

President's Report to the Board

For the period from April 26, 2014 – July 9, 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

Ensuring the efficiency and accountability of our operations, as well as promoting the quality of the work done by our faculty and staff, remained priorities over the course of this reporting period:

- After the 2014-15 operating budget was approved by the Board at its last meeting, an open forum was held on campus on May 15 to address faculty, staff and student inquiries. Approximately 60 people were in attendance, and a video of the forum may be viewed at: <http://www2.uregina.ca/yourblog/video-university-of-regina-budget-forum/>
- As part of the University's commitment to enhanced fiscal transparency, Presidential travel expenses dating back to 2008 are now on the website, as are Vice-Presidential travel expenses from January to April 2014. Going forward, Presidential and Vice-Presidential travel expenses will be posted quarterly.
- Through the policy renewal project, 70 policies have been revised or newly created and posted to the new website, with 50 remaining on the old site and in the process of being reviewed. A more detailed information item on this project is included in the Board package.
- As noted in the previous report, one of the Provincial Auditor's recommendations regarding research is that the Board of Governors receive regular reports on the Strategic Research Plan and by extension, its three signature research themes of Sustainable Development, Human Development, and Creativity and Informatics. The following points provide that update, together with additional information regarding progress on research recommendations identified by the Provincial Auditor and the Crago/Kirk report, and some research successes of note.

- Within the Strategic Research Plan's signature themes, five key areas of research impact have been identified: Wise Computing with Big Data; Anxiety, Stress and Pain; Public Safety; Environment and Energy; and Indigenization Research. Leaders for each of these five research clusters have been identified, and overviews that address the critical mass, research impact, and research distinctiveness are now being developed.
- The Vice-President (Research) has been working closely with each faculty to develop annual research plans that identify specific goals, objectives, metrics, and resource needs. Associate Deans and their respective committees have been fully engaged in this process.
- Measured by citation indices, research impact results indicate that the University of Regina leads Canadian comprehensive universities in this area that assesses quality of work. The Vice-President (Research) has presented these 10-year research impact trends to Deputy Ministers of the provincial government as well as to the strategic plan facilitation committee.
- Work continued on the implementation of recommendations arising from the Provincial Auditor's Research Report (PARR) and the Crago/Kirk report. To date, the PARR Task Force has met 11 times and has implemented six of the 26 recommendations. Eleven of the 20 remaining recommendations have progressed to the stage where they are now on hold pending the input of the new Director of the Office for Research, Innovation and Partnership, Sally Gray, who began work at the University on July 1.
- It is also of note that the development of research clusters and annual faculty research plans has resulted in significant progress toward implementation of a number of the more challenging PARR recommendations. More detailed information about progress made on the recommendations contained in the PARR and Crago/Kirk research reports is included as part of the Board package.
- As a follow-up to the April 9 town hall meeting on the progress made toward the recommendations in the PARR and Crago/Kirk reports, in early June the Vice-President (Research) held a public forum that gave an overview of the University's funding model. A follow-up forum will be held in the fall.
- University of Regina researchers have had a number of outstanding research achievements in the past two months. These include:
 - In May, the University of Regina officially opened the Institute of Environmental Change and Society, a new world-class research facility housed in the Research and Innovation Centre. Under the direction of Dr. Peter Leavitt, the \$13 million centre will be home to Canada Research Chairs and allied scholars studying the interactions between human society and the environment, particularly with respect to water quality, availability, use, and protection. As one of its first initiatives, the IECS is host to the Canadian Institute of Ecology and Evolution (CIEE) – the first time that the CIEE has been hosted in Western Canada.

- Teaching and Learning Librarian Cara Bradley was awarded the Canadian Library Association's 2014 Robert H. Blackburn Distinguished Paper Award for her 2013 paper entitled "Information Literacy Articles in Science Pedagogy Journals." The award recognizes the most significant research article published in the previous year by a member of the Association.
 - Dr. Sandra Zilles, a professor in Computer Science and the Canada Research Chair in Computational Learning Theory, was named one of the top three Outstanding Young Computer Science Researchers in the country by the Canadian Association of Computer Science. The award recognizes computer science faculty members who within 10 years of completing their PhD have made highly significant contributions in their careers, particularly through their research.
 - Dr. Jo-Ann Episkenew and a team of colleagues including Deanna Reder, Susan Gingell, Allison Hargreaves, Daniel Heath Justice, and Kristina Bidwell, were awarded the *Canadian Literature* journal's 2013 Best Essay Prize for their paper entitled "Thinking Together: A Forum on Jo-Ann Episkenew's *Taking Back our Spirits: Indigenous Literature, Public Policy, and Healing*."
 - NSERC recently awarded \$445,350 to researchers at the University of Regina. The largest grant, valued at \$129,350, was awarded to Dr. Dena McMartin, Professor in Engineering and Applied Science and Associate Vice-President (Academic and Research) to study "Watershed Impacts Related to Agricultural Water and Climate Extremes." A number of other faculty members also received sizable grants, including Dr. Shaun Fallat, Dr. Douglas Farenick, Dr. Yongan (Peter) Gu, Dr. Howard Hamilton, Dr. Gordon Huang, Dr. Richard Manzon, Dr. Gavin Simpson, Dr. Fernando Szechtman, Dr. Paitoon Tontiwachwuthikul, and Dr. Yang Zhao.
 - James Daschuk's *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*, published by the University of Regina Press, was the winner of the 2014 Sir John A. Macdonald Prize for the best scholarly book in Canadian history.
- In the last report, it was noted that Facilities Management had tendered and was evaluating responses from four vendors to provide a new information system that would cost less to operate and be more effective than the existing one. The successful vendor has now been selected, and the project is in the early stage of implementation, which includes discussions with key internal stakeholder and contract negotiations with the vendor.
 - A consultant has also been selected through a tendering process to carry out a unit review of Parking and Transportation Services, and discussions are underway to refine the scope and final cost of the work.

- In June, Campus Security installed and began using its new incident reporting software, which will enhance the unit's operations and the support it provides to the University community.
- At the Canadian Association of University Business Officers (CAUBO) Annual General Meeting in June, Vice-President (Administration) Dave Button was installed for another one-year term as President of CAUBO. This appointment is unprecedented, as normal terms are limited to one year. In this case, the Board requested that Mr. Button remain President for another year because the President-Elect has left the university system. This request is a strong indication of the level of administrative expertise that Mr. Button brings to the University.

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

Work continued in the area of ensuring that our academic offerings remain relevant and accessible to our students:

- To help ensure that new students get the best possible introduction to our University, Student Affairs has been working with the University of Regina Students' Union on the planning, organization management and risk reduction of Fall 2014 orientation activities.
- The Timetable Renewal project is now complete, with the timetabling software in full production. The Fall 2014 timetable was produced using the software, and the Winter 2015 timetable is well underway. The Registrar's office is currently meeting with different departments to address any concerns they may have and ensure that the timetabling process runs as smoothly as possible in the future.
- The Registrar's Office is currently working on a class scheduling policy to develop guiding principles for timetabling, and is beginning discussions to examine the feasibility of developing a full year's timetable at one time.
- During the reporting period, it remained a priority to ensure that strong leadership is in place in all of the faculties, and progress was made on a number of decanal searches:
 - The search for a new Dean of Fine Arts was successful, with Professor Rae Staseson of Concordia University named to the position. Professor Staseson began her term as Dean on July 1. I would like to thank Dr. Sheila Petty for the leadership she has shown as Dean over the past several years.
 - The review of the current Dean of Arts, Dr. Rick Kleer, was completed, with the committee recommending his reappointment to the position. Dr. Kleer's reappointment is currently being finalized.
 - The search for a new Dean of Education continued, and Dr. Jennifer Tupper accepted an appointment for a one-year term as Acting Dean from

July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015. I would like to thank Dr. James McNinch for his leadership as Dean.

- Effective July 1, Jacqueline Spalding, formerly of Brock University, assumed the role of Director, English as a Second Language Program, effective July 1, 2014. Ms. Spalding will play a key role in enhancing the ESL program, many of whose graduates move on to degree programs at the University.

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

Maintaining and enhancing the environment of openness and positive engagement on campus remained a priority throughout the reporting period:

- The consultative and inclusive strategic plan renewal process continued. The facilitation team held consultations with and received input from members of the University's internal and external communities, including at a public forum held on May 15. In the coming weeks, a first draft of the plan will be presented to campus and members of the public for their consideration and input.
- The strategic plan will be a key agenda item for the Fall 2014 meeting of University Council, which will take place on Wednesday, September 10. The notice of this meeting has been sent to Council members, and the Council Agenda Committee has already met to begin planning the meeting, which is expected to address a number of other agenda items.
- Focus groups have been held to determine what might be required for Human Resources to develop a leadership development program designed to build capacity in the University's administration for the future.
- The response to the University's one-time Voluntary Incentive Plan for Retirement has been positive, with just over 60% of the eligible long-time faculty and staff members opting for early retirement. I would like to thank all eligible employees for the important role they have played on our campus over the past 40 years.
- Plans are underway for a "State of the University" address and public forum to take place in the fall.

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 Services has completed a reorganization that will enable more efficient processing of applications and better service to students.
- Two events in May – the University’s annual Open House, and the Science Rendezvous – brought thousands of prospective students to the University of Regina.
- Thus far, the Spring/Summer term has seen an annual enrolment increase of more than 7% over last year.
- As of the end of June, the number of student applications for Fall 2014 was 12% higher than at the same time last year – a clear indication that prospective students are very interested in the University and its programs. Thus far, the admission rate has been about even with last year’s.
- The latest registration numbers, as of June 26, show that overall enrolment, including the Federated Colleges, is up 2.2% over Fall 2013. Total undergraduate enrolment is up 1.8% year-over-year, and graduate enrolment is up 5%.
- Dr. Shauneen Pete’s term has been renewed as Executive Lead – Indigenization. Her work will continue to be important in helping provide appropriate services and programming for Aboriginal students, faculty and staff.

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:

- “Community Connections” visits to Yorkton and Swift Current in the last week of April allowed members of the University to meet with educational and community leaders in both cities.
- In early May, Casino Regina held its annual “Charity Royale” fundraising event. This year, the University of Regina was selected as the beneficiary, and a total of \$75,000 was raised for two initiatives to support student success – the Female Coaching Fellowship and the Neekaneewak Leadership Initiative.
- Also in May, Professor Emeritus Dr. Bev Robertson contributed \$500,000 in to the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy as part of *Building*

Knowledge – The College Avenue Campus Renewal Project. This gift will establish the Centre for Science and Public Policy within JSGS and create graduate fellowship scholarships.

- A College Avenue campus “Alumni and Friends” fundraising appeal was sent by email in June to approximately 40,000 people. A final fundraising total from this initiative will be announced in the fall.
- On a related note, the College Avenue campus promotional material was recently refreshed with new stories profiling additional individuals associated with programming delivered from the campus.
- Phase 2 of the Wayfinding project will continue throughout 2014-15. This will include the creation of building addresses and street names on campus to help address navigation issues for visitors, including first responders. It will also feature billboard-type signs in the grassed boulevards to point visitors to the University’s entrances, banner installations on existing street lamp poles, and the addition of University of Regina signage to existing City of Regina signs to help those driving into and around the city find the University. Parking signage as well as stop, yield, pedestrian crossing and one-way street signs will also be replaced throughout the year.
- The University of Regina Alumni Association’s Annual General Meeting took place on June 25, with two new members joining the Association’s Board of Directors – Burt Yakichuk and David Cundell. More than 100 people attended the AGM, which included a 40th anniversary celebration. Lydia Bramham, the first President of the Alumni Association, was one of those in attendance.
- To celebrate the University’s 40th anniversary, a 1970s-themed faculty and staff picnic was held in early June. The University also hosted a booth at the Canada Day celebration in Wascana Park.
- External Relations is currently planning an “Evening with the Saskatchewan Mafia” event which will take place September 17, 2014 in Ottawa. The evening is an opportunity for alumni and friends to celebrate the role Saskatchewan residents have played in public policy in Canada over the past several decades.
- In June, the Honourable Kevin Doherty was named Minister of Advanced Education. In initial meetings and discussions with University officials, Minister Doherty has shown a great deal of support for the University and an interest in learning more about its programs and operations.

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:

- Dr. Mark Dockstator began his term as President of First Nations University of Canada on July 1, and has already met with me and with the core team that provides support to FNUniv through the Advisory Services Agreement. I would like to thank Dr. Julian Tupone for serving as Acting President of FNUniv over the past year.
- Over the past few months, the working group for implementation of the recommendations related to the Institut français has been gathering information to prepare a report on governance options for the Institut. The group will resume meeting in September, with the goal of having a governance model and administrative structure selected by November for consideration by the relevant Council committees over the subsequent months.
- Dr. Sophie Bouffard has begun her appointment as Director of the Institut, and is already engaged with the Institut's program planning, financial reporting, and research priorities.
- Work continues to develop a joint agreement with the Daughters for Life Foundation founded by Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish, who was the 2014 Forward Together lecturer. Through this agreement, young women from the Middle East would have the opportunity to pursue studies at the University.

REPORT ON THE PRESIDENT'S ACADEMIC RESEARCH

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

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

- Site visits and interviews have been completed for the “Voices of the Community” appreciative inquiry into inclusive education and employment practices in Saskatchewan. My colleagues and I are now analyzing the transcripts, determining themes, and organizing our data so we can begin drafting the final report. Documentary photography will follow in the coming months.
- I continued my administrative work as President of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IASSIDD). This included several conference calls related to items such as the organization’s budget and forthcoming research conferences. I also prepared material for the forthcoming IASSIDD Executive and Council meetings that I will attend at the IASSIDD European Regional Congress held in Vienna, Austria in mid-July.

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

- At the Senior Women Academic Administrators of Canada (SWAAC) annual conference in May, I participated in a panel discussion on the challenges experienced by female leaders at universities.
- In June at the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada’s Transatlantic Dialogue, I was an invited panellist in a discussion on the pressures faced by universities in today’s post-secondary landscape.

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

- Dr. Shanthi Johnson of the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies has been named Female Professional of the Year by the Indo-Canadian Chamber of Commerce.
- Former faculty member Gail Bowen received the Distinguished Canadian award from the Centre for Continuing Education's Lifelong Learning Centre.
- Dr. David Gerhard of the Department of Computer Science received the Innovation Award at the 2015 Paragon Awards for having invented a new musical instrument – the “Rainboard” – which functions in conjunction with an iPad and can replicate the sound of many other instruments.
- Effective July 1, Wynne Young became Director of the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy's Outreach and Training unit. She succeeds Dan Perrins, who is now an executive-in-residence with the school.

STUDENT AND ALUMNI SUCCESS

- The 40th annual Spring Convocation took place in early June, with 1,849 students receiving their degrees, certificates, and diplomas. This represented the second-largest graduating class in the University's history. Among the award winners was Matt Dipple of Engineering and Applied Science, who received the President's Medal in recognition of his commitment to academics, extra-curricular activities, and leadership.
- In honour of the University's 40th anniversary as an autonomous institution, 40 new entrance awards worth \$1,000 each have been created for incoming first-year students. Recipients of this “University of Regina 40th Celebration Award” have been selected and notified, and they will be celebrated in the fall.
- Katherine MacMillan, a third-year PhD student in Psychology, recently received a Philanthropic Educational Organization (P.E.O.) International Scholar Award. Ms. MacMillan was one of only 85 doctoral students across North America to receive this \$15,000 award.
- Jonathan Harris, a Master of Public Policy student at the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, was recognized with a national award – the 2014 Justice Emmett Hall Memorial Foundation Student Essay Prize.

- Victoria Ordu and Favour Amadi, the two students from Nigeria who were required to put their studies on hold and leave Canada, are now back at the University to continue their programs. I would like to thank the staff of UR International as well as all of the other students, faculty members and people in the community who have supported them over the past two years.
- The 2014 Alumni Crowning Achievement Award winners, who will be formally honoured in October, have been named:
 - Lifetime Achievement: Leonard Schein
 - Outstanding Young Alumna: Courtney Keith
 - Outstanding Service to the University: Sean McEachern
 - Professional Achievement: Barry Pittendrigh
 - Humanitarian and Community Service: Sel Murray
- Dr. Ross King – former U of R English student and one of our past honorary degree recipients – received an honorary Doctor of Letters from the University of Saskatchewan at that institution’s Spring Convocation.

CAMPUS EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- In May, patients of the Dr. Paul Schwann Centre held their 5th annual “Rainbow Walk” to raise funds for the centre.
- In early June, a site visit took place to assess the University’s suitability to host the 2018 Congress of the Federation of the Humanities and Social Sciences, which will bring together approximately 7,000 scholars. The selection committee was very positive in their comments about the University and the city. A decision is expected in November.
- Also in early June, the third annual TEDx event was held at the University, bringing members of the community to campus both as presenters and audience members.
- The Centre for Teaching and Learning and UR International collaborated to host seven faculty members from Mexico’s Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM) for a one month-intensive course on post-secondary teaching and learning. More than 20 sessions were hosted and delivered by faculty, staff, and administrators of the University of Regina. This was a pilot program, and it is anticipated that the program will become an annual one delivered for a larger cohort of visiting professors from ITESM.
- Planning has continued for the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG), which will be held in Regina in late July. The University will be housing and feeding 1,800 of the athletes during the games. Don Clark has been serving as the University’s liaison to NAIG.