

Message from the President – April 2009

Partnerships have long been essential to the University of Regina. Through partnerships with community organizations, government, funding agencies, industry, donors, alumni and friends, our University becomes much greater than the sum of its parts.

One of our most valued and successful partnerships is the one we share with our closest academic partners and friends: Campion College, Luther College and First Nations University of Canada. The importance of our relationship with the federated colleges on campus has become abundantly clear to me in the short time I have been president.

Our relationship, which goes back more than three decades, respects institutional independence and individual goals and needs while understanding the importance of, and embracing, a shared academic purpose.

Recently, two significant events took place to celebrate and honour this federation, and to formally commemorate and affirm our shared commitment to respect and co-operation – both historically and as we go forward into the future.

On March 31, I joined Presidents Ben Fiore of Campion College, Bruce Perlson of Luther College, and Charles Pratt of First Nations University of Canada to unveil four plaques – one for each of us – to install in the coming weeks in our respective institutions. These marble plaques will serve as a lasting monument to the educational and social goals on which our federation is built and will continue.

Creating and installing the plaques is a lasting recognition of how unique our campus is, and celebrates our shared history. At the same time, it's a way of looking to the future by reaffirming that we will continue working together to build the best possible learning and work community for everyone – a community built on respect and inclusiveness, and one that represents the world we want to live in. Ours is a place where we come together to generate and encourage debate and dialogue, but we do so in a way that respects and includes differences. Actions and attitudes not respectful of people's race, gender, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation, for example, fall outside the realm of acceptable dialogue and debate on our campus.

When we celebrate our federation, we mark our shared commitment to these values and the community we have built together on our campus.

Also on March 31, the second event celebrating our federation was the launch of a new lecture series, called "Forward Together." This annual lecture will continue our shared spirit of community. One of the things common to the University and all of the federated colleges is the idea that everyone should be treated equally and with the utmost respect and compassion. For that reason, we decided to jointly sponsor an annual public lecture promoting themes such as understanding, inclusiveness and human rights. Chilean documentary photographer Carlos Reyes-Manzo was the inaugural lecturer.

Reyes-Manzo spent two years in prison and was exiled to Panama following the Chilean military coup in 1973. Living in the United Kingdom since 1979, he documents people who are marginalized from society and suffer human rights abuses. His lecture examined the role of social documentary

photography in promoting human rights. His images capture the human tragedy that can occur when society loses sight of its most important values such as respect, human dignity and inclusiveness.

These two events were inspiring and affirming in the moment, but more importantly, they were significant statements about the strong history we have shared, and the future we will continue to share through our federated college partnership. We truly are greater, together.