

November 9, 2016

Dear students, faculty and staff,

If you're looking to broaden your horizons or simply for a change in perspective, look ahead to Western's [fourth annual International Week](#) which gets underway November 21-25.

This week-long event celebrates diversity and intercultural learning across our campus while raising awareness about the opportunities for students, faculty and staff to participate in international learning experiences at home and abroad. Visit <http://www.internationalweek.uwo.ca/schedule.html> for a list of events and activities with something for everyone — from cultural and food-related experiences to a [Passport Contest](#) featuring great prizes and a chance to win a \$500 scholarship.

Since Western International (WI) was created five years ago to promote global citizenship and to enhance our university's international profile, we have made tremendous strides forward as an institution.

For instance, consider that in 2010-11, less than 3% of Western's incoming undergraduate class was comprised of international students, and fewer than 3% of our students participated in international learning activities.

Today, more than 11% of our first-year students come from abroad and another 10% come from Canadian provinces outside Ontario. Student participation in international experiences has doubled to more than 6% during the same period, thanks in part to five new student exchange partnerships in Australia, six in the UK, and 14 more at institutions around the world. Among the dozens of new initiatives across campus that have contributed to this success, the International Learning Award (aka, "Boarding Pass") and the Global Opportunities Award are two excellent examples.

The [Boarding Pass](#) is available to full-time undergraduate students in second year who plan to pursue an international learning experience in their third year of study. Students with a cumulative 80% average with a full-time course load at the end of Year 2 are automatically eligible for a \$1,000 award to help finance an international learning experience. This year, 80 students took advantage of this award and interest in the program is growing.

Meanwhile, the [Global Opportunities Awards](#) is a \$1,000 scholarship to support student participation in exchanges, study abroad programs, international field courses, summer programs, international community engaged learning, field research and more. Full-time undergraduate and graduate students who have completed their first year of study at Western are eligible to apply, and awards are based on academic achievement and a statement outlining how the experience will contribute to your development as a global citizen, what you expect to learn, and how you will be an effective ambassador for Western. Response to this program has been very positive with more than \$1 million awarded since it was created in 2011. Last year, more than 500 students applied for 200 awards, and we are working hard to identify donors interested in supporting more growth in this popular program.

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Among the exciting events happening during International Week is the [World's Challenge Challenge](#) (WCC). Launched three years ago, this annual competition invites student teams of three to think of a problem the world is facing, then present their solutions to a panel of judges. Last year more than 30 teams vied for prize money (\$1,000 for each winning team member) they could use to fund an international learning experience. This year, the final presentations get underway at 4:00 pm November 24 at Von Kuster Hall at the Don Wright Faculty of Music Building.

Western is also taking the World's Challenge Challenge global by opening the competition up to student teams from other universities across Canada and around the world. The first annual [International World's Challenge Challenge](#) will take place in May 2017 as part of our on-campus celebrations of Canada's sesquicentennial. Western's top WCC team will go head-to-head with winning teams from other universities that hold their own qualifying competitions. National and international contenders will converge on campus to compete for \$30,000 in prize money. The vision for this exciting competition is to create an annual event that will grow to attract the brightest students from around the globe to our campus.

These are just a few examples of what's making Western a more global institution. For a more complete picture of Western's worldwide activities — including our 250 international partnerships and an interactive map of where our international students come from — visit WI's online [Dashboard](#). WI and the Department of Communications & Public Affairs also hosts another interactive web page called [Where's Western](#) where students, faculty and staff can post short videos of their international learning experiences.

I encourage you to find a way to participate in International Week, and let me take this opportunity to thank the thousands of faculty, staff, students and alumni who are helping Western achieve its global aspirations. With the progress we've made to date, Western has already differentiated itself from our national peers and we are on track to becoming a national leader in the realm of international education.

Sincerely,



Amit Chakma

President & Vice-Chancellor

P.S.,

This week (November 8-11) I am very proud to note that a group of Western's top young scholars are in Dublin, Ireland to celebrate their achievements at the 2016 Undergraduate Awards (UA) Global Summit. Earlier this year, [UA recognized 33 academic papers by 29 Western students as "Highly Commended."](#) distinguishing them among the top 10% of their subject category within a pool of more than 5,000 submissions from entrants at more than 250 universities across 39 countries. Through the support of the Provost, Western is pleased to reward the excellence of these students by paying for their trips to the Global Summit. As well, this year's award-winning papers — along with award-winning papers by Western entrants to previous years' UA competitions — are posted online by Western Libraries at our [Scholarship@Western website](#).