President’s Report to the Board

For the period from February 27, 2014 – April 25, 2014

Submitted to the Board of Governors
Submitted by Dr. Vianne Timmons, President and Vice-Chancellor

This report summarizes my progress to date on the six key areas of priority related to the Strategic Plan which the Board and I have identified for 2013-2014. It also includes an update on my own academic research program, as well as an overview of University highlights since the beginning of this reporting period.

OUR WORK: Teaching, Research and Public Service

Objective: make the University widely known for its quality of work by promoting and rewarding the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, public service and administration

Work continued to ensure the efficiency and accountability of our operations, and to promote the quality of the work done by our faculty and staff:

- With the provincial budget having been released on March 19, the University’s budget committee worked with all areas on campus to finalize their submissions and develop a balanced budget for 2014-15. That proposed budget is included in the Board package for consideration.
- At its February 26 meeting, University Council passed a motion by the Council Committee on Budget calling for the President to recommend to the Board that next year’s budget principles include an overarching principle of transparency.
- Through the policy renewal project, a total of 65 policies have been revised or newly created and posted to the new website, and 60 remain on the old site and in the process of being reviewed. An update was sent to campus on March 31 listing newly posted policies and highlighting a few of note. A more detailed information item on this project is included in the Board package.
- There has also been a great deal of activity with regard to the recommendations received in both the Provincial Auditor and Crago-Kirk reports on research. The Provincial Auditor’s Report on Research task force met twice in April, received the Council Committee on Research sub-committee’s report on the Crago-Kirk review, and provided input and recommendations regarding priorities and budget.
- The internal review of research centres/institutes has been completed, and terms of reference have been developed for the forthcoming external review by Dr. Martin Kirk.
Work continues on recommendations regarding patent and commercialization, as well as tactical research plans and reviewing research metrics.

In early April, the Vice-President (Research) held a public forum on research to update the campus community on the progress on the Provincial Auditor and Crago-Kirk reports.

One of the Provincial Auditor’s recommendations is that the Board of Governors receive regular reports on the Strategic Research Plan, so future reports will contain brief updates on the three signature research themes of: Sustainable Development; Human Development; and Creativity and Informatics.

Within these themes, five “tactical areas of strength” have been emerged naturally from the Strategic Research Plan as a function of their sheer productivity, relative distinctiveness to the University of Regina, and critical mass. These five tactical areas of strength are: Big Data; Stress, Anxiety and Pain; Public Safety; Energy, Environment, and Water; and First Nations, Métis and Inuit Research. Future Board reports will place a special focus on updating the Board on developments in these areas, while still taking into account research being done that is not specifically part of these tactical areas of strength, but which nonetheless is a key part of the University’s research enterprise.

Short-listed candidates were interviewed for the Director of the Office of Research, Innovation, and Partnerships, and a decision is pending.

The University of Regina Press (formerly the Canadian Plains Research Center), which was re-organized and re-launched last year as part of the ongoing review of research institutes and centres, continued to build its reputation as a centre for academic publishing excellence. At the April 26 Saskatchewan Book Awards, the Press received six awards, including four related to faculty member James Daschuk’s Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life.

Facilities Management has tendered and is evaluating responses from four vendors for the replacement of its nearly 20-year-old information system. Initial indications are that the new system, when implemented, will allow Facilities Management to better serve and communicate with the University community. At the same time, it will cost roughly two-thirds of what the current system does to operate on an annual basis.

Facilities Management has also tendered for consultant support to carry out a unit review of Parking and Transportation Services, and in June will be installing a new software system to replace Campus Security’s outdated and now-unsupported incident-reporting software.

Each year, the University secures its insurance through CURIE (the Canadian Universities Reciprocal Insurance Exchange) – something which allows the University to insure at rates far below market, and receive a dividend-type redistribution of the corporation’s profits. It is of note that the University’s
annual insurance premiums have declined over the past several years despite an increase in insurance costs in general. At the same time, the University’s dividend from CURIE has increased each year.

- Dave Button, Vice-President (Administration), was selected by his western-Canadian peers to assume a University-related appointment as a CURIE Board Director – further recognition of his expertise in the post-secondary financial sector.

- For the past 15 years, the University has conducted an annual survey of mileage and per diem rates for the benefit of all western Canadian universities. The 2014 survey was recently completed and distributed to the other participating institutions.

**Objective: align our array of program offerings to respond to the needs and interests of current and prospective students**

Ensuring that our academic offerings remain relevant and accessible to our students continued to be a key focus:

- Having strong leadership in place in the faculties is crucial, and to that end, decanal searches were a key priority throughout the reporting period. The search for a new Dean of Fine Arts was successful, with Professor Rae Staseson of Concordia University named to the position. The search for a new Dean of Education continued, with a short list developed, and interviews and public presentations scheduled for early May.

- By the time of the Board meeting, the University will have hosted Mary Burgess, Director of Open Education at BCcampus, to discuss open educational resources and the potential they have for to enhance the educational experience for both students and faculty members at the University.

- The President’s Liberal Arts Advisory Group began planning a forthcoming event geared toward promoting the liberal arts among high school guidance counsellors.

- At the February 26 meeting of Council, Council approved the Council Committee on Academic Research’s work plan for the year, which includes identifying and refining a new process for academic unit reviews.

**OUR PEOPLE: Engagement, Diversity, Success, Esteem**

**Objective: foster positive and open employee relations, providing freedom and opportunity for faculty, staff and students to be recognized, heard, and positively engaged in the operations of the University**
Work continued to promote and maintain an environment of openness and positive engagement on campus:

- The Strategic Plan renewal process was formally launched in early April at a well-attended event on campus. Since that time, Dr. Joe Piwowar and the other members of the facilitation team (consisting of faculty members, administrative representatives, an alumni representative, and an undergraduate student) have held a series of consultations with the campus community and external stakeholders. Further input is being provided via a blog on the strategic planning website, the Council Committee on Academic Mission Moodle site, and written submissions.

- At the February 26 meeting of University Council, Council recommended that an elected representative become part of the Strategic Plan facilitation team. This has been done, with Dr. Wes Pearce elected and added to the team.

- A first draft of the new Strategic Plan is expected to be presented to campus for consideration in June, with a final version coming to the Board in the fall.

- The Fall 2014 meeting of Council has been scheduled for September 10. It is expected that the draft Strategic Plan will be a key item on the meeting agenda.

- A public forum on academic freedom was held in March in response to a faculty member’s request.

- Efforts continued to foster the development of a diverse employee group that is representative of the province’s population. As of late April, statistics show that, our workforce comprises:
  - 55.48% women (up from 55.40% in December)
  - 2.83% self-declared Aboriginal (up from 2.42%)
  - 7.90% members of a visible minority (up from 7.36%)
  - 1.83% persons with a disability (down from 2.03)

- The University is implementing a 360-degree feedback process for a number of the President’s direct reports to supplement the existing out-of-scope performance management process.

- Human Resources is now in the initial stages of developing a leadership development program designed to build capacity in the University’s administration for the future.

- On April 17, the University announced a one-time Voluntary Incentive Plan for Retirement, for which 74 longtime faculty and staff members are eligible. Response from employees has been very positive.
Objective: ensure that we recruit, retain and foster the success of a growing and diverse student body

Efforts to recruit, retain and support students continued to have a positive impact on the student population:

- Enrolment as of the fourth week of classes for Winter 2014 had been 12,773 students (an increase of 3.3% over the same time last year), and by the last day of classes in April, it was 12,659 students, or an increase of 3.5% over the end of classes last year. This indicates that our efforts to support and retain our students are paying off, with more and more students remaining enrolled throughout the year.

- In the first half of March, Student Recruitment focused on helping students apply for admission and scholarships prior to the March 15 deadline. In addition, calls were made to all applicants who had not yet sent in all of their documentation. Preparations were also made for the annual open house, which takes place on May 9.

- The number of student applications for Fall 2014 is currently 16% higher than at the same time last year, with the bulk of this increase coming from international students. It is also of note, however, that there is an increase of 13% in the number of applicants from Saskatchewan high schools.

- Dr. Shauneen Pete, Executive Lead – Indigenization, co-ordinated “Imagining Canada’s Future: a First Nations, Métis and Inuit Research Showcase” at First Nations University of Canada in the last week of March. It was very well attended by Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty, staff and students alike.

- Dr. Pete also conducted an educational session for the University of Regina Cheer Team as a means of helping them understand how their well-publicized actions in mid-March had been culturally inappropriate. This incident emphasized how important it is for the University to continue its work to Indigenize campus and make it as welcoming and supportive a place as possible for all students.

- In early April, a career fair was held on campus for students with disabilities.

- On April 9, faculty, staff and students participated in the “Day of Pink” to raise awareness about and take a stand against bullying.

OUR COMMUNITIES: Presence and Partnerships

Objective: promote community involvement in and support of the University

Over the reporting period, promoting the larger community’s engagement with and support of the University remained a priority:
• The fifth annual Inspiring Leadership forum in early March was a sold-out event, with more than 500 people participating from within the province and beyond. Planning has already begun for next year’s event.

• Various other public events took place on campus, including Campion’s 34th annual Nash Lecture, the School of Journalism’s 34th annual Minifie Lecture, the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy’s Tansley Lecture, and the Centre for Continuing Education’s annual Heritage Lecture. These were important means of bringing the larger community to campus.

• In late April, I hosted an event in Calgary to update alumni from the city on the University’s progress over the past few years.

• By the time the Board meets, I will also have participated in “Community Connections” visits to Yorkton and Swift Current in the last week of April.

• Phase 1 of the gateway and wayfinding project – the work at the Kramer Boulevard entry to campus – should be completed by early May. The project remains on budget. The re-opening of this entry to campus will form part of the University’s 40th anniversary celebrations.

• The University remained in close contact with the Ministry of Advanced Education leading up to and after the provincial budget announcement. It is also of note that Minister Norris visited campus at different times over the reporting period.

Objective: Enhance collaboration with and among First Nations University of Canada, Campion and Luther Colleges, and the Institut français

Working with the Federated Colleges and the Institut français was also a key focus over the past two months:

• The relationship between First Nations University of Canada and the University of Regina has been extended under a new Advisory Services Agreement whereby the University will continue to support FNUniv in the areas of management, operations, budget and finance, as well as policy and governance.

• The search for a new President of FNUniv is nearing completion, and formal announcement is expected soon.

• Dr. Allison Fizzard, a longtime faculty member at Campion College, has been appointed Campion’s new Dean effective July 1, 2014. Dr. Fizzard will replace Father Frank Obrigewitsch, SJ, whose term as Dean has come to a close.

• Following a national search, Dr. Sophie Bouffard was appointed Director of the Institut français, completing the implementation of what was the priority recommendation regarding the Institut’s future. Throughout the search process, Associate Vice-President (Academic and Research) Dr. Dena McMartin continued to work with the committee charged with prioritizing and enacting the
other recommendations related to French-language programming at the University.

- The sixth annual Forward Together lecture, sponsored by the University and the three Federated Colleges and organized this year by Luther College, took place on March 26. Featuring Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish, it was the best-attended lecture yet, with close to 500 people present, many from the larger community.

- Stemming from discussions with Dr. Abuelaish while he was on campus for the lecture, the University and the Federated Colleges are exploring the possibility of an agreement with the Daughters for Life foundation to support young women of different faiths from the Middle East in their studies at the University.

- The University and the Federated Colleges have already agreed on a speaker for next year’s lecture – ethnobotanist and historian Dr. Wade Davis.
REPORT ON THE PRESIDENT’S ACADEMIC RESEARCH

This report outlines developments in my academic research program since the last Board report.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

- In March and April, my colleagues and I from the Faculty of Education conducted site interviews in different Saskatchewan communities for our “Voices of the Community” appreciative inquiry that is part of a multi-university national SSHRC-CURA disability policy research project. Interviews will continue in the coming weeks, followed by documentary photography as work continues on the final report and possibly a book.
- As President of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, I chaired several conference calls related to the organization’s business and upcoming conferences.

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

- Over the past two months, I had the opportunity to deliver a number of academic presentations related to my areas of research and professional interest. These presentations included speaking to participants at a workshop on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, guest lecturing for an MBA class on governance, and participating in the forum held on campus regarding academic freedom.
CELEBRATING OUR CAMPUS

This report highlights faculty, staff and student successes as well as some other notable campus events since the last Board report.

FACULTY AND STAFF SUCCESS

- Receptions were held in March to honour two groups of employees – those who had reached long service milestones, and those who had retired from the University during the past year.
- Dr. Brian Sveinson is retiring as Director of Student Services and Counselling at the end of April. Dr. Sveinson has helped thousands of students during his 24 years with the University.
- Bill Sgrazzutti has been re-appointed as University Librarian for a five-year term.
- Dianne Ouellette, Manager of the New Media Studio Lab, has received a $60,000 grant from Canada Council for the Arts to create documentary about her brother who died in an oilfield accident.
- The President’s Teaching and Learning Scholars Research Showcase took place in early April, organized by the Centre for Teaching and Learning. It provided an opportunity for the President’s Teaching and Learning Scholars to share their innovative work in teaching with the campus community.
- The winners of the 2014 Centre for Teaching and Learning Awards have been named:
  - Dr. David Gerhard (Computer Science) – the President’s Award;
  - Dr. Tobias Sperlich (Anthropology) – the Flexible Learning Award;
  - Dr. David Gerhard and Dr. Lisa Watson (Business Administration) – the Innovation in Teaching Award; and
  - Rebecca Caines and Christian Clermont – the New Faculty Award.
- Dr. Stephen Cheng has been appointed for a two-year term as the Centre for Teaching and Learning’s Faculty Associate.
- The recipients of the 2014 Alumni Association Awards of Excellence have been selected. They are:
  - Dr. Mark Brigham (Biology) – the University of Regina Alumni Association Award in Graduate Research Mentorship;
  - Dr. Yiyu Yao (Computer Science) – the University of Regina Alumni Association Award for Excellence in Research;
  - Professor Patricia Elliott (Journalism) – the University of Regina Alumni Association Award for Excellence in Service; and
  - Dr. Cory Butz (Computer Science) – the University of Regina Alumni Association Award for Excellence in Teaching.
The Canadian Library Association named faculty member Cara Bradley of the Dr. John Archer Library the 2014 recipient of the Robert H. Blackburn Distinguished Paper Award, which recognizes the most significant research article published in the previous year by a member of the Association.

The Retail Council of Canada has named the University of Regina Bookstore a finalist for a 2014 Libris Award in the Campus Bookstore category for its role in making quality books available to Canadian readers.

STUDENT AND ALUMNI SUCCESS

University of Regina students did a great deal of charitable work over the past couple of months:
- Engineering and Applied Science students donated to the Regina and District Food Bank through the CANstruction competition;
- Students participated in the Five Days for the Homeless initiative and surpassed their fundraising goal of $25,000; and
- UR Guarantee students organized their third annual Relay for Life in support of the Canadian Cancer Society, bringing their three-year total to more than $100,000 raised.

The annual UR Guarantee celebration was held in early March, with 13 students receiving awards.

Minister Norris was on campus on March 17 to help celebrate the success of the Study Abroad Program, which has seen approximately 800 students spend a semester at universities in other countries over the past four years.

On March 21, graduate students participating in the Shen Kuo research exchange program presented their work to the campus community prior to travelling to Beijing as part of the program.

Journalism student Kristen McEwen won a national award for best photo essay at Canadian Community Newspaper Awards, beating out more than 2,600 other entries. McEwen and her classmate Julia Dima are also in contention for several Saskatchewan Weekly Newspaper Awards.

Through an interdisciplinary collaboration between faculty and students from Engineering, Theatre, Arts Education, and Campion College, a portable, sustainable performance stage has been constructed.

A number of students were honoured at the 39th annual Athletic Awards night, including high jumper Jeremy Eckert, who received the President’s Award for best combining academic and athletic excellence throughout his university career.
CAMPUS EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- It has been officially announced that the University of Regina will host the 2017 National Science Fair, which will involve approximately 1,000 students from across Canada.

- The University has submitted a bid for the 2018 Congress of the Federation of the Humanities and Social Sciences, which brings together approximately 7,000 scholars annually. Preparations are being made for the selection committee’s site visit that will take place in early June.

- The University hosted both the CIS national women’s volleyball and the Canadian University curling championships.

- First Nations University of Canada held its 36th annual pow-wow on April 12 and 13.

- Also in April, the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies held its 5th annual Sports for Life: Indigenous Youth, Health, and the Future of Saskatchewan conference, which is designed to keep Aboriginal high school students engaged in sport. More than 150 students participated.