



U OF R REPORT

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President-Designate welcomed to campus

The University community stood shoulder-to-shoulder eagerly awaiting an opportunity to meet President-Designate Vianne Timmons at a May 1 news conference announcing her appointment as the University's seventh president and vice-chancellor.

Timmons comes to the U of R via Prince Edward Island and brings with her a long list of accomplishments. She is currently the vice-president of academic development at the University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI) where she has also served as dean and professor of education and is acting registrar. Her research is focused in education with a particular emphasis on literacy, learning and their roles in establishing healthy vibrant communities.

The impressiveness of Timmons' credentials is matched by the depth of her enthusiasm for the U of R's faculty, staff and students.

"I see the possibilities in what we can achieve togeth-



President-Designate Vianne Timmons with her daughter, Taylor, husband, Stuart and son, Sam.

er," says Timmons. "And I know that we will continue – and the key word for me is 'continue' – to achieve great things because your University, now my University, has accomplished so much."

"You are a very young university, an energetic university, a passionate university, but now you are a great university. You have accomplished enough that you

should be able to, and will be saying that. And that growth is dramatic and it will continue."

Timmons also made known her great belief in students' potential. She sees students as the key to creating a better world.

"You – our University – have openly said, 'We are going to make a difference by the work we do and the students that we work

with.'... I have great confidence in this next generation and what we can do with them," Timmons said.

She also expressed appreciation for the people who came before her at the University, reserving special mention for current president Jim Tomkins, who, she says, has often been described to her as someone who has a "deep devotion to

family, place and building a common purpose."

Tomkins is also impressed by what he sees in Timmons.

"In the meetings, conversations I've had with Dr. Timmons over the last two to three days, I find that she reveals herself to be an impassioned academic, an experienced and qualified administrator, a tireless advocate for post-secondary education, a caring individual who remains focused where she should be focused – in other words on the students, faculty, staff who give life to a university," says Tomkins.

Tomkins will serve as president and vice-chancellor until June 30, 2008, when Timmons will take up the role. She will be formally installed as president and vice-chancellor during fall convocation in October.

For more information about Timmons' background visit: www.uregina.ca/news/releases/2008/may/1Backgrounder.shtml

Enrolment presents challenge and opportunities: Tomkins

As he enters his final weeks as president and vice-chancellor, Jim Tomkins' commitment to strengthening the University during a time of transition is firm. Tomkins recently held a campus forum to talk about the opportunities and challenges facing the University. In a separate year-end interview with the *U of R Report*, he spoke of some of the University's priority projects.

The University's balanced budget for 2008-09, for example, is a snapshot of some of the challenges and opportunities facing the U of R: Increased provincial government funding allows for more operational funding, additional dollars to operate the Lab Building

Addition and money to maintain the tuition freeze for another year. At the same time, the budget accommodates a reduction in tuition and course fee revenue resulting from current and expected declining enrolment.

"The problem financially is falling enrolment," says Tomkins in assessing the achievements of the past year and the challenges ahead for the U of R community. "If it had not fallen during the last two years the University would have more than three million dollars in additional revenues."

Tomkins said that although the number of high school graduates has peaked and is projected to decline for the next

10 years, there is evidence that the strong economy is currently the greatest factor affecting enrolment numbers. Many high school graduates are opting to join the workforce instead of enrolling in post-secondary institutions.

"We've noticed that the number of students registered with us has dropped more slowly than the number of classes they are taking," he says. "That likely means they are holding down jobs and instead of taking three courses they're taking two."

Tomkins says the biggest single initiative the University has undertaken this year has been to develop a strategic

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Jim Tomkins addresses the University community at the President's Forum, April 30.



Writ Large

Dr. Anne M. Lavack
Dean, Faculty of
Business Administration

It's hard to watch the news or read a newspaper these days without hearing about Saskatchewan's booming economy. But what does this mean for our students?

Many students finance their university education through part-time jobs. Students are coming under increasing pressure from employers to work more and more hours each week. For a student dependent on the income from a part-time job, it's difficult to say 'no' to these demands, particularly when the ready availability of more working hours means higher income.

However, research has demonstrated a negative impact on academic achievement when students work an excessive number of job hours per week, because it reduces the amount of time available for homework and study. Some students accept reduced grades as the price of more employment hours. Others offset their increased employment hours by reducing their semester course load, ultimately extending the length of their stay in university.

A few find the economic benefits of the workplace more fulfilling than continuing the pursuit of higher education, and decide to take a hiatus from university. They usually assume they will return to university after a year or two, and don't realize how their changing lifestyle may make it difficult to re-engage at university at a later date.

Part-time students in our graduate programs are also affected by labour market dynamics. Workplace labour shortages mean many are working longer hours than usual, which reduces their ability to undertake part-time studies. As a result, some take a hiatus from university for a semester or two, "until things slow down at work."

Among students about to graduate from university, the booming economy means they may have several job offers to choose from. Furthermore, they may have increased opportunities for upward mobility. In a red-hot labour market, it's not uncommon to change jobs each year in pursuit of ever-higher salary levels and increasing levels of job responsibility. As baby boomers retire, high-potential young people with the right skills and abilities can climb the corporate ladder very quickly.

So what does all this mean for the University of Regina? It's easy to see that the buoyant labour market can lead to reduced student applications and reduced course enrolments in the short term. We need to find ways to show our students that the long-term benefits of education outweigh the short-term attractions of a hot job market. Our Strategic Enrolment Management efforts will be extremely important in developing strategies for attracting and retaining students.

Writ Large is written by campus leaders and is intended to challenge readers to engage with and learn about the various 'parts' that make up the wider University of Regina community and connect us to the world. If you have a topic suggestion for Writ Large, please e-mail communications@uregina.ca and include your contact information. Please put "U of R Report" in the e-mail subject line.

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Bonnie DuPont

company has been widely recognized for our CSR initiatives, and I take great pride in having led the team that has brought this to fruition.

Q. How do you define power at this stage in your career?

A. At this point power relates to having the influence to make positive changes, both in an organization and in society. Some of it is gained through one's position but much of it comes through personal experience and confidence.

Q. What are the hardest lessons facing young women entering the business world today?

A. Business has changed significantly since I entered that world 30 years ago. I think it is more difficult to find a career path now. More and more organizations are hiring contract or temporary workers, making it very challenging for young people to get a foothold. On the positive side, I think the workplace is much more welcoming for young women than when I started my career. Real leaders have an understanding that talent is gender-neutral, and that women will contribute just as much as men.

Eduard Minevich

the stories; dramatic, tender and funny.

Q. What's the difference between a fiddle player and a violinist?

A. I usually say 50 bucks an hour! But if they are good there is no difference.

Q. What inspires a classical musician to play in intimate venues like a local pub?

A. It's a totally different environment with a very cozy ambience. I like to be close to the people and see their reactions. I love it!

Q. What inspires you about new Canadian music?

A. The variety, perhaps, because of the different backgrounds of the composers. Not that I like everything.

Q. Do you still have a connection with Russia?

A. Yes. I have many friends there, but no family left. I've been back three times since 1975, the last time with the trio *Contrast* for a celebration of the great Russian poet Alexander Pushkin.

Q. How did it feel to play for Russian President Vladimir Putin at a Canadian State Dinner in Ottawa in 2003?

A. It's complex. He's a former KGB agent, and I've had some trouble with those guys. He was very pleasant to talk to.

Robert Moody

common features are pattern and form, abstraction and simplicity. Good photographs have strong aspects of composition and are free from unnecessary details. Good

mathematics is just the same.

Q. What do you feel is a common misperception of you?

A. I don't feel misunderstood, but I feel quite a number of people misunderstand mathematics. Most people think of it as algebraic manipulations, pages of equations or boring statistics – not that statistics is boring. Quite the opposite!

It is a bit like comparing playing scales with the playing or writing of symphonies, or confusing the rules of English grammar with the actual literature written using it. Much of what is taught in school is the grammar of mathematics and the algorithms used for solving certain types of problems. The grammar, of course, is essential. But somehow it all becomes rote, and the beautiful ideas get left out.

Another common misconception is that everything there is to do in mathematics has already been done. Mathematicians and scientists know that as long as there are creative people there is no end to new mathematics. For example, for the past 10 years or so I have been thinking about the subject of diffraction. The study of diffraction turns out to involve a lot of very beautiful mathematics, and at the same time to have real-life implications for experimentalists.

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enrolment plan to begin to address enrolment.

"We have spent a great deal of time and effort developing a plan to attract more students and do a better job of retaining them. It will be left to the incoming president and the executive to implement the plan," says Tomkins.

The University has also launched a branding exercise to position the U of R as a great place to work, to study and to teach. Branding ties naturally into recruitment and retention activities, says Tomkins, not just for students, but also for faculty and staff.

The University's progress in attracting research grants will also be of interest to potential new faculty and

enhances the student experience, Tomkins notes. Grants from the three national research councils for projects at the U of R have increased significantly this year, which reflects well on the quality of work being done.

"Many of the projects are interdisciplinary and collaborative, and many of them involve students in the research, which is a great benefit to them."

Meanwhile, the budget allows for some important infrastructure and capital improvements to take place, as the University continues to bring older buildings on campus up to current standards and renovate space for new uses. This work will be facilitated by a five per cent

increase in the provincial sustaining capital grant. The third floor of the Classroom Building, which first opened in 1965, will be retrofitted, and a variety of enhancements are being made to the Administration-Humanities Building, which is now 35 years old. Planning and design work will also commence for the next retrofitting project: the original Laboratory Building.

"We will see the positive effect of those upgrades on the bottom line, no doubt about that," Tomkins says.

Moreover, the capital budget increases funding for teaching and research equipment by 30 per cent, from \$1 million to \$1.3 million.

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Perrins prepares next set of public servants

One of the newest people on campus preparing students for the challenges and opportunities of a public service career is Dan Perrins, who was at one time the highest ranking public servant in the province of Saskatchewan.

Perrins became an executive-in-residence at the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy last February following the election defeat of the government of former Premier Lorne Calvert. At the time of the election, Perrins was deputy minister to the premier.

During his 35 years of service with the province Perrins held senior social policy and program management positions in the Departments of Social Services, Health, Education, and Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training. He weathered change in many forms, including when he started his career as a front-line social worker and later developed skills in policy development. He changed departments, worked with new partners and even new governments.

"I don't think I anticipated or appreciated, in more senior positions, all that is involved in transition," says Perrins. "There is very little written about it. We don't talk about it much until it actually happens. I think in this transition period (the recent election) we did try to prepare people. But it is a difficult thing to prepare for because it's not the public servant's role. When there is going to be an election, you shouldn't be anticipating things one way or the other. You just have to wait."

Perrins has found that while there is a great deal of uncertainty associated with a career in the civil service it also offers limitless opportunities for growth and a chance to make a significant contribution to society. He hopes to serve as a mentor for students eager to make their own mark in the profession.

"The hope is if there are people with talent and determination who want to progress, that there is the opportunity for them to do that and there are people



Former deputy minister to the premier Dan Perrins recently became an executive-in-residence at the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy.

available to assist them and move them along," says Perrins.

He adds that while it's often difficult to know where these opportunities will come from the people who consistently pay attention, work hard, and continue to learn often find their way.

As an educator Perrins plans to pass on advice he wishes he had received early in his career such as the importance of understanding the role of the public servant versus the elected official.

"You don't really see that until you become more senior and you are the person interfacing with the minister and the respective staff in the department. It's not always as straightforward as it might appear. Sometimes you give advice and it's not taken. You translate that back to your staff as, 'It's the elected's prerogative. They get to make the decision.'"

This understanding is one of the keys to being a good public servant and it can have

a daily effect on how a public servant presents policy options to the decision makers, notes Perrins.

"The commitment to the options should be as strong as the recommendation and that's not easy. You have to give fully developed proposals. You could easily say, 'Look what I did on this one. Pick that one.' But there are two or three other options that you haven't developed quite the same. Well, you should. It's not your call."

Pop culture heroes put under the academic microscope

Children are not the only ones fascinated by the adventures of Sherlock Holmes and Harry Potter. The Humanities Research Institute is hosting two conferences this year to put the celebrated sleuth and the aspiring wizard under the academic microscope.

The first conference, "Harry Potter and the Meeting of the Queen City Muggles," took place May 10, appropriately, at the University's old College Avenue campus. The historic buildings are reflective of the style author J. K. Rowling created for her book. The second conference, "Re-Examining Conan Doyle," will be held November 7 to 9, and will focus on the life and works of the creator of the Sherlock Holmes character.

The Centre for Continuing Education and Regina Public Library assisted with the Harry Potter conference by bringing together both

the University and the wider Regina community while English professor Marcel DeCoste collected proposals for the presentations.

DeCoste says that the Harry Potter phenomenon raises questions as to "what it is speaking to and what it is revealing in our own cultural present."

"Such questions are always worth pursuing," he adds, "because that present is where we live and such phenomena probably have as much of an impact as any number of more 'serious' or lasting cultural artifacts. Apart from that, such study can make connections between J. K. Rowling's seven-book saga and such precursor texts as Dickens, Arthurian legend, and Tolkien's or C. S. Lewis' fantasy series."

The "Re-Examining Conan Doyle" symposium will include a showing of early Sherlock Holmes films, spon-

sored by the Department of Media Production and Studies, as well as a stage adaptation of a Holmes story by Regina Little Theatre, sponsored by the Theatre Department.

"For too long writing about Holmes has been dominated by fans who treat Holmes and Watson (Holmes' sidekick) as if they were historical characters," says Nils Clausson, a professor in the Department of English. "But Conan Doyle is an important figure in late 19th century and early 20th century culture and literature. It's worth recalling that in their lifetime both Shakespeare and Dickens were considered 'popular' writers and not part of the literary canon."

For more information about the "Re-Examining Conan Doyle" symposium, go to www.uregina.ca/hri-Conferences/conan_doyle_2008.shtml



English professor Marcel DeCoste says the Harry Potter phenomenon raises questions about our culture.

Presenting our honorary degree recipients

Bonnie DuPont

Bonnie DuPont left the University in 1976 with a bachelor's degree in social work but she is returning this spring as a highly accomplished senior executive receiving an honorary degree. Since her student days, DuPont has attained a long list of accomplishments in the boardroom. Her achievements are so impressive the national Women's Executive Network named her one of Canada's Top 100 Most Powerful Women every year from 2003 to 2006. In 2007, she was inducted into the Network's Hall of Fame. Now, as Group Vice-President with Enbridge Inc. in Calgary, she is accountable for corporate resources, a portfolio that includes information technology, public and government affairs, human resources, governance, and corpo-

rate social responsibility (CSR). Previous to this, DuPont gained 20 years of executive experience in both energy and agribusiness.

DuPont will receive an honorary degree from the University on June 4 during Spring Convocation.

Q. You started as a social work student but ended up in corporate Canada. Why the change?

A. My social work education was very important to my career. In the Faculty of Social Work I came to understand many of the concepts and principles that are important in human resources and CSR initiatives. Ideas related to social justice, program evaluation and strategy have all served me well in my career.

Q. What are your greatest personal and professional accomplishments?

A. On the personal side I think my greatest accomplishment has been raising my daughter. I was a young mother, struggling personally while trying to get my career started. My daughter may not have had all of the material things that her peers had, or even some of the stability, but she came through it and turned out to be a wonderful, bright and caring person.

On the professional side my greatest accomplishment has been the introduction and nurturing of a socially responsible culture at Enbridge. Our

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Bonnie DuPont

Eduard Minevich

Violinist Eduard Minevich brings something special to the stage whether he's performing for impeccably dressed world leaders or has a fiddle crooked under his chin in the neighbourhood pub. He is a passionate player who received his training from St. Petersburg Conservatory, the oldest musical institution in Russia. His training is deeply rooted in the classics and he has been an accomplished soloist and concertmaster for numerous Canadian orchestras including the Regina Symphony Orchestra; however, Minevich routinely takes on more contemporary fare. He has performed as guest gypsy-violinist for Orchestra London and has collaborated with Canadian fiddle champion Frank Leahy. He rounds out the wildly versatile trio *The True Jive Pluckers* with

Regina rhythm and blues guitarist Jack Semple and bassist Steve McLellan.

Minevich will receive an honorary degree from the University on June 5 during Spring Convocation.

Q. Describe how a great performance feels.

A. I seldom feel satisfied with my performance, but if it was half-good, that's great! I feel confident; ready to try much more. We musicians know that you are as good as you sounded the last time you played. Then comes the new challenge. I never forget hearing the great Oscar Peterson live, or B.B. King, Nathan Milstein in London, or Rostropovich. I can't forget those inhuman, but oh-so-human, performances!

Q. What do you appreciate – or dislike – about silence?

A. I love silence; love silent movies, my time in the forest. As I grew older silence became like the 'rest' in music. I hate loud people and loud music in cars driving by.

Q. Why did you choose to play the violin?

A. I didn't; my father did. But I feel now it was a good choice, although back then I liked soccer more.

Q. Do you have more than one violin? Does each one have a story?

A. Yes, I do, but not as many as my son has guitars. Some of my violins have quite

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Eduard Minevich

Robert Moody

A curious mind led Robert Moody to a career in mathematics. He has been a professor and researcher at universities in Canada, the US, Europe and India, is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and in the 1960s, helped discover a new area of mathematics called Kac-Moody algebras. After 25 years of studying symmetry-related mathematics, Moody shifted his focus onto quasi-crystals, just to keep things interesting. Quasi-crystals are structural forms that reside between crystal and glass. Although mathematicians studied the forms in theory in the 1960s, their physical existence wasn't confirmed until 20 years later. Moody's interest in abstraction and form later led him behind the camera lens. He is an avid

photographer whose work includes studies of sculpture, landscapes and portraiture of other mathematicians. Moody's website shows the range of his photography. The site can be found at www.math.ualberta.ca/~rvmoody/rvm/.

Moody will receive an honorary degree from the University of Regina on June 6 during Spring Convocation.

Q. On your website you've written that mathematics elicits an emotional response in you. Why is that?

A. Contrary to popular belief, mathematics is mostly about ideas; the results of thousands of years of thinking by many great minds. The ideas are unexpected, beautiful and fit together in intricate and perfect ways.

Many mathematicians find this internal beauty sufficient in itself to study mathematics, but it is also a way of thinking about the world, and here the insights obtained by reducing complex physical processes to the key constituents, abstracting these and then studying the logical relations between them, can produce beautiful and highly significant insights.

Q. What is the connection between math and photography?

A. Both subjects are huge and embrace many aspects and personalities, so I think that the connection here is more personal than universal. Speaking for myself, I think that the

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Robert Moody