

President's Message – March 2012

As we continue to work toward achieving the goals outlined in our strategic plan, entitled *mâmahowkamâtowin: Our Work, Our People, Our Communities*, it is important to pause and celebrate milestones reached along the way.

One such milestone worth celebrating is the result of a 10-year retention and completion study, released earlier this month by the Office of Resource Planning. The study illustrates growth in the University's retention rates, and I am pleased to report the University now has the highest rate of first- to second-year undergraduate retention in 10 years.

This is a testament to our strong programs such as the UR Guarantee and the many experiential learning opportunities offered through our Cooperative Education Program. It also speaks to the valued work our employees conduct every day as they engage students and work to fulfill our academic mission.

With that in mind, I would like to point out that the University of Regina was recently named one of Saskatchewan's top 20 employers. This accomplishment would not have been possible without the dedication of our motivated and highly engaged employees. It was also made possible by the continual commitment of academic and non-academic units across campus to enhancing our workplace environment over the past couple of years.

In a February 2010 employee engagement survey, more than 50 per cent of our employees provided their perspective on the work environment at the University of Regina. This high level of participation provided valuable input to direct employee engagement improvement initiatives, within specific units and across the University. For example, many areas held feedback sessions to get more direct input from employees and included employees in operational planning. Other areas more actively promoted professional development opportunities and celebrated employee accomplishments in teaching, research, and service to community. In addition, performance management training has taken place and a change management framework was selected and is currently being implemented to engage leaders and employees in effectively implementing change in the workplace.

Through our strategic plan, we have committed to providing "freedom and opportunity for faculty and staff to excel, be esteemed, and be recognized" – and we remain committed to this objective. For that reason, we are now launching the second employee engagement survey to continue to provide employees the opportunity for input toward creating a positive and fulfilling work environment.

The second, biennial survey, which is being administered by the Faculty of Business Administration, Centre for Management Development, is currently underway. I encourage all employees to watch for an email that contains a link to the survey and to take 20 minutes to respond. Responses will remain anonymous and confidential. More information about the survey is available at: <http://www.uregina.ca/hr/employees/employee-engagement.html>

Your feedback will be beneficial in helping us improve our workplace – continuing in areas of strength and identifying improvement opportunities. Your input assists every unit on campus to make enhancements to the employee experience.

Thank you for your commitment to the University of Regina and for the contributions you make on a daily basis for the benefit of our students and our community.

Vianne Timmons
President and Vice-Chancellor