

President's Report to the Board

For the period from February 26, 2015 – April 22, 2015

Submitted to the Board of Governors

Submitted by Dr. Vianne Timmons, President and Vice-Chancellor

In keeping with the commitment to Indigenization that is contained within the University of Regina's recently approved strategic plan, I would like to begin this report by acknowledging that the University is located on Treaty 4 and Treaty 6 lands – something which has been an important part of our history, and which will be equally significant for our future.

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.

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

Work took place throughout the reporting period to compile and evaluate retention data, as well as implement measures that will enhance the student experience at the University of Regina:

- Data collection continued for participation in surveys related to student retention and satisfaction with the educational experience at the University. The existing undergraduate retention and completion report was amended and updated to ensure more accurate reporting among first-time students. Previously, the report did not include students who had taken University of Regina courses while still in high school as part of an accelerated program. With this update, these often high-performing students are now included in the University's retention cohorts. This data was provided as part of the University's latest submission to the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE). Peer and comparator CSRDE data will be provided to institutions in mid-June.
- The University is also participating in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) retention data exchange for the first time this year. The STEM submission will be completed by early May, and institutional and peer comparator results should be returned to the University by the end of August.
- Data collection by the company that manages the Canadian University Survey Consortium's 2015 Graduating Student Survey is now complete. When the results are received later this summer or early fall, they will provide additional insight on factors that have an impact on student retention at the University.

- The Office of Resource Planning (ORP) has been developing slide presentations on “threshold courses” in which the rate of failure is higher than average, as well as presentations on enrolment and retention by faculty. These reports will help identify specific areas where retention is an issue and targeted action can be taken.
- The Office of Resource Planning has met with Information Systems as well as the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research to discuss the requirements for a report dedicated to graduate retention and completion. Once the parameters of the study are established, work will begin on the report itself.
- The previous report to the Board noted some of the many retention initiatives the University has implemented and documented over the past few years as it works to enhance student retention rates. With those initiatives in mind, the Office of Resource Planning is now using an environmental scan from several years ago as a starting point to develop an updated report on best practices in student retention at other universities. This report is expected to provide additional options for the University to consider in the coming years.
- In the meantime, work continued on a number of initiatives to enhance retention. Deans’ Council, for example, in consultation with student advisors across campus, is examining the University’s current configuration of advising services. If it proves appropriate and affordable, a central student advising service will be established, with particular focus on students at risk (those in academic difficulty, those being required to change faculties, and those being required to discontinue, for instance). The emphasis of this service would be on getting help to at-risk students quickly and effectively, thereby reducing unnecessary attrition, especially in the first year.
- Deans’ Council is also in the early stages of considering a pass/fail option for students in year one. Modelled on an initiative at the University of Ottawa, this option – if adopted – would permit students to designate a limited number of courses as pass/fail. Such courses would not negatively impact GPAs, and the option may assist those students who have strengths in their chosen area of study but who struggle with others that are either required, or of particular interest to the students.
- The opening of the new residence towers, with more than 600 beds, is expected to be an important contributor to student success and retention. Research demonstrates that on-campus living increases student retention by up to 25%, as students make friends, study together on campus, and build a sense of community and belonging. As the proportion of the student body from outside the Regina “catchment” area increases, on-campus living facilities, food services, fitness facilities, and other amenities will be increasingly important for retention.
- Provision of adequate group study space continues to be a priority to support student success and retention, particularly because current enrolments have meant heavy utilization of Library space by students working on individual and joint projects. The transfer of some Library holdings to the sixth floor is permitting an

increase in group and individual study space on the Library's main floor using areas previously devoted to those holdings.

- As noted in the last report, enhancing funding support to help recruit and retain graduate students is a priority. The University's proposed budget, to be considered at the May Board meeting, has a line item for additional graduate student support. In addition, the University's proposal to Universities Canada (formerly AUCC) was accepted for matching funding to create \$1 million in Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Scholarships that will allow graduate students to spend time studying and researching abroad.
- Enrolment for Winter 2015 as of the last day of classes was strong, with 12,993 students currently active in degree-eligible credit courses. That is an increase of 2.6% compared to the same time in 2014.
- Applications, admissions and acceptances for Fall 2015 have also been tracking well ahead of last year. Domestically, the University is 252 students or 24% ahead in acceptances compared to 2014. Combining domestic and international acceptances, the University is 520 students or 30% ahead of 2014. It is important to note, however, that these figures are a general indicator, but will not directly translate into final enrolment numbers.

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

Evaluating both the University's internal research support mechanisms and its external funding application success rate remained a priority:

- The Office of Resource Planning continued its review of institutional investment in and support of the research enterprise. The first draft of the analysis has been completed, and further work is being conducted to provide a refined document for the Board at a forthcoming meeting. Preliminary results using 2012-13 data as a fiscal base year indicate that the University spent approximately \$47.7M (108% of its research revenue) on the direct or indirect costs of research. This represents approximately 27% of the operating budget. Further analyses will explore how this statistic compares with some other medium-sized universities in Canada.
- Data collection is ongoing with regard to institutional comparisons for graduate student support and faculty grant application success rates.
- Although results for the full year will not be available for some time, Tri-council success rates as of April 30 have been submitted to the Finance and Facilities Committee. Of note is the 67% success rate in the Faculty of Science, which represents the highest success rate in the past five years.
- To enhance Tri-Agency funding success rates by providing support for scholars in all disciplines as they prepare funding applications, the President's Fund/SSHRC General Research Grant has been redesigned and expanded. Now

called the University of Regina Research Seed Grant, it allocates funding for NSERC and CIHR applicants as well as those applying for SSHRC research grants.

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

A great deal of activity took place throughout the reporting period to enhance the University's engagement with members of the public and other key stakeholders:

- The external review of the Alumni Relations and Development Offices is now complete and a final report has been received. In the coming months, the University will consider how best to implement the report's recommendations.
- As part of the University's renewed focus on engagement with the larger community, a number of University-related events were organized off campus. They included:
 - In late February, the University Executive Team met with the executive team of the City of Regina to identify and discuss shared issues and opportunities;
 - On March 11, the University's signature professional development event in the community, the Inspiring Leadership Forum, attracted 500 people to Evraz Place. The Forum was sold out nearly two months in advance, attesting to the popularity of this event in the province;
 - On March 13, I participated in United Way's Socialization, Communication and Education Program, visiting Coronation Park School to read to children and connect with many future university students;
 - The University's Community Connections Tour visited Saskatoon on April 1. Outreach included an appearance on CTV Saskatoon's morning show, forums with the University's Nursing and Social Work students in Saskatoon, a meeting with the President of the University of Saskatchewan, and a reception for alumni from the Saskatoon area;
 - Since the last Board meeting, I have met with the editorial boards of the Leader-Post, Star Phoenix and Global TV Regina. I will continue this type of outreach effort with local media;
 - To mark Earth Day on April 22, the University held an event at Miller Comprehensive High School to highlight a partnership University researchers have created with that school to give grade nine and ten students the opportunity to participate in critical research aimed at avoiding the use of pesticides in plant care. The project is led by University faculty member Dr. Tanya Dahms;
 - By the time of the Board meeting, the University will have hosted the inaugural Prairie Kitchen Party, a fundraiser for student aid. Approximately 400 people are expected at the event; and
 - In follow-up to the Moose Jaw Community Connections Tour visit that took place in December, the University is partnering with the City of Moose Jaw to

host a luncheon on June 1, featuring Don Newman, former CBC news anchor and senior parliamentary correspondent.

- External Relations also took a lead role in organizing or co-ordinating a number of on-campus events that attracted members of the larger community. These included:
 - On March 5, Member of Parliament Tom Lukiwski toured Dr. Chris Yost's lab in the Research and Innovation Centre, and an event was held afterward to celebrate \$585,000 in funding received to support Dr. Yost's research on reducing the amount of harmful bacteria in wastewater;
 - Nearly 40 people attended an alumni reception held on March 26 prior to the annual Stapleford lecture, providing alumni an opportunity to meet the speaker and network with other members of the community;
 - On March 27, I hosted a breakfast at the University Club with high school counsellors from Regina and Moose Jaw. The event was a good opportunity to gain their input about how our University can better attract students and serve their needs;
 - The University's first reception for local alumni of Chinese origin was held the evening of March 27. The event, which attracted more than 100 people, helped the University strengthen ties with a growing number of Chinese alumni in Regina. Plans are underway to build on this success by holding another event in 2016;
 - On March 31, the main gym in the Centre for Kinesiology, Health and Sport played host to 2,000 high school students as part of the Red Cross's "Day of Pink" anti-bullying initiative. This provided an opportunity for potential students to become more familiar with the University; and
 - Planning is taking place for an event to launch a video highlighting the success of Campus for All, which promotes inclusive education at the University for students with intellectual disabilities.
- Work also continued on several fronts to complete fundraising and planning for the College Avenue campus revitalization. Some of the activities included:
 - On April 2, a lunch was held at the College Avenue campus to update past donors on the status of the project, as well as and the University's ongoing efforts to secure funding to move the revitalization effort forward;
 - That same day, a request for proposals was issued seeking a construction manager and preliminary design work for the revitalization;
 - Given the timing of the request for proposals, a decision was made to extend the fundraising campaign into the fall of 2015 to take advantage of the momentum created by the initial design options that will be available in the coming months;
 - Revised communications and marketing materials for the campaign are expected by early May. In addition, the spring 2015 semi-annual appeal to donors will be focused on the College Avenue campus;
 - The Lifelong Learning Centre hosted a special "Coffee with the President" on April 16, allowing the opportunity to update this key stakeholder group on the status of the revitalization project and to hear their ideas for the future;

- Discussions are underway with the Centre for Continuing Education for naming opportunities within the credit and non-credit programs;
- Contributions to the College Avenue campus revitalization campaign currently stand at more than \$8 million, including received cash and cash pledges of \$5.4 million.

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

Efforts continued to further Indigenize the University’s operations and curriculum in light of the new strategic plan:

- To more closely align its mandate with the theme of Indigenization as it is articulated in *peyak aski kikawinaw*, the Aboriginal Advisory Circle has changed its name to the Indigenous Advisory Circle (IAC).
- The IAC’s strategic plan has now been integrated with items from *peyak aski kikawinaw* that were specific to Indigenization, and has been presented to the University Executive Team. The plan will be shared with the Board at a forthcoming meeting, and the Executive Lead – Indigenization, Dr. Shauneen Pete, has discussed it with faculty councils, student groups, and other stakeholders.
- To help develop and refine the IAC’s strategic plan and guide the IAC’s activities, Dr. Pete has compiled an inventory of current Indigenization practices on campus as well as an overview of practices at a number of other universities. With these documents essentially complete, she continues to keep the inventory updated, and is currently working on a paper outlining Indigenization efforts in Canadian Faculties of Education that will provide some additional options for the University to consider going forward.
- In addition, as part of campus consultations on the 2015-16 operating budget, Dr. Pete presented a vision for an Office of Indigenization that would oversee and have accountability for various aspects of Indigenization as embodied in *peyak aski kikawinaw*.
- A number of other initiatives related to Indigenization were undertaken during the reporting period, including:
 - A symposium on murdered and missing Aboriginal women took place from March 23-27, engaging members of the University community in discussions about how to address this issue in curricular practices;
 - The Witness Blanket exhibition on the residential school experience completed its extended stay on campus. Over the course of the more than three months it was at the University, it was viewed by thousands of members of the campus community, as well as many school groups and members of the public from across the province; and

- Dr. Pete has worked with several faculty members to help redesign their courses, and has spoken to a number of classes about matters associated with Indigenous education, truth and reconciliation, and residential schools. She also met with a number of Saskatchewan's First Nations post-secondary coordinators.

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

In light of *peyak aski kikawinaw*'s emphasis on environmental, cultural, economic and social sustainability, work continued on campus to assess the University's current progress and consider future initiatives related to sustainability:

- The President's Advisory Committee on Sustainability (PACS) approved its Sustainability Strategic Plan (SSP), whose vision is to make the University "a national leader in education for sustainable development and a sustainable organization."
- Taking into account both strengths and gaps that have been identified in the institution's sustainable practices, the PACS SSP aligns with the University's strategic plan, and has five areas of focus:
 1. Leadership, providing vision and strategies to remove barriers and "business as usual" assumptions so that we can act in new ways;
 2. Decreasing waste on campus;
 3. Increasing energy efficiency;
 4. Encouraging sustainable transportation options; and
 5. Communicating with and engaging the campus openly to incent change.
- PACS has also recommended that the University adopt the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS), a transparent self-reporting framework on the institution's sustainability performance in the areas of curriculum, research, campus and public engagement, operations, and planning and administration.
- Should STARS be adopted, the system would provide a means to better document, measure and assess the University's sustainability performance, and would provide important information about best practices at other institutions. The University is currently evaluating the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of adopting STARS.

REPORT ON THE PRESIDENT'S ACADEMIC RESEARCH

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

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

- By the time of the Board meeting, I will have met three more times with my research partners on the “Voices of Inclusion” appreciative inquiry into inclusive education and employment practices in Saskatchewan. In those meetings, we compared the results of our analysis, and determined what articles we would draft for potential publication and eventual incorporation into the final report. We also began preparing academic presentations of our work, and selected photography for the report and planned book.
- I continued fulfilling my responsibilities as President of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IASSIDD). I held conference calls with members of the IASSIDD executive related to the organization’s business, and helped finalize planning for the May 2015 IASSIDD Regional Congress. Given the role I played in chairing the IASSIDD 2012 World Congress, I also provided input to those who are planning the 2016 event.

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS AND OTHER ACTIVITY

- As noted above, I began work on a presentation related to findings from the “Voices of Inclusion” project. I will be delivering this presentation at the May 2015 Pacific Rim International Conference on Disability and Diversity, which is being held in conjunction with the IASSIDD Regional Congress.
- I participated in conference calls related to the activities of the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research, of which I am a Board member. I also participated in meetings of the Universities Canada (formerly AUCC) Standing Committee on International Relations as well as the Canada Foundation for Innovation Governance and Nominating Committee.

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

- A number of administrative searches and reviews have been completed or are currently underway:
 - The search for a Vice-President (Research) was completed and the successful candidate, Dr. David Malloy, was announced. After his appointment for a five-year term, Dr. Malloy provided an open presentation to campus on his vision for the research enterprise at the University;
 - After a review, Dr. Thomas Chase accepted an offer of appointment for a five-year renewal of his term as Provost and Vice-President (Academic);
 - Also after a review, Dr. David Gregory accepted an appointment for a second five-year term as Dean of Nursing;
 - Dr. Kathy McNutt has been named Executive Director of the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, effective July 1 2015; and
 - Following a national search, Dr. Jennifer Tupper was appointed to a three-year term as Dean of the Faculty of Education.
- Receptions were held in March to honour close to 200 faculty and staff members who either retired or reached a service milestone over the past year.
- Dick White, who retired as Director of Athletics at the end of 2014, was inducted into both the University of Regina and the province of Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame.
- The Centre for Teaching and Learning named the recipients of its annual teaching and learning awards:
 - Dr. Alec Couros (Education) and Dr. Susanne Kuehling (Anthropology) received Awards for Innovation in Teaching;
 - Andi Céline Martin (Kinesiology and Health Studies), Dr. Dominic Gregorio (Music) and Dr. Francesco Freddolini (Luther Fine Arts) received New Faculty Teaching Awards of Recognition; and
 - Dr. Fidji Gendron (First Nations University of Canada Science) received the Award of Excellence in Flexible Learning.
- A number of faculty members had impressive research success over the course of the reporting period. This is a small sampling:
 - Dr. David Gerhard's National High Altitude Balloon Experiment was one of 66 projects to receive funding through NSERC's Promo Science Program;
 - Dr. Helen Pridmore of the Department of Music received a travel grant from the Canada Council for the Arts to support her musical performances in

France that are part of a newly developed cultural exchange between French and Canadian musicians;

- The prestigious academic journal *Behaviour Therapy* identified an article by Dr. Gordon Asmundson (Department of Psychology, Faculty of Arts) as its most downloaded article of 2014. This is a clear demonstration of the quality and international impact of Dr. Asmundson's work; and
 - Dr. Amr Henni and Dr. Ezeddin Shirif of the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science received the 2015 Award of Innovation at the Regina Chamber of Commerce Paragon Awards ceremony. They were recognized for identifying a way to remove oil and salts from water in Saskatchewan oil reservoirs so the water can be used for irrigation or in industry.
- Dr Craig Chamberlin, former Dean of Kinesiology and Health Studies and Acting Dean of Social Work, has been named President of Algoma University.
 - Dr. Peter Dorrington of the Department of French has been named Vice-President of Teaching and Research at l'Université de Saint-Boniface.

STUDENT AND ALUMNI SUCCESS

- Following her success at the Toronto International Film Festival with her documentary entitled "Backroads," Film student Candy Fox won multiple awards at the Living Skies Student Film Festival.
- Graduating students from the Bachelor of Fine Arts program exhibited their work at the MacKenzie Art Gallery throughout the month of March.
- On March 28, the annual Faculty of Engineering project day provided an opportunity for fourth-year students to show their inventions to the public.
- Two students in the Faculty of Science – Brandon Klug of Biology and William Ogilvie of Geology – were two of 32 national finalists in an NSERC competition to showcase their research in an online video.
- In late March, Fine Arts student Mengxuan Qui was awarded the inaugural International President's Scholars Award. The \$15,000 award goes to the undergraduate international student with the highest admission average among eligible students.
- During the reporting period, a number of student groups organized events to raise funds for charitable organizations. Notable examples are:
 - Business Administration Students' Society member participated in "5 Days for the Homeless" and raised approximately \$30,000 for Carmichael Outreach; and
 - UR Guarantee students raised more than \$30,000 for cancer research through their fourth annual "Relay for Life."
- In mid-April, a career fair for persons with disabilities was held on campus.

- Alumnus Alan McIntyre, a lawyer with McKercher LLP, is part of a judicial team helping Ukraine establish a pre-trial settlement process.

CAMPUS EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The University's collective agreement with URFA was ratified in late March.
- The Centre for Teaching and Learning's Showcase took place in late February, featuring the research projects of a number of faculty members who are committed to innovation in their teaching.
- On April 1, the Humanities Research Institute hosted its Research Showcase, which included presentations by 2014-15 research fellows Dr. Raymond Blake, Professor Leesa Streifler and Professor Sarah Abbott.
- The University's Actuarial Sciences program has once again received accreditation from the Canadian Institute of Actuaries, making it one of only 10 programs nationwide to have that designation.
- A series of events took place in late March as part of the "Man Up Against Violence" initiative. The University of Regina men's sports teams were key supporters.
- Weyburn-based company Crescent Point Energy donated \$100,000 worth of equipment and other support to the Petroleum Systems Engineering Undergraduate Laboratory.
- Several high-profile lectures took place during the reporting period:
 - Sister Helen Prejean delivered Campion's Annual Nash Lecture;
 - Dr. Gerald McMaster spoke about Aboriginal perceptions of non-Aboriginals for the Humanities Research Institute's annual Dr. Barbara Powell Lecture;
 - Chantal Hébert delivered the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy's eighth annual Tansley Lecture;
 - Dr. Michael O'Sullivan, grandson of former Regina College Principal Rev. Ernest Stapleford, delivered the Stapleford lecture on the subject of global education;
 - Dr. Ellen J. Kennedy spoke about genocide in a lecture organized by the President's Liberal Arts Advisory Group; and
 - Regina artist Wilf Perreault delivered the Centre for Continuing Education's Heritage lecture.
- Preparations are underway for the University's third employee engagement survey, scheduled to take place in Fall 2015.
- The University is also planning to launch a new employment equity plan that will help fulfill the institution's commitment to achieving a more representative workforce and enhancing the campus culture of diversity and inclusion.
- On May 6, an open forum will be held to outline the 2015-16 budget and answer questions from students, faculty and staff.