

President's Message – April 2017

Members of the University community,

One of the three strategic priorities contained in the University's strategic plan, *peyak aski kikawinaw*, is student success. In the plan we state that an important contributing factor to that success is providing "a vibrant, challenging and stimulating learning environment with the services required to allow for student engagement, achievement, personal growth, academic success and career readiness."

The idea of building and maintaining such an environment helps shape our decision making and guides those initiatives undertaken to support student success. While most of this relates to our academic mission, there are many other ways our students have success outside of the laboratory, library or classroom.

As the Winter 2017 semester draws to a close, I would like to share a few recent examples of how our students are finding success by giving their time, and in doing so, making our community a better place.

About a week ago, five students spent five days and nights outside to increase awareness of homelessness and raise money for Carmichael Outreach, an organization that provides a variety of services for people in Regina who find themselves in difficult circumstances. While the students did attend their classes, they had to depend on food from strangers and they slept outside the entrance to the Riddell Centre.

The students – Paige McNabb, Siobhan Neary, Joshua Exner, Sasha Shupe, and Rebecca Perigny – raised \$51,353.27, far exceeding last year's impressive total of \$37,000. The more than \$51,000 raised this year was the most by any of the 22 universities across Canada that took part in the Five Days for the Homeless campaign. That's a remarkable accomplishment, but not a surprising one considering how community-minded our students are. Other students also got involved in the fundraiser by collecting donations and organizing a number of events in the community. I know that all the students who participated in the fundraiser are proud of their achievement and have come away enlightened as a result of their experience.

Another recent event that was successful because of the efforts of our students was the University of Regina's Relay for Life, which was organized by our UR Guarantee students for the sixth straight year. The annual event, which is a major fundraiser for the Canadian Cancer Society, culminated on the night of March 31-April 1 with an all-night celebration honouring cancer survivors as well as those who have lost their battle with the disease. More than \$10,000 was raised by University of Regina students, faculty and staff, bringing the six-year total to \$189,000 in support of the Canadian Cancer Society. The money raised will help the Canadian Cancer Society fund research and provide information and support services for people living with cancer in Saskatchewan.

Both these charitable events followed a mid-February initiative at the University called Random Acts of Kindness Week. Jamie Prisciak, a third-year kinesiology student and Olivia Arnal, a

third-year business student, organized the week. Among other planned activities, students wrote inspirational, feel-good notes and left them in a variety of random places around campus like under keyboards and in library books. The notes were small tokens of kindness meant to brighten up someone's day.

As we close in on the end of another semester at the University of Regina, we should be inspired by our students and everything they do for others. On a daily basis, they show us that it really doesn't take much effort to offer a smile to a colleague in the hallway or express a kind word to a co-worker for a job well done. In these simple ways, we can help realize some other tenets of our strategic plan – making our University a welcoming and rewarding academic and work environment for students, faculty, and staff, and a place where our treatment of each other is principled, open, transparent and respectful.

Sincerely,

Dr. Vianne Timmons
President and Vice-Chancellor