

Message from the President – March 2009

At the University of Regina, we have a unique opportunity to create, within our own walls, an environment that represents the world we want to live in. How can we do this? Through our own individual behaviour and how we choose to work, study and interact with each other.

The University is a place where we come together to generate and encourage debate and dialogue. Ideas, critical thought, discovery and knowledge define our purpose. Within this climate and environment, we need to treat each other with dignity and respect. In a respectful environment – the one we want for our University – all that we do, from emails to class handouts to our personal interactions, should be from a position of respect. Materials and attitudes not respectful of people's race, gender, sexual identity, and physical or mental disability, for example, fall outside the realm of acceptable dialogue and debate on our campus.

We want to encourage conversations around things like societal values, religious views and the entire spectrum of what it means to be human – but we need to have these discussions in a manner that respects difference and depersonalizes our language, focusing always on the issue, not the individual.

The University of Regina has a Respectful Work and Learning Environment Policy (<http://www.uregina.ca/presoff/vpadmin/policymanual/hr/RWLE%20%20Policy%2006-12.pdf>) which clearly states our commitment to “creating and maintaining an environment in which members of the University community can live, work and learn in a collegial climate of mutual respect, free of harassment and discrimination.”

This policy is built to honour basic human rights, dignity and respect and anything we do on this campus must also honour these rights.

Professionalism is part of a respectful workplace in that every decision we make at the University of Regina reflects our belief in treating others with dignity. We can conduct ourselves in a way that creates a welcoming place for visitors and an environment where our students, faculty and staff treat each other with dignity and respect. These are the actions we must take to create a campus environment that represents the world we want to live in. All people in our University community – regardless of race, religion, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation and identity – need to be respected, and should feel they belong here.

The number one reason students leave universities is because they are disengaged. Part of being engaged comes from how we treat each other. As faculty, staff and students, let's make sure that everyone who walks through our doors is engaged and becomes part of a world at this University that is built on dignity and respect. Please take the responsibility to

continue building, within the walls of this University, the most inclusive, welcoming environment that any student, community member, faculty or staff has ever experienced.

We shape the future by educating the next generation on how to make our society a better world. Let's ensure we reflect the world we want!