

President's Message – December 2011

The past year was a significant one at the University of Regina for many reasons, and as it draws to a close, I would like to take some time to reflect on 2011 and look forward to 2012.

During the year, we marked several important milestones together, one of which was the centennial of our College Avenue campus. The “Centennivale” event with staff in January, the Founders’ dinner in February, the Alumni Homecoming in September, and the launch of the centennial photo book in October – these were all wonderful opportunities to celebrate our history. October 25 – exactly 100 years to the day the cornerstone was laid at the College Building – was a fitting way to end our formal centennial celebrations, with the raising of the University of Regina flag at City Hall to mark the City of Regina’s official “University of Regina Day.”

Another landmark moment was the celebration of the University’s 30-year history of partnerships with Chinese institutions. This event in early October coincided with the opening of our Confucius Institute, which will play an important role in promoting Chinese culture in Saskatchewan in the future. We currently have approximately 1,700 international students from 65 countries on our campus, and that degree of cultural diversity would not exist on our campus had our relationship with China not provided such a strong model for our academic relations with other countries.

The University’s most important academic relationship – that with the federated colleges – also reached some milestones in 2011. In February, Luther College marked 40 years since the cornerstone was laid for its building on our campus, and in March, Dr. Jim Pitsula’s “Forward Together” lecture examined the role the three federated colleges have played in the University’s development. In May, First Nations University celebrated 35 years since its founding in 1976 as the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College. Earlier in the year, I was honoured to accept a Dakota starblanket on behalf of the University of Regina from elders and students of FNU in recognition of our decades of partnership and mutual support.

Throughout the year, we honoured the achievements of members of our University community – our students at Spring and Fall Convocation, our alumni at the Alumni Crowning Achievement Awards, and our employees at the annual “Celebrate” event a couple of weeks ago, for example. But amidst that celebration, we also had some sad moments, when we took time to honour longtime members of the University community whom we lost over the past year, including Elders Glen Anaquod and Isadore Pelletier, Andy Glavacevic of Facilities Management, Dr. Ken Probert of the English department, and former President Dr. Lloyd Barber. It is through the work of people such as them over the past several decades that the University of Regina is on such a strong footing today, and an institution of which all of us should be proud.

Moving into 2012, we are building on a legacy that has been 100 years in the making. To enhance our academic mission, we have a new strategic research plan in place, are developing a new teaching and scholarship plan, and are completing our academic program review. Our enrolment is nearly 13,000 students, approximately 10% of whom are Aboriginal. Our relationship with the provincial community is stronger than ever before, and we are making a

national and international impact through our teaching and research. As we look to the future, we can do so with great optimism, at the same time remembering the contributions of those who built our University over the past 100 years. Through our work – educating those who follow in the footsteps of Regina College’s original 27 students – we are helping fulfill their vision for our province and world.

Thank you for everything you have done for the University of Regina in 2011, and on behalf of my family, I wish you and your loved ones a happy holiday season and all the best in 2012.

Vianne Timmons
President and Vice-Chancellor