

Agora Online

A Newsletter for Faculty,
Staff, and Friends of Lakehead University
December 2004, Vol. 21. No. 6



A Gift to Last

Dr. Penny Petrone, Professor Emerita of Education, has donated her collection of papers to the Chancellor Paterson Library. This substantial collection includes material relating to Petrone's three books on Aboriginal literature in Canada, the prose and poetry of Canadian poet Isabella Valancy Crawford (1850-1887), and research material relating to education in Canada.

At a reception held in Dr. Petrone's honor last month, University Librarian Anne Deighton said, "Dr. Petrone is considered to be a pioneer in researching and writing about the literature of Canada's Aboriginal people. The material she amassed will be an invaluable source of information, not only for students and faculty but also for visiting scholars."

Stories you may read online at agora.lakeheadu.ca

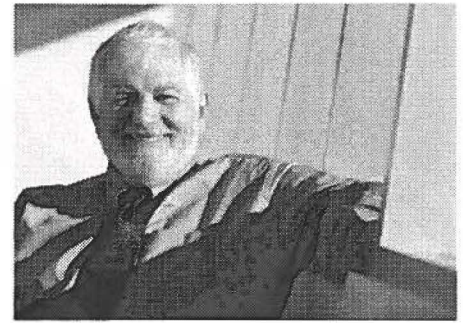
1. **Number One in "Value Added"**
For the third time, Maclean's has ranked Lakehead the number one university in Canada in "Value Added."
2. **Department Feature: Athletics**
3. **ICR Discoveries**
A new research partnership in Thunder Bay will bring together the best cancer research talent.
4. **Synergy Award for Innovation**
The Forest Watershed and Riparian Disturbance (FORWARD) research project has won a 2004 NSERC Synergy Award for Innovation.
5. **Terry Fox provides Inspiration for International Conference**
Dr. Jane Taylor reports on the North American Federation of Adapted Physical Activity's 7th symposium.
6. **Stress and Memory**
Dr. Mark Howe is conducting research into the effects of maltreatment on the memory of abused children.
7. **Letter from Murmansk**
Robin Ranger reflects upon his experience as an exchange student in Russia.
8. **Campus News**
Lakehead U Staff Award; NSERC Award for Research Capacity Development; Bioterrorism in Healthcare; Francis Clayton; Friend Raising while Fundraising.
9. **The Grapevine**
Definition Quest; Marla Tomlinson; Carol Otte; Tracey Henriksson.

President's Message

The Maclean's University Rankings and other Important Matters

by Dr. Fred Gilbert

President and Vice-Chancellor, Lakehead University



I must admit that part of my disenchantment with the Maclean's rankings comes when my Alma Mater(s) crow about their placement in the rankings. Naturally, there is no acknowledgement that the placements carry little significance as to the actual quality of education received vis-à-vis other universities. The same caveats apply whether you are first or last and these are:

- There is precious little difference in most categories and the margin of statistical error about the mean encompasses most of the data points.
- The measures are primarily input in nature, e.g. does the percentage of students with an incoming average >75% really say anything about the quality of education provided?
- A substantial weighting is still given to essentially a popularity poll where the vast majority of respondents across the country have no idea what goes on at Lakehead but are still willing to rate us.
- At the end of the day it is really about how well our students are actually educated and how well they perform once they enter society (c.f. Shale and Liu, 2002).

In fact, the best determinants of a university's performance are those related to student success and student experience. Maclean's moved somewhat in this direction this year with a survey of student satisfaction. Now if they were to replace some of the input measures with these responses and the value

added analysis (where Lakehead placed first in Canada for the second year in a row), we might see a significant improvement over what has become a perennial 17th place ranking in a category that truly compares unlike institutions. Unfortunately, there is good evidence that the rankings influence decisions regarding which university to attend, particularly for those students who have no other reference point (Mueller and Rockerbie, 2002).

Finally, there is corroboration that the categories Maclean's uses compare unlike institutions. Page and Cramer (2000) contend that appropriate cluster analysis would place Lakehead University in a category with universities very different from the Maclean's Primarily Undergraduate group. Even in 2000 we were more like the Comprehensive category and our peers in the cluster analysis used to generate three groupings, the number of groupings used by Maclean's, were Calgary, Carleton, Concordia, Manitoba, Memorial, Moncton, New Brunswick, Ryerson, Saskatchewan, Sherbrooke, Wilfrid Laurier, and Windsor.

In the final analysis, we are left with how to deal with misleading information that could negatively impact our enrolment. This is where the Office of Communications plays an important role in harmonizing our institutional websites, presenting a consistent image of Lakehead whether in print, correspondence, or visual forms, and in coordinating the awareness campaign to market the

institution and its primary "selling" points. The intent is to offset a 17th place Primarily Undergraduate ranking with real information and a positive public image. While other universities are entering this arena, we have made a commitment to be successful in an increasingly competitive marketplace and to show the comprehensive nature of our university.

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We soon will know the recommendations of Bob Rae's Review of the Post-Secondary Education Sector. The University's response, formulated by a task force representing the community of interests on campus, is at <http://www.lakeheadu.ca/~analysis/lkhdresponsetoraereview.pdf> on Lakehead's webpage. The message is consistent with the one we have been making to government over the past six years. And if we finally can have redress for our chronic underfunding due to the stranded students created by over a decade of public policy, which disadvantaged this university, we truly will have captured the power to build an increasingly bright future for Lakehead.

We came within 26 full-time students of meeting our budget target for this fall. Close enough that we can manage this year's fiscal challenges barring unforeseen catastrophes. However, until we have greater certainty around future funding we must be extremely cautious as we develop next year's budget. We must not put the University at risk by over-extending ourselves fiscally so commitments to new funding will be limited, strategic, and based on sound business planning. We will continue to shore up those areas in greatest need and make policy decisions that will make economic sense, both in the short and long term.

There is continued growth in research funding and graduate student numbers and great potential in international student education through distributed learning and recruitment to the campus. In fact, distributed learning and the capacity that exists with ATAC and the growing faculty engagement with the technology there, is critical to the long-term success of Lakehead. The nature of post-secondary education is undergoing a fundamental change and those institutions that understand that, and seize the opportunities presented, will survive and flourish.

Finally, let me comment on the recent and continuing controversy surrounding the Coors Maxim event held at the Outpost by LUSU. This event has galvanized people in a way that bodes well for engaging in constructive dialogue. Students will decide, in a more culturally and gender-sensitive way, what events to hold on campus. We applaud these efforts and encourage that the dialogue be broadened to engage faculty and staff. Administration commends the initiatives now under way. Fundamentally, we all want a

campus that creates a learning environment that respects individual and group interests in a direct and open manner. The University has a meaningful role and responsibility to play as a leader of societal reform, and a clear recognition of the values of diversity and cultural awareness should flow from here into the broader community. The recent controversy may aid us in this responsibility.

My best wishes to all for the forthcoming holiday season. Safe passage home (and back to Lakehead) for our students and others travelling out of town, and may everyone enjoy the comforts of family and friends in this restorative time of rest and relaxation. ■

Mueller, R.E. and D. W. Rockerbie 2002. Do the Maclean's rankings affect university choice?: evidence from Ontario. 36th Annual Meeting Can. Econ. Assoc., Calgary, AB. 20 pp.

Page, S. and K. Cramer, 2000. Rankings of Canadian Universities, 2000: buyers beware. Can. J. Educ. 25(4): 297-309.

Shale, D. and Y. Lui. 2002. Ranking the rankers of universities: Canada's Maclean's Magazine vs. U.S. News and World Report. 42nd Annual Forum Assoc. Inst. Res., Toronto, ON 17 pp



NSERC Awards Lakehead \$1.5 M for Research Capacity Development

NSERC has granted Lakehead University \$1.5 million dollars over five years through the NSERC Research Capacity Development in Small Universities Pilot program. The grant will be used to help overcome some of the barriers and challenges facing research productivity in the natural sciences and engineering at Lakehead University, in priority areas identified through the Lakehead University Strategic Research Plan. ■



Jennifer Becker, Andrew Moggy, and Meaghan Brinkman

Friend Raising while Fundraising

Creating and sustaining a personal connection with prospective donors is the priority of the Office of Development. But how can you personally reach out to 30,000 alumni? Lakehead's telefundraisers – a group of 18 student callers – do it by phone.

From October through March, this dedicated group of students gather nightly in the Avila Centre to contact thousands of our alumni across Canada to support the Annual Fund. ■

Award to Staff for Outstanding Performance

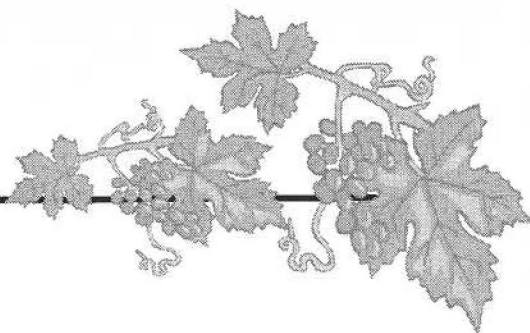
Nominations are now open for the Award to Staff for Outstanding Performance and/or Contributions. This award recognizes and rewards outstanding performance or contributions to the University by a non-faculty employee. For the complete policy outlining items such as the eligibility of candidates, selection criteria, and nomination guidelines, link to: <http://www.lakeheadu.ca/~lusec/award-staff.htm>.

To link to the Application Form: <http://www.lakeheadu.ca/~humanres/stafawrd.htm>.

Deadline for nominations: March 1, 2005 ■

The Grapevine

by Lori Fleming and Karen Stecky



Welcome to the Grapevine, a column about people at Lakehead and their interests and activities beyond the campus. If you have some news you would like to share through The Grapevine, send it by email: grapevine@lakeheadu.ca or speak to Lori Fleming (343-8589) or Karen Stecky (343-8961).

Definition Quest

For the second year in a row, a Lakehead team earned first place standing at the annual Definition Quest, a fundraising event in support of literacy organized by the Thunder Bay Public Library, Friends of Thunder Bay Public Library, and Literacy Northwest. Team members Mike Richardson (English), Vic Smith (History), and Patricia Vervoort (Visual Arts) outpaced 20 other teams for, among other things, successfully defining the word for being slightly drunk ("squiffy") and shipworm ("teredo").

Dublin Marathon

Marla Tomlinson, Communications Officer, recently returned from Dublin, Ireland, where she participated in a marathon to raise money for the Canadian Diabetes Association. This adventure enabled her to experience the beautiful sights of Ireland as well as to raise \$5,600 for a worthy cause. Marla has been running for just over a year now and trained for this marathon

with an 18-week program. Her completion time was 5 hours and 51 seconds. "Running the marathon is the most challenging thing I have ever done, but I'm glad I did," she said. Marla plans to enter the Toronto Waterfront Marathon next September, and is planning to run the 10-Mile Road Race in Thunder Bay in May.

Travels to China

Carol Otte, Microcomputer Services Supervisor, Technology Services Centre, and her husband Peter travelled to China in October. She said Shanghai was modern and very busy and that she had to adapt to "a lack of personal space." The tour included meals held at massive restaurants with servings of a variety of authentic dishes, each meal including white rice and ending with a serving of watermelon. Two highlights of her trip to were the Terracotta Warriors in Xi'an and the Great Wall that was "a thrill to walk on."

Going Away on Sabbatical?

A Lakehead University alumna is available to house-sit for faculty members away on sabbatical. If you would like more information, please contact Tracey Henriksson at thenriks@tbaytel.net or at 577-3900. ■

Agora Online

The Agora Online is produced by the Office of Communications and distributed to staff, faculty, and friends of Lakehead University. We welcome your contributions. Please send them to:

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