

President's Message – February 2014

Forty years ago, the world was a much different place. The average cost of a new car was \$3,750, average monthly rent was \$185, and gas was 14 cents a litre. One of the more popular television shows of the era was “Happy Days” and the musical group ABBA was lighting up the charts. 1974 was also the year when the RCMP first allowed women to apply to the force, and when U.S. president Richard Nixon resigned over the Watergate scandal.

Also 40 years ago, on July 1, 1974, by an Act of the provincial legislature, the University of Regina became an autonomous, degree-granting institution.

A few years before, Dr. John Archer, the Principal of the University of Saskatchewan's Regina Campus, had said: “Regina is not seen as a university town, as yet. The Regina Campus is still a question mark in some people's minds. This, too, will pass. Regina, ere long, will be proud of this rugged brat that squats so starkly in the southeast environs of the city. Reginans have reason to be proud of it now, were they to consider seriously the great progress made in a scant ten years.”

Imagine what Dr. Archer would say if he were to see that “rugged brat” now! I'm sure he would be proud of what the University of Regina has become 40 years later.

What we have become is a diverse, comprehensive university that offers a wide array of programs for our students, serves our provincial community in countless ways, and makes an impact at home and around the world through our faculty members' and students' research.

As we approach the 40th anniversary of the University of Regina's creation as an autonomous university, it is only appropriate to celebrate that milestone and those who worked so hard to make it a reality. That includes the 30 faculty members who authored the “Regina Beach Manifesto” in late 1963. In addition to setting the early tone for the University's emphasis on a liberal arts education, this document “nourished a spirit of independence and accelerated the drive for autonomy” that would ultimately be realized in 1974, according to Dr. James Pitsula in his book *As One Who Serves: The Making of the University of Regina*.

Two weeks ago, to commemorate the “Regina Beach Manifesto” and discuss how we can build on the longstanding tradition of liberal arts education at our University, we held a public forum entitled “The Liberal Arts at the University of Regina: Looking Back and Moving Forward.” The evening included keynote addresses by Professor Emeritus Dr. Jack Boan, who helped draft the “Regina Beach Manifesto,” and Dr. David Helfand, President and Vice-Chancellor of Quest University. It also featured a panel discussion that brought together Dr. Philip Charrier (Department of History), Dr. Shauneen Pete (Faculty of Education and Executive Lead - Indigenization) and Dr. Sean Tucker (Faculty of Business Administration).

If you were not able to attend, you may watch a video of the forum online at <http://www.uregina.ca/president/committees/liberal-arts-advisory/initiatives.html>

In the months to come, we will be announcing a number of other special events that celebrate the progress we have made together over the past four decades. My hope is that throughout the year

our students, faculty, staff, members of the public and alumni (after all, it's the 40th anniversary of the Alumni Association as well!) will all have opportunities to celebrate in a fashion befitting the 40th anniversary of the University of Regina.

40 years on, it is difficult to imagine that our institution could have been named anything other than the University of Regina, but that might very well have been the case. Dr. Pitsula's book also includes an account of the debate that took place over the naming of our independent University. A campaign was launched and some 340 names were considered, drawn from almost everything including geographical location, the names of Canadian statespersons, and spiritual values.

After considering names like Prairie Lily University and Freedom University, the decision makers of the day chose what I believe to be an appropriate name for our institution, and I can't tell you how pleased I am to be sharing with you in the 40th anniversary celebrations of the University of Regina.

Here's to a memorable 40th anniversary in 2014.

Sincerely,

Dr. Vianne Timmons
President and Vice-Chancellor