence. The ACSA represents all accredited professional degree programs in architecture in the United States and Canada.

Congratulations to Professor Beites on a busy month of accolades!

Journée internationale de la Francophonie

On March 20, the campus community celebrated la Journée internationale de la Francophonie, an important moment of recognition for Francophone language and culture. In addition to many staff- and student-led events that took place throughout the month of March, the Bureau des affaires francophones (BAF) marked the day by sharing its annual report with the community, detailing the many initiatives their office has undertaken to celebrate the Francophonie on campus.

Research Week

This year's Research Week events took place from March 23-27, bringing together students, staff, and faculty from across all disciplines in our annual celebration of all things research. Many thanks to all those who participated in the events, be it by attending or by showcasing their work.

Red Dress Day

The Laurentian community will be recognizing May 5 as the National Day of Awareness and Remembrance for Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQI+ people. Historically, this day was recognized in February on Laurentian's campus but the date was moved this year in order to align with the national campaign.

The day honours victims and survivors, demanding justice for the disproportionate violence against Indigenous women. Named after an art installation initiated in 2010 by Métis artist Jaime Black, who used empty red dresses to represent the voices and lives of Indigenous women and girls lost to violence, the day acts as a powerful, visual reminder that these crimes are a national, systemic issue requiring immediate, collective action.

Sincerely,

Lynn Wells
President & Vice-Chancellor