

## **President's Message – January 2012**

Happy New Year! I hope you had a relaxing holiday break and are ready for another successful semester.

For many of us, the new year is a time for new beginnings in some aspects of our lives. At the same time, however, it can be a time to build on the momentum of the past year – and that is certainly the case in many respects at the University of Regina.

For example, environmental, operational and fiscal sustainability was a key focus in 2011, and it will continue to be one of our top priorities for the coming year.

The University of Regina's Strategic Plan outlines our commitment to becoming a leader in environmental responsibility and including sustainability at the core of our teaching, research and campus life. In the coming year, we must ensure that this commitment remains top-of-mind. The little things we do within our office spaces – things such as turning off lights, unplugging small appliances, and reducing the amount of printing we do – can over the long term have a huge impact on our efforts to become a sustainable campus.

In fact, Information Services' print optimization project – through which the printing practices of 44 out of 47 departments on campus have either been assessed or reconfigured – was recently one of five finalists for the Info-Tech Research Group's second annual "Quest for Canada's Greenest IT Department" competition. This is a testament to the impact this program is having on our campus. Once the project has been fully implemented, our five-year cost savings are projected to be \$2.3 million. In addition to contributing to our fiscal sustainability, the print optimization project promotes a greener environment by saving paper and energy, and reducing our carbon emissions.

The past year has seen considerable progress in the area of sustainability – but this is just the beginning. Recently, the President's Advisory Committee on Sustainability began work. Comprised of employees and students and chaired by the Provost and Vice-President (Academic), this committee is looking at ways the University can incorporate and promote environmental sustainability in our operations – something which often leads to monetary savings. This committee will examine the feasibility and benefits of specific environmental initiatives right through to broader questions of institutional sustainability, and will make its initial recommendations to me in the first quarter of this year.

Another project that will ramp up this year – and contribute to our long-term sustainability – is "Building Knowledge: The College Avenue Campus Renewal Project." This special fundraising initiative will play an important role in guiding the future use of our historic College Avenue campus and ensuring we meet many goals. For one thing, it will enable us to complete the necessary renovations to the buildings to ensure that they are structurally sound, accessible, and up to modern environmental standards. This will allow the College Avenue campus to better meet the academic and learning needs of the many students and community members who will utilize it as we move into a new century of education on that campus.

The growth in enrolment and facilities that we have experienced in the past few years is a strong indication of how hard we are working to become one Canada's top comprehensive universities. As we continue to grow, the College Avenue Campus Renewal Project is just one way we will accommodate the needs of our student population. An additional parking lot that will allow for 485 new stalls will be completed soon, and we are examining options that would increase the amount of student housing on campus. As well, the University is continually working to ensure that our campus is accessible, and that our services fulfill the diverse needs of our many students and employees.

Throughout 2012, we will remain focused on environmental, operational, and fiscal sustainability, and I will continue to update campus on the status of the work being conducted to support this important objective.

Thank you for everything you did for our University over the past year. I wish you all the best in the new semester, and in the new year.

Vianne Timmons  
President & Vice-Chancellor