

Message from the President – September 2009

Welcome to the University of Regina, and welcome to the start of the 2009-2010 academic year! For many of us, September is a time of new beginnings, especially for our new students, faculty and staff. Welcome to YOUR university.

The new academic year holds great promise for all of us, and I am filled with optimism and excitement about the year ahead. One of the reasons is that the University of Regina has a new strategic plan. It was developed through extensive consultations with our University community and the broader community. Our Board of Governors approved the plan over the summer. It is called: “*mâmahohkamâtowin*: Our Work, Our People and Our Communities.” The Cree word *mâmahohkamâtowin* means “co-operation; working together towards common goals”. This plan will guide our direction for the next five years and beyond.

Our new strategic plan will have an impact on our lives and futures, and you will begin to see the results in the things that we do this year. For example, we will look for ways to incorporate sustainable practices into all of our activities; we will make every effort to engage more meaningfully with our First Nations and Metis communities; we will work hard to improve the university experience for all of our students; and we will work toward an even more welcoming campus where we properly recognize the achievements of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

I’m very excited about this new opportunity to realize our potential as an academic community. I hope you share my enthusiasm as we work together toward these common goals.

Another reason I’m very excited about the year ahead is that I will be visiting a number of Saskatchewan communities to talk about our University. Over the next few months, I will be going to high schools and community events where I plan to meet with future students and families, and visit our alumni and community leaders. I look forward to making new friends and connecting with existing ones as we reach out to our provincial community. We plan to tell the University of Regina story in the cities of Moose Jaw, Swift Current, Estevan, Weyburn, Yorkton, Prince Albert, North Battleford, and perhaps others.

This year, you will also see a more integrated and coordinated approach to our community relations, student recruitment and advertising. We will use a more robust marketing approach to profile the quality of our teaching and research, and the value of our faculty, staff and students in the community. Watch for our “new look” in the days and weeks ahead.

These new initiatives and directions are all about one thing: Our University – **Your** University. I invite you to make this place your place. Whether you are new to the campus or not, you are part of a vibrant and rich community. Take advantage of everything it has to offer!

For our students, an important part of your education and learning will take place outside the classroom. You can meet new friends from around the world or from your own hometown right in our hallways. Have a coffee or go for a walk with someone in your class. Learn about other cultures by talking to our international students. Get involved in activities such as intramural sports, or join one of the many student clubs on campus where you can share common interests with others. Go to lectures and theatre performances, work out in the Fitness and Lifestyle Centre, visit the art gallery, or cheer on the Cougars and Rams at one of their games. The opportunities on our campus are endless. By engaging with your new community while you are here, you will have a more balanced and healthier life, you will develop a broader vision of our world, and you will build memories and friendships that last a lifetime. Campus life is an important part of your academic development and I encourage you to make time to experience it.

It is also important to know that if you need some extra help with a class or personal assistance, please don't hesitate to call the appropriate student support office such as Counselling Services. And please don't be afraid to talk to someone if you need to. We're here to help support you and make your experience fulfilling and the best it can possibly be.

For our faculty and our staff, I also invite you to continue to engage in our campus community. Your work and contributions are essential to the fulfillment of our academic mission and you provide immeasurable value to our students and to the broader research and teaching community. I encourage you to attend the many activities on campus with your family, friends and colleagues, share our unique cultural and academic environment with others, and work hard to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Our teaching and actions have the potential to affect others in a transformative way. Within our University, let's create a community that is a model of the world we want.

Good luck to everyone this year in achieving your academic, professional and personal goals. I am confident that the months ahead will offer many opportunities that will help you to realize your potential. If you see me in the hallway, please introduce yourself and say hello. I want to get to know as many of you as possible over the next year.