

Welcome, Bonjour. Aanii.

Thank you to the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club of Sudbury for inviting me, and to all of you for joining us today.

First of all, my wife Barbara and I would like to thank the community of Greater Sudbury 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 communities in the country.

Traditionally, university presidents begin new mandates in July or August.

By then, the budget's been approved, the students are gone for the summer, faculty and researchers are off to the far reaches of the planet conducting research and presenting at academic conferences, and staff are taking their vacation.

It's a relatively quiet period...allowing for a smooth, gentle transition... for a new university president.

So maybe I should have given a bit more thought to finalizing my start date, because it's been somewhat hectic since I started April 1!

I've been officially on the job for just under 3 months, and it's already been quite a whirlwind of activity.

Right off the bat, we were in the throes of finalizing the budget for Board approval and implementation, as you know, in a very challenging economic climate, which is affecting all of you, as well.

During the next two months, I criss-crossed all of Northeastern and Central Ontario... twice!

My first trip was for a recruitment push for Fall admissions, meeting applicants and their parents, as well as English and French high school guidance counselors, principals and school board officials.

I learned first-hand the perceived strengths and weaknesses of Laurentian.

My 2<sup>nd</sup> road trip was to participate in 15 (!) convocation ceremonies, as we awarded more than 2,000 degrees to Laurentian's growing alumni family!

On top of the 9 ceremonies on campus, I also travelled to Barrie, Orillia, at Cambrian College, at Algoma University in Sault Ste-Marie and at *Université de Hearst* and *Collège Boréal*.

And already, I've met with faculty, staff and students from about 30 departments at the University.

Much has been done in the last 50 years, since Laurentian was first created to expand knowledge in Northern Ontario.

The university is now exporting creativity and expertise beyond Canada's borders, *en français et en anglais*.

From a primarily undergraduate institution, Laurentian has grown into a comprehensive university, now offering six PhD and more than 20 Master's programs, and conducting tens of millions of dollars of research annually.

And recently, our School of Medicine graduated its first class of physicians.

Much has been accomplished in the past decades.

But the challenges that lie ahead demand even more effort, hard work and innovation.

Laurentian has a lot going for it.

On the construction side, we've completed many new facilities in the past few years:

- The School of Medicine in 2005
- The West Residence in 2006
- An on-campus Tim Hortons and multimedia auditorium-style classroom in 2007
- The School of Education last December

- And most recently in February, the expansion of the Ben Avery complex, with an indoor 200m track, basketball courts, climbing walls, squash courts and expanded training facility.

Since 2005, this represents an additional 300,000 square feet of on-campus facilities at an investment of more than \$60 million, employing many local architects, construction firms, contractors and suppliers.

To put this into perspective, the main campus of Collège Boréal is approximately 220,000 sq ft.

I indicated earlier that the Board of Governors approved in April the 2009-10 budget.

I am proud of joining an institution that managed its financial affairs with prudence.

Laurentian has the third lowest debt ratio among Ontario universities.

We are facing, however, the potential of a \$7.5 million deficit this year, if there is no enrolment growth.

But we have a plan to contain our expenditures for the next two years, while investing in key development opportunities.

The Board supports this plan unanimously.

You may wonder why Laurentian has a deficit since 2008-09? There are three reasons:

- Compensation costs, including pension contributions, have risen faster than the increases in tuition fees and the increases in operating funding by the province;
- Staffing ratios have not been reduced proportionally to the temporary decline in enrolment since the departure of the double cohort, partially because of graduate expansion.
  - For example, enrolment went down 11% since 2006-07. If our staffing had gone down 11% since 2006-07, there would have been 45 fewer faculty and 22 fewer staff positions budgeted in 2009-10;
- The university must absorb annual financing costs for the new School of Education, the unfinanced portion of the expansion of the Ben Avery facility, as well as new leases.

In 2008, we launched The Next 50 fundraising campaign. We have to date raised nearly \$30 million or 60% of our goal.

Scott McDonald, a Laurentian alumnus many of you know as the former face of Inco in Sudbury, and his team of dedicated volunteers are committed to raising the remaining \$20 million over the coming years.

We are very pleased that shortly we will begin construction on the Vale Inco Living with Lakes Centre.

The recent \$5 million funding announcement from the federal infrastructure program was the missing piece of the puzzle for this \$20 million project, also generously supported by the provincial government.

It will be a very green building, built to the highest environmental standards in North America.

It will be a fitting home for the Cooperative Freshwater Ecology Unit, a partnership with the MNR, MOE, Vale Inco, Xstrata Nickel and the City.

Over the past few months, we've also signed new articulation agreements with *Collège Boréal* and *Université de Hearst*, among others, facilitating the transfer of students to Laurentian University in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years of our programs.

We are introducing three new program offerings at the undergraduate level in Simcoe-Muskoka, and part-time introductory courses in English and Psychology at Georgian College's Owen Sound campus.

Also this Fall, we will offer a new master's program in computational sciences here in Sudbury, as well as our renowned MBA program in Barrie in a part-time format.

And applications to graduate programs have increased by approximately 11%, to date.

## **The Future**

Our challenge, now, is to continue to build on this great momentum, in what are sure to be difficult economic times.

I tell staff that I am writing a book on my journey at Laurentian.

I have written the first chapter and, with everyone's input, am writing the last chapter – describing what we are aiming for at Laurentian, 10 years from now.

My VPs thought that this analogy was a rhetorical device to make my speech flow at convocations!

They were surprised to receive in their inbox this morning the actual draft of these two chapters.

From my consultations, trips, meetings and discussions, four broad themes to chart the University's future have emerged.

We want:

1. National recognition.
2. Being a university of choice.

3. A university fostering strong student engagement.

And...

4. A university with close ties to the communities we serve.

## **1. To be recognized Nationally**

This is a challenge for all Northern Ontario universities.

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

Quite frankly, we will need to become better at telling the success stories about our students, faculty and alumni.

And there are many, at the national, provincial and local levels.

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 21<sup>st</sup>.

It could have also been Phil Noble, CEO of Grant Thornton, another national management and accounting firm.

Phil is also proud alumnus of our School of Commerce.

Another great area of interest for our applicants is environmental studies.

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 you, 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.

Although 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, we will 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.

Already, some ideas are emerging on campus on developing an International Faculty of Mining, offering “finishing” or professional programs in mining, partnering with other universities in Canada or around the world offering instruction in languages other than English or French and specializing in areas other than deep underground mining.

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 our faculty 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.

Did you know that, thanks to partnerships with five Ontario colleges, including Cambrian and *Boréal*, a high percentage of nursing graduates throughout the province every year – perhaps as high a 30% - are Laurentian graduates?

Or that we are one of only three Ontario universities with a midwifery program, and the only one with this program offered *en français*?

We will also 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.

**2. We want to be a university of choice**, while strengthening our unique regional, bilingual and tri-cultural mandate.

We have been Ontario's fourth fastest growing university since 2000, featuring the lowest student:faculty ratio in the province and ranking fourth nationally among universities of our kind in terms of the proportion of our budget allocated to bursaries and scholarships.

We are proud to be the number one choice for university studies for applicants from Northeastern Ontario.

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 the highest retention rates among Ontario universities with their local grade 12 students, and should partially dispel the myth of mass exodus of local high school students.

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

Laurentian University attracts more students annually from Northeastern Ontario than the universities of Nipissing, Algoma, Lakehead, Hearst, Ottawa and Western combined.

But we could do better in Northeastern Ontario outside Greater Sudbury, and in Simcoe-Muskoka, where we serve only 17% of university-bound students.

There is also 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.

We will attract even more of those students to Laurentian.

Although the number one choice for university studies in Northeastern Ontario – we still see over 1,000 applicants annually from Northeastern Ontario pursuing university studies in Southern Ontario.

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

This is a significant loss for Northern Ontario.

And in an increasingly competitive postsecondary sector, we can, and we will, do better!

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

But we want to do better, this is why we are hoping to begin very soon the construction of a \$3 million Indigenous Sharing and Learning Centre.

This will be a “home away from home” for our Native students and central gathering place for Native and non-Native students and community members to learn about each other.

We also want to become the No. 1 destination for graduates from French language secondary schools throughout the rest of the province, outside of the Ottawa region.

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.

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.

### **3. Fostering strong student engagement**

When I meet Laurentian students and alumni, I am struck by their strong attachment to the university.

Most recall their experience here, and many of their profs, fondly, and positively.

Our recent \$10M expansion of the Ben Avery facility was made possible in large part by the generous support of all students, who voted in a referendum to basically tax themselves, to the tune of \$75/year, to make this project a reality.

The U Pass, which provides free transit service to all Laurentian students during the school year – again through a levy on their fees – was an initiative led by students who wanted to reduce carbon emissions and improve bus service to the campus. Engaged student leaders, working collaboratively with the University and the City made it happen.

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.

We must take advantage of every opportunity to make their on-campus experience more stimulating, exciting and engaging, not only for students, but also for faculty and staff.

#### **4. Building close ties to the communities we serve**

According to an economic impact study conducted by Deloitte and Touche for Laurentian in 2008, the university's annual economic impact on the region is close to \$310 million, including spending, income and employment impacts.

This included \$72 million in direct and indirect impacts from student spending.

Good news for all Chamber members!

However, the University's impact on our region is much more than simply economic.

It's also about people.

Of our now 40,000 strong alumni family, 60 % reside in the North, and 35 % in Greater Sudbury.

That's thousands of Laurentian alumni making a difference each and every day, right here in our community and in your businesses.

Minister Rick Bartolucci, Sudbury's No. 1 cheerleader and advocate, is an alumnus, and we remain grateful for his ongoing support and advocacy for Laurentian – as well as for Cambrian, Boréal and the local school boards.

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

Or with alumnae Louise Paquette, from FedNor.

Or with Jim Marchbank and Guy Labine, over at Science North, as we build on their efforts to spread science communication creativity and innovation around the globe.

Or with Gisèle Chrétien, former president of Collège Boréal and past chair of the Sudbury Regional Hospital, and now heading up our region's Community Adjustment Committee, of which I am also a member.

Or with engaged and dedicated community boosters, such as Laurie Bissonnette, partner at KPMG and chair of our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Steering Committee.

In the continuum of care, much has been accomplished by alumni such as Jo-Anne Palkovits, president and CEO of St. Joseph's Health Centre and Léo Therrien, from *Maison Vale Inco Hospice*.

The list of local leaders with Laurentian connections goes on, and on, with many more in attendance today!

Faculty and staff give each year an average of 225 hours of volunteer work to more than 260 community organizations and charities.

Annually, Laurentian sponsors and contributes to a number of local events.

Since 2006 alone, we have contributed more than \$400K, and every year, we raise between \$35K-\$45K for the United Way.

*Au cours des dernières décennies, le corps professoral, le personnel et les anciens ont contribué à la création d'initiatives et d'organisations provinciales et pancanadiennes, y compris La Nuit sur l'étang, le Théâtre du Nouvel-Ontario, l'Institut franco-ontarien et le drapeau franco-ontarien.*

*Celui-ci fut créé en 1975 par Gaétan Gervais et ses étudiants, en septembre.*

*Le drapeau est maintenant reconnu par le gouvernement de l'Ontario et flotte désormais avec fierté dans chaque province.*

And every year, thousands of Sudburians, young and old, access our on-campus facilities and installations.

Next year, we look forward to hosting the 2010 Ontario Summer Games.

The community-led partnership which runs the Laurentian Track brings together the City, the University and the four school boards.

Along with the generous support of the provincial government, much-needed renovations are underway at the track, and next year, more than 3,500 participants from across the province will converge on Sudbury.

And in 2011, we'll also host the fourth *Jeux de la francophonie canadienne*, which will attract more than 1,200 youth from all provinces and territories.

So, I think it's obvious that, despite some perceptions that may be out there about Laurentian being this ivory-tower type of faraway place at the end of Ramsey Lake, thousands of Sudburians come on campus every year, and hundreds of LU folks are actively engaged in the Sudbury community.

But here, too, we can do better!

Let's bring more of the gown to town.

Through our active participation in a number of community initiatives, such as the Community Adjustment Committee, we will work collaboratively to explore opportunities and

take action to ensure Sudbury's ongoing prosperity and sustainability.

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

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.

I am pleased to report that Laurentian's Senate and Board of Governors approved in principle the creation of a School of Architecture, along with its proposed undergraduate and graduate programs, subject to full funding.

Let's develop additional partnerships with school boards, to bring even more elementary and secondary school students on campus, weekly.

Of course, we're planning a range of events, activities and celebrations for our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2010.

In fact, my very first official function, on April 1, was to launch the countdown to our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations, for next year.

Although I started off with a party, it hasn't really been a party since!

Kidding aside, we look forward to inviting all of you and the Greater Sudbury community to join us for a series of great activities, next year.

## **Conclusion**

Since 1960, we have witnessed a significant increase of the participation rate of three generations of Northerners in postsecondary education – in the North.

Much has been accomplished.

And much more needs to be done.

Laurentian's success in meeting these four goals:

1. To be recognized nationally.
2. To be a university of choice.
3. To be a university fostering strong student engagement.  
And...
4. To be a university with close ties to the communities we serve.

will greatly contribute to Sudbury's continued prosperity and sustainability.

As Laurentian's ninth president, I am fully committed to our collective success.

I am eager to engage in a dialogue with the Chamber and community groups, such as Rotary, to explore how we can do more, as partners.

Together, we will further build on Laurentian's – and Sudbury's – reputation of leadership, innovation and excellence.

Merci. Thank you.