

Lakehead
UNIVERSITY

Agora

A NEWSLETTER FOR LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY STAFF & FACULTY

Lakehead Awarded \$13.38 million from the SuperBuild Growth Fund

by Frances Harding

Lakehead University has been awarded \$13.38 million by the provincial government to fund an Advanced Technology and Academic Centre. The new \$32 million project will enhance the University's capacity to provide an appropriate technology base for classroom learning and to reach out to the region and beyond with distance learning.

"With the SuperBuild contribution of \$13.38 million now secure, the remaining funds will come from a number of different private, public and institutional sources," says Dr. John Whitfield, vice president research and development.

"Much of these additional funds are already in place such as the funds from the Access to Opportunities Program (ATOP), Canada Foundation For Innovation (CFI), and the Ontario Research and Development

Challenge Fund (ORDCF), and matching dollars for these programs. The Development Office together with the Fundraising Committee of the Board and the Lakehead University Foundation are working to raise the remaining funds."

The Advanced Technology and Academic Centre will be constructed next to the Ryan Building and will generate 1,377 spaces for students.

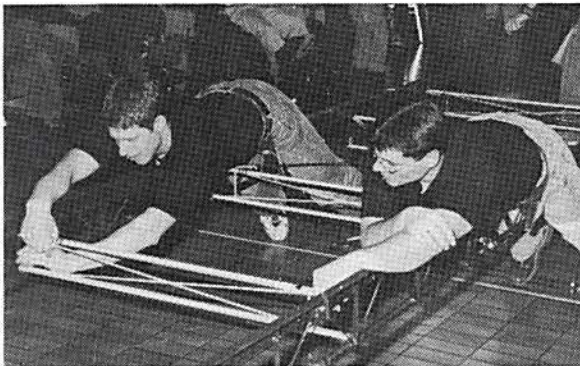
The state-of-the-art facility will house a multitude of advanced technological applications primarily in the areas of engineering, mathematics and computer science.

The centre will include "smart" classrooms, video-conferencing facilities, multimedia production/teaching services, GIS facilities, as well as regular classrooms and computer labs.

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Best in the Mid-West

Photo: Peter Puna



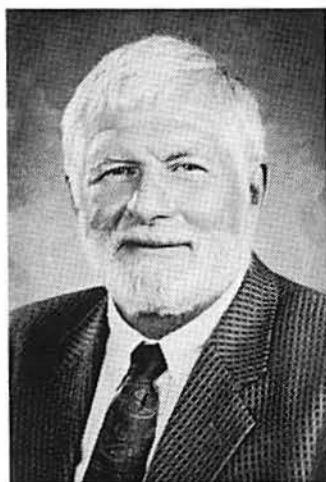
Team members include Brian Maver, Govinder Dhesi, James Jollymore, Brian Dietrich, Glen Furtado and Bill Becker. Dr. Tony Gillies and Dr. Claude Johnson are their faculty advisors.

Civil engineering students have earned the right to compete in the national competition of the American Institute of Steel Construction/American Society of Civil Engineering Student Steel Bridge Competition.

At the US Mid-West Region competition held in February, the students placed first overall, building their blue and yellow steel bridge in just 12.25 minutes!

Last year, the Lakehead team was the first Canadian team to ever compete at the national level where they took the top award in the category of aesthetics and placed 20th overall.

"The National Final will be hosted by Texas A & M in May," says Dr. Tony Gillies, "and the team is currently seeking financial support in order to participate in the competition."



Dr. Frederick F. Gilbert
President

NEWS BULLETIN

In a press release issued on March 14, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities Dianne Cunningham announced the transfer funds for postsecondary institutions for the 2000-01 academic year.

For the first time, a portion of the increase will be tied to performance based on three indicators (graduation rates, and graduate employment rates after six months and two years) and to access based on enrolment levels.

As well, the government announced a five-year plan (beginning in 2000-01) to cap annual tuition increases for most programs at two percent.

I have serious concerns about the impact of this announcement on Lakehead University and will be exploring these issues in greater detail in the April Agora.

— Dr. Frederick Gilbert

From the President's Desk

by Dr. Frederick F. Gilbert

I thought readers might find it interesting this month to vicariously sense what makes Lakehead special for me, its fifth president, based on some events of the past week. Part of being president is a requirement to keep in touch with the campus and the people who make up the University as well as interacting with interests outside the University. This past week included a faculty luncheon meeting, the monthly meeting with the LUSU Executive, a meeting of the Strategic Plan Monitoring Group, the weekly meeting of the Administrative Executive Committee, the monthly meeting with staff who report to me, a meeting of the Electoral Board for the new Chancellor, and a teleconference with the Living Legacy Trust to finalize a Working Group meeting later this month. I voted for Athletes of the Year, wrote an address for the Gifu Shitoku Gakuen University's Convocation, an article for the *Nor'Wester*, an introduction to the *Annual Report*, and attended a meeting of the Accreditation Team visiting campus to review the Faculty of Education. I paid visits to the Ryan and Braun Buildings to talk with faculty and met with numerous people from on and off-campus regarding the business of the University. All in all, a pretty normal week.

As a wrap-up to the week, there was a reception for the Consul General of India, The Honourable Mr. C. M. Bhandari, who was in Thunder Bay to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Independence of India from Great Britain, the Visual Arts Juried Student Exhibition for Lakehead students at the Thunder Bay Art Gallery, and a Powwow at the Fieldhouse -- one of a number of activities scheduled during the month of March to celebrate Indigenous History/Aboriginal Awareness Month.

Following on Black History Month's events in February, the Tamil Society's Spicy Night and the Multicultural International Week

activities, it is apparent that we have a university that truly recognizes its diversity and is successfully overcoming the many cultural and racial biases found within modern society.

I know many faculty wonder about my commitment to the arts and humanities. As a result of the SuperBuild Growth Fund allocations to post-secondary education, John Ibbitson used his column in the *Globe and Mail* to suggest that the provincial government and its Premier were deliberately funding projects with a technological bias and paying little attention to and, in fact, downplaying the liberal arts. In a telephone conversation with Mr. Ibbitson before the article appeared (he was contacting most of the university presidents), I, in turn, suggested that, without knowing the nature of the SuperBuild applications, it is impossible to determine whether any such bias existed. The projects which received funding could very well have been representative of a cross section of the submitted projects. Furthermore, in a situation where only 35 out of 109 projects were funded, it is hard to imagine the government putting itself in a situation where the projects which best fit the four criteria they had said would be the objective bases for success were not followed. I wrote a letter to the editor of the *Globe and Mail* which was not published, but I want to present it here as I think it may provide clarification of my personal position.

"John Ibbitson seems to have extrapolated much from the government's funding for capital projects at Ontario's universities and colleges. His primary argument is that the funded projects represent a government imprint on academic programming. These capital projects were submitted because there are needs to improve the technology at most campuses.

From the President's Desk

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In Lakehead University's case, not only will academic programs dependent on advanced technology be served but also all programs will benefit from the "smart" multimedia classrooms, distance education facilities, and centralized computing capacity created.

If there is a message inherent in the allocations other than that some projects met the criteria better than others, it is not readily apparent. If there is an attack on the liberal arts and humanities, and I am not convinced of such, surely the universities need to recognize that a fundamental responsibility we all have is to ensure the relevance of these programs to the learning environments we host. There are many examples of appropriate linkages between technology and a liberal education, a lesson not lost on institutions like Acadia University, where the synergy of ideas combined with software and hardware result in better learning experiences for students. The very nature and substance of the frameworks for a learning environment are being changed all around us. Surely we can find ways in higher education to show the relevance of a liberal arts and humanities underpinning to an increasingly technologized society. It means thinking about academia and academic programs in new, innovative and ultimately more exciting and relevant ways."

Finally, in response to a query from the Strategic Planning Monitoring Group, I want to assure the University community that should the Hockey program go forward in the fall of 2001, it will be completely funded externally.

**Distinguished Researcher
Lecture**

Dr. Azim Mallik

"Disturbance in Boreal Forests: The
Challenge of Balancing Acts"

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

1 p.m. in the Senate Chambers

Chancellor's Reception



"Being a Senator has given me a wide public platform to continue advocacy for the social justice agenda I have pursued for many years."

— The Very Rev. The Hon. Lois M. Wilson

Graduates living in the Ottawa area were invited to attend a reception last month on Parliament Hill hosted by the Chancellor of Lakehead University, The Very Rev. Lois M. Wilson. Special guests included MPP Lyn McLeod and MP Dr. Stan Dromisky.

Lois Wilson was appointed to the Senate in 1998 and has been described by the *Globe and Mail* as a trail-blazing feminist, the first woman to head the United Church of Canada, a lifelong crusader for human rights and an advocate for the poor and the marginalized.

Wilson is stepping down this year after serving as Chancellor for 10 years.

An electoral board has been established and it is expected a new Chancellor will be announced in late spring.



More than 90 alumni and friends turned out for the Chancellor's Reception on Parliament Hill including Merrick Schincariol (second from left) and Samantha Wrenshall (second from right). Schincariol (HBSc'99) is working with Nortel Networks and Wrenshall (HBMus'98) is with the National Arts Centre.



**Barb Eccles
appointed
Technology Transfer
Officer**

With her background in science and law there is no doubt that Barb Eccles is well equipped to be Lakehead University's Technology Transfer Officer.

Eccles graduated from Lakehead with an Honours Bachelor of Science degree in Physics with Energy and Fuel Science and spent one year at McMaster University studying Experimental Physics at the master's level before switching to law at the University of Toronto.

She was called to the Bar in 1996 and has since been practising with a local firm -- Cheadle Johnson Shanks MacIvor -- concentrating on taxation, corporate and commercial law, and bankruptcy and insolvency.

The position of Technology Transfer Officer was created with funding from NSERC to promote and facilitate the transfer of University technology to the private sector, to help protect commercially valuable intellectual property, and to provide a resource to the Lakehead University research community for intellectual property management.

Dean of Graduate Studies and Research Dr. Mark Howe says that with the appointment of Barb Eccles, the Office of Research can now offer more assistance to researchers who deal directly with issues of technology transfer. "This is an exciting opportunity for researchers at Lakehead, particularly those involved with commercial and industrial partners, to obtain accurate and up-to-date information on issues concerning intellectual property, patents and copyrights."

Eccles is vice-president of the Alumni Association of Lakehead University, Northwest Regional Representative on the Council of the Canadian Bar Association of Ontario, and a director of the Thunder Bay Law Association.



Northern Plains

Aboriginal History and Adaptation

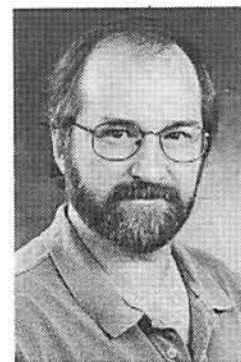
by Frances Harding

Lakehead University is part of an interdisciplinary research team led by Brandon University that has been awarded \$2.5 million from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) to study Aboriginal history and adaptations.

"It's a huge, interdisciplinary project that will study patterns of change over a 9,000 year time period right up to the recent past," says Dr. Scott Hamilton, an associate professor in the Department of Anthropology and one of the project's co-investigators.

Researchers will be using archeological, geoarcheological, archaeobotanical and ethno-historic information, together with oral traditions preserved by Aboriginal elders, to illustrate patterns of change in the natural and cultural landscapes of First Nations peoples. These include the Blackfoot of Alberta, the Plains Cree and Assiniboine of Saskatchewan, and the Plains Ojibway and Dakota in Manitoba.

"Essentially we'll be producing 'a time-lapse photography version' of how the Plains Indian peoples used and perceived the land at various times and in response



Dr. Scott Hamilton
Department of Anthropology

to various environmental episodes and cultural influences," says Hamilton.

"We'll be relying heavily upon multivariate data management technology just to get information into a manageable format. It's a huge, challenging project... and GIS will be important to us in terms of managing and integrating spatial information."

The grant has been awarded under SSHRC's Major Collaborative Research Initiatives (MCRI) program, a program which supports large-scale projects emphasizing collaboration.

The project is led by Brandon University, with co-investigators from Lakehead University, University of Calgary, the Alberta Provincial Museum, University of Saskatchewan and University of Wisconsin (Eau Claire).



James Koprach, a master's student in experimental psychology, is researching the prenatal origins of asthma and allergy

Origins of Asthma and Allergy

As Early as Pregnancy?

by James B. Koprach

A recent Health Canada study has shown that prevalence of physician-diagnosed asthma in children has risen from 4.7% to 13%, and in adults from 2% to 9%. With treatment currently aimed at symptom management, a call for further research to unravel the underlying pathogenic mechanisms of the disease has been made.

To answer this call, a Lakehead University research team including James Koprach, a master's student in experimental psychology, Dr. Paul Satinder (Psychology) and Dr. Gabriel Dakubo (Biology) have developed a model that attempts to provide evidence that the immune system of the fetus is, to a certain extent, under the mercy of maternal behaviour – referred to as prenatal programming.

To assess this, eligible pregnant women complete a questionnaire providing information related to lifestyle variables such as caffeine consumption, exercise frequency, and smoking habits and medical background, including allergic and asthmatic history. These reported items are then used to observe how they might be involved with prenatal programming of the immune system.

The model is being tested by taking blood from the mother and comparing it to that of the newborn obtained from the umbilical cord. Much effort has gone into determining which components of the immune system would be evaluated in the blood samples. In

Maternal behaviour and medical history have the potential to act as key perpetrators in prenatal programming of the fetus' immune system to favour allergic disease

the end, two biochemical markers representing asthma and allergy involvement were chosen. These markers are being compared between mother and newborn, and are also being compared to an additional chemical analysis measuring the amount of blood nicotine from smoking. How the levels of asthma and allergy markers change in relation to nicotine levels and items on the questionnaire will provide evidence that maternal behaviour and medical history have the potential to act as key perpetrators in prenatal programming of the fetus' immune system to favour allergic disease.

Elucidation of possible prenatal origins of asthma and allergy holds tremendous potential for therapeutic intervention during critical periods of immune system development. By establishing a model of prenatal programming, target sites for pharmacological management can be explored, or education can simply be enhanced to encourage pregnant women to avoid certain activities such as smoking and exposure to various allergens.

The Asthma Society of Canada has recognized the researchers' efforts by providing major funding for this project in the amount of \$10,000.

A close working relationship with obstetricians and labour and delivery nursing staff at the Thunder Bay Regional Hospital has been instrumental in orchestrating the logistics to bring this project to light.

The Northwestern Regional Cancer Centre also plays a role by providing lab space and technical assistance.

James Koprach is one of several students participating in a student writing program sponsored by The Chronicle-Journal.

In Memoriam



Dr. Henry (Hank) Akervall

Hank Akervall, a professor emeritus and a consummate sportsman, passed away on February 18, 2000 while playing hockey. He was 62.

Akervall joined Lakehead in 1966 to teach forestry and to serve as director of athletics where he was instrumental in starting the physical education program. He also laid the foundations for the establishment of the outdoor recreation program and, when he retired in 1996, he was a professor of the School of Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Tourism.

In 1999, Hank Akervall was inducted into the Lakehead University Sports Wall of Fame as coach of the 1966-67 Nor'Wester Hockey Team, the only Lakehead University hockey team to have ever won a national title. In 1988, he was inducted into the Northwestern Ontario Sports Hall of Fame.

Akervall's accomplishments as an athlete were many. They included being captain of the Canadian National Olympic Hockey team and competing at the Olympic Games in Innsbruck in 1964. He was a level five hockey coaches' instructor and was active in a number of community groups including Ducks Unlimited, the Thunder Bay Fly Fishing Club, and the Northshore Steelhead Association.

"Henry was a Thunder Bay boy," says Dr. John Whitfield, vice-president research and development. "The opportunities and options for someone with his talent and drive were enormous, but he chose to return here where he served his home town, region, and

of course the University with distinction, commitment and generosity. He led by example, stressed practical experience, and was an advocate of the "train the trainer" approach. Thunder Bay has lost a champion."

A memorial fund has been established in memory of Henry Akervall. For information contact the Development Office at (807) 343-8194.

SuperBuild (continued from page 1)

The announcement was made in Sudbury on February 24, 2000 by Jerry Ouellette, parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

In addition to Lakehead, four other educational institutions in northern Ontario received funding from the SuperBuild Growth Fund: Cambrian College in Sudbury (\$14.84 million), Canadore College in North Bay (\$1.78 million), Laurentian University (\$.61 million) and Northern College in Timmins (\$.06 million).

"I am extremely pleased by the government's support for this major capital project," said Dr. Fred Gilbert, president of Lakehead University.

"This is a significant statement of the importance of our university to the students of this province and to the social and economic well-being of Thunder Bay and Northwestern Ontario. I hope that everyone shares my excitement of what this means for the future."

Currently, plans are under way for the architectural design and project management of the new Advanced Technology and Academic Centre.

Construction is expected to be completed by the fall of 2002.

Through SuperBuild, the Ontario Government is spending \$742 million this year to build and modernize universities and colleges for future demand.

Campus Notes

In Memoriam

Lena Odjig White, a teacher of Aboriginal language courses at Lakehead, passed away on January 28, 2000 after a short battle with cancer.

White grew up on Manitoulin Island and completed a master's degree in Environmental Studies (Languages and Culture) at York University. She taught in Lakehead's Native Language Instructors' Program since its inception in 1981, and was coordinator of the Program from 1993 to 1995.

According to the Program's current Coordinator Wanda White (no relation), Lena White was widely respected by students, faculty, and members of the Aboriginal community for her dedication to Ojibwe language and culture.

She leaves behind her husband Charles Nelson, and two sons Stanford and Shannon White, both of Walpole Island.

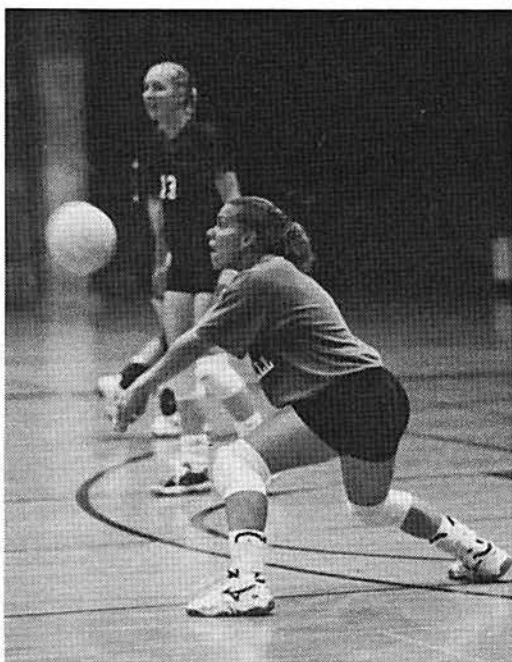
Women's Basketball Coach

Trish Lorenz has been hired on as coach of the Women's Thunderwolves Basketball Team replacing Bob Main who has been serving as Interim Coach for the current year. She will begin in her new position at Lakehead in late spring.

Lorenz comes to Lakehead from Augustana University College in Camrose, Alberta, where she was appointed Head Coach of the women's basketball team in 1996, taking the team from a record of 6 and 10, to its current position of first place in the Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference (North).

Trish Lorenz received her Bachelor of Arts degree (Physical Education) from Augustana University College in 1992, her Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Lethbridge in 1994 and her Master of Arts degree (Physical Education) from the University of Alberta in 1996.

Photo: Rob Linke



Helping Varsity Athletes Succeed

by Kris Ketonen

Balancing school and sports can be tough, especially if you're a varsity athlete. That is why Lakehead University has begun to develop two new programs that will help students cope.

The first is the **Academic Success Program** which was initiated two years ago for varsity wrestlers by Coach Francis Clayton with assistance from the Chawkers Foundation. The program is comprised of a number of seminars which cover a wide range of topics from time management, study skills and essay writing to health-related issues such as drugs, alcohol, and STDs. The seminars are given at the beginning of the school year and, for the first time this year, the program was available to *all* varsity athletes.

The second program, now in the early stages of development, is a proposed **Academic Assistance Program**, which will enable Lakehead University coaches to monitor how their players are performing in the classroom. It will also give them a chance to intervene and recommend appropriate assistance in the event of an academic problem.

"These programs will help prepare student athletes for the challenges ahead," says Athletic Director Tom Warden. "We as a department are directly responsible for the academic success of our athletes. It's up to us to help them succeed."

Varsity wrestlers Mel Anderson and Justin Beauparlant speak highly of the Academic Success Program. "It builds self confidence," says Anderson. "Even if it just gives us the names of the people to talk to when we're having problems ... it opens those doors."

Clayton originally started the Academic Success Program for the Lakehead wrestling team. "If the athletes do well in school and know where they're going, they'll get to wrestling practice and be more at ease," he says.

Rotary Study Exchange



Congratulations to Jill Zachary, associate field coordinator in the Department of Social Work and Alex Pasquali, international activities coordinator. They have been chosen to participate in the Rotary Foundation Group Study Exchange Program this spring. Zachary will be travelling to Sweden to study the Swedish social services system and to foster links with Swedish universities. Pasquali will be travelling to Italy to meet with representatives from Italian universities.

Strengthening Our Circle Powwow



The Lakehead University Native Student Association (LUNSA) helped to organize a powwow in the C.J. Sanders Fieldhouse that attracted hundreds of participants in early March. The weekend included workshops with Aboriginal elders -- Richard Lyons, Anne Wilson, Louise Shebegegig and Gilbert Smith.

Mark your Calendars...

OPEN BIOLOGY SEMINARS AND LECTURES

Chromatin and cancer

Dr. Roy Harkness

Monday, March 20, 2000

3:30 pm -- RB-2042

Cell cycle control of a chromatin assembly pathway in yeast

Dr. Roy Harkness

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

12:30 pm -- UC-2011

Biofilms, a supreme defensive fortress of microorganisms

Dr. Kam Leung

Monday, March 27, 2000

10:30 am -- RB-1023

Ecology of biodegradation, a molecular approach

Dr. Kam Leung

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

3:30 pm -- RB-2024

Molecular biology and the natural history of microbes

Dr. Jianping Xu

Monday, April 3, 2000

1:30 pm -- RB-1023

Clonality, recombination and speciation in human pathogenic fungi

Dr. Jianping Xu

Tuesday, April 4, 2000

11:30 am -- RC-0005

The Annual Alumni Curling Fundspiel

will be held on Friday, March 24 at the Port Arthur Curling Club. To register your team call Kris Carey at Alumni Services at 343-8155.

Don't Miss an Evening with the Lakehead University Music

Department starting at 8 p.m. at St. Paul's Church on Tuesday, March 21, with performances by the Lakehead University Vocal Ensemble (choir conductor Susan Marrier) and the Lakehead University Student Composers Project.

The Annual Student Juried Exhibition

continues at the Thunder Bay Art Gallery until April 9 with **The Major Studio Exhibition** (fourth-year thesis shows) taking place from April 11 - 23.

The Second Annual Gerontology

Research Day will be held in the Senate Chambers on Friday, March 31 from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Guest speakers include Dr. Elizabeth Dow, Michel Bedard, Dr. Myrna Reis and Dr. Jean Kozak. For more information call Sharon Stone at 343-8530.

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