

Thank you very, very much Carolyn for this very kind introduction.

Distinguished guests, colleagues and friends,

Welcome, Bienvenue, Aanii, Boozhoo, Kwe kwe.

Maamii kwendam gii wiik mii ek. (*It's a pleasure to be here*).

A good presidential installation or convocation speech needs to be short – otherwise all that people seem to remember is that the president went on for too long.

So, I will attempt to follow the advice of a former Supreme Court of Canada judge who charged lawyers appearing before the court to: “Be heard. Be clear. Be brief. Be gone”.

But I make no promises as there is much to discuss this evening.

First of all, Barbara and I would like to thank all members of the university community and leaders from the Greater Sudbury area and all of northeastern Ontario, for their very warm welcome.

You have all showed us why the Canadian Council of Learning ranks Greater Sudbury as one of the most welcoming community in the country.

Your worship, thank you for the unwavering support and enthusiasm you have shown towards us since we have moved to Greater Sudbury.

I think it's fair to say that “we hit it off” from our first meeting and media conference on March 31st.

We were promoting the Northern Aboriginal Festival, proudly organized and sponsored by Laurentian, Cambrian College and the City of Greater Sudbury.

During my first visit at City Hall, the mayor was proud to tell the future Chief of Police, Frank Elsner, that I was the best new citizen of Greater Sudbury and that I would be a great President for Laurentian.

Why?

Because in 90 minutes at City Hall, I had not complained once about the potholes.

Little did he know the only reason I didn't complain was because I didn't realize these were potholes – I thought they were actual urban open pit mines ... contributing to the economy of Greater Sudbury.

But, seriously, the issue prompted me to bring to the mayor's attention that the potholes at the corner of Ramsey Lake Road and Paris Street were pretty bad, that if they were not fixed by September, I would stand in the middle of one with the media on my side.

Mayor, I need to thank you for taking action on the problem.

As a sign of thanks, his worship, a former longtime NDP Member of Parliament, dared me to wear an orange tie – and I am happy to do so tonight.

Not only have these potholes been fixed, but the City through Pioneer Construction has initiated road improvements for the whole stretch between Science North and Laurentian.

Out of concern for the traffic delays that the construction work would impose on our guests coming to one of our nine convocations on campus this week, we kindly asked the City and Pioneer Construction to interrupt their work until our convocations were over.

So dear guests, if you thought Ramsey Lake Road was a bit bumpy tonight, please do not blame the mayor or Jamie Wallace, blame me.

J'aimerais remercier tout particulièrement mes parents, les membres de ma famille, mes mentors et mes ex-collègues qui se sont déplacés soit d'Ottawa, Toronto ou New Liskeard pour se joindre à nous ce soir.

Je me dois de rendre hommage à l'honorable sénatrice Marie Poulin, une ancienne de la Laurentienne, ainsi qu'à l'honorable Mauril Bélanger, député fédéral d'Ottawa-Vanier, un fier franco-ontarien originaire de Mattawa.

Merci de m'honorer de votre présence.

L'honorable John Milloy, ministre de la Formation, des Collèges et des Universités, se joindra à nous demain matin.

Je suis très touché par la confiance de la communauté universitaire de la Laurentienne à mon égard.

C'est un honneur et un privilège d'être au service de gens extraordinaires – étudiantes et étudiants, professeurs, membres du personnel, anciennes et anciens, donatrices et donateurs – qui ont tant fait pour que Laurentienne soit ce qu'elle est aujourd'hui.

I appreciate the support received from members of the Board of Governors.

Heartfelt thanks go also to my colleagues from the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, the Council of Universities, our federated universities, Cambrian College, Collège Boréal, Georgian College, St. Lawrence College, Algoma University, local school boards, Contact North and other postsecondary institutions.

I am committed to fostering greater collaboration and innovation in the education sector and facilitate student retention and mobility.

What's new

So, as we move forward, let me begin by talking about what's new.

J'étais très heureux de signer mercredi dernier cinq nouvelles ententes d'articulation avec le Collège Boréal.

Cela permettra à 400 étudiants de Boréal inscrits en promotion de l'activité physique et de la santé, hygiène dentaire, massothérapie, soins paramédicaux ou soins infirmiers auxiliaires, de poursuivre un programme de premier cycle en études de la santé, en français, à la Laurentienne, avec une reconnaissance de crédits.

Ces nouvelles ententes viennent s'ajouter à des ententes d'articulation déjà en place dans divers domaines.

This fall, we will offer a new master's program in computational sciences on our Sudbury campus, as well as our renowned MBA program in Barrie in a part-time format.

We are introducing three new offerings at the undergraduate level in Simcoe-Muskoka : a four-year BA in History, a three-year BA in Anthropology, and the Rhetoric and Media Studies stream of the four-year BA in English.

We will offer part-time introductory courses in English and Psychology at Georgian College's Owen Sound campus.

Not only are we celebrating this year the accomplishments of the charter class of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, we have also welcomed the first graduating class from the four-year Bachelor of Business Administration program and the first four-year degree graduates in Psychology and English majors, offered in partnership with Georgian College at its Barrie and Orillia campuses.

Why choosing Laurentian

Laurentian has been Ontario's fourth fastest growing university since 2000.

We find ourselves right in the middle of the largest research and science hub of Northern Ontario – surrounded by our faculties and numerous research centres and institutes, our spin-off technical research and service company, the Mining Innovation, Rehabilitation and Applied Research Corporation (MIRARCO), the Centre for Excellence in Mining Innovation (CEMI), the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, Science North, Sudbury's new teaching hospital and the Northeastern Ontario Regional Cancer Centre.

I tell our applicants that we are Ontario's greatest resort : 750 acres surrounded by five lakes, a golf course, a supervised beach, 45 kilometres of ski trails, newly expanded athletic facilities, brand new residences, nurses and physicians close by – and shopping opportunities only five minutes away with free public transit to get there thanks to a

wonderful partnership between student associations, the university and the City of Greater Sudbury.

All that and a world-class education.

Most importantly, I tell them that by choosing Laurentian, they don't just join "an institution".

On April 29th, I met with the board of directors of our Alumni Association, chaired by Jacques Tremblay who is here with us tonight.

During introductions, one of our third year students, Yunni Jeong, shared her story with the group.

Her older sister was enrolled at the University of Toronto where she was enrolled in first year courses with over 1,000 students. 1,000 students in ONE course.

She strongly encouraged Yunni to enrol at Laurentian, since we have the lowest student:faculty ratio in the province and our average class size in first year is about 33.

Well, Yunni moved from Toronto to Sudbury, and simply told the board of directors of the alumni association that evening : "I realize now that by coming to Laurentian, I didn't join an institution, I joined a community".

Staff from Laurentian and I just looked at each other, thinking "hey, that could be a new slogan".

We want our students to become part of a community – and stay here after graduation.

And, help the community grow and improve.

And, Yunni's not alone.

For the first time this year, a majority of our students come from outside Northeastern Ontario.

Ceci est crucial puisque cela signifie que nous amenons de nouveaux venus et de nouvelles familles dans le Grand Sudbury, ce qui augure bien pour nos communautés et notre économie puisque plusieurs resteront parmi nous après l'obtention de leur diplôme.

All of this being said, all Canadian colleges and universities are faced with fiscal challenges.

We are not immune to the global economic crisis.

Who would have thought a year ago that the federal government would project, for 2009-2010, a record high deficit of \$50 billion?

Less than two years ago, nickel prices were at record highs.

Mines couldn't find skilled workers fast enough.

Now, we have to hunker down and get through shutdowns and layoffs as families hurt and the community hurts with them.

But, we will get through this.

Sudbury has done it in the past and it will do it again.

And, Laurentian plans on being a key part in that perseverance.

In simple terms, our fiscal challenge is this : our projected compensation costs for 2009-10 are significantly outpacing our revenue increases from tuition fees and government operating funding.

So far, we have protected all programs and permanent jobs.

But reality will hit home soon.

Moving forward

Moving forward, my main focus is to position ourselves strategically for the future.

So what should we aim for down the road, say 10 years from now?

When it comes to the book I will one day write about my experience at Laurentian, I have told audiences that I have written the first page – and that I wanted their input in drafting the last page of the book. And, then we will work on the chapters in between, together.

Themes are emerging for this new book, and I would highlight four tonight :

- We want Laurentian University to have strong national recognition;
- We want to be a university of choice;
- We want to be a university fostering strong student engagement;
- We want to be a university with close ties to the communities we serve.

J'aimerais aborder brièvement chacun de ces quatre thèmes.

First, on national recognition.

This is a challenge for all Northern Ontario universities.

What's important to remember, is that success attracts success.

But quite frankly, we will need to become better at telling the success stories of our students, faculty and alumni.

J'ai déjà évoqué la sénatrice Poulin.

Je suis renversé par les réalisations que je découvre au fur et à mesure que je rencontre les divers départements de l'université.

I was very proud that Lou Pagnutti, CEO of Ernst & Young and an alumnus from our School of Commerce, welcomed over 150 applicants and their parents in a beautiful Bay Street boardroom on May 21st.

It could have also been Phil Noble, CEO of Grant Thornton, another big management and accounting firm. Phil is another proud alumnus of our School of Commerce.

Nos futures étudiants – et leurs parents – sont très impressionnés lorsque je leur parle de Lou et de Phil. Et il y a tant d'autres histoires à succès parmi nos 40,000 anciennes et anciens que je pourrais partager.

As one could expect, environmental studies is an area of great interest for our applicants.

We very much look forward to starting this summer the construction of our \$20 million Vale Inco Living With Lakes Centre.

When I meet with applicants and their parents, their jaw drops when I tell them that Premier McGuinty has an expert panel on climate change, and that one of our distinguished faculty members, Dr David Pearson, known to many of us, serves as its co-chair.

To achieve national recognition, we will also need to plan carefully our expansion of future graduate programs.

We now have over 700 graduate students.

Applications in graduate studies are up 11%, this year alone!

I know that most of our departments are eager to expand their graduate programs.

We cannot be a university community that attempts to be all things to all people, and do those things well.

For every new program we create, I believe we should perhaps consider dissolving one of our less successful programs.

Since the masters programs are quickly replacing undergraduate diplomas in the eyes of employers, we will need to focus on a few strong areas that will really "put us on the map" nationally.

To earn greater national recognition, there is no substitute for excellence.

We will need to engage with the mining industry, the cluster of related services, our government and postsecondary education partners, to determine how Laurentian could, through its teaching and research, be even more responsive and be recognized globally as the “go to university” in mining and related sciences.

We will need to build on the success of our health sciences programs – in nursing, human kinetics, radiation therapy, midwifery, native human services, rural and northern health to name a few.

We will have to leverage the creation of the School of Medicine, to ramp up our teaching and research efforts in health sciences to meet the unique needs of rural areas in Canada and abroad, as well as the health challenges associated with an aging population.

Le dernier virage de 20 millions de dollars, pour atteindre notre cible de 50 millions de dollars de notre campagne de financement entourant notre 50e anniversaire, menée par Scott McDonald, nous aidera énormément dans ces deux domaines-clés.

Nous devons nous associer avec d'autres universités du Canada et de l'étranger afin d'élaborer d'autres programmes de collaboration et ententes d'articulation.

Ceci donnera plus d'options créatives et plus de flexibilité pour nos étudiants, faisant de la Laurentienne un premier choix encore plus attrayant.

Nous devons sans cesse nous demander, «qu'est-ce que nous pourrions être les premiers à faire en Ontario? »

We will need to intensify the research activity of our faculty members, relative to other Canadian universities ... and tell people about what we're doing.

We will also need to protect, as much as possible, the existing proportions of our operating budget allocated towards bursaries and scholarships, the library and student services.

Whether you love or hate the national rankings of Canadian Universities, all of these issues matter for those rankings which are read in droves by prospective students and their parents.

Second, on being a university of choice.

There is a demographic tsunami facing us and we must plan for it now.

Two years ago, there were 166,000 students in grade 10 in Ontario and only 126,000 students in Kindergarten – that's 40,000 or 24% fewer students coming through in Kindergarten.

24% fewer students who will potentially one day attend Laurentian.

So the tsunami is coming – but we have time to prepare and diversify and that's what I plan on doing.

Here in the northeast, there were only 5,300 students in Kindergarten.

We will pursue sustainable growth.

For example, just south of us in Simcoe-Muskoka, there were 4,800 students in Kindergarten - about the same as northeastern Ontario.

However, there are no university presidents with offices set up in Simcoe-Muskoka while there are seven in this region.

This will change and we will attract even more of those students to Laurentian.

I am also proud that we retain annually about two thirds of grade 12 students from Greater Sudbury who pursue university studies in Ontario, and as high as 83% of French-language students from Greater Sudbury.

This is probably one of highest retention rates among Ontario universities with their local grade 12 students.

Of course, we could do better, and we will.

Even though we are the number one choice for university studies in Northeastern Ontario – we attract more students annually from the region than all other Northeastern Ontario universities, the University of Ottawa and the University of Western Ontario combined – we still see over 1,000 applicants annually from Northeastern Ontario pursuing university studies in Southern Ontario.

Ceci est une lourde perte pour le nord.

Over 25 years, with two children per household, this represents losing the equivalent of the population of North Bay.

We are also the number one choice for university studies in Simcoe-Muskoka, but again we could attract more students from this region at one of our campuses.

We will need to attract a greater proportion of applicants from Northeastern Ontario and Simcoe-Muskoka, of Native ancestry and of French-speaking Ontarians and Canadians.

We especially want First Nation, Métis and Inuit students to feel at home here at Laurentian.

This is why we are hoping to begin very soon the construction of a \$3 million Indigenous Sharing and Learning Centre.

We estimate that about 10% of our students are Aboriginal students.

Nous voulons être une destination de premier choix pour les finissantes et finissants des écoles secondaires de langue française du reste de la province et d'ailleurs.

We also want to be the university of choice for graduates from immersion programs across the province.

There are as many French immersion students as there are French as minority language students in Ontario's schools today : 90,000 in each system.

We need to cater more proactively to their aspirations, while enhancing the learning supports in place.

Our students should easily be able to improve their fluency in the other official language by the time they graduate from Laurentian.

We will increasingly be a multi-campus university community, with additional, carefully selected campuses in Northern Ontario and the GTA, where we will distinguish ourselves with our bilingual and tricultural programming.

To be a university of choice, we will need to continue modernizing our existing facilities and make our Sudbury campus even more welcoming over time.

Third, on being a university with high levels of student engagement.

My hope is that Laurentian will be known for offering, in both official languages :

- A high level of academic challenge;
- Memorable student-faculty interaction;
- An enriching educational experience which includes active and collaborative learning;
- As well as a supportive and safe campus environment.

I want our students and graduates to say that :

- Their entire educational experience at Laurentian was excellent;
- If they could start over they would choose Laurentian; and
- They would recommend us without hesitation for the quality of our teaching.

Lorsque des anciens me présentent en région, ils font tous et toutes référence à l'avantage de faire partie d'une communauté universitaire vraiment axée sur l'étudiant.

C'est une de nos marques de commerce.

Les étudiants sont plus engagés dans leur apprentissage s'ils peuvent prendre part ou assister à des débats sur des sujets controversés, assister à des séminaires provocateurs et divertissants menés par des experts parmi le corps professoral, s'asseoir à un café pour jaser informellement avec d'autres étudiants, des professeurs ou d'autres membres du personnel, ou être exposés à des cours interdisciplinaires.

Il faut saisir les occasions de rendre la vie universitaire encore plus excitante pour les étudiants et le corps professoral, avec plus d'étudiants et d'activités en résidence, plus d'installations sportives accessibles à l'année longue et davantage d'interaction parmi le corps professoral, ainsi qu'entre les professeurs et le reste de la communauté universitaire, et ce dans les deux langues officielles.

Fourth, on becoming a university with closer ties with the communities we serve.

Let's learn from the outstanding contribution of community leaders such as Maureen Lacroix, who will leave the Board of Governors this month, after 13 years of service.

Maureen : en préparation à ce discours, je me suis permis d'envoyer un courriel à un membre éminent du département d'histoire, lui demandant de m'identifier quelles étaient les cinq personnes ayant eu la plus grande influence sur la Laurentienne depuis ses débuts, il y a 49 ans.

Tout un débat électronique s'en est suivi pour quelques jours, avec quatre autres de ses collègues, pour parvenir à un consensus sur une liste de cinq noms, tant de l'interne et de l'externe que parmi les deux groupes linguistiques.

Et votre nom faisait partie de cette courte liste finale de cinq noms!

Cela est tout un hommage.

Let's bring the gown to town.

Through our active participation in the Community Adjustment Committee, let's support Greater Sudbury as it explores new areas of opportunities to re-emerge after this downturn.

After all, this is what led to the creation of Science North 25 years ago!

Let's work with the new CEO of the City of Greater Sudbury, a proud Laurentian alumnus, Doug Nadorozny, in shaping a new economic development plan with Laurentian as its cornerstone.

Let's embrace, with the required support of the provincial government, the community's desire to see a Laurentian University School of Architecture right downtown.

Bâtissons sur des succès annuels tels que la foire régionale de sciences et accueillons, plus souvent, un plus grand nombre d'étudiants et de membres du personnel enseignant de 7e à la 12e année sur nos campus.

Établissons davantage de partenariats avec les écoles, planifiés avec soin, qui rapporteront des dividendes pour toutes les parties impliquées.

Offrons davantage de séminaires dans la communauté par des membres de notre corps professoral sur des questions contemporaines – d'une manière que les gens pourront comprendre – soit dans divers coins de la région ou par diffusions sur le web auxquelles nos anciens et amis peuvent être invités.

Let's ramp up ongoing discussions with community representatives and college partners along highway 11 to see how we can meet their need to enhance the participation rate in university studies, in particular with First Nations.

Conclusion

At age 19, I ran and got elected as a school board trustee in Ottawa, becoming the youngest school board chair in the country two short years later.

(It seems to be a characteristic of the positions that I have assumed later in my career!)

One of my high school teachers was interviewed then by CBC French Radio.

She said, "some students are happy to play within the sandbox, others need a beach. Dominic needs a beach."

A few years later, the President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ottawa at the time, Dr. Marcel Hamelin, handed me my first bachelor's degree, and as I walked on the stage, he put his hat on my head and joked that I would be one of his successors.

In hindsight, both were partially right.

You remember how I sell our campus to our applicants?

I did find my beach here – it's even supervised – which is perhaps a wink to the nature of collegial governance within universities.

And while President Hamelin may have had a good premonition about my career prospects, it's here in Greater Sudbury that I am accepting with humility the task of leading this university community about to celebrate its 50th anniversary.

Barbara will serve as my lifeguard.

There is no tide on Ramsey Lake.

Waves will be strong at times in the months and years ahead.

But Ramsey Lake Road is paved with opportunities.

Literally, thanks to the Mayor and Jamie.

So, together, let's risk more than others think is safe.

Let's care more than others think is wise.

Let's dream more than others think is practical.

Let's, together, write the chapters of that book on how a good university became a great locally, nationally and internationally recognized university, and make that book a bestseller 10 years from now.

I am up to it, Laurentian's Board of Governors is up to it, our top notch executive team is up to it, and I suspect you are too.

Greater Sudbury and Northern Ontario, our alumni, our current and future students, deserve no less from us.

Miigwetch. Merci.