

## CONTEXT

As I report to the Board on my objectives for 2023-2024, it is important to note that work will also continue on some objectives from past years, including:

- Generating a 15% increase in international students, 2% growth in graduate students, stability in overall domestic enrolments, and a 2% increase in student credit hour equivalents (per the 2023-2024 budget submission to the Board of Governors);
- Maintaining growth in total Tri-Agency research funding compared to a rolling multi-year average;
- Implementing and tracking against benchmarks in the 2022 Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Oppression Action Plan;
- Remaining on track in implementing the *Sustainability Action Plan* to reach a 25% reduction in the University's GHG emissions over the course of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan's timeline; and
- Making progress on the newly established *2023-2026 Academic Plan* that identifies project leads and several benchmarks.

Updates on progress toward these objectives from past years will be provided throughout the year as part of the Board meeting material, including in the Performance Measurement Framework, reports from individual areas, and as appropriate, my own discussions with the Board.

Separate from those past objectives, my approved objectives for 2023-2024 are guided by three main areas of emphasis:

1. The 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, *kahkiyaw kiwâhkômâkaninawak: All Our Relations*, and more specifically, its five pillars:
  - Discovery;
  - Truth and Reconciliation;
  - Well Being and Belonging;
  - Environment and Climate Action; and
  - Impact and Identity.
2. Priorities identified from the January 2023 Board of Governors' strategic retreat, principally:
  - Identifying alternative revenue generation, including for ancillary services;
  - Managing reputation internally and externally; and
  - Being competitive in attracting students.
3. Priorities identified in the University's Risk Registry:
  - Budget/Funding;
  - Student Recruitment and Retention;
  - IT Security and Privacy;
  - Labour Relations;
  - IT Security and Innovation;
  - Research Oversight;

- Space and Facilities Management;
- Strategic Communication;
- Health and Safety; and
- Student/Faculty and Staff Mental Health.

These specific and annually focused 2023-2024 objectives, which reflect significant input from members of the University Executive Team and those who report to them, are categorized under seven areas and follow below.

## **2023-2024 OBJECTIVES**

### **Objective 1: Establish comprehensive strategies, with performance targets by faculty/administrative unit, to improve both employee engagement survey and student satisfaction/experience results**

High morale and strong engagement are key components to every successful organization. In terms of the University of Regina in particular, they are essential to addressing the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan institutional priority of *well being and belonging*, and can be enhanced through the *effective use of data* as emphasized in the Board of Governor's strategic planning retreat report.

In such a context, this objective is related to two main areas of focus: following up meaningfully on the March 2022 Employee Engagement Survey while preparing for and administering the next one, and implementing key student satisfaction components of the newly developed 2023-2026 Academic Plan.

With respect to the Employee Engagement strategy, measures of success will be to:

- Hone the employee engagement survey tool in advance of the March 2024 follow-up survey to more accurately identify types of employees, such as whether they are full-time/continuing, part-time, or limited contract;
- Refine the employee engagement scoring system to establish more precise ratings without negating meaningful comparison to the 2022 survey;
- Administer the 2024 survey and provide results to individual units; and
- Define targets to help establish the survey tool as one means for performance assessment among University leaders.

As the University continues working toward settling the outstanding URFA Collective Agreement, addressing these measures related to Employee Engagement will: advance the Strategic Plan priority of *well being and belonging*; address the Board's strategic retreat emphasis on *managing reputation internally and externally*; and mitigate risks related to *budget/financing* and *labour relations*.

With respect to a strategy related to the 2023-2026 *Academic Plan* framework, measures of success will be to:

- Identify the priority recommendations that will best support the Academic Plan's two overarching aims of enhancing student satisfaction, support, and success, and establishing innovative programming;
- Define the actions required and those responsible for implementing these recommendations to best achieve the relevant targets included in the Performance Measurement Framework,

ensuring that Truth and Reconciliation, Indigenous Engagement, and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion are appropriately taken into consideration; and

- Implement to the degree possible over the year these key recommendations in areas such as recruitment and retention, teaching and learning, academic programming, and student success and experience.

Completion of these measures related to the Academic Plan will set the foundation for longer-term improvements in the Strategic Plan area of *impact and identity* because better results will enhance reputation. It will also address the board retreat priorities of *managing reputation internally and externally, being competitive in attracting students, and collecting and using data more strategically*, while mitigating risk relating to *budget/funding and student recruitment and retention*.

### **Objective 2: Establish the principles and template towards the development of a new Budget Model that aligns with the Board-approved principles**

This objective recognizes – and is designed to help address – the challenges the University faces both at the institutional level and at the Faculty/unit level in the preparation and implementation of its annual budget. In doing so, it will work toward the Strategic Plan priority of *Impact and Identity*, address the Board strategic retreat priorities of *revenue generation and attracting students*, and mitigate risk around *budget/funding and strategic communication*. This will be especially important as the University continues discussions with the provincial government regarding a potential new multi-year funding agreement.

Measures for the year related to developing a new Budget Model (the full implementation of which is anticipated to be a multi-year process) will be to:

- Critically examine existing processes and identify areas to maximize efficiencies and enhance budgeting practices;
- Develop the principles for a new Budget Model that will take a holistic, institutional approach and move away from the specific Faculty/unit focus where appropriate; and
- Ensure that the new Budget Model will allocate resources and adjust services and supports wherever possible to enhance services for students, staff, and faculty within available resources.

### **Objective 3: Establish a Strategic Enrolment Plan (SEP) for the University and implement key elements**

Beginning in 2018 Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) consultants undertook a process to establish an SEP, which engendered outcomes such as a retention plan, a retention advisory committee, and a recruitment advisory committee. The overall outcomes arising from RNL's work, however, were not achieved on a scale that will best serve the interests of the University.

For that reason, this objective is being pursued in order to: act on the Strategic Plan priority of improving student *well being and belonging*; address the Board strategic retreat emphasis on *better attracting and retaining students and improving the collation, sharing and use of data*; and mitigate risk relating to *budget/funding and student recruitment and retention*.

Measures related to this objective will be to:

- Develop a comprehensive SEP for the University that includes executive oversight, individual and Faculty/unit responsibilities, and a planning program that is data-driven, cyclical, and continuous;
- Implement where feasible over the next year the priority recommendations;
- Complete preparations to implement full-year registration for fall 2024, which will result in better course planning and assist students in balancing their on- and off-campus activities and obligations; and
- Reorganize and administratively relocate Enrolment Services from Student Affairs to the Registrar's Office.

**Objective 4: Establish a clear path/strategy for capital builds and renovation and for supporting priorities including for lab space, upgrading of classrooms and other space, IT infrastructure, and use of ancillary services/space**

Currently, the University lacks an overall guide or scoring system to help strategically assess and act in response to capital requirements and opportunities. As a result, the institution often appears reactive in terms of the creation, upgrade, and evolving use of facilities in support of the academic mission of teaching, research, and service. Since financial and employee capacity cannot address the large list of needs, an effective means of assessing and triaging these needs is essential to help colleagues better frame requests, and deliver and understand results.

Developing such a strategy will: advance Strategic Plan priorities that include, most readily, *discovery* (with improvements to research and teaching-related space); help address the Board strategic retreat priority of *revenue generation*, or at least, *greater cost efficiency*; and act upon the Board priorities of *attracting and retaining more students*, and making *better-informed, data-driven decisions*. It will also help mitigate risks in *budget/financing, student recruitment and retention, IT security and innovation, and space and facilities management*.

Recognizing that developing and implementing such a plan is necessarily a long-term multi-year endeavour, measures related to this objective over the coming year will be to:

- Set criteria to score projects according to factors that include addressing student satisfaction/service, enhancing institutional expertise and identity, and advancing research, scholarship, teaching and pedagogical innovation;
- Generate and disseminate a comprehensive capital plan with methods and criteria for decision making and timelines for progress; and
- Develop a strategy with specific timelines for upgrading outdated and vulnerable IT infrastructure to improve in areas that include: student processing; cyber security; internal communication and workflow efficiency; better using underutilized space; and enhancing results in ancillary operations.

**Objective 5: Complete Phase 2 of the University's identity project, and produce multi-year strategies for fundraising and alumni relations related to institutional priorities, with benchmarks to define success**

Over the past year, the University Advancement & Communications unit worked to enhance the University's reputation and reach by launching Phase 1 of an institutional identity project, and developing clear priorities for fundraising centred on institutional strengths. The area's reporting structure was altered in early 2023, with Communications and Marketing now reporting to the Chief Governance Officer, and the Advancement/Alumni Relations area now reporting to the Vice-President (Administration).

The progress made last year, coupled with the new reporting structure, affords an especially good opportunity to pursue this bipartite objective for 2023-24. Achieving this objective will: advance the Strategic Plan priority of *impact and identity*; address the Board retreat emphasis on identifying means of *revenue generation, managing reputation internally and externally, and being competitive in attracting students*; and help mitigate risk related to *budget/funding, student recruitment and retention, and strategic communication*.

With respect to the institutional identity, Phase 1 last year involved establishing a tagline reflecting the University of Regina's character/ethos. Through extensive marketing, "Go Far Together" is becoming widely known, especially because its explanation is grounded in the University's prairie location and long-time motto: "As One Who Serves."

Measures related to completing Phase 2 of the identity project will be to:

- Establish greater consistency in the look, feel and content of "Go Far, Together" messaging and marketing;
- Implement a sustained marketing campaign to strengthen the "Go Far, Together" brand among current and potential students, faculty, staff, alumni, and other stakeholders; and
- Develop and implement fulsome communication plans to advance recognition and reputation for each of the three identity pillars: health and wellness; career readiness/experiential learning; and partners in Truth and Reconciliation.

With respect to alumni relations, the University has long struggled to develop an engaged and wide-ranging alumni base, despite having graduated more than 80,000 students from around the world over the past five decades. In part, this relates to the Alumni and Community Engagement area's funding and administrative structures. And with respect to fundraising, the University has been challenged in recent years to develop a compelling comprehensive campaign – a challenge that can now be more easily surmounted in light of the work being done to advance the new institutional identity.

Measures related to fundraising and alumni relations strategies for the coming year will be to:

- Complete and begin implementing a multi-year fundraising strategy, based upon the clearly established, well-aligned institutional priorities of Student Experience, Truth and Reconciliation, Health, and Leading the West. The strategy will include targets to define success;
- Establish a multi-year plan to better project the University's story and engage a larger number of alumni locally, provincially, nationally, and internationally; and
- Re-focus the activities of Alumni and Community Engagement to better support the implementation of the alumni relations plan.

**Objective 6: Be more proactive than in the past at pursuing opportunities for government funding and university/industry/business partnerships**

The University is often reactive rather than proactive in acting upon opportunities for partnerships with government and other organizations or industries. With a Commercialization Officer now hired within the newly formed Office of Research Partnerships & Innovation, and with increased capacity planned in government relations through the hiring of a Government Relations Advisor, the opportunity exists to better seek out opportunities for government funding and entrepreneurial partnerships.

Achieving this objective will: advance the Strategic Plan priorities of *discovery* (through partnerships to support research) and *identity and impact*; address Board strategic retreat priorities of *revenue generation* and *building reputation*; and address risks that include *budget/financing* and *strategic communication*.

Measures for the year related to this objective will be to:

- Develop and begin implementing a strategy (with baseline and targets) for working with various levels of government to identify and act upon opportunities for mutually beneficial funding partnerships that will support the University's academic programming, research enterprises, and facilities; and
- Develop and begin implementing a strategy (with baseline and targets) for working with business and industry as well as other organizations to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities related to the University's research enterprise.

### **Objective 7: Begin implementing priority activities from the Indigenous Engagement Strategic Plan**

On track to be launched in Fall 2023, the University's Indigenous Engagement Strategic Plan will identify activities to advance Truth and Reconciliation and Indigenous engagement within all sectors of the University, and extending into the communities that surround and support our institution. Making meaningful progress on these activities will help address the Strategic Plan priorities of *Truth and Reconciliation* and *impact and identity*, and better position the University to attract more Indigenous students, who represent the fastest-growing (and a traditionally underserved) demographic in the province. Success will also advance the University in areas that include the Board strategic retreat priorities of *revenue generation*, *building reputation*, and *better preparing students for success*, and will mitigate risk in *budget/financing* and *student recruitment and retention*.

Recognizing that implementing all aspects of the Indigenous Engagement Strategic Plan will be a long-term process, measures for the year related to this objective will be to:

- Identify priority activities and initiatives as well as benchmarks or targets for success;
- Identify those at the University responsible for moving the initiatives forward;
- Begin implementing these initiatives wherever possible; and
- Develop a timeline and preliminary implementation plan for longer-term initiatives that cannot yet be undertaken.