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 over the past two months on the five areas of priority that the Board and I identified for the 2015-16 academic year. These areas of focus align with the three priorities and two overarching themes of the University’s strategic plan, *peyak aski kikawinaw*: student success; research impact; commitment to communities; sustainability; and Indigenization. The report also includes updates on my academic research, University events and accomplishments, and other matters that may be of interest to the Board.

**Objective: Sustain enrolment at 2014-15 levels per the performance management framework, with particular emphasis on enhancing diversity among the student population**

A considerable amount of progress has been made in this area:

- Overall enrolment for the recently completed Spring/Summer semester was 6.3% higher than last year, with the number of credit hours taught up by 7.3%.
- This growth is continuing into the Fall 2015 semester, which is also seeing increases in both the number of registered students and the number of credit hours to be taught. As of August 25, overall undergraduate and graduate enrolment had increased by 5.1% compared to the same time last year for the Fall semester, and the total number of credit hours to be taught had increased by 3.9%.
- Particularly notable is a marked increase, after some years of decline, in the credit hours taught in the Faculty of Fine Arts. Under the leadership of Dean Rae Staseson and her team, and in partnership with other University units, the Faculty of Fine Arts has reached out in new ways to prospective students with a strong message about the Faculty’s programs and the careers that are open to Fine Arts graduates. As of August 25, credit hours in Fine Arts were up more than 8% over the previous year.
- Also notable is that graduate enrolments were up by 7.0% as of August 25. This success demonstrates the attractiveness of new degree offerings such as the
Master of Health Administration degree, as well as the increasing attractiveness of research-based graduate degrees generated by strong graduate supervision and increased financial support of graduate students.

- In the context of a contracting Saskatchewan high-school graduating cohort, this increasing enrolment at both the undergraduate and graduate levels is evidence that:
  
  1. The University of Regina is the first choice of an increasing number of students in Saskatchewan;
  2. The investments we have made in out-of-province advertising and recruitment are paying off, especially in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario; and
  3. The strategic approach to international recruitment and retention by UR International continues to generate strong international enrolments and retention in an increasingly competitive context.

- Throughout the summer, planning continued for recruitment activities to take place this year. These include the September UR Update session for guidance counsellors, the Fall Open House event for students and their families in October, and two events in December and March that will allow students to be admitted to the University “on the spot.”

- Preparations were also made for additional recruitment work outside the province. For example, a recruiter will be based in Calgary from September to December to build on the success the University has had in Alberta in recent months. In addition, the University launched its new future student website at urconnected.uregina.ca.

**Objective:** Identify and begin implementing specific initiatives designed to increase first-to-second-year retention rates to 80% per the University’s performance measurement framework

Work continued toward evaluating and implementing different initiatives designed to enhance student retention:

- The Office of Resource Planning continued work on its report on student retention. The report considers the University’s retention data and initiatives in the context of UK, American and Canadian universities who have implemented best practices. The recommendations section is in the final stages of completion, after which the report will be submitted to Deans’ Council for consideration.

- Some of the initiatives identified in early drafts of the report – early interventions for at-risk students, for example – were topics of discussion at the University Leadership Team retreat in late August.

- In the meantime, other initiatives took place throughout the summer with an eye to student retention. Summer orientation sessions were held for incoming
students, with a record 450 students participating. In addition, a full slate of orientation sessions has been planned for early September to help students learn to manage the academic expectations that they will face at university this year. It is expected that there will be a record number of students participating in orientation.

- Of particular note for this year is a focus on how life in residence can have a positive effect on retention. The opening of the University’s newest residence complex, Kīšik Towers, is part of our retention strategy, as student retention, especially from year one to year two, increases substantially among those living in on-campus accommodation. Providing such accommodation becomes even more important as the proportion of our student body from outside the city and province increases. Initial projections for occupancy of Kīšik Towers have been met or exceeded, and when full, the complex will be home to more than 600 students, as well as a 90-space daycare.

- Over the summer, planning continued for the development of Living-Learning Communities that will debut in residence this fall. The initial 45 first-year students to participate in the program will begin their studies here this fall, and will be co-located in residence according to their academic and personal interests to help foster a stronger sense of belonging to and engagement with their peers, their faculties, and their University. Thus far, four Living-Learning Communities have been created in the areas of Engineering, Health and Wellness, Social Justice and Leadership (focused on Campion College) and Global Perspectives. As this pilot project continues over the course of the academic year, it is expected that additional interested students will be added to these initial Living Learning Communities.

- Issues of student success, especially transition and retention, will be a focus for Deans’ Council in this academic year. Areas of particular emphasis will be threshold courses (generally first-year courses with an unusually high rate of failures) and student advising. For threshold courses, discussion will focus on providing assistance to students who are struggling, and to instructors faced with students who lack the necessary foundation to succeed in these courses. For advising, Deans’ Council is discussing the feasibility of creating a small central team, drawn from the existing campus complement of academic advisors, who will focus on at-risk students and students in transition from one Faculty to another.

- Over the summer, Information Services completed work on an “Official App for Students” to be launched in September. It allows students to check grades and class schedules, has maps of campus plus events and news listings, and perhaps most importantly, provides emergency notifications.

- Also of note is that Information and Facilities Management have worked together to convert 10 additional classrooms into smart classrooms, and upgrade other existing smart classrooms to accommodate newer digital signalling standards.
Objective: Highlight and publicly profile four research initiatives (including one related to Indigenous research) that clearly demonstrate the tangible local impact of our work

Communicating the growing impact of University of Regina research was a priority in the early part of 2015, and remained so throughout the summer:

- In recent months, the University has been very successful at increasing the number of research stories profiled in our various media platforms such as the University website, social media, and the Degrees alumni magazine. In the January-August timeframe, for example, 74 research stories were produced for the University’s webpage, 31 more than the total number of research stories produced for all of 2014. A special effort was made to promote research successes during the summer months, a time when a great deal of faculty and student research takes place, often unbeknownst to the general public. This has resulted in increased local media coverage of the University’s research.

- This increased promotion of University research in the larger community has helped set the stage for a more concerted effort to profile four specific projects in a way that goes beyond our traditional means of highlighting University research. A plan is expected to be in place by the next Board meeting as to which researchers and their projects should be profiled in terms of tangible local impact.

Objective: Ensure that the newly restructured Alumni Relations and Community Outreach unit develops a comprehensive long-term plan for its operations

It remained a priority throughout the reporting period to ensure that the University has the capacity to better connect with alumni and other community members:

- The 2015-2016 budget approved in May by the Board of Governors included provisions for a Director of Alumni and Community Outreach. A job description has been developed, and External Relations is working with Human Resources to staff this position. In the meantime, I have met with members of the Alumni Association, and have accepted their offer of assistance to leverage new strategic opportunities through the new position.

- The External Relations unit has been realigned into two new streams: 1) Communications and Marketing, and 2) Donor Relations, Alumni Relations and Community Outreach. The transition to the two streams and the development of a long-term operational plan for community outreach will be completed upon the hiring of the new Director of Alumni and Community Outreach. External Relations has been working with Facilities Management to ensure that there are adequate work spaces within the External Relations area to accommodate the realignment.
Objective: Implement the key recommendations from the review of the University’s donor relations functions in order to enhance relationships with donors and build the University’s capacity for fundraising

The Board has supported the implementation of key recommendations designed to enhance the University’s capacity to generate increased revenues from donations, and the past few months have provided the opportunity to make progress in this regard:

- Regarding staffing, as noted in the previous report I have extended Bruce Anderson’s term as Associate Vice-President (Development) to June 30, 2018. This has added stability to the donor relations team. In addition, with budget resources in place for a new Director of Development, the process is now underway to fill this new position. I have also approved the hiring of a part-time Prospect Researcher to help generate leads on developing relationships with potential donors.

- I personally have taken on a new portfolio of donor prospects as part of my priorities, and am already using invitations to community and University events to create opportunities for donor cultivation and stewardship.

- In support of the College Avenue fundraising campaign, a donor and University community event is being planned for Darke Hall on September 16. This will be an opportunity for donors to learn about progress being made on the College Avenue fundraising campaign. The project architects and heritage consultant will be in attendance to provide information about planning and to address any questions that members of the community may have.

- Plans are also underway for me to host a series of small dinners to engage prominent members of Saskatchewan’s business community in support of a new initiative that is part of the College Avenue campus renewal. This initiative is being designed to address “stop-outs,” in which people have taken some post-secondary education but have not completed a university degree. A 2011 National Household Survey indicated that for financial, family and other reasons more than 19,000 people in Regina alone have experienced a “stop-out” in their post-secondary education. The University is developing a new program to offer these former students a path to successfully achieve their educational goals and build their careers, and community support for the College Avenue campus will play an important role in this.

- Plans have also been underway for a number of other donor-related events and announcements, including the annual President’s Breakfast for Athletics. The President’s Breakfast will provide an opportunity to cultivate community support for a number of our athletics programs, including a high-performance training centre where our athletes can train together under the guidance of coaches, faculty, and graduate students.
REPORT ON THE PRESIDENT’S ACADEMIC RESEARCH

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

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

- Work continued on the “Voice of Inclusion” appreciative inquiry into inclusive education and employment practices in the province – a project in which I have engaged with two colleagues from the Faculty of Education. We submitted an article to the International Journal of Inclusive Education, and learned that it has been accepted for publication pending revisions. We conducted additional analysis of the interview results in preparation for completing the final report, and the literature review that will be part of the report is nearly complete. We also developed a framework for the book that will be part of the project, and selected the majority of the quotes and photographs for the book.

- I continued fulfilling my duties as President of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IASSIDD), remaining in close contact with other members of the Executive as we planned the organization’s activities for the coming academic year.

FAMILY LITERACY

- In response to a request from a team in Calgary, I compiled and provided copies of past programs I have developed for rural, Aboriginal and newcomer family literacy. These programs are currently being considered to determine if it would be appropriate and possible to modify them for implementation in that city.

PROGRAM PRIORITIZATION

- A team from Wilfrid Laurier University has approached me about participating as a researcher on a project examining the process of program prioritization at different universities. We are currently discussing my potential participation.

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS AND OTHER ACTIVITY

- Two of my opinion-editorial pieces – one about forest fire evacuees and one on how to be successful at university – were published in the Regina Leader-Post.

- I delivered a keynote address to a group of women university administrators from around the world as part of the “Transformational Leadership in Higher Education” program delivered at the University in August.
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

- In late August, the annual “Gathering on the Green” event was held to thank faculty and staff for their work, and welcome them to the new academic year.

- At the annual meeting of the Association for Higher Education Facilities Officers, Vice-President (Administration) Dave Button was presented with the President’s Award for his work at helping to integrate Mexico into the organization. This is the second time in three years that he has received this award in recognition of his service to the organization.

- Approximately 50 new faculty members attended new faculty orientation on September 1. This represents the largest cohort of faculty hires in many years.

- Colleen Murphy has assumed the role of Acting University Librarian. She will serve in this capacity until the appointment of a new University Librarian. A national search is currently underway, and it is expected that the position will be filled within the next year.

- Daniel Gagnon will complete his term as Dean of the Faculty of Science at the end of this academic year, and a national search is now underway to fill that position.

- Dr. Gordon Huang was formally inducted as a Fellow in the Canadian Academy of Engineering, one of the highest recognitions possible for an engineer in Canada.

- Dr. Gordon Asmundson of the Department of Psychology has been named Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Anxiety Disorders.

- Earlier this year, University of Regina Fine Arts sessional lecturer Holly Fay received the National Visual Arts Advocacy Award from the Canadian Artists Representation/Le Front des artistes canadiens (CARFAC).

- In a wonderful example of interdisciplinary research, Dr. Nick Carleton of the Department of Psychology, Dr. Patrick Neary of the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies, and Dr. David Gerhard of the Department of Computer Science are working together to determine if acoustical analysis can reduce health risks for people.
STUDENT AND ALUMNI SUCCESS

- A group of three Industrial Systems Engineering students – Sam Dietrich, Caleb Friedrick and Joshua Friedrick – have begun work that will enable them to participate in an international competition in Indiana in May 2016. They are designing software and hardware that will facilitate the automated planting of crops according to specific GPS co-ordinates.

- As part of their program, three other Engineering students who graduated recently – Marten Fidler, Tanner Hunt and Paul Toews – designed a therapeutic chair for students with autism. They donated the chair to Winston Knoll Collegiate in Regina for use in the school’s Developmental Centre.

- Jordan Ethier, a recent graduate of the Department of History, had an article published in The Mirror, Canada’s oldest and most prestigious undergraduate history journal.

- The recipients of the 2015 Alumni Crowning Achievement Awards (to be presented in October) have been named:
  - Jim Hopson – Lifetime Achievement Award;
  - Dr. Kristian Baker – Distinguished Professional Award;
  - Rob Deglau – Distinguished Humanitarian and Community Service Award;
  - Barry Clarke – Dr. Robert and Norma Ferguson Award for Outstanding Service to the University and/or the Alumni Association; and
  - Cherish Jean-Baptiste – Outstanding Young Alumni Award

- In July, the University announced the name of the new residence and daycare building, as well as the new names of the North and South Residences. The names were inspired by a suggestion from Braden Konschuh, Sports Information Officer in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies, who suggested that Saskatchewan and prairie themes be incorporated into the names. In keeping with the strategic plan’s commitment to Indigenizing campus:
  - The new residence and daycare building will be called Kīšik Towers (pronounced KEE-zhick ), coming from the Saulteaux language, meaning “sky,” as it is the tallest building on campus;
  - The existing North Residence building will be known as Paskwāw Tower (pronounced pus- KWOW), the word for “prairie” in the Cree language; and
  - The South Residence will be called Wakpā Tower (pronounced wak-pa), coming from the Dakota word for “river.”

- On September 2, the campus community and local media were invited to have a preview of Kīšik Towers, which will be home to its first group of students this fall. Kīšik Towers will be a key factor in the recruitment and retention of students in the years to come, and will play an important role in enhancing the student experience at the University.
Paul J. Hill, a past honorary degree recipient and longtime supporter of the University, was named to the Order of Canada.

Dr. Sherine Gabriel, who did her pre-medical studies at the University of Regina in the late 1970s, has been named Dean of the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School at Rutgers University.

Former University of Regina Cougar basketball player Tyler Wright was recently inducted into the Regina Sports Hall of Fame.

CAMPUS EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Effective July 1, the University became a full partner with Mitacs, an independent non-profit agency that supports research in all disciplines through collaboration with partner organizations. This partnership will create new opportunities for research support, especially for graduate students and post-doctoral fellows.

July 5 marked the fiftieth anniversary of classes being offered at what is now known as the “main campus” of the University of Regina.

For several weeks in the summer, the University worked with the Red Cross to accommodate evacuees who had been displaced by forest fires in the province. Several units on campus, including Residence Services, Food Services and the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies, were involved in the effort.

In early July, it was announced that Regina-based architectural firm P3 Architecture Partnership, in association with Vancouver-based heritage experts Donald Luxton and Associates, has been selected to lead the renewal of the College Avenue campus.

The North American Interfaith Network Conference was held at the University of Regina from July 19-22. Luther College, Campion College and First Nations University played key roles in hosting this international conference.

From July 23-25, the University hosted an international symposium entitled “Public Engagement and the Politics of Evidence in an Age of Neoliberalism and Audit Culture.” Dr. Marc Spooner and Dr. James McNinch of the Faculty of Education were the primary organizers.

On July 20, Facilities Management went live with phase one of its new FAMIS system (Facilities Asset Management Information System), which over the long term will enhance work orders, inventory management, customer invoicing and overall business practices.

Over the summer, the University Bookstore implemented a number of services aimed at making student textbook purchases easier and more efficient. These include in-store pick-up for online purchases and a price comparison service.
In August, the Paul J. Hill School of Business once again hosted a seven-day “business boot camp” to help former members of the Canadian Armed Forces make the transition into the world of business.

A mural entitled “Spiritual Journey,” commissioned by the Indigenous Advisory Circle in partnership with the Faculty of Education and created by Cliff Dubois of the Pasqua First Nation, has been unveiled in the Teacher Preparation Centre as part of the University’s commitment to Indigenizing campus.

On September 1, the University officially launched La Cité universitaire francophone, which amalgamates the Institut français and the Department of French to create an entity with academic status equivalent to other faculties. This is an important step forward for French-language education at the University, and in the province as a whole.

The University community was saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. Paul Antrobus, a former Luther College psychology professor who taught thousands of students during a career that spanned more than four decades at the University.