

President's Message – July 2010

I have studied and worked in the post-secondary system for the past three decades, and Convocation ceremonies still have a special place in my heart. It is always so heartening and encouraging to see the pride that graduates and their families show on Convocation day, and this year will be no different at the University of Regina.

Last week, I got a preview of Spring Convocation when I had the opportunity to celebrate Convocation with graduates of Yukon College who earned their University of Regina Education and Social Work degrees.

For the past 20 years or so, a wonderful partnership has existed between Yukon College and the University of Regina – a partnership that is beneficial for our institutions and our students. Since 1989, it has allowed 122 Yukon College Education students to graduate from the Yukon Native Teacher Education Program. In addition, since 1994 this partnership has allowed 92 Yukon College students to graduate with a University of Regina Social Work degree. I'm proud to say that last week, another 14 Yukon College students received their University of Regina degrees.

Participating in that Convocation ceremony in Whitehorse showed me first-hand the wide reach the University of Regina truly has. Students in Regina, across Saskatchewan and beyond are demonstrating vision, talent and determination and realizing their dreams. I have always believed that education is the key to a bright future, and now 14 more students hold that key in their hands.

More than 1,700 students will join them on June 9, 10 and 11, as we celebrate their achievements at Spring Convocation. After so many years of hard work, these students will be entering a new chapter in their lives, and as they do so, I would like to recognize some of our most distinguished graduates.

Cori Lea Saas is the recipient of the University of Regina President's Medal, which is awarded at each Convocation to a student receiving a first degree who has shown academic excellence as well as strong leadership in and commitment to extra-curricular activities. Cori grew up in Moose Jaw and completed high school in Loreburn. She was accepted into the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina to pursue her dream of teaching. Her special areas of interest are inclusive education, outdoor education and technology in the classroom. She has been a tutor for an elementary at-risk student, a member of the Board of Directors for the Saskatchewan Burrowing Owl Interpretive Centre, and for three years has volunteered at the Wings on Wascana Outdoor Education Workshop for elementary students. She is currently teaching in Rouleau. Cori will also be awarded the Saskatchewan Teacher's Federation Prize, which goes to a distinguished member of the graduating class in the Faculty of Education who does not hold another degree.

The recipient of the Governor General's Academic Gold Medal, which recognizes the most outstanding academic performance of a graduate student, is Chrystene Renée Ells. Chrystene graduated in October, 2009 with a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Interdisciplinary Studies in media production, theatre, and visual

arts. She achieved a grade point average of over 90 per cent. Her MFA project was a 90-minute feature film titled *Sisu: The Death of Tom Sukanen*, the story of a Finnish ship builder living and dying in Saskatchewan in the early twentieth century.

The Governor General's Academic Silver Medal is awarded to the undergraduate student who achieves the highest academic standing in a bachelor's degree program. The recipient is Jeanette Rhoda Peters. Jeanette is graduating with two credentials: the Bachelor of Arts Honours degree majoring in linguistics (High Honours) minoring in anthropology and French, and the Certificat en française langue seconde. She plans to pursue graduate studies in the near future.

Additional student award winners who have demonstrated high academic achievement and a deep commitment to their community are:

Blair Marc Stengler – Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan Gold Medal in Engineering
Chelsea Darla Dreger – Leon Goldman Scholarship
Anne Carol McLeod – James M. Minifie Award
Deborah Jean Skoczylas – W.A. Riddell Award in Fine Arts
Shirley Dale Hill – S.E. Stewart Award in Arts
Jerrod Manford Smith – University Medal
Lucas Daniel Askew – University Prize in Kinesiology and Health Studies
Marc Andrew Beal – University Prize in Science
Stacey Marie McGillis – University Prize in Social Work

To our award winners, and to all of your fellow graduates – congratulations, and best wishes for the future. Take pleasure in walking across the stage on Convocation day. That moment is exciting and nerve-wracking, but most of all, it is the start of something great. The world is open to you through your education, and I encourage you to take advantage of the opportunities that education will provide.

I would also like to recognize our honorary degree recipients, because through your achievements, you have set a positive example for our graduating students as they enter this exciting new stage of their lives.

Hayley Wickenheiser, who led Canada's women's hockey team to gold at the Vancouver Olympics, will receive an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from the University of Regina on Wednesday, June 9. Canadian author Alistair MacLeod will receive an honorary Doctor of Laws on Thursday, June 10 and - accomplished musician, actor and humanitarian Tom Jackson will receive an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts on Friday, June 11. On each of these days, one of the honorary degree recipients will address Convocation. All of us in the University of Regina community can take to heart the life lessons these honorary degree recipients will impart.

At this time, I would also like to congratulate our staff and faculty. Your hard work and passion for your University contribute to the achievements of our students, and over the course of their time here, our

students have been helped immeasurably by your commitment to their success. I would like to make special mention of this year's recipients of the Alumni Association Awards for Excellence. Bruce Anderson is being honoured for Excellence in Public Service, Dr. Greg Marchildon for Excellence in Research, and Dr. Philip Charrier and Dr. Rob Giberson for Excellence in Teaching. Also being recognized at convocation is former Board Chair Mo Bundon, who will be receiving the Board of Governors Distinguished Service Award. Thank you all for your commitment to our University and its students.

Once again, congratulations to our graduates – we are proud of your accomplishments. We know that everything you have learned during your time at our University will help you realize your dreams and contribute to the lives of others. You are now joining more than 55,000 alumni who, every day, contribute to the well-being of our communities.

As you progress in your careers, I encourage you to visit us often – in person and through the website at www.uregina.ca/news/ – to stay in touch with YOUR University. Share your news, tell us your stories, and thank you for being part of the far-reaching University of Regina community.

On behalf of the University of Regina, congratulations to all of our Spring 2010 graduates!