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Lakehead

UNIVERSITY

OPPORTUNITY PROFILE

Associate Vice President, Communications & Marketing



Land Acknowledgement

Lakehead University respectfully acknowledges its campuses are located on the traditional lands of Indigenous Peoples.

Lakehead Thunder Bay is located on the traditional lands of the Fort William First Nation, Signatory to the Robinson Superior Treaty of 1850. Lakehead Orillia is located on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg. The Anishinaabeg include the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Pottawatomi nations, collectively known as the Three Fires Confederacy.

Lakehead University acknowledges the history that many nations hold in the areas around our campuses, and is committed to a relationship with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples based on the principles of mutual trust, respect, reciprocity, and collaboration in the spirit of reconciliation.





Organizational Profile

Celebrated as one of Canada's leading academic institutions, Lakehead University offers more than 85 academic programs that are grouped within nine Faculties from a comprehensive selection of academic areas of study. Lakehead is an innovative comprehensive university that provides an education that is about how to think, not what to think. Closely tied to that enterprising spirit is a deep connection to the community. Lakehead is committed to making a difference in the communities it serves, developing a broader understanding of societal issues, and inspiring action for thoughtful, positive change. Lakehead University is also committed to the success of our Indigenous learners and to our relationships with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples based on the principles of mutual trust, respect, reciprocity, and collaboration in the spirit of reconciliation. Lakehead University acknowledges the history that many nations hold in the areas around its two campuses.

Dynamic, modern, and learner-centered, Lakehead University's campuses offer an enriching university experience that blends academic excellence with a variety of social and recreational activities. Lakehead is a nationally ranked research-intensive university and is the proud host to eleven Canada Research Chairs.

Lakehead University has over 9,300 full-time equivalent students and over 2,000 faculty and staff across nine faculties at two campuses in Orillia and Thunder Bay, Ontario. This fall, Lakehead will also launch the Barrie STEM Hub in Barrie, Ontario. Lakehead University ranked 6th on Maclean's Canada's Best Primarily Undergraduate Universities for 2026 and tied 1st in Ontario among primarily undergraduate institutions. Lakehead has a reputation for innovative programs and cutting-edge research. The university offers a variety of degree and diploma programs at the undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels. Lakehead University's approach is a personal one which affirms the value of our students and sees and treats them as individuals, not as mere numbers.

Dr. Gillian Siddall, President & Vice-Chancellor

Dr. Gillian Siddall became President and Vice-Chancellor of Lakehead University in July 2023. Since returning to Lakehead, she has focused on strengthening a culture of collaboration, respect, and shared purpose across the university community while positioning the institution to serve communities across Northern Ontario and Simcoe County and ensuring the long-term sustainability of its campuses and regional initiatives.

Under her leadership, the university launched a new institutional strategic plan, Evolution: Lakehead University's Strategic Plan 2025–2030, which sets a clear direction for the future with priorities focused on transformative student experiences, people and culture, financial sustainability, and strong community and industry partnerships. Her presidency has also seen the expansion of Lakehead's regional presence, including the establishment of the Barrie STEM Hub, creating new opportunities for students and strengthening partnerships across Simcoe County.

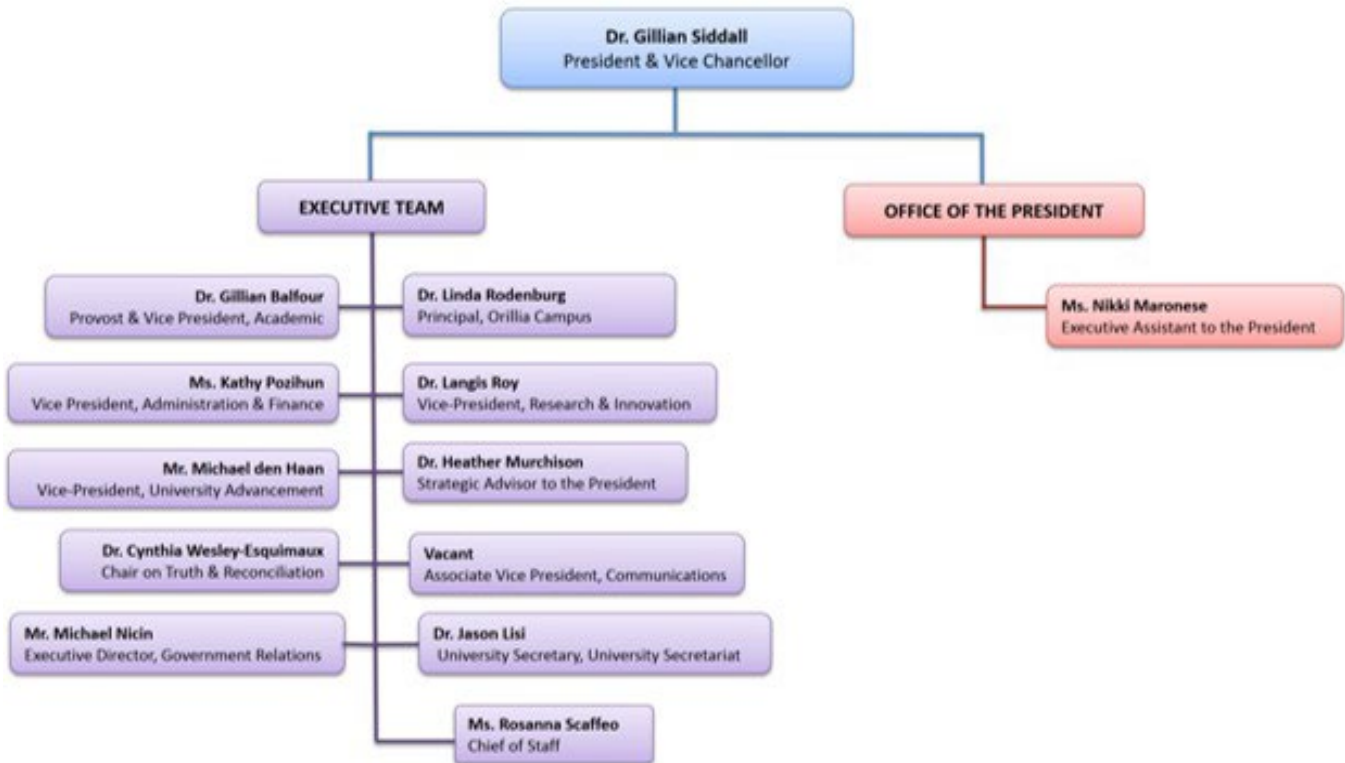
A major milestone during her presidency has been advancing the Collaborative Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Program (CDVMP), a landmark partnership between Lakehead University and the Ontario Veterinary College at the University of Guelph. Designed to train veterinarians for the North, in the North, the program represents the first expansion of veterinary education in Ontario in a generation and will welcome a cohort of 20 northern students each year.

Dr. Siddall previously served as President of Emily Carr University of Art + Design and earlier as Vice-President Academic and Provost at OCAD University. She first joined Lakehead in 1998 as a faculty member in English and later served as founding director of the Teaching and Learning Centre and as Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities.

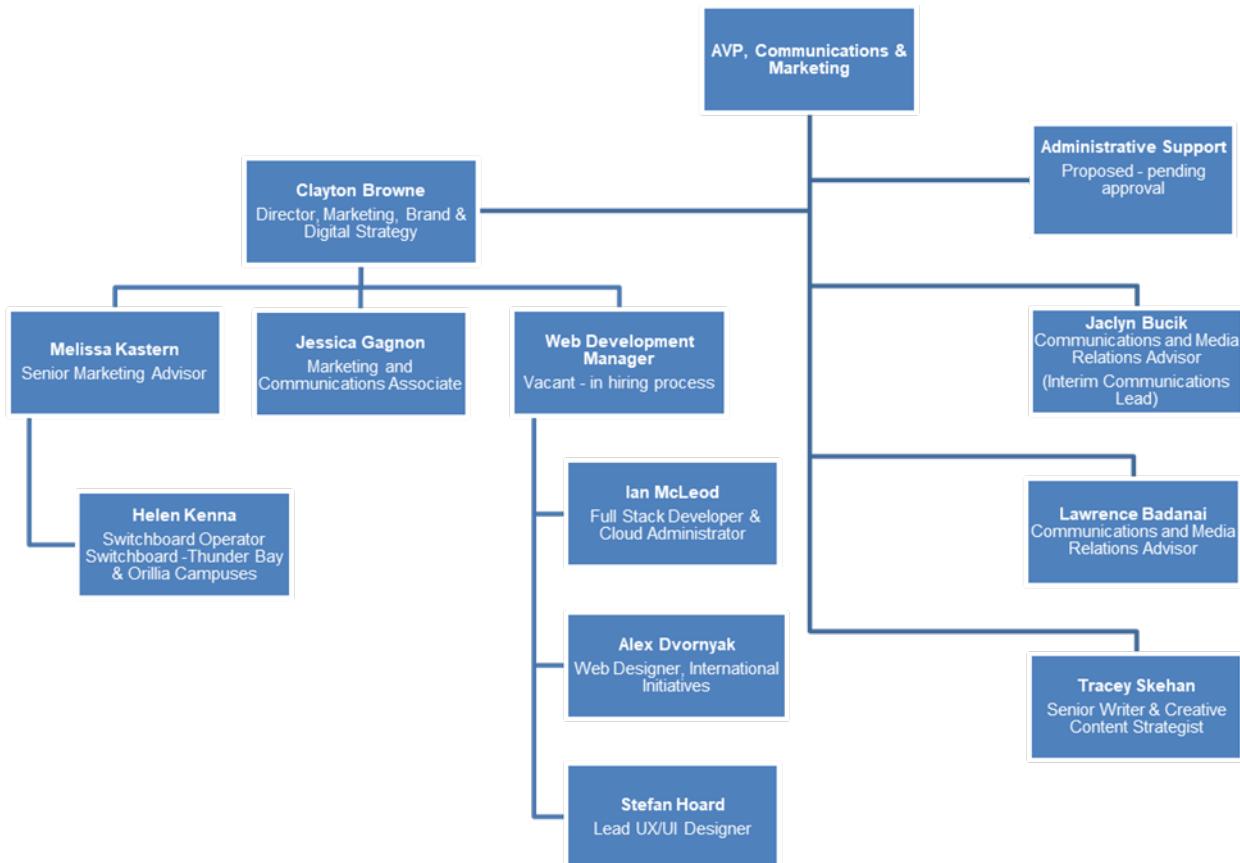
She holds an Honours BA and MA from the University of Guelph and a PhD from Western University. A scholar of Canadian literature, her research explores musical improvisation within and beyond literary contexts. Outside of her academic work, Dr. Siddall is an accomplished jazz vocalist and choral singer and a co-founder of the Guelph Jazz Festival.



Organizational Chart



Communications & Marketing Org Chart



Lakehead University At a Glance

- 3 Campus Locations: Thunder Bay, Orillia, and Barrie
- Home to over 9,300 students, including:
 - 7,708 undergraduate students,
 - 1,603 graduate students
- 1,548 international students from 85 countries
- 13% of domestic students identify as Indigenous
- 27 research chairs
- Over 70,000 alumni in 111 countries
- Over 2,000 faculty and staff between two campuses
- Host of the West Campus of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine University

9 Faculties at Lakehead:

- Business Administration
- Education
- Engineering
- Graduate Studies
- Health and Behavioral Sciences
- Bora Laskin Faculty of Law
- Natural Resources Management
- Science and Environmental Studies
- Social Sciences and Humanities

Mission

To be a comprehensive university that cultivates ethical and innovative thinkers and problem solvers.

Vision

To empower a local and global sustainable future through transformative learning and community partnership.

Beliefs

We believe our students, staff and faculty make Lakehead University different. We believe that our students want an innovative comprehensive university where they have the highest chance of success. We believe that our students have the passion and drive to realize their dreams and succeed. We believe that our students want the intellectual freedom to pursue the unconventional. We believe in the diversity that comes from students, staff and faculty of many cultures and nations. We believe that our students, staff and faculty are passionate about both their own individuality and their communities.





Lakehead Campuses

Thunder Bay

Lakehead University is situated in the heart of the City of Thunder Bay. Fields and green space surround our campus and all buildings are conveniently located together in one location creating a true campus feel. Many of the University's buildings are grouped around Lake Tamblin and our residence complexes hug the banks of the McIntyre River. Underground tunnels connect many of the main, centralized buildings on campus, allowing for easy access between classes and facilities. Paved trails surround the campus making it the perfect place to take advantage of taking in the beauty of the area whether you are walking, jogging, rollerblading, bicycling, or, in the winter, cross-country skiing! Over 6,800 students call the Thunder Bay Campus home.

Orillia

The Orillia campus is located on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg. Since opening in 2006 with a single downtown location, the campus has expanded in both infrastructure and community impact. Today, Orillia is home to just over 2,300 students, forming a dynamic and close-knit academic community. The main campus features LEED®-certified buildings, modern learning spaces, and residence facilities that reinforce Lakehead's commitment to sustainability and student success. Orillia offers a diverse mix of undergraduate and graduate programs across the arts, sciences, education, environmental studies, business, and more.

Barrie STEM Hub

Lakehead University's Barrie STEM Hub is a purpose-built education and innovation centre located in downtown Barrie's vibrant waterfront district, opening in Fall 2026. Designed for hands-on, high-tech learning, the Hub offers small-class STEM programs in engineering and computer science that are aligned with employer needs and real-world skills. The Hub spans two nearby sites—24 Maple Avenue and 5 Ross Street—with modern laboratories, collaborative classrooms, research spaces, and strong industry connections that support experiential learning, co-ops, and career readiness for students. This partnership between Lakehead and the City of Barrie strengthens access to post-secondary education, energizes the downtown core, and helps build a pipeline of skilled graduates ready for in-demand STEM careers.





Strategic Priorities (2025-2030)

The overarching goal of the strategic framework is to strengthen Lakehead University's vision of providing a transformative university experience grounded in exceptional scholarship and student potential while contributing to the advancement of the regions in which it is located. Lakehead University's [2025-2030 Strategic Plan](#) is built around five interrelated and interconnected strategic themes (see below). Woven throughout each of these themes are commitments related to academic and research excellence, place, advancing Truth and Reconciliation across the university, partnerships and a focus on co-creating solutions, and internationalization. Continued advancement of these elements is foundational to achieving the goals set out in the strategic themes.

Expanding Student Opportunity and Success

Expand the number of individuals who pursue and attain a university qualification in the regions Lakehead serves.

Sustainable Economic and Community Development and Entrepreneurship

Maximize Lakehead's positive regional economic and community impact.

Advancing our Societal Impact

Advance solutions to grand challenges affecting society through quality research and scholarly activity.

People and Culture

Establish Lakehead as a top employer.

Financial Sustainability

Ensure Lakehead's long-term financial sustainability.



Position Profile

Associate Vice-President, Communications & Marketing

Lakehead University invites applications for the role of Associate Vice-President, Communications & Marketing, a senior executive leadership position responsible for the strategic integration and advancement of institutional communications and marketing across the University.

Reporting to the President and Vice-Chancellor and serving as a key member of the President's executive leadership team, the Associate Vice-President provides strategic leadership for the University's communications and marketing enterprise and serves as a trusted advisor on institutional positioning, reputation management, and public engagement.

The AVP ensures the development and execution of an integrated communications and marketing strategy that advances Lakehead's strategic priorities, strengthens its brand and reputation, and supports meaningful engagement with internal and external audiences. Through a digital-first and data-informed approach, the AVP ensures that Lakehead's communications and marketing activities are aligned, responsive, and impactful across diverse platforms and audiences. These audiences include future and current students, domestic and international, as well as faculty, staff, and community members across Thunder Bay and County of Simcoe.

The AVP provides leadership for a comprehensive portfolio that includes institutional and leadership communications, media relations, crisis and emergency communications, brand strategy, marketing, social media, multimedia production and design, website strategy, and issues management. The role ensures strong integration between communications and marketing functions, recognizing their distinct but complementary contributions to advancing the University's mission.

Working closely with the President, the Executive Team, Deans, and other senior academic and administrative leaders, the AVP plays a central role in shaping and advancing Lakehead University's institutional narrative. The AVP identifies opportunities to elevate the University's research, teaching excellence, and community partnerships while strengthening its reputation locally, nationally, and internationally.

With extensive internal and external accountabilities, the AVP ensures that communications and marketing activities across the University are coordinated, timely, and aligned with institutional priorities while respecting

the decentralized nature of the academic environment. The AVP exercises sound judgment and discretion in advising senior leadership on complex or sensitive communications matters that may affect the University's reputation.

The preferred location for this position is at the Thunder Bay Campus.



Key responsibilities and priorities for the AVP will include:

Strategic Communications and Marketing Leadership

- Develop and lead the implementation of an integrated institutional communications and marketing strategy aligned with Lakehead University's strategic plan and institutional priorities.
- Ensure strong coordination of communications and marketing activities across faculties, campuses, and administrative units, strengthening alignment while respecting the decentralized academic environment.
- Lead the development of institutional messaging and narrative that advances Lakehead's reputation and public profile.

Presidential and Executive Communications

- Serve as a trusted advisor to the President and senior leadership on communications strategy, institutional positioning, and public messaging related to major initiatives and announcements.
- Support senior leadership in communicating the University's priorities, achievements, and strategic initiatives to diverse audiences.
- Provide strategic guidance on leadership communications and institutional messaging.

Key responsibilities and priorities for the AVP will include (cont'd):

Marketing and Brand Strategy

- Lead the development and implementation of a comprehensive marketing strategy that supports student recruitment, reputation enhancement, and stakeholder engagement.
- Provide stewardship of the University's brand and visual identity, ensuring consistency and strategic alignment across the institution.
- Advance storytelling and content strategies that highlight Lakehead's research excellence, teaching innovation, and community impact.

Reputation and Issues Management

- Provide strategic leadership for the University's media relations strategy, ensuring proactive engagement that strengthens Lakehead's visibility and reputation.
- Lead institutional preparedness and response strategies for crisis and emergency communications.
- Monitor emerging issues and provide advice to senior leadership on communications considerations related to complex or sensitive institutional matters.

Digital Communications Strategy

- Provide strategic leadership for the University's digital communications ecosystem, including website strategy, social media, multimedia production, and emerging digital platforms.
- Champion a digital-first and data-informed approach to communications and marketing that strengthens audience engagement and institutional reach.
- Ensure effective governance and strategic direction for the University's web presence.

Institutional Collaboration

- Work closely with the President, the Executive Team, Deans, and other senior leaders to advance institutional priorities through coordinated communications and marketing strategies.
- Build strong partnerships across the University community to strengthen alignment and effectiveness of communications initiatives.
- Identify opportunities to elevate Lakehead's profile through partnerships, public engagement, and strategic storytelling.

Leadership and Organizational Development

- Provide leadership and direction to the Communications and Marketing team, fostering a culture of innovation, collaboration, and service excellence.
- Ensure the unit operates as a strategic partner to the University community, providing expert guidance and leadership rather than solely delivering transactional communications services.
- Build organizational capacity and ensure effective allocation of resources to support evolving communications and marketing priorities.



The Candidate

Commitment to Equity Diversity and Inclusion

Lakehead University is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion and recognizes that a diverse staff/faculty benefits and enriches the work, learning and research environments, and is essential to academic and institutional excellence. We welcome applications from all qualified individuals and encourage women, members of racialized communities, Indigenous persons, persons with disabilities, and persons of any sexual orientation or gender identity to apply for this AVP Communications position. In accordance with the provincial legislation, accommodation will be provided by Leaders International Executive Search and Lakehead University throughout the recruitment, selection, and/or assessment process, upon request, to applicants with disabilities. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply.

Leadership Profile

The ideal candidate is a strategic communications and marketing leader with demonstrated success in strengthening institutional reputation and advancing organizational priorities through integrated communications strategies.

The successful candidate will bring:

- Significant senior leadership experience in communications, marketing, public affairs, or related fields within a complex organization.
- Demonstrated experience developing and implementing integrated communications and marketing strategies in a digital-first environment.
- Deep expertise in reputation management, media relations, and issues management.
- Exceptional strategic judgment and political acuity, with the ability to advise senior leaders in complex or sensitive situations.

Leadership Profile (con't)

- Strong collaborative leadership skills and the ability to build relationships across diverse stakeholders.
- Outstanding written and verbal communication skills and the ability to translate complex ideas into compelling narratives.
- Experience leading high-performing communications and marketing teams.
- An appreciation for the mission of a public university and the role of higher education in advancing communities and society.

Candidate Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree (graduate degree an asset) in marketing, communications, journalism, public relations, or related field.
- Minimum of 15 years experience in a senior communications or marketing role or public affairs environment in post-secondary or not-for-profit sectors, relevant public/private sectors, and minimum 5 years in a senior executive leadership capacity.
- Significant previous experience in a senior communications and or marketing position with a reputation as a learner, innovative leader, and resilient communications strategist.
- Demonstrated experience and successful track record as an effective media spokesperson.
- Experience in issues management, demonstrated experience in leadership communications and C-suite coaching and support for crisis communications.
- Experience in leading and motivating high-performing teams. Exceptional written and verbal communication skills.
- Capacity to engage and communicate in highly complex issues such as those relevant to higher education.
- Demonstrated commitment to reconciliation, Indigenization and equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Adept in current and emerging communications technologies and social media platforms.
- Exceptional public speaking and social media skills.



Measures of Success

In the first three years, the AVP will be expected to:

- Strengthen Lakehead University’s institutional brand and reputation across regional, national, and international audiences.
- Implement an integrated communications and marketing strategy aligned with institutional priorities.
- Enhance the University’s media presence and public visibility.
- Advance a modern digital communications ecosystem that strengthens engagement and reach.
- Improve coordination and strategic alignment of communications and marketing activities across faculties, campuses, and administrative units.
- Build a high-performing communications and marketing team that is recognized as a trusted strategic partner across the University.

COMPENSATION

A competitive compensation package will be provided, including an attractive base salary and excellent benefits. The range for the position is \$131,000-164,000 plus comprehensive benefits and pension plan. Further details will be discussed in a personal interview.

To apply, please email your cover letter and resume (PDF or Word document only—preferably as one document) to Ardyce Kouri or Luke Shin at apply@leadersinternational.com, indicating the job title in the subject line.

Leaders International Executive Search
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