

## President's Message – April 2011

Together with teaching and community service, research is one of the three pillars of the University of Regina's academic mission. The research activities undertaken by faculty members at our University are rich and diverse. Just as importantly, academic research is a key component of the undergraduate and graduate student experience here as well. There is no better illustration of this than the upcoming University of Regina Graduate and Undergraduate Student Research Conference.

The sixth annual conference, to be held April 1-2, provides a tremendous opportunity to present their findings in front of their peers, and reflect on the feedback of others.

The lineup of this year's presentations is impressive, and speaks volumes about the quality of our students. It includes such topics as the motor performance of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders, alternative rehabilitation programs for correctional facilities, and the question of whether or not an applicant's name can influence the hiring process in racially diverse labour markets.

I encourage students, faculty, and staff members to attend as much of this conference as you can. Our students are the primary reason we are here, and showing our support for them is an important way of developing our academic community and encouraging our researchers of the future. For more conference details, please visit [www.urgsa.ca/conference](http://www.urgsa.ca/conference).

The student research conference comes on the heels of another important development in the research enterprise at the University of Regina. In late March, Executive of Council approved the University's new strategic research plan, the blueprint for research for the next five years.

The strategic research plan, like our institutional strategic plan, *mâmahowkamâtowin: Our Work, Our People, Our Communities*, was prepared after extensive consultation with internal and external stakeholders. The process used was comprehensive and included 90 interviews, four online questionnaires, three town hall meetings, written submissions, and a number of document revisions. I would like to thank all those whose thoughtful input helped shape the document and chart a general course for our future research work.

Entitled *Working Together Towards Common Goals: Serving Through Research*, the strategic research plan outlines the *raison d'être* of University of Regina research. It delineates the purpose of research, the criteria for excellence and accountability, and describes the essential role research plays at our University.

The plan identifies three signature research themes and eight sub-themes that reflect areas of demonstrated expertise and sustained research excellence at the University of Regina.

Those signature themes and sub-themes are:

- Sustainable Development and its two sub-themes: Energy and Natural Resources; and Environment.
- Human Development and its three sub-themes: Health; Human Justice, Safety and Security; and Arts, Culture and Heritage.
- Knowledge Creation and Discovery and its three sub-themes: Information and Communication; Pure Discovery-Based Research; and Community-Based Research.

One of the goals of the new plan is to further support and develop these areas of excellence.

Last year, the University attracted the most research funding in its history – a full 25 per cent more than the previous year. One of our objectives is to build on that momentum, and support efforts to attract more funding, especially Tri-Council funding.

Another important outcome of the strategic research plan will be to strengthen the impact University of Regina research has on the communities we serve. As stated in the plan, “Research is most valued by society when it changes the way we think, act, and feel about ourselves, others and our environment, be it at the international, national, provincial, or local level.”

Our faculty members and students are engaged in a wide spectrum of pure- and applied-research activities – from research in the social and hard sciences to performance- and community-based research. We should all take great pride in the research that is conducted at the University of Regina. Whether it’s in the laboratory, the library, or the classroom, together we are engaged in research that is relevant to the academy and meaningful and responsive to the needs of our communities.