

## **President's Message – June 2017**

Members of the University community,

Each June we mark what is an important milestone for many at our University – Spring Convocation. And this spring, nearly 2,000 students will take to the stage at the Conexus Arts Centre to receive their degrees, diplomas and certificates.

These students come from a wide range of backgrounds. Many are from Saskatchewan, like Clayton Lorne Green, who is earning a Bachelor of Indigenous Social Work. At Convocation, Clayton will receive the Faculty of Social Work Dean's Medal as well as the University of Regina's President's Medal, which is awarded to the undergraduate student receiving a first degree who best combines academic excellence and service to community. Leadership is a key criterion for the President's Medal, and in Clayton's case, it was his volunteer work with residential school survivors that demonstrated leadership and commitment above and beyond his school work.

Increasingly, many of our students come from outside Saskatchewan, and indeed, from around the world. When Saghar Chahar Mahali arrived in Canada from Iran in 2010, she could not speak English. At Spring Convocation, Saghar will graduate with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Psychology. Boasting an impressive 90 per cent grade point average, she will earn the Faculty of Arts Dean's Medal. While a student, Saghar found time to give back to the community by volunteering as an English tutor at the Regina Immigrant Women's Centre and volunteering at the North Central Family Centre.

Clayton and Saghar are just two examples of students who have found success – both academically and as community-minded citizens – and I look forward to congratulating both of them personally in the coming days.

There are many such stories among this year's group of graduates, and in the coming weeks and months, many prospective employers will learn just how accomplished and well-prepared our graduates truly are. In fact, according to a report recently released by Saskatchewan's Ministry of Advanced Education, University of Regina graduates have the best employment rates of all post-secondary institutions in Saskatchewan. As those who dedicate ourselves to working with such bright and talented students, we should all be proud of this fact.

Convocation is also a time when we bestow honorary degrees on outstanding citizens for their contributions to our province and world. This June, we are celebrating the accomplishments of three honorary degree recipients: Beverley Ann Busson, Timothy Hearn and Kenneth Levene.

Beverley Ann Busson was in the first class of women RCMP members training in Regina in 1974, and the culmination of her career came when she was named the first female Commissioner of the RCMP in 2006. After studying criminology at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, British Columbia, she earned a law degree in at the University of British Columbia in 1990. She credits her success to her belief in – and practice of – lifelong learning.

Timothy Hearn, who grew up in Regina, was chairman, president and chief executive officer of Imperial Oil Limited from 2002 to 2008. During his 40-year career with Imperial Oil, he held a variety of positions, including vice president of Human Resources at Imperial's parent firm, Exxon Mobil, and president of Exxon's Asia-Pacific operations. Since retiring, Mr. Hearn has served on a number of boards, including the C.D. Howe Institute and Viterra. He is also an advocate for the homeless through his work as Chair of the Calgary Homeless Foundation.

Kenneth Levene's grandfather left Russia in 1911 for a better life in North America. After arriving in New York and working in a dry cleaning shop, he moved to Canada where he began selling dry goods until he established Crescent Furniture in Regina in 1929. Kenneth Levene earned business degrees at McGill University and Harvard and in 1962 he became the third-generation operator of Crescent Furniture, before he decided to close the business in 1984. An active supporter of educational and philanthropic initiatives, he established the Kenneth Levene Graduate School of Business at the University of Regina in 2005.

In their own way, each of our honorary degree recipients embodies our University motto: *As One Who Serves*. At Convocation, I am certain that they will inspire our new graduates who are embarking on the next stage of their lives.

To our honorary degree recipients and our graduating students, let me be the first to offer congratulations on behalf of our University! In particular, I would like to be the first to welcome our graduating students to our growing alumni family – now more than 70,000 members strong.

I would also like to say thank you to the University of Regina faculty and staff who are so instrumental in helping our students reach this milestone in their lives. Welcoming them as first-year students, working with them in the classroom, overseeing their academic projects, providing career counselling and guidance closer to graduation – these are just some of the many things you have done to contribute to their success. Thank you for your continuing dedication to our students, and to our University.

Sincerely,

Dr. Vianne Timmons  
President and Vice-Chancellor