

President's Message – May 2011

As another semester at the University of Regina comes to a close, new and exciting things await each of us. Regardless of the destination we choose this summer – the classroom, the back yard, an out-of-province or even an out-of-country location – we will all have the opportunity to learn more about the rich and diverse cultures in our neighbourhoods, our province, and our world.

I recently had an opportunity to travel to North Battleford as part of the University's annual Community Connections Tour. The Community Connections event I attended was organized by the Faculty of Social Work and Poverty Free Saskatchewan, a network of individuals, organizations, governments and businesses working toward the elimination of poverty. The event included a dialogue session on the importance of eradicating poverty in our province, as well as the actions needed to achieve this goal. The dialogue session was co-sponsored by the Meadow Lake Tribal Council, the Battlefords Tribal Council Indian Health Services, and the Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers (Battlefords branch).

Caring about everyone in our communities was at the core of this session, as was the idea that we must all pay close attention to the needs and different views of others. I came away from this session inspired. The time I spent meeting with local groups who are tackling an issue of relevance and importance to us all allowed me to reflect upon our shared values as outlined in our Strategic Plan, *mâmahowkamâtowin: Our Work, Our People, Our Communities*. In particular, I am reminded that we must employ our expertise to serve each other and society.

I am reminded of the values stated in our Strategic Plan that encourage us – the University of Regina community – to:

- Be a scholarly community engaged with many other communities. The members of our community are our defining resource. Our treatment of each other is principled and respectful.
- Employ our expertise to serve each other and society. We illuminate socially relevant problems. The knowledge we generate enriches the community.
- Be legitimately concerned with all aspects of our world. We are a bridge and an interpreter between our communities, other peoples, and other nations.

While attending the North Battleford event, I was also reminded of the rich and diverse experiences we gain from meeting our international students, some of whom have fled difficult situations within their home countries and said goodbye to their families in order to study here. The session also emphasized the importance of being engaged citizens who value the many privileges we have in our society.

One of those privileges is the ability to vote in democratic elections – something eligible voters will have the opportunity to do in our May 2 federal election. All of us can have a say in how our country is governed, and I encourage everyone to take the time on May 2 to exercise that democratic privilege and express your opinion about how we can make our country – and our world – a better place.

Wherever the next few months take you, I hope you enjoy the warmer season. Thank you for all you have done for the University of Regina and its students throughout this academic year. Your commitment to your university – and to the provincial, national and international communities of which it is a part – is something of which we should all be proud.