

This report summarizes my progress to date on the five areas of priority that the Board and I identified for the January-July 2015 timeframe. It also includes updates on my academic research, University events and accomplishments, and other matters that may be of interest to the Board.

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**Objective: Develop reports on student retention data, current initiatives, and potential future initiatives**

The new strategic plan places a clear emphasis on ensuring that students remain engaged with their studies and have academic success – an emphasis that will be increasingly important both to prepare them for life after graduation and to maintain strong levels of enrolment. For this reason, work has begun to compile and evaluate retention data that can be used to enhance the student experience at our University:

- In recent years, the University has implemented a number of initiatives designed to enhance student retention, including:
  - the UR Guarantee program;
  - supplemental instruction in the Faculty of Science;
  - the Global Learning Centre as well as language and cultural support through UR International;
  - Expansion of the Aboriginal Student Centre;
  - The Omâ program, which provides cohort-based supplemental learning and skills workshops;
  - Residence life programs through Student Affairs;
  - The High School Transitions Committee overseen by the Provost's Office; and
  - A dramatic increase in student financial support that now ranks the University second-highest among Canadian comprehensive post-secondary institutions in this area.
- Determining and building upon the success of these and other initiatives will be crucial in the coming months and years, however, so the University is preparing to participate in two surveys that will help in that regard. Information Services and the Office of Resource Planning (ORP) have upgraded the existing undergraduate retention report in preparation for participating in this year's Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE). Forthcoming participation in both CSRDE and the National Survey of Student Satisfaction (NSSE) will provide additional data and supporting information regarding student

retention and the student experience at the University. There is no fixed date yet for receipt of this data, although it is expected by mid-summer.

- ORP also has a project underway with Information Services to produce statistics on graduate student completion rates and times to completion.
- Research has shown that effective advising and early intervention are key to student retention. Accordingly, the Provost's Office has brought together Deans' Council, academic advisors from across campus, and members of the University of Regina Students' Union Executive to exchange views on the University's current modes of advising and determine how we might improve our advising and intervention services.
- As a result of these conversations, Deans' Council has begun to look at "threshold" courses across the Faculties – ones in which the failure rate is higher than average – to find ways of providing additional support to students in these courses. In the context of a tight fiscal situation, the University is also exploring ways of providing additional financial support to graduate students to increase their retention rate and decrease their time to completion.
- In February, employees from the Enrolment Services and ORP made presentations to Deans' Council and the academic advisors' group related to recent and historic statistics on enrolment, recruiting and retention.
- Also in February, ORP compiled data on undergraduate retention rates from year one to year two in different grade point average brackets. This could provide another means of determining which students would most benefit from early intervention and other academic supports.
- A previously created environmental scan of best practices in retention at other institutions is being reviewed and shared with different units on campus as potential retention initiatives are considered in support of the new strategic plan.
- It is also of note that enrolment has remained strong at the University for the 2014-15 academic year. Fall 2014 enrolment as of December 4 was up 2.2% over the previous year, and credit hours taught increased by 1.2%. For the Winter 2015 semester, enrolment as of February 3 was up 2.6% over the same time last year, and the number of credit hours taught was up 3.1%.
- These enrolment increases have continued to be driven by Faculty of Nursing registrations as well as Aboriginal and international student enrolments. Over the past five years, the number of self-declared Aboriginal students at the University has grown by close to 50%, and the number of international students has grown by more than 96%.

## **Objective: Develop reports on institutional research support and external research application success rates**

The strategic plan also places a strong emphasis on ensuring that the tools are in place to expand the scope and impact of research undertaken by faculty members and graduate students. Work has begun on two initiatives that will help in that regard – evaluating both internal research support mechanisms as well as the success of external funding applications:

- ORP has been engaged in a review of institutional expenditures made in support of the research enterprise on campus. This review, when complete in the next few months, will consider laboratory and technical space and supports, and financial and human resource management contributions.
- The full study of external funding success rates for external organizations such as the Tri-Agencies will be completed after April, once the fall submissions of grant applications have been adjudicated and results released to all Canadian universities.
- In the meantime, a number of activities have been taking place to help enhance Tri-Agency research funding success rates:
  - Tri-Agencies Advisory Groups led by the Vice-President (Research) have been meeting on a semesterly basis to review success rates and identify potential strategies for improving success;
  - Institutional NSERC consultations have been held and a strategy developed to support and encourage stronger research funding applications;
  - The SSHRC advisory group has been focused on department-level research culture and support, and the Vice-President (Research) will be invited to meet with one or two departments at a time to discuss SSHRC strategies and encourage funding applications; and
  - The CIHR advisory group will meet later this semester and will likely consider an approach similar to the NSERC strategy since CIHR researchers at the University tend to be more widely distributed within and across faculties, rather than located within a single department or unit as SSHRC researchers often are.
- Recently, a team led by four researchers in the Faculty of Business Administration received more than \$400,000 in Canada Foundation for Innovation funding to create a business behavioural research laboratory on campus. This is a great example of how an integrated approach to funding applications – involving individual researchers, their faculty, ORIP and the Office of the Vice-President (Research) – can be successful in the future.

## **Objective: Engage with key stakeholders to enhance the University's community presence**

Work continued on several initiatives designed to help the University engage with some of its many stakeholder groups:

- The external review of Alumni Relations and the Development Office of the University has taken place, with consultants coming to campus in late January to interview close to 30 people, including Board members, key donors, deans, the University Executive Team, the Alumni Association Board, and staff members. The final report is anticipated to be complete in mid-to-late March.
- In light of the University's emphasis on community engagement in the new strategic plan, a revitalized effort is being made to be more active in the community, laying the groundwork for the external partnerships that will contribute to the success of the University and its students. Early examples of the renewed focus on community engagement include:
  - Additional emphasis on creating opportunities for University leaders to attend events in the community such as Chamber of Commerce events and Kiwanis and Canadian Club luncheons. Efforts will continue to ensure consistent University representation from senior leadership at these types of community events in the future;
  - The first-ever "State of the University" address hosted by the Regina and District Chamber of Commerce, which attracted approximately 300 business and community leaders;
  - Promotion of one of the University's signature events in the community, the sixth annual Inspiring Leadership Forum, which will take place on March 11. The forum, which attracts community leaders and professionals from across the province and beyond, is sold out;
  - A "Community Connections" visit to Moose in mid-December 11, which included a presentation to the Moose Jaw Chamber of Commerce;
  - "Community Connections" visits planned for March and April to several communities, including Saskatoon, North Battleford, Lloydminster and Meadow Lake; and
  - Planning of the April 25 "Prairie Kitchen Party" fundraiser for student aid, which will provide an opportunity to connect with key supporters of the University.
- The effort to engage the community also includes attracting community members to events on campus to make them feel invested in their University. Recent and upcoming events include:
  - The annual December open house at the President's residence, which was attended by more than 150 community members;
  - A meeting with the directors of the Regina and area school board directors;
  - A January meeting of TEC Canada on campus at which I delivered a presentation about the University;

- The January launch of the University’s strategic plan, which was attended by many alumni and members of the larger community;
  - The announcement that the 2018 Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities will be hosted by the University. This announcement, which generated a great deal of interest from members of the larger community, involved key partners including the City of Regina, the Province of Saskatchewan, Tourism Saskatchewan, Tourism Regina, the Regina Hotels Association, and all three Federated Colleges;
  - Pre-event receptions on campus prior to the Forward Together and Woodrow Lloyd lectures, which attracted more than 80 alumni. A similar event for alumni is being planned for the Stapleford lecture later in March;
  - A forthcoming reception for local alumni of Chinese origin who have chosen to make Regina and area home; and
  - A Red Cross “Day of Pink” anti-bullying event that will be held on campus in late March for approximately 2,000 high school students.
- The College Avenue Campus revitalization remained a priority as well over the reporting period:
    - Donations to the CAC campaign total more than \$8 million, taking into account the gift of the Shumiatcher art collection. This total includes received cash and cash pledges of about \$5 million. Since the December Board meeting, additional gifts and pledges totalling over \$260,000 have been received, with others still in progress;
    - The CAC Executive Leadership Committee met in December to discuss further opportunities, which are now being pursued, and in December and January, stewardship events were held involving existing and prospective donors;
    - The campaign plan has been revised to enable the wind-up of the fundraising campaign by June 2015. Communications and Marketing are working with the Development Office to revise campaign materials to break down the larger campaign into individual elements (for example, the Lifelong Learning Centre and Darke Hall), and in doing so, will refresh and reposition the campaign as it draws to a close; and
    - Facilities Management has been working with the Development Office around the use and timing of gifts.
  - It is also of note that a fundraising seminar is being planned for deans and directors in May.

**Objective: Develop an inventory of current Indigenization initiatives at the University and provide options for enhancing them**

In keeping with the strategic plan’s overarching commitment to Indigenization, work continued to itemize and evaluate the University’s current efforts in order to implement best practices in the future:

- Dr. Shauneen Pete, the University’s Executive Lead – Indigenization, was a member of the facilitation team for the strategic planning process. In this capacity, she also facilitated planning with the University’s Aboriginal Advisory Circle (AAC) with the aim of creating strategic alignment between *peyak aski kikawinaw* and the forthcoming plan of the AAC. In response to *peyak aski kikawinaw*’s call to “embed Indigenous practices, ideas, and principles in our academic pursuits,” the AAC has prepared an ambitious draft plan that aligns with the University’s strategic plan in the areas of student support, community engagement and Indigenous research. The plan, which was informed by a recent inventory of University of Regina Indigenization practices as well as best practices at other institutions, will be reviewed by the University Executive Team in the near future. This will enable decisions on recommendations in areas such as staffing and greater coordination of Indigenization efforts at the University.
- In addition, Dr. Pete has met with First Nations University of Canada President Mark Dockstator as well as the FNUUniv Faculty Council to discuss the AAC strategic plan.
- Several years ago, a list was compiled of the University’s Indigenization initiatives stemming from the former strategic plan, *mâmahohkamâtowin*. This list has been provided to Dr. Pete to ensure that all initiatives are accounted for as the University assesses the effectiveness of its Indigenization activities and moves forward with *peyak aski kikawinaw*.
- From these documents, it is apparent that the University has done a great deal in the broad area of Indigenization in recent years. For example:
  - The University of Regina was among the first Canadian universities to make a course with substantial Indigenous content mandatory for Faculty of Arts students;
  - Other Faculties such as Education, Social Work and Nursing have a substantial Indigenous “presence” in their curricula;
  - Specific retention initiatives have focused on Aboriginal students;
  - The Aboriginal Student Centre was substantially expanded;
  - Dr. Pete has taken a proactive role in educating Faculties and academic units about Indigenous epistemologies and protocols, and has been instrumental in implementing policy reforms (for example, food and smudging);
  - The University of Regina Press has emphasized high-impact scholarship on Indigenous issues in its publishing program (for example, Dr. James Daschuk’s *Clearing the Plains* and a new series of volumes on Indigenous language narratives); and
  - The Indigenous Peoples’ Health Research Centre continues its robust program of building capacity in health research among Aboriginal people.
- Much, however, remains to be done, and the AAC’s strategic plan, together with the comprehensive summary being developed of existing and best practices in Indigenization, will be crucial to realize the potential of *peyak aski kikawinaw*.

- It is also of note that since the last report, a number of specific initiatives have taken place in the area of Indigenization:
  - The University Executive Team was provided with a report on the Indigenization of institutions of higher education in New Zealand;
  - The “Witness Blanket” exhibition about the residential school system drew more than 150 people for the opening pipe ceremony and feast, and has been visited by more than 500 schoolchildren and youth. Numerous University classes have viewed the installation, and 40 undergraduate students have volunteered to facilitate school tours. This installation is being co-hosted by First Nations University of Canada.
  - A symposium on murdered and missing Aboriginal women is being planned for March 23-27.
  - The Centre for Teaching and Learning has taken responsibility for administering the “Indigenizing Our Teaching” speaker series, and has signed an agreement with the University of Saskatchewan for access to the “Indigenous Voices” faculty development program.

**Objective: Develop an inventory of current sustainability initiatives at the University and provide options for enhancing them**

Work has begun to consider how current and potential initiatives on campus can support the strategic plan’s focus on economic, cultural, social and environmental sustainability:

- An inventory of current sustainability initiatives on campus is in progress and nearing completion. Some notable successes are:
  - A combination of UR Early courses, a new timetabling system, and enhanced evening, weekend, spring/summer and online courses has allowed us to educate record-high numbers of students without the creation of additional teaching space;
  - Service learning programs such as the Community Research Unit, offerings through Campion College, and Engineers Without Borders are exposing our students to issues of cultural, social, environmental, and economic sustainability;
  - Collaborations continues with the Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development (RCE-SK). The most recent initiative – the student-led Inter Disciplinary Action Research Team (iDART) – connects students to local and global partners and projects related to sustainability; and
  - The Sustainability and Community Engagement Fund, launched in Fall 2014, has awarded \$24,800 to nine faculty, staff and student-led campus projects. The next competition will take place in Fall 2015.
- Once the inventory of current practices is completed and evaluated to address gaps, an inventory of best practices at other institutions will be developed to provide options for consideration in the future. To assist in this process, in my February message to campus I used the Forward Together lecture as a touchstone

from which to solicit input from campus on ways in which we can incorporate sustainability in all of its forms into our operations in the coming years.

- In the meantime, the President's Advisory Committee on Sustainability (PACS) continues its work, and a draft strategic plan on sustainability will be considered by PACS in March.

# **REPORT ON THE PRESIDENT’S ACADEMIC RESEARCH**

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

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## **INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

- My research collaborators and I continued work on the “Voices of Inclusion” appreciative inquiry into inclusive education and employment practices in Saskatchewan. We met two times to review photography for the planned book and compare interview analyses and themes for the report. Further analysis will continue in the coming months, and the team has divided up responsibilities for creating a first draft of the report by the summer.
- As President of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IASSIDD), I chaired the annual meeting of the organization’s executive team. In addition, I participated in several conference calls, and provided guidance to IASSIDD members who are chairing the upcoming regional and world conferences.

## **ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS AND OTHER ACTIVITY**

- At meetings of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada in January, I led a session on institutional sustainability.
- In February, I was one of four academics who conducted a site review of and drafted a report on the University of British Columbia’s Department of Educational and Counselling, and Special Education.

## CELEBRATING OUR CAMPUS

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

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### FACULTY AND STAFF SUCCESS

- A number of searches and reviews have been completed or are currently underway:
  - After reviews in their respective Faculties, Acting Dean of Kinesiology and Health Studies Dr. Harold Riemer and Acting Dean of Social Work Dr. Judy White accepted decanal appointments from July 1, 2015 until June 30, 2020.
  - After a search, Dr. Kathy McNutt accepted appointment as Executive Director of the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy from July 1, 2015 until June 30, 2020.
- The University's Annual United Way fundraiser surpassed \$100,000 thanks to the efforts and contributions of faculty, staff and students. For the campaign, the University received the United Way's Greystone Leadership Award.
- The Darke Hall Five – a musical group made up of University of Regina faculty and staff – gave a public performance to raise funds to help a four-year-old Regina boy receive medical treatment in England for a rare eye disease.
- The annual “Celebrate” event was held to honour approximately 80 faculty and staff members who were recognized for their work over the past year by external organizations.
- Three University of Regina employees – Dr. Shauneen Pete, Wilma Bell-Wessel and David Wessel – received the Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation's Global Citizen Awards.
- Campus Security officer Patrick Sherling was recognized by the Regina Police Service for helping save the life of a person on campus.
- Dr. Patrick Neary was invited to speak at the Canadian Embassy in Washington D.C. about his research on sports-related concussions.
- Dr. Jennifer Tupper presented the Dr. Ottilia Chareka Memorial Lecture at the University of New Brunswick on February 19. The topic of her lecture was treaty education.

### STUDENT AND ALUMNI SUCCESS

- Film student Candy Fox was honoured by the Toronto International Film Festival for her documentary called “Backroads,” which tells a story of abuse in a family. “Backroads” was named one of the top ten student films in Canada – the second

time in three years that a University of Regina student has been honoured in this way.

- Fine Arts graduate student Jody Greenman-Barber was awarded second place in the national competition for the Winifred Shantz Award for Ceramics.
- In early December, the University participated in the national “Giving Tuesday” initiative, raising more than \$5,200 for student aid.
- The University’s Fall student aid campaign raised approximately \$50,000, and the spring campaign is currently in development.
- In December, Carly Hosjan and Sheldon Reddekopp helped save a life in the Centre for Kinesiology and Health Studies. Carly is a Kinesiology and Health Studies student, and Sheldon is a student at the Saskatchewan Police College.
- In late January, UR Guarantee students launched their fourth annual “Relay for Life.” Over the past three years, the students have raised more than \$100,000 over past three years for cancer research.
- Students from the Paul J. Hill School of Business were successful in recent national business school competitions:
  - The JDC West team was third overall in a competition in Victoria, and placed first in all categories related to volunteerism and charity fundraising.
  - At the Inter-Collegiate Business Competition in Kingston, the Hill School team competed against more than 140 international teams, finishing first in marketing and third in debate.
- Current and former members of the University of Regina Ram have had considerable success recently:
  - Fourth-year receiver Addison Richards was one of only two Canadians invited to participate in the United States East-West Shrine Bowl college football all-star game.
  - Former Ram punter and receiver Jon Ryan participated in his second Super Bowl.
  - Former Ram offensive lineman Brett Jones, who won the Grey Cup with the Calgary Stampeders, has signed with the New York Giants, bringing the number of former Rams in the NFL to five – more than any other CIS program.
- The January 30 Chinese New Year celebration organized by the Chinese Students’ Association drew approximately 600 people to the Education Auditorium.
- PotashCorp announced a donation of \$150,000 to sponsor the University’s athletics programs, bringing its support over the past three years to \$450,000.
- Geology alumnus Peter Ogryzlo was honoured with an award of excellence from the Association for Mineral Exploration British Columbia. Mr. Ogryzlo had very positive things to say about the education he received here and some current faculty members.

- University of Regina alumnus and distance runner Kelly Wiebe was one of the nominees for Sask Sport Male Athlete of the Year.
- A number of career-related events for students have taken place since the beginning of the new year, including:
  - A spring career fair that drew more than 100 companies to recruit our students; and
  - A Career Development Conference organized by the Faculty of Business Administration and featuring local business leaders

## **CAMPUS EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- First Nations University of Canada opened its Plain Red Art Gallery in December.
- An event was held on campus in early December to commemorate the Engineering students killed 1989 at École Polytechnique.
- The President’s Community Award was presented in mid-December to Renu Kapoor, a strong supporter of the University.
- The annual holiday open house for the larger community was held at the President’s residence in mid-December.
- The new strategic plan was formally launched on January 13, and different units on campus are now working to align their own unit plans with it. The name of the plan, *peyak aski kikawinaw*, which is Cree for “We are one with Mother Earth” – was chosen out of many suggestions from the University community. The name connotes the idea that we are a stronger entity by working together.
- The University was successful in its bid to host the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences in 2018. Given that this is the largest academic conference in Canada, bringing approximately 8,000 academics and their families to Regina, this is good news for our University, city, and province. The event is expected to bring approximately \$10 million in economic benefit to Regina and area.
- The University was recently named one of Saskatchewan’s top employers, which is a reflection of the working environment we have sought to develop over the past four decades.
- The Saskatchewan Book Award shortlist event was held at Campion on February 13. The University of Regina Press received some nominations for its publications, including those involving University of Regina employees Dr. Pauline Minevich and Dr. Stephen King.
- A large number of high-profile public lectures took place on campus in recent months, bringing many people from the general public to campus.
  - Bob Rae, former Premier of Ontario and interim leader of the federal Liberal party, spoke about ways of honouring the treaties between the Government of Canada and First Nations;

- The annual Woodrow Lloyd Lecture featured Dr. Cindy Blackstock speaking about First Nations children and equality;
  - Dr. Wade Davis delivered the seventh annual Forward Together Lecture, speaking on the relevance of traditional wisdom in the modern world; and
  - Dr. Wesley Wark spoke about global security as part of the Faculty of Arts “Open Minds” series.
- The winter semester meeting of University Council was held on February 25.