# NURTURING a PASSION to LEAD

## STRATEGIC PLAN

2013-18

Lakehead
UNIVERSITY

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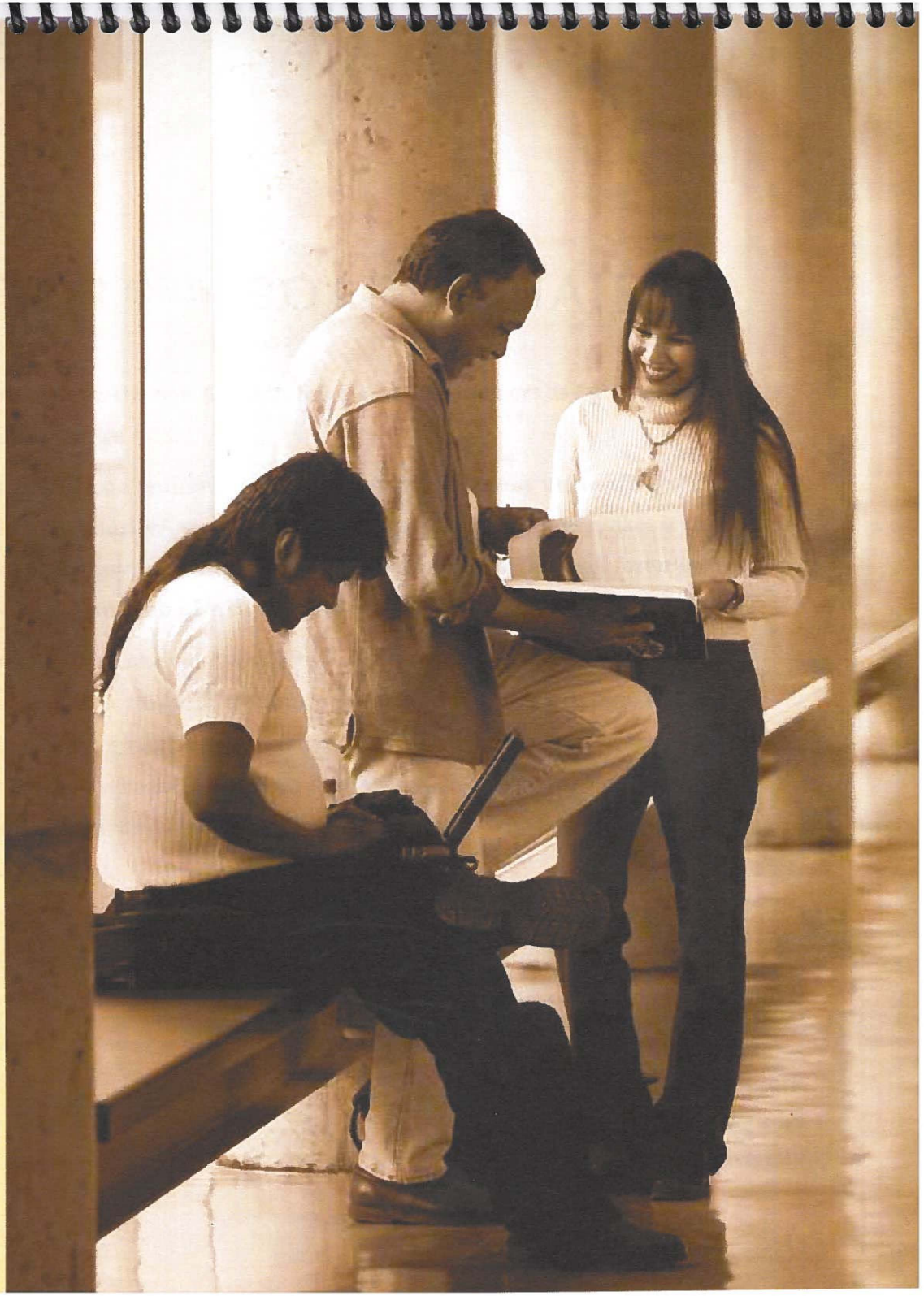
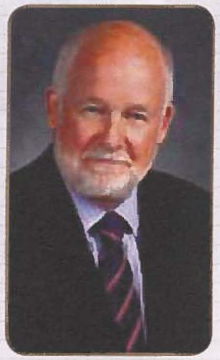


# LETTER from the BOARD CHAIR



It's exciting to serve as the new Chair of the Board of Governors as Lakehead launches its Strategic Plan for 2013-18.

Although it looks like an ordinary document – one of the many universities turn out with predictable regularity – even quickly leafing through its pages makes it clear that this Strategic Plan is anything but ordinary. It's a framework that will foster intellectual and human connections and give students the tools to construct their own destiny.

It's not surprising that Lakehead's collective vision for the next five years is a bold one. Since moving to Northwestern Ontario more than twenty years ago, I've learned that innovation and resourcefulness is a way of life here. And this spirit is also rooted in the hearts of those who call Simcoe County home. Thank you to all the faculty, staff, students, alumni, and broader community members who have engaged in the consultation process.

While completing the Strategic Plan is a major milestone, we know that this is just the start. With your commitment and hard work, we will ensure that Lakehead is a place where scientists, philosophers, engineers, and fearless dreamers come together to and sustain our world.

Cameron Clark
Chair, Board of Governors
Lakehead University

# LETTER from the PRESIDENT and Vice-Chancellor

The Strategic Plan for 2013-18 has gone through different iterations, alterations, and revisions. And this is a good thing because it means that Lakehead is being responsive to the aspirations of everyone connected to this dynamic university and true to itself.

By listening to many voices, we have created a plan that embraces Lakehead's tradition of encouraging students and faculty to explore big questions and find original solutions – and taken it several steps further. Our stakeholders should expect no less from an institution that revolves around experiential and collaborative learning.

Now it is time to launch the strategic actions laid out in this plan. This complex process will be carried out in concert with our Academic and operational plans and will result in vibrant community partnerships, strong social justice initiatives, and greater economic development for Northwestern Ontario and Simcoe County.

The challenges Lakehead University has set for itself may seem daunting, choosing the road less travelled often does. But our cutting-edge excellence in teaching, research, and community service ensures that these are challenges we are more than ready to take on.

Brian J. R. Stevenson, PhD
President and Vice-Chancellor
Lakehead University

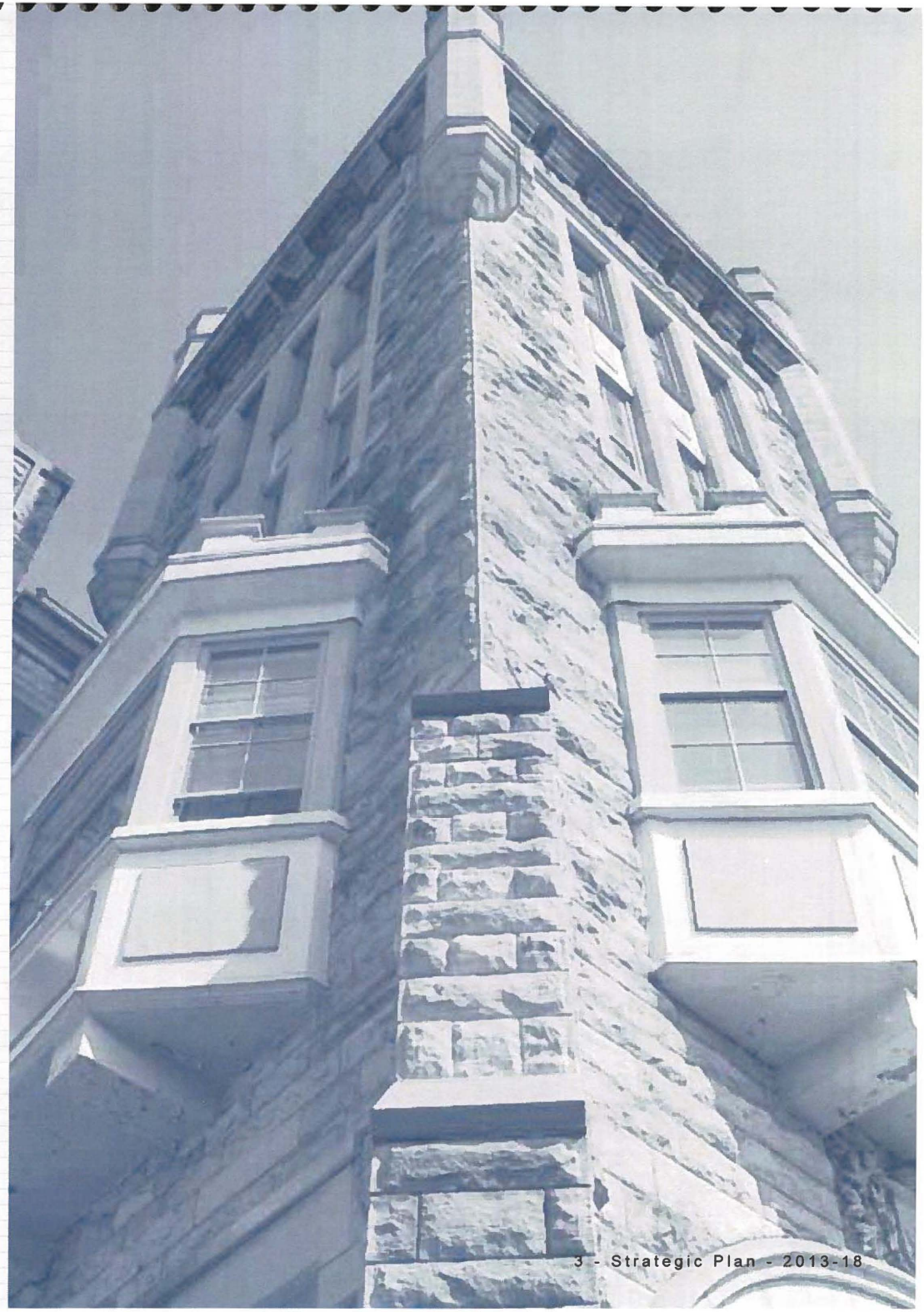
# OVERVIEW

This Strategic Plan is the culmination of a two-year process that began in January 2011 when Lakehead's Board of Governors first turned their attention to laying the groundwork for the 2013 to 2018 period.

Their initial efforts became the draft Strategic Plan which was released for comment in April 2012. From April until November, the Board of Governors and senior administration engaged the entire University, and the broader communities in both Thunder Bay and Orillia, in a discussion aimed at defining a fresh vision for Lakehead University.

The consultation was a resounding success, resulting in a plan that is more complete, more nuanced, and more attuned to the University community. It is also one that continues to support the dual governance model of Board and Senate.

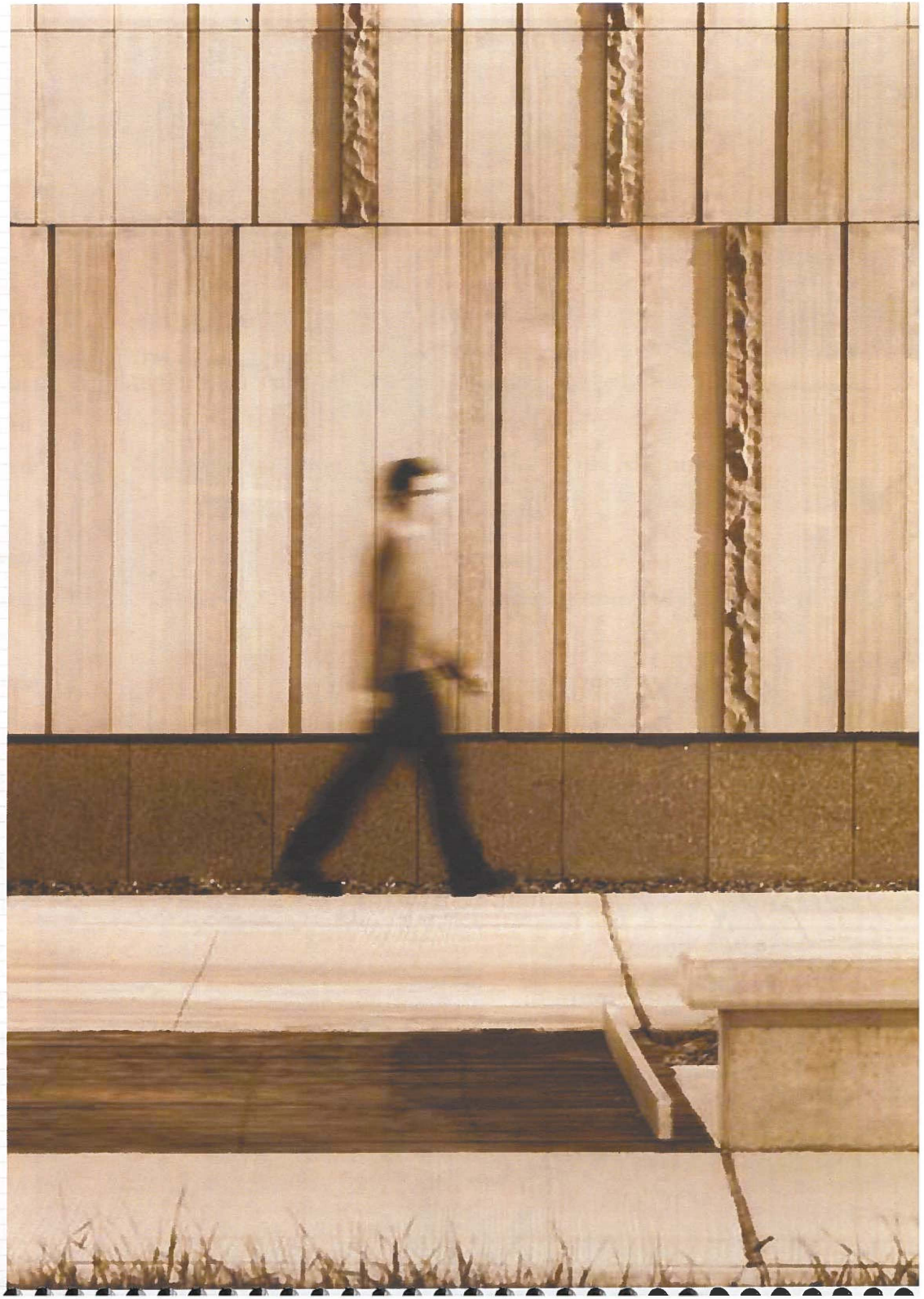
Among the highlights of the consultation process, led by Board Chair Cameron Clark, were over



50 meetings with students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members. The Board was rewarded with the diverse perspectives of these key stakeholders as well as those of individuals unconnected to the University who took the time and trouble to read the plan online and forward their thoughts. The ideas the Board received have been incorporated into the updated plan and will help shape the direction of the University.

The evolution of the Strategic Plan also coincided with a major re-branding initiative designed to identify what we value as an organization. The responses to the simultaneous branding consultation formed the basis of a new Vision and Mission, unveiled for the first time in this Strategic Plan. These core elements of Lakehead's approach to learning and scholarship have been enhanced by a Belief statement revolving around the heartfelt conviction that, "Our students make Lakehead University different."

The task of writing the plan is now complete and the Mission, Vision, and Belief statements are firmly in place. But this achievement is just the beginning. The Board of Governors is ready to lead the implementation of the plan's five strategic actions and nearly 50 initiatives on behalf of the entire University community. And when we celebrate our 50th anniversary in 2015, we will also be celebrating a transformed Lakehead.



## VISION

To provide a transformative university experience that is far from ordinary.

## MISSION

To be recognized as an innovative comprehensive university that provides an education that is about how to think, not what to think.

## BELIEF

We believe our students 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 our students of many cultures and many nations. We believe that our students are passionate about both their own individuality and their communities. We believe in our students.

# WHY DO WE NEED A STRATEGIC PLAN?

The Strategic Plan provides clear measures for success and establishes the basis for monitoring and accountability.

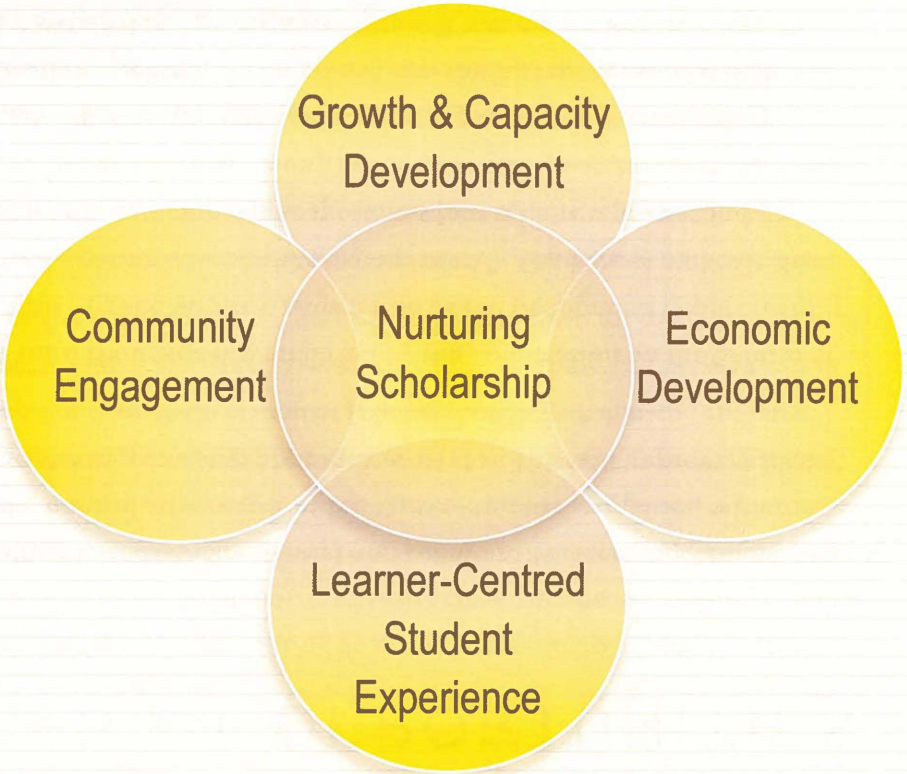
Strategic planning is an evolving process that begins by defining a collective and worldly vision for the future that reflects the dreams and actions of Lakehead's 10,000 students, faculty, and staff, and 50,000 alumni. As we approach our 50th anniversary in 2015, the Strategic Plan offers a way to consolidate our achievements and show the world that we are a place that creates unconventional thinkers who are transforming the way we live. By charting Lakehead's direction and the goals it seeks to achieve, the Strategic Plan provides clear measures for success and establishes the basis for monitoring and accountability. That is the task of this document.

The Strategic Plan becomes reality through operational plans, like the Academic Plan, which articulate how the vision is to be realized, and integrated planning and budgeting which establishes and funds priorities.

This Strategic Plan is built around five major interrelated and interconnected components. They should be seen not as directions, or even as pillars, but rather as interlocking circles. A clear sign of their interdependence is the fact that many of our initiatives support more than one component.

Fierce pride in our students and the determination to see them succeed sets Lakehead apart. This is evident in everything from our new mission to the exciting changes we have made over the last decade including the opening of the Orillia campus, the establishment of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM), and the approval of the new Faculty of Law. These changes are enhancing Lakehead's reputation and attracting increasing numbers of students from southern Ontario, throughout Canada, and across the world.

At the same time we recognize that the next decade will bring a major set of challenges and opportunities – working within budget constraints, fostering sustainability, maintaining comprehensiveness, and responding to the needs and aspirations of an increasingly diverse and technologically-savvy student body. Lakehead must also meet our partners' expectations that we take the lead in facilitating social justice, greater access to education, and economic development.



# TAKING ON A NEW SET OF CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

At Lakehead, we're at our best when facing a new challenge. Give us a problem and we'll come up with an innovative solution. Our unconventional approach to teaching and research helps us transform challenges into opportunities for our students, partners, and communities.

The previous Strategic Plan made comprehensiveness a major priority and with the new Faculty of Law, Lakehead now has the breadth of a comprehensive university. The first challenge recognizes that Lakehead University is a smaller institution and that true comprehensiveness cannot be achieved without adding the depth to go with that breadth. The foundation of Lakehead's approach to all its challenges is the recognition that everything flows from scholarship. It is why we exist, how we grow, why students come, and how the community gains. NURTURING SCHOLARSHIP will strike a balance between teaching and research, champion the development of Centres of Excellence, and focus on the continued development of our faculty.

The Lakehead student's educational experience must be delivered in a seamless manner. For this to happen, the experiences outside the class must be just as unique and exhilarating as inside the class. The strategic direction LEARNER-CENTRED STUDENT EXPERIENCE combines a culture based on experiential and collaborative learning, enhanced by the natural advantages of the University's two campuses, with the principles of a one-stop approach to service. This will improve students' success and make their time at Lakehead unforgettable.

Our third challenge is symbolized by the Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services, known also as the Drummond Report (http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/reformcommission/). The Report makes it clear that we are in an era where most new jobs require a postsecondary education and many of today's graduates will go on to careers in areas that don't currently exist, making an expansion of postsecondary education essential. At the same time, the current provincial deficit and the provincial budget requirements will mean a prolonged effort by government to reduce the cost of postsecondary education. This means that Lakehead University must simultaneously grow and become more effective in the way student and taxpayer funds are used. The strategic direction, GROWTH AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT, establishes the framework for how we can meet that challenge.

The fourth challenge is driven by Lakehead University's long-term commitment to an active relationship with our communities. We are already a national leader in innovative community-based research and

community service learning. NOSM, the Faculty of Law, and the Orillia campus were all responses to community expectations rather than internal Lakehead initiatives. This makes COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT an important social mission consistent with Lakehead University's values and history. It is also a matter of critical strategic importance to the University's future in light of a long-term demographic decline in Northwestern Ontario. We must find ways to make university education a real prospect for students. This is especially true for Aboriginal students who are currently half as likely to have attained a university degree as non-Aboriginal students. In the next two decades, the number of people aged 15-24 in Northwestern Ontario is predicted to decline by about 20%, while Aboriginal people will constitute 40% of this age group. Canada's treaty obligations and Lakehead's emphasis on social justice reinforce the desirability of actively engaging Aboriginal peoples within our constitutional framework.

The importance of any university to the social and economic development of its communities cannot be overstated. University members' purchasing power brings money to local economies. Universities also nurture arts and culture and provide students with essential skills and knowledge. The final challenge is wedding the transfer of knowledge, every university's core mission, to the specific circumstances of Northwestern Ontario and Simcoe County. This can best be achieved by making the University's commitment to ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT a strategic priority. Lakehead will combine research with innovation and education with professional development to make a positive contribution to the economies of our communities while simultaneously providing new career opportunities to our graduates.

The five components of this Strategic Plan represent three interlocking motivations. The first, to seek excellence, is an internal motivation to attract, develop, and maintain great faculty, enterprising students, and committed staff. It is reflected in the Nurturing Scholarship and Learner-Centred Student Experience components. The second, growth and development, outlines the University's capacity-building aspirations and identifies the supports, infrastructure, and people needed to make these aspirations a reality. The third centres on giving back to the community by having a social purpose that builds on, and occasionally transcends, our academic mission. This will be accomplished through dynamic Community Engagement and Economic Development. It is the interaction between these motivations that brings the University's mission, and this Strategic Plan, to life.

# THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE

1

## Nurturing Scholarship

Teaching, research, and service form the three pillars upon which universities achieve their twin objectives of expanding and communicating knowledge. The term scholarship was chosen for this direction because it accurately reflects the Board's belief that teaching and research, although they may be seen as separate activities, are inextricably linked and driven by a common focus on learning.

2

## Learner-Centred Student Experience

The Lakehead Experience must flow both from its history and its mission. Increasing diversity and a clear commitment to helping students succeed will create a transformative student experience. Lakehead University offers unrivaled opportunities for life experiences that are far from ordinary. A clear example of this is the active student involvement in Lakehead's varsity athletics program and the program's strong community relationships. The University itself, through the dual focus on one-stop services and giving students the tools to carve their own unique path to success will bring additional richness to the Lakehead Experience.

3

## Growth and Capacity Development

The Board anticipates that by 2018, major new initiatives to attract and keep international, Aboriginal, and graduate students, coupled with the University's successful undergraduate and graduate programs, will result in an overall enrolment of 10,000 students. As a result, Lakehead University will be broader, deeper, and more sustainable.

4

## Community Engagement

At the heart of this component is Lakehead's desire for a relationship with the community. The plan will build a stronger, more vibrant relationship with the community through a "knowledge commons" and a commitment to students who face barriers to postsecondary education. A critical element is expanding working relationships with Aboriginal groups, school boards, municipal governments, non-profit groups, private businesses, and alumni. A comprehensive external relations plan that prepares the University to enter into a significant campaign is integral to greater community engagement.

5

## Economic Development

Lakehead is directly involved with economic development in four major ways beginning with the positive financial impact on the community stemming from the purchasing and spending of University staff, faculty, and students. We provide trained graduates for new jobs created by the knowledge economy. Our faculty and staff enrich the community through their active involvement and support of art, music, culture, and recreation. Our research fosters innovation that will lead to the emergence of new companies and new industries. This component recognizes these benefits are part of the University's *raison d'être* and not simply an accidental by-product.

# NURTURING SCHOLARSHIP

## STRATEGIC ACTION:

**Lakehead University will be recognized for the excellence of its scholarship, the cohesive integration of teaching, learning, and research, the fostering of intellectual freedom, and the incorporation of disciplines into an integrated, multidisciplinary framework.**

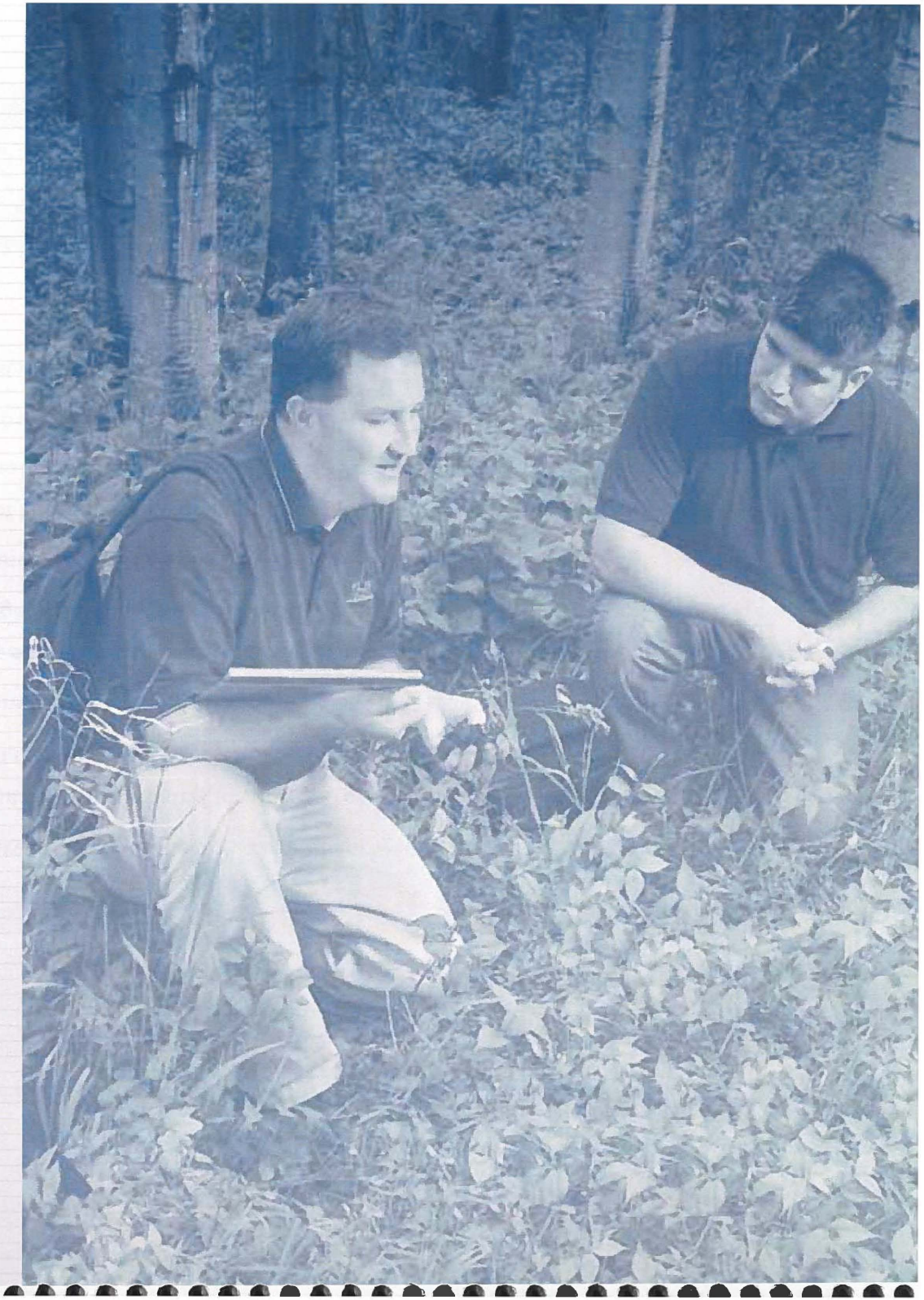
# CREATING UNCONVENTIONAL AND PASSIONATE THINKERS

- Deliver high quality undergraduate and graduate programs.
- Recruit, retain, and support staff and faculty who are committed to the pursuit of excellence in both teaching and research.
- Increase professional and pedagogical supports.
- Increase research, scholarly and creative activity, and facilitate collaborative and community-engaged scholarship opportunities.
- Increase overall research funds received by 2018 to $25 million.
- Develop Centres of Excellence in which graduate studies, research funding, and community interest intersect in an area of clear expertise.
- Enhance the quality of library resources to foster scholarship.
- Encourage students to think critically and ask questions.

# LEARNER-CENTRED STUDENT EXPERIENCE

## STRATEGIC ACTION:

**Lakehead University students will be offered a unique experience that combines opportunities for an active lifestyle with integrated student supports in a collaborative learning environment. As a result, the modified graduation rate will increase by 3% during the life of this plan.**



# SETTING THE STAGE FOR A COMPELLING EXPERIENCE

- Enhance the development of experiential learning and research, both inside and outside the class.
- Perform well above the Ontario mean for Active and Collaborative Learning as measured by the 2017 National Survey for Student Engagement.
- Make a one-stop approach of easy and convenient access to services the underlying framework for improving interactions with students from enrolment, through their academic career, to graduation.
- Build and maintain an outstanding series of online tools that ensures students can quickly and easily conduct all of their normal university business online.
- Expand the availability of centres and buildings that will be natural gathering places for students such as the proposed Kendaasiwin Centre, a new International House, and a one-stop service centre.
- Foster an environment for success through enhanced support services as exemplified by the activities of the Student Success Centre.
- Seamlessly integrate a global orientation into Lakehead University's student culture, while maintaining social justice, through English as a second language, expanded exchange and transfer programs, and innovative events.
- Introduce students to a wide range of community and extra-curricular opportunities through new partnerships involving Athletics, Recreation, student organizations, the Alumni Association, Student Services and the community.

# GROWTH AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

## STRATEGIC ACTION:

**Lakehead University will achieve overall enrolment in excess of 10,000 students by 2018. As a result, Lakehead University will be broader, deeper, and more sustainable.**

# THE PATH TO A BIGGER AND BETTER UNIVERSITY

- Actively recruit new students from other regions in Ontario, other provinces in Canada, and other countries around the world.
- Increase international enrolment to 10% of overall enrolment by 2018.
- Increase the number of Aboriginal students by more than 150 over the term of the plan.
- Increase educational opportunities for students in Northwestern Ontario and Simcoe County. By 2018, the percentage of students from these areas attending university will be close to the provincial average and Lakehead University will remain their premier university of choice.
- Develop more partnerships offering other postsecondary students a seamless path to a university degree.
- Provide the infrastructure, student supports, and additional people and equipment needed to stimulate enrolment increases.
- Establish and execute a comprehensive external relations plan that prepares Lakehead University to undertake a significant fundraising campaign.
- Ensure that our underlying rate of growth in revenues and expenditures is equal through a combination of creating new sources of revenue and prudent management. Additional revenue sources could include non-degree and continuing education programs, and increased opportunities for self-sustained research services.
- Develop and implement a multiyear capital plan to build new and upgrade existing infrastructure to meet the objectives of the Academic Plan and to enhance student experience.
- Ensure an orderly plan for ongoing maintenance and renovation of existing physical facilities.

# 4

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## STRATEGIC ACTION:

**Lakehead University will engage in authentic and meaningful partnerships with individuals, alumni, Aboriginal communities, NGOs, governments, businesses, and associations with whom we share a common vision and interest.**

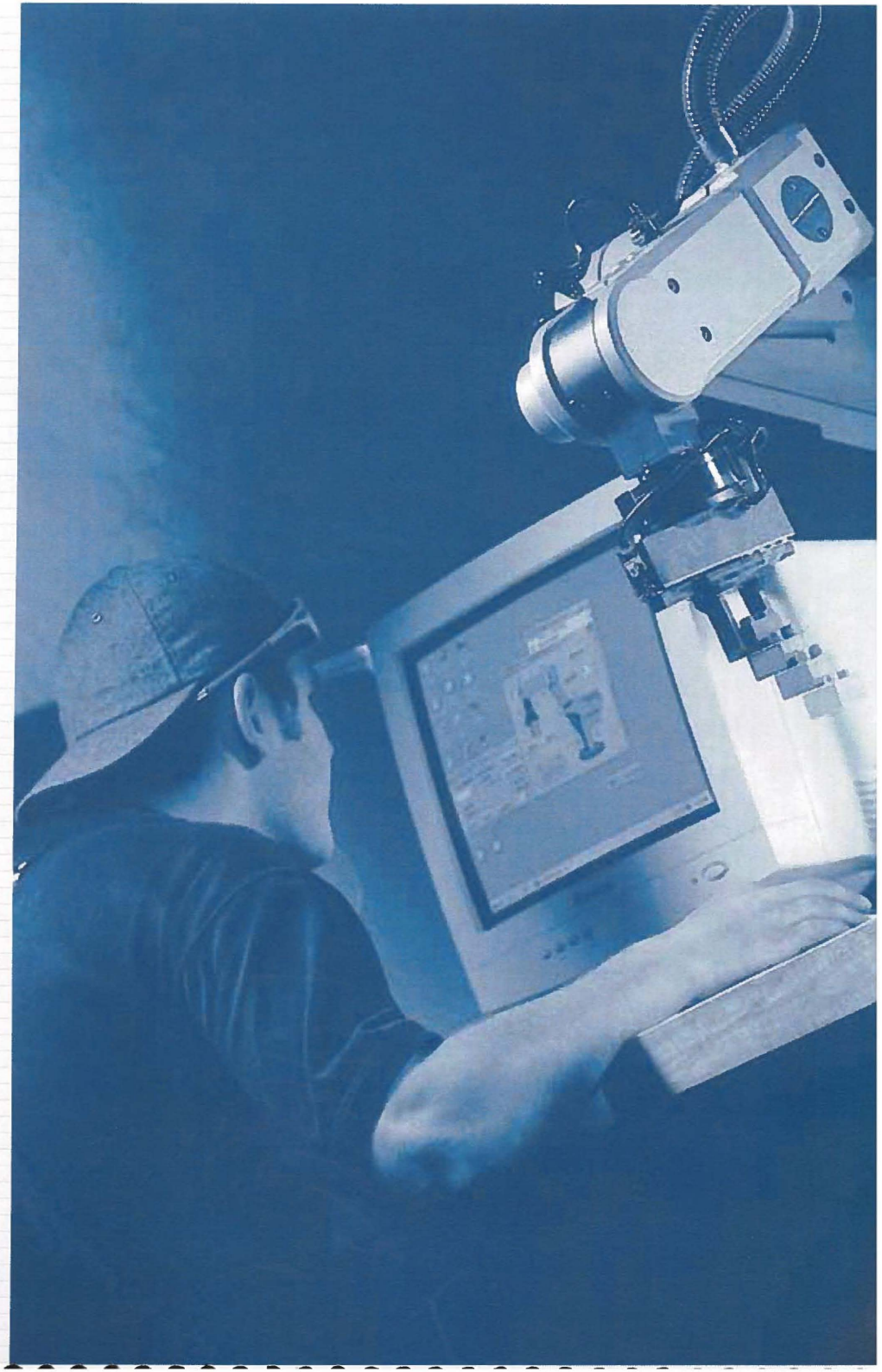
# OPENING DOORS AND CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITIES

- Include a "Knowledge Commons" through which the University maintains and showcases music, art, artifacts, culture, language, and indigenous knowledge on behalf of the community as part of the plans for the proposed Kendaasiwin Centre.
- Treat the "Knowledge Commons" as a focal point for the development and expansion of partnerships that simultaneously expand scholarship and engage the community.
- Plan and celebrate the 50th Anniversary in 2015, which will dramatically increase the percentage of alumni who are engaged with the University.
- Continue to foster and develop the special relationship between Lakehead's varsity teams and the community.
- Extend a comprehensive university experience to students living in communities outside Thunder Bay and Orillia through the innovative use of online technology and satellite classrooms.
- Expand the Achievement Program, which includes:
  - Partnerships with school boards to provide a selection of youth-oriented opportunities that make it clear that university is an achievable goal for all who have the ability;
  - A tuition-credit program that provides financial support to students who participate in the Achievement Program; and
  - Increased bursaries, enhanced child care, and other student supports for adult learners.
- Increase opportunities for students currently facing educational barriers to enrolment in graduate studies and professional programs.
- Establish legal assistance services available to the community through the new Faculty of Law.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## STRATEGIC ACTION:

**To contribute to and support the social and economic prosperity of Northern Ontario and Simcoe County communities through research, education, knowledge transfer, the training of highly-qualified personnel, commercialization, and Centres of Excellence.**



# TRANSFORMING THE ECONOMIES OF CENTRAL AND NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO

- Develop a Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Mining and Exploration (CESME) that will provide opportunities to our graduates and enhance mining in Northern Ontario and internationally.
- Investigate and begin to develop other Centres of Excellence that emphasize sustainability in areas such as forest development, fresh water, and communities.
- Actively support the development of the Northern Policy Institute.
- Continue to support the commercialization of research through patents and start-up companies.
- Develop highly skilled, entrepreneurial, ethical, critical, and creative thinkers that sustain and grow healthy economies in Northwestern Ontario and Simcoe County.
- Develop community-based partnerships to create and maintain the knowledge-based jobs our graduates and partners value. Ensure diligent long- and short-term strategic planning that uses resources available for reliable planning such as labour force projections and the recommendations of the economic round tables.

# APPENDIX A - MILESTONES FOR SUCCESS

## Nurturing Scholarship

- Increase overall research funds received to $25 Million
- Expand research, scholarly, and creative activity
- Introduce Centres of Excellence
- Active and Collaborative Learning score will be above the provincial average on the 2017 NSSE administration

## Learner-Centred Student Experience

- Graduation rate (modified) will increase 3% from 2013 - 2018
- The three year moving average of Lakehead University's employment rate two years after graduation from an undergraduate program will be equal to or higher than the three year moving average of the provincial average employment rate two years after graduation from an undergraduate program
- Implement a one-stop framework for service

## Growth and Capacity Development

- Fall/Winter enrolment will reach 10,000 students by 2018
- International enrolment will constitute 10% of overall enrolment by 2018
- 70% of Northwestern Ontario university students will attend Lakehead
- A rising percentage of Simcoe County university students will attend Lakehead
- The number of students transferring from college to Lakehead University will increase
- The rate of growth in revenue will be equal to the rate of growth in expenditure

## Community Engagement

- Increase the percentage of students in Northwestern Ontario and Simcoe County who attend university (no current data. Must develop a new measure.)
- Increase the number of Aboriginal students by more than 150 over the term of the plan
- Expand the Achievement Program
- Double the percentage of alumni who are engaged with the University
- 60% of the Lakehead University student population will continue to be comprised of first generation students (students for whom neither their mother nor their father has a university degree)

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