



U OF R REPORT

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Alumni achievements to be celebrated

Although she's been in the workforce for many years, Elaine McNeil hasn't forgotten what she learned as a university student.

"One of the important things I learned at the U of R was the 'life-long learning' approach of the Faculty of Education," says McNeil, who completed her master's degree in education in 1991, a decade following her bachelor of education degree.

"Building on what people already know is important, and I still employ the principles of adult learning that I learned at the U of R."

McNeil, who received her master's degree at age 45, has worked with adult learners at SIAST Wascana Campus and internationally for the past 22 years. She will be recognized with the 2006 Lifetime Achievement Award at the annual Crowning Achievement Awards on October 20.

The Alumni Association and the U of R will co-host the awards night, which features six award presentations along with entertainment by alumni and current students.



Elaine McNeil BEd '81, MEd '91 will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Crowning Achievement Awards on October 20.

"We hold the Crowning Achievement Awards to showcase the remarkable and diverse contributions our graduates are making to society in many fields," says Brian

Munro, president of the Alumni Association.

"There are now more than 48,000 U of R alumni contributing to their communities and the world in education,

humanitarianism, advanced research, community service and enterprise. It's an evening for returning grads to celebrate their own, and to enjoy some top-notch entertainment."

Other award winners to be honoured at the event include Daphne Bramham BA '75, who will receive the Award for Professional Achievement, and Richard Turchenek CPS '01, PGD '96, BA '74, recipient of the Award for Humanitarian and Community Service. Brothers David Quinn BAdmin '87 and Stuart Quinn BAdmin '81, will each receive the Dr. Robert and Norma Ferguson Award for Outstanding Service. Erin Weir BA '02 will be presented with the Outstanding Young Alumni Award.

The Crowning Achievement Awards will be held on Friday, Oct. 20 at the Regina Performing Arts Centre, 1077 Angus Street. Program and presentations start at 7:45 p.m., preceded by refreshments at 7 p.m. and followed by a reception at 9:15 p.m. Tickets can be purchased until Oct. 13 by calling (306) 585-4024, toll-free 1-877-779-4723, or by emailing uralumni@uregina.ca. A table of eight is \$220; general \$30; students \$10. Proceeds support student activities and programming.

Quality Undergraduate Student Experience puts students first

In a world that too often appears gripped in the mania of "faster, bigger, cheaper," the University of Regina is going deeper, by emphasizing quality. Quality is at the heart of President Robert Hawkins' vision to make the University of Regina the "most student-centred university in Canada."

At a recent campus town hall, Hawkins spoke about two new major strategic projects to heighten the University's competitiveness, particularly in the key area of student recruitment and retention. His presentation to staff, faculty and students set out the elements of a multifaceted project he calls "The Quality Undergraduate Student Experience (QUSE)."

While Hawkins detailed a list of QUSE initiatives already being planned or implemented, he emphasized the ongoing opportunity for new thinking and new approaches, saying the "door is wide open for good ideas."

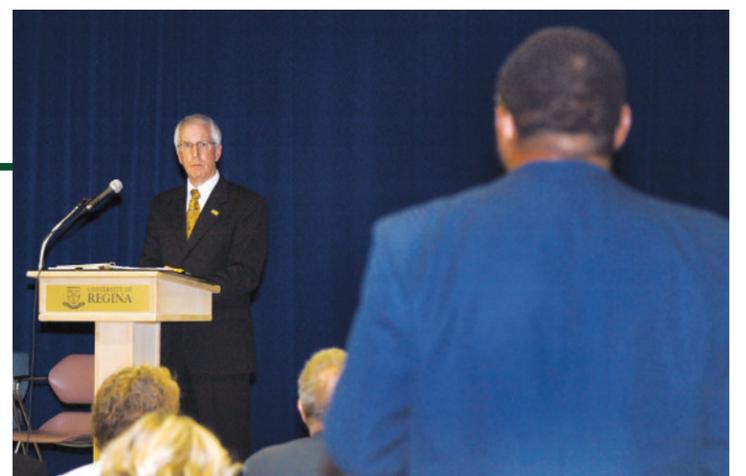
The President launched the QUSE, announcing the University will provide up to \$1,000 for each and every student who wishes to study for a term, or a year, as part of an approved student exchange program. The funds are intended to offset the cost of transportation.

"We must do more if we are going to get our young people ready for an increasingly interdependent, international world," said Hawkins, citing

that only 52 of several thousand eligible U of R students took advantage of exchange programs last year.

Other elements of the Quality Undergraduate Student Experience include:

- Every student will have access to an experiential learning opportunity, be it a co-op, internship, practicum opportunity or service learning opportunity.
- Students will be able to get the coaching and support they need to greatly increase opportunities for academic success. More resources will be provided to the Student Development Centre.
- All first-year students will have one "seminar-like" class experi-



The Quality Undergraduate Student Experience was a focus at the Campus Town Hall hosted by President Hawkins.

ence and cohorts may be introduced in future years.

- Common room areas will be developed as part of a "collegium" concept of building strong student communities. An aboriginal student centre will be included as part of this development.
- A transition year program will be considered for students who

have not been able to complete Grade 12, but are interested in attending university.

- Teaching excellence will be promoted through a reorganized Teaching Development Centre as it combines resources with the Centre for Academic Technologies. New professors will be expected

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Writ Large

Barbara Pollock
Vice-President
External Relations

To those of us who have chosen to pursue our profession at the University of Regina, there is nothing more important than the University's academic mission. It is why we are here and why we find great challenge and reward in the things we do.

In External Relations, part of our program is to assess, build, and caretake the reputation of this great University. In some ways, the process of earning and keeping a solid reputation is the same for an institution as it is for an individual.

How do people feel about working with you? About doing business with you or taking a class from you? What do they say about you? That's what carves out a reputation.

Some say we shouldn't care what others think of us – that a university can't be guided only by the popular vote, that it has a higher mission. But when you think about it, that's the way we commonly form our impressions about a particular work environment, a professor or supervisor, a favourite restaurant or bookstore.

It's in the U of R's best interests to continually assess our reputation because it is very often others' views of the U of R that encourage students to register here, professors to teach, researchers to gather to uncover new knowledge, individuals to seek careers here, and donors and funding agencies to see value in supporting us.

That's why the University spends time and resources setting goals, assessing our performance in meeting those goals, surveying key partners and opinion leaders about how we're doing, and taking steps to present the whole, very positive picture of our work.

You'll have heard of the recent debate about the validity of *Maclean's* magazine's annual university rankings issue – and that some universities have decided it's time to speak with their feet. The U of R is participating in this edition once again, because it's one tool of many that our prospective students, faculty and staff can use to decide if the U of R is in their futures. We are working with the magazine to address our concerns with its methodology but we prefer to provide our information than to wonder where the writers are finding it.

It's one tool that others use to form an opinion about us – and it contributes to our reputation.

While our students achieve, our teachers motivate in classrooms and labs, our researchers make a difference by their knowledge creation, and our staff help create an environment for success, the University answers questions, ensures the public has an opportunity to appreciate the exciting things that happen here, and works to correct any false impressions that others may hold.

We want others to like what they read about us, to be encouraged about what they hear – and when they see the words "University of Regina," to immediately recognize, and have confidence in the reputation those words represent.

In the next year, you will see and hear about our efforts to present a cohesive University of Regina look, feel and experience. We will take your efforts, your performance and your dedication to your research, teaching, and service and present them to the public.

Building a great reputation is in everyone's best interest.

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.

Aboriginal Student Centre an emerging campaign priority

For the moment, the Aboriginal Student Centre is a reception and lounge area, but Sabrina Sparvier says that's simply "the start of what it can be, and will be."

Sparvier manages the centre in its new location on the main floor of College West. She knows first-hand how difficult it can be for aboriginal and Métis students entering university and persevering through to graduation. She was the exception when she graduated with a bachelor of administration degree from the U of R. Sparvier has been part of Student Services at the U of R since 2003, but the creation of the new centre signals a stronger mandate to help more aboriginal and Métis students make the transition to university and realize their full potential.

"The feedback we've received," she says, "is that students need a structured and inclusive environment where they can access services and interact with peers who are facing similar challenges. The centre will be the central link so that students will be directed to existing programs and services offered by the University. We'll also

ensure that students have access to services they need in the external community. And we're adding new programs and services, including a student success program to enhance the life skills and academic success rate of aboriginal and Métis students."

There will also be a mentorship program that will create relationships between elementary/high school students and their University counterparts, encouraging the younger students to consider the possibilities of post-secondary education. An awareness program, in partnership with the First Nations University of Canada, will educate the University community to be a more welcoming and inclusive place.

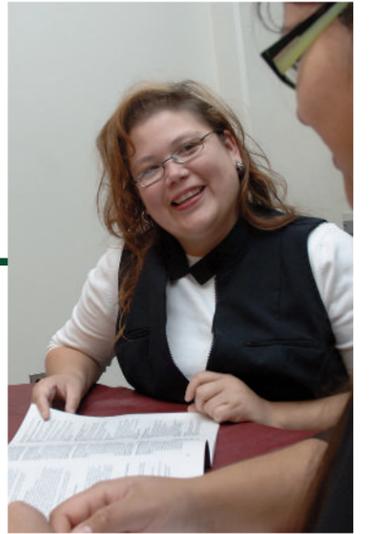
These plans for the Aboriginal Student Centre, Sparvier notes, hinge on gifts

Building Dreams and Futures

directed to emerging priorities through the Building Dreams and Futures (BDF) campaign.

"A lot of the things I'm doing would be very difficult without this support," she says.

"The centre is one of the emerging priorities that has caught peoples' attention



Sabrina Sparvier (L) manages the Aboriginal Student Centre, a place for aboriginal and Métis students to access services and programs on campus and interact with peers.

because a gift can kick-start a program, or be a launching pad to get others interested in supporting one of the Centre's programs," notes Barb Pollock, vice-president of External Relations.

"The Crown Investments Corporation has been a major contributor to Aboriginal student support, and we're excited that more students will benefit from gifts through BDF to initiatives like the Aboriginal Student Centre," Pollock says.

The original Building Dreams and Futures campaign to raise \$75 million has reached 86 per cent of that goal and the planned giving campaign launched last year has already achieved 46 per cent of its \$25 million objective.

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to take a course through the Centre.

- A senior teaching award, to include significant monetary recognition, will be established.
- Campus-wide course evaluations will be introduced this year. Faculties, students and academic administrators will be invited to provide input on the evaluation design.

Hawkins also pointed to the current renovations in the Administration-Humanities Building, which include a new recruiting area, as an example of how the University is creating an inviting atmosphere for current and future students.

The demographic shift occurring in the University's traditional recruitment catch-

ment suggests timeliness will be a consideration in implementing the various initiatives. By June of 2007 there will be 10 percent fewer graduates from Regina high schools. In five years that number is projected to increase to 19 percent and in a further five years the projection calls for a 28 percent reduction in high school graduation rates.

"The University must meet the student recruitment and retention challenge which, if not tackled, will become the number one threat to our University," said Hawkins. He also noted that the university sector is being significantly challenged by three common drivers for change: increased accountability, expanded internationalization, and competition for future students.

"This is an exciting challenge to be undertaken at the right time in the history of our University, by men and women of exceptional ability and energy," concluded Hawkins. "Your work is going to benefit our students and continue the building of the University of Regina."

The second project outlined at the town hall presentation focused on new and expanded professional and academic degree programs. Seven prospective graduate programs were outlined with the condition that new programs will comply with existing academic approval processes. The full text of the presentation is available at www.uregina.ca/presoff/president/majordocuments.shtml

Director of Communications: Paul Corns
Managing Editor: Therese Stecyk
Contributors: Bill Armstrong
Photography: U of R Audio Visual Services
Distribution: Natalie Tomczak

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We welcome your comments and suggestions. Please send them to communications@uregina.ca, and include "*U of R Report*" in the e-mail subject line.

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Social Work dean settles into the job

David Schantz loves the Prairies for many reasons – including the approach to life that often comes naturally and by necessity in the wide open spaces of the plains.

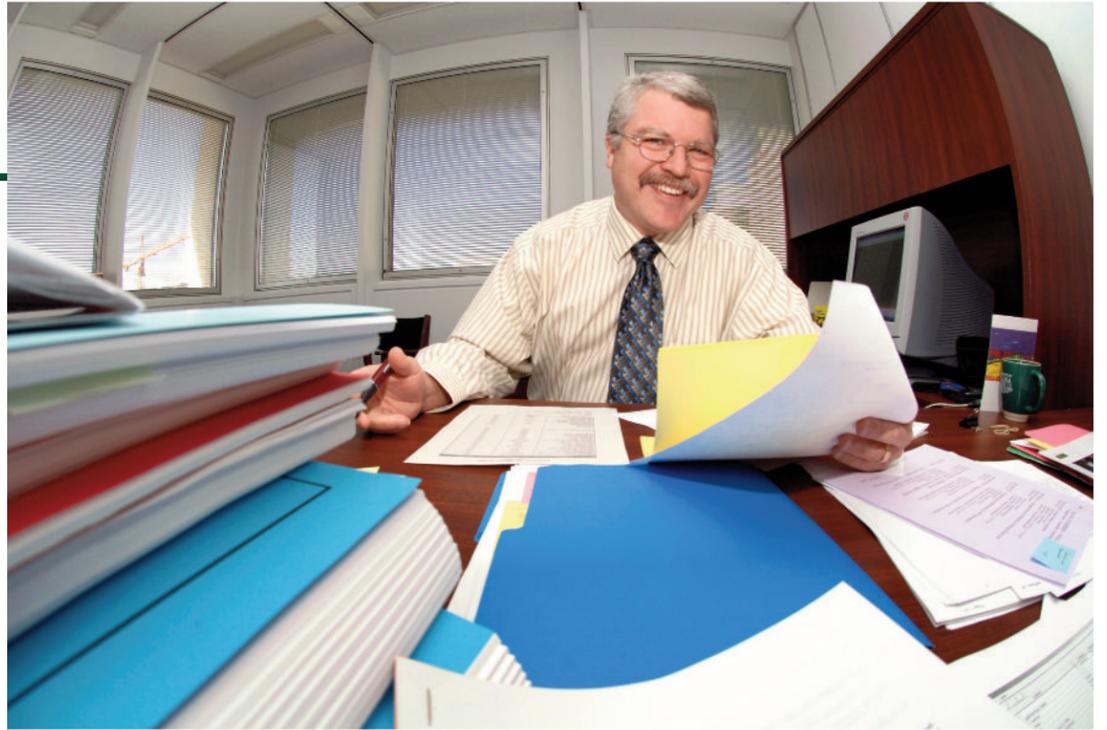
“People have permission to think outside the box. That’s an important quality at a time when communities in our province are both expanding and contracting,” says Schantz, who joined the U of R this fall as dean of the Faculty of Social Work.

While Schantz has followed a geographically diverse career, he keeps landing back on the Prairies. He received his post-secondary education in Illinois, Georgia and the State of Washington. He developed his specialties in community-based services for severely emotionally disturbed children, adult mental health and program evaluation in Montana and Seattle. He played key roles

in the startup accreditation process of master’s-level social work programs at Valdosta State University in Georgia and the University of Montana.

“I would have been content to stay in Missoula for the rest of my career,” Schantz notes, “but people from the U of R were quite persistent that I should consider applying for this opening. The more I looked at the opportunity, the more it intrigued me,” Schantz continues.

“With the Faculty operating in Saskatoon and Prince Albert, as well as Regina, we have opportunities to advance the teaching of social work over a wide area. I also think we can help communities address the social issues they are facing, by joining the conversations they’ve already started, and by securing research dollars to help them find solutions. I see my role as facilitator



David Schantz has joined the U of R as dean of the Faculty of Social Work.

for a group of capable, creative problem-solvers.”

Schantz’s wife Sharon, an occupational therapist, is staying in Missoula until their house is sold, and is getting her permissions to practise in Saskatchewan. The couple is currently experiencing a

transcontinental empty-nest situation: one son is attending California Institute of Technology, while the other has just started at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Schantz grew up working in residential construction, so he’s itching to find a house in

Regina, get to work on it, and settle into the community.

“The people who planned Regina thought it through very well,” he observes. “It is a beautiful city. And the people I’ve met are down-to-earth and community-oriented. It is a good place to call home.”

New name, vision and location for IS Help Desk

As acting supervisor of the former Help Desk, José Michell is used to receiving calls that have nothing to do with IT. He welcomes the name change to IT Support Centre (ITSC) because it more closely reflects the actual services customers can expect when they call the ITSC, and because it’s consistent with the industry approach to a sector that has evolved significantly

switching long swaths of computer paper when he started as a part-time weekend operator. Help desks grew out of the transition from mainframes to desktop computers and the need to support individual users. The same people who worked on the large mainframes ended up providing individual customer support over the phone, often without adequate customer support training.

That was then. Today, training in IT customer support service is very specific, says Michell. He and three other members of the ITSC team recently returned from ‘help desk boot camp’ – a three-day intensive course that gives ‘help desk’ professionals the tools they need to properly support their customers’ IT needs.

“For us it was kind of refreshing. Some of the things we already do, some we don’t, and sometimes you don’t know if you’re doing the right thing,” says Michell. Following the program, all four U of R participants obtained certification as Help Desk Analysts through Help Desk International, the world’s largest association for IT service and support professionals.

While a new level of front-line customer support may be the



L to R: Shaun Farrell, Elysha Woytowich and José Michell will relocate at the end of October when the IT Support Centre (ITSC), formerly known as the Help Desk, moves to its new home in Education Building Room 549. Miles Corbett (far left photo) will be staying in the Archer Library satellite location of the ITSC while former Help Desk space in the AdHum Building will be renovated and become home to the technical analysts in the Desktop Workstation Support unit (formerly Technical Services).

first noticeable change that campus IT users begin to notice when they call the ITSC, many other changes are underway behind the scenes to improve the overall customer support experience for all campus IT users. For example, improved knowledge-based software is being tested which will help users solve more typical or simple computer problems independently.

“Part of our new mission is to help customers self-learn and be less dependent on ITSC,” Michell notes. This will free up technicians for more complex computer issues. ‘Web chat’ software, allowing

users to have live online one-on-one support from ITSC support analysts, is also being considered, as is call management and incident tracking software to enable ITSC to manage customer service requests from start to finish. The eventual goal is to have ITSC as the first line of support and single point-of-contact for all IT needs on campus.

Other changes will see the main ITSC site move out of its current location in the Administration-Humanities Building by the end of October into a newly-renovated space in ED 549. The satellite location of the ITSC

in the Archer Library will be retained and the AdHum space will be renovated and become home to the technical analysts in the Desktop Workstation Support unit (formerly Technical Services).

With all the change, ITSC will eventually become the entry point to customer IT services and represent the face of the department. Michell realizes there’s a lot riding on how well he and his team do, but they’re up to the challenge. “We are going to be the main door to IT.”

Visit the ITSC site at <http://www.uregina.ca/compse/rv/ITSC/>



Miles Corbett in the Archer Library ITSC

since the days when giant mainframes dominated the computer landscape.

Michell, who has worked in IT at the University for almost 13 years, remembers the days of mounting tapes and



WOW! Welcome Week rocks campus

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Spirits were high the first week of classes with dozens of Welcome Week activities for new and returning students. The highlight of the week came with the second annual WOW Concert on the Dr. Lloyd Barber Academic Green.

With classes officially cancelled, students, faculty and staff were free to participate in the days' events. Headliners Yellowcard joined bands Coulee, Emery, Reeve, Oliver, Lillix and TOFU in a day-long festival that thrilled the throngs of students who filled the Academic Green all day.

"The day was very much a success. We expect that we probably had upwards of 7,000 people come and go throughout the course of the day," says organizer Kevin Bolen, manag-

er of Co-operative Education & Student Employment.

"All in all, I think it was just a great community building event and something to build on for next year," says Bolen.

Throughout Welcome Week, activities and events focused on student involvement.

Numerous student clubs and societies set up tables and displays on the Green, including the U of R's chapter of Engineers Without Borders, the newest of 25 chapters across Canada. At the Fifth Parallel Gallery, viewers were both participants and creators in art projects, classes and events during Make It Happen '06.

The Shinerama Llamas were on-site for the kick-off of Shinerama, Canada's largest post-secondary

fundraiser involving students at almost 60 university and college campuses. Several celebrity guests were spotted having their shoes shined in support of cystic fibrosis fundraising, including Minister of Advanced Education and Employment the Hon. Pat Atkinson.

Free food, barbecues and pancake breakfasts kept the masses well fed almost daily while movie nights, special lectures, program receptions, Rams football, karaoke, a tug of war, inflatable games, a dunk tank, water fights and UR Fit mini-fitness classes provided plenty of entertainment for all.



(endnote)

