

President's Message – April 2014

Through our three-fold mission of teaching, research and public service, the University of Regina is many things to many people.

For some, the University is a place for students to engage in studies that will help them become well-rounded citizens of the world. For others, it is a place to undertake professional programs or prepare for a specific career. Many know it as a place to pursue intellectual inquiry in the purest sense, and still others consider it the ideal place from which to make an impact locally and around the world through community-based and applied research. The University of Regina is all of these things – and that only scratches the surface.

The University is also a centre of culture for our province – something that becomes especially apparent each year as the winter semester winds down. With that in mind, I would like to reflect on some of the ways that the University provides essential support for the arts in Saskatchewan and helps promote our province's rich cultural heritage.

The end of the semester brings with it a number of opportunities to see some of our outstanding music students perform publicly. Concerts by the University of Regina Wind Ensemble, Choirs, Concert Band, Orchestra, Jazz Band and New Music Ensemble are just some of this month's musical offerings. I encourage everyone to check the Events Calendar on the University's homepage for a complete listing of all recitals and concerts.

Performances by our music students and faculty members are just one way which the University contributes to the arts in Regina and southern Saskatchewan. Another is through the Theatre department, which stages plays and musicals on campus as part of its programming. Attending these performances provides a wonderful opportunity to see the work of our talented students – students who upon graduation secure jobs across Canada with such highly regarded theatre companies as Ontario's Stratford Festival, where a number of our alumni are currently employed both on stage and behind the scenes. In addition, our arts education program in the Faculty of Education helps graduating teachers inspire and educate our province's next generation of artists.

This week, we are in the midst of "Home Brew – A Raw Meet Production," a four-day student festival of creation. Running until April 5, the festival provides an opportunity for students from across campus to develop an artistic project, whether it's a poem, play, composition or creative idea.

Also this month, our graduating film and visual arts students have screenings and exhibits at two of the city's public art venues, The Artesian and the MacKenzie Art Gallery. If you can attend any of these events, I encourage you to take some extra time to go through the MacKenzie's other exhibits. As many of you will know, the University and the MacKenzie have a relationship dating back more than 60 years, and the MacKenzie frequently displays works from the extensive collection of art it stewards on behalf of the University.

Going back even further, the University's Conservatory of Performing Arts has been providing high-quality, accessible arts education and training opportunities for learners of all ages and abilities for more than a century. Each year, some 1,500 students discover the joys of art, music, theatre and dance at the Conservatory, and graduates include the likes of Malcolm Lowe, the longtime concertmaster of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Recently, the University was fortunate enough to receive a generous contribution from Dr. Roberta McKay and Mr. Elmer Brenner in support of *Building Knowledge: The College Avenue Campus Renewal Project* – a Fazioli concert grand piano. The Fazioli is widely regarded as the finest piano in the world, and is the instrument of choice for such great pianists such as Angela Hewitt, Louis Lortie, Marc-André Hamelin, and Herbie Hancock. The piano will be housed in a revitalized Darke Hall, honouring the vision Francis Darke had upon funding the building's construction – “to build a temple to the arts, and a centre for cultural activity for the University and the community.”

Our ongoing commitment to arts and culture, together with initiatives like the College Avenue campus renewal project, will ensure that the University, our students, faculty, staff and alumni will continue to play a vital role in the cultural well-being of Saskatchewan and the world beyond our provincial borders for generations to come.

Dr. Vianne Timmons
President and Vice-Chancellor