



Lakehead University formally adopts the Okanagan Charter

March 20, 2019 – Thunder Bay and Orillia, Ont.

Lakehead University is placing the health and well-being of students, faculty and staff at the forefront with the formal adoption of the *Okanagan Charter: An International Charter for Health Promoting Universities and Colleges*.

The Charter was signed on Wednesday by Dr. Moira McPherson, Lakehead's President and Vice-Chancellor, during a special event held at the University's Thunder Bay campus, and by Principal Dr. Dean Jobin-Bevans, at the University's Orillia campus.

An outcome of the 2015 International Conference on Health Promoting Universities and Colleges, the Charter calls on post-secondary institutions to embed health and well-being into all aspects of campus culture, including the development of policies, procedures and practices.

This commitment to student, faculty and staff health and well-being inside and outside of the classroom is an essential element of the University's 2018-2023 Strategic Plan.

"We recognize that promoting health and well-being is necessary to achieving our vision of providing a transformative university experience, which is why Lakehead University has taken the step to adopt the Okanagan Charter," explained Dr. McPherson.

"Exceptional scholarship and student potential are sustained by the mental and physical health of our people, and a healthy and supportive campus environment. We want to embed this notion into all aspects of campus culture and across operations," she added.

As part of the adoption of the Charter, Lakehead University has committed to developing a comprehensive, campus-wide Wellness Strategy that will support, encourage and inspire a culture of health and well-being for all who study and work at the university.

Andrea Tarsitano, Vice-Provost (Students) and Registrar, is co-lead of the newly formed Wellness Advisory Committee that will be leading the development of the strategy.

"Our goal is to promote the idea that health and wellness isn't just the responsibility of one particular department, but that advancing health and wellness needs to be a

commitment across all disciplines and departments within our university community,” she said.

“There will be many opportunities for students, faculty and staff to get involved and provide their visions of what a healthy campus looks like.”

Consultations for Lakehead University’s Wellness Strategy will begin in the coming months.

More information about the Okanagan Charter can be found at www.healthpromotingcampuses.ca.

– 30 –

Cutline 001: Elder Gerry Martin signs the Okanagan Charter at Lakehead Thunder Bay while Dr. Moira McPherson, Lakehead's President and Vice-Chancellor, watches.

Cutline 002: Lakehead Orillia Principal Dr. Dean Jobin-Bevans signs the Okanagan Charter with Elana Weber, Student Wellness and Athletics Coordinator, on the Orillia campus.

Media contact: Jaclyn Bucik, Marketing & Communications Associate, 705-330-4008 ext. 2014, or jbucik@lakeheadu.ca

Lakehead University has approximately 9,700 full-time equivalent students and 2,000 faculty and staff in 10 faculties at two campuses in Orillia and Thunder Bay, Ontario. Lakehead is a fully comprehensive university: home to Ontario’s newest Faculty of Law in 44 years, the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, and faculties of Engineering, Business Administration, Health & Behavioural Sciences, Social Sciences & Humanities, Science & Environmental Studies, Natural Resources Management, Education, and Graduate Studies. *Maclean’s 2019 University* Rankings place Lakehead University among Canada's Top 10 primarily undergraduate universities and in 2018 *Research Infosource* named Lakehead Research University of the Year in its category for the fourth consecutive year. Visit www.lakeheadu.ca