

President's Message – October 2016

Members of the University Community,

If you have walked, biked or driven down College Avenue lately, you will no doubt have noticed that Darke Hall is covered in scaffolding and draped in white plastic wrap. The historic concert hall is in the midst of a \$3 million facelift. The current work includes a complete roof replacement, brick and stone repair, window upgrades and new front step.

The refurbishment of Darke Hall is just one part of the College Avenue Campus Renewal Project that, over the next two years, will return the old campus to its former glory. The \$60 million project will also see renovations to the College Building, Tower Building and the Conservatory façade. Unfortunately, the Gallery and Conservatory Buildings (excluding the Conservatory façade) will be taken down during the revitalization project. This is the result of some initial construction decisions made while these facilities were being developed, combined with decades of persistently shifting clay soils that have eroded the buildings' structural integrity.

While the College Avenue Campus Renewal Project is our highest-profile current construction initiative, there are numerous other projects underway that are important to meet the needs of our students, faculty and staff in the near future and for years to come. In 2016-17 alone, we are investing more than \$114 million in major capital projects.

Another construction project on which we will soon be embarking is a \$4.8 million upgrade to the Laboratory Building. The project includes important safety code upgrades, such as those related to the fire alarm and sprinkler systems. The roof will also be replaced and the electrical and heating systems will be upgraded.

Our federated partner, Campion College, is undergoing its largest renovation since it was built in 1967. The project, which is nearing completion, includes a new front entryway, elevator and external stairwell. The initiation of the project provided a great opportunity to link the new Campion College entry to Kīšik Towers via a new underground pedestrian corridor and service tunnel that will provide a much-needed connection between the College and the rest of the campus. This new link will improve wheelchair accessibility and comfort as students and parkade patrons travel from Kīšik Towers to Campion and beyond. A new roadway and landscaping will visually tie the spaces together. The total value of the work is approximately \$7 million.

In part because of the opening of Kīšik Towers and the additional students on campus, a dining hall and multi-purpose facility is in the early stages of evaluation. The need for expanded dining options was identified during consultations on the 2016 Campus Master Plan and a public request for proposals for a business plan was issued last November. CITE360studio, a Regina architectural firm with an experienced team, was awarded the contract and completed the report in August. The report indicated a viable business case for a dining hall and additional classroom and conference space, and the project was recently approved by the Board of Governors to proceed to preliminary design.

The University has also embarked on a comprehensive campus-wide navigational project called Wayfinding. The project aims to greatly improve visitors' experience in locating buildings, parking lots and other on-campus destinations.

You have probably noticed a large number of triangulated orange metal fences popping up in various locations across the University lately. These fences mark the locations of directional signs that were identified in the 2015 Campus Wayfinding Study. Advancing the Wayfinding projects is essential to ensuring that the University successfully hosts the Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities in 2018. The conference will attract approximately 7,000 people to campus and will have an estimated economic impact of \$10 million on the City of Regina.

You might be surprised to learn that for the first time in more than four decades, there are no residents in College West this semester. That is because we have started upgrades and maintenance to the suites and shared residential areas of the 43-year-old residence – the second-oldest student residence on campus.

The two-year project will result in many improvements, including enhanced accessibility and greater energy efficiency with such features such as low-flow toilets and upgraded lighting and windows. Floors, cabinets and fixtures will also be replaced to address the building's aging infrastructure. The \$38.3 million project is expected to be completed in March of 2018. An information session for all those interested in knowing more about the project and its impact will be held in the weeks ahead. Stay tuned to campus emails for more information about time and location.

The physical transformation of our University is constant as we work to create new programs, accommodate increased enrolments, and build the best possible educational and work environment for our students, faculty and staff. Since 1994, for example, we have added approximately 1.5 million square feet of new space.

So how do we make a decision to move ahead with one project over another? There are of course many factors, but chiefly we are guided in the development of our University by the Campus Master Plan, the document that connects the physical evolution of campus with our strategic priorities. Every five years or so, the plan is updated to reflect the current realities of our University. The 2016 Campus Master Plan is the latest in a long line of interrelated plans dating back to 1962.

The 2016 Campus Master Plan is visionary – developed by the inspired participation of many members of our community. It recognizes that significant portions of our campus are in mature states and advances the sentiment that these areas are valuable assets to protect and carefully manage. The construction activity you see around our main campus and the revitalization taking place at the College Avenue Campus are reflections of the cultural and historic value we place on our physical and environmental assets and our desire that they remain vital for future generations.

Our campus continues to transform, and I look forward to seeing the results in the coming months. In the meantime, thank you for your input, your support, and your patience – all of which are so important to this process.

Sincerely,

Dr. Vianne Timmons
President and Vice-Chancellor