

President's message – January 2018

Members of the University community,

I hope you had a restful and fun-filled holiday season with family and friends, and on behalf of my own family, I wish you all the best as we kick off 2018 and begin a new semester at the University of Regina.

This year has a lot of excitement in store for us at the University. We will experience our own version of “March Madness” when we play host to the U Sports Women’s Final 8 Basketball Tournament from March 8-11. This is the fourth time in our history that the University has hosted the national championship, and it will be exciting to see our Cougars compete against the best teams in the country. Tickets will be on sale soon, so I encourage you to check www.reginacougars.com in the coming weeks for availability.

Just over two months later, the University will host the 2018 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, Canada’s largest gathering of scholars, from May 26 to June 1. Congress is an annual event that brings together more than 70 scholarly associations and as many as 7,000 academics, researchers, policy makers, students and practitioners from across Canada. This is the first time in its 87-year history that Congress will be held here.

The successful bid for Congress was supported not only by our University community, but also by the community-at-large. Mayor Michael Fougere and Premier Brad Wall wrote compelling letters of endorsement. Tourism Regina, Tourism Saskatchewan and the Regina Hotel Association and also championed our bid. The result? We topped larger institutions such as the University of British Columbia for the right to host Congress 2018 and realize the estimated \$8 million boost that the event will bring to the local economy.

Many people from across the University have been busy for more than a year working on the logistics of the event. With the countdown on, even more of us will become fully engaged in the task of hosting the best Congress ever. During the week of Congress our campus will be filled with scholars from across Canada, and it is a great opportunity to showcase everything our University, city and province have to offer.

The theme for Congress 2018 is “*Gathering diversities.*” This theme was developed through an inclusive on-campus process and is very fitting considering our University is located on Treaty 4 territory with a presence in Treaty 6 – the ancestral lands of the Cree, Saulteaux, Dakota, Lakota and Nakoda nations and the traditional homeland of the Métis.

One of Congress’ most popular features is going to be the Big Thinking lecture series, which will be open to the community, free of charge. The lectures in this series will be held throughout the week and will be presented by leading scholars and well-known public figures. These lively debates will tackle some of today’s most pressing issues in academia and in the world in general. The Big Thinking lecturers are:

- Melina Laboucan-Massimo, a member of the Lubicon Cree First Nation and Indigenous Knowledge and Climate Change Fellow at the David Suzuki Foundation;
- Margaret MacMillan, a professor of History at the University of Toronto and a former warden of St. Antony's College and professor of International History at the University of Oxford;
- Marie Wilson, former CBC broadcaster and commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada;
- Christiane Taubira, former French Justice Minister;
- Alaa Murabit, UN High-Level Commissioner on Health Employment & Economic Growth; and
- Françoise Baylis, Canada Research Chair in Bioethics and Philosophy at Dalhousie University.

In addition, University of Regina alumnus and Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde will be a guest of Congress, and legendary Canadian singer-songwriter Dr. Buffy Sainte-Marie – also a distinguished educator and the holder of an honorary degree from the University of Regina – will perform a special Congress concert.

I invite faculty members and graduate students to consider submitting a paper, or simply attend some of the great Congress events. Let's all show our out-of-town visitors how well we support an event that really makes a difference in our academic lives!

Whether you are a faculty member or staff member, I ask you to consider volunteering for Congress 2018. The need for volunteers is huge, because about 500 volunteers will be required to ensure that all goes smoothly.

Registration for Congress and volunteer registration will both open on January 15, and I encourage you to check the Congress 2018 website at www.congress2018.ca for more details.

I would like to thank all those who, in addition to their regular activities, are committing themselves to get involved in one way or another with Congress 2018. This is a tremendous opportunity to host a major Canadian academic event and show off our University of Regina and prairie hospitality.

I wish you all the best for 2018, and I look forward to seeing you at Congress!

Sincerely,

Dr. Vianne Timmons
President and Vice-Chancellor