

President's message – December 2015

As December begins, it is a fitting time to look back and reflect on all we have accomplished together over the past 12 months. I want to thank all faculty, staff, students, alumni and donors for their contributions to the University of Regina during the past year.

It's hard to believe, but it has been almost a full year since we launched our 2015-2020 strategic plan, entitled *peyak aski kikawinaw*. Like so much of what we do at the University of Regina, the plan was a collaborative effort, fostered by the 15-member facilitation team and hundreds of faculty, staff, students, alumni, community members, and other University stakeholders and community partners.

The plan, approved unanimously by the University's Board of Governors, identifies three key areas of priority – student success, research that has impact, and commitment to communities. It also highlights two overarching areas of emphasis – Indigenization and sustainability – that thread throughout each priority. It is a testament to everyone's commitment to this plan that we are making significant progress in all of our priority areas.

Another bright spot over the past year has been enrolment. Headcounts and the number of credit hours taught have grown for the seventh consecutive year. A total of 14,360 students were enrolled University-wide at the end of the fourth week of the Fall semester. That represents an increase of 3.3 per cent over the previous year.

The good news doesn't stop there. The number of Canadian students from outside Saskatchewan has increased once again. In addition, Aboriginal student enrolment is up 5.8 per cent year-over-year, and now represents close to 12 per cent of all students. Graduate student registration is up 5.3 per cent from Fall 2014, and international student enrolment has increased by 8.5 per cent over the past year. International students now make up 13.7 per cent of the student body and originate from all parts of the globe – whether Asia, Europe, Africa, the United States, South America, or somewhere in between.

Thinking about how internationally connected our University has become, I am reminded of the crisis that continues to unfold in Syria. In light of the fact that December 10 is Human Rights Day, I urge all of us to extend our compassion to those who have fled the instability in their homeland only to spend time in refugee camps in neighbouring countries. Canada, I'm proud to say, is doing its part by pledging to bring 25,000 Syrian refugees our country. As Canadians, and as residents of a province whose motto translates to "From many peoples, strength," all of us should do whatever we can to support that commitment and welcome these newcomers to our communities.

At the University of Regina, 2015 began with the launch of a strategic plan based on the idea that "Together, we are stronger." In that spirit, my husband Stuart and I would like to close out the year by inviting all faculty and staff to the annual come-and-go gathering in our home at 1001 McNiven Avenue from 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Friday, December 11.

This gathering will give all of us an opportunity to reflect on everything that has taken place over the past year, celebrate our successes together, and look forward to 2016. Just as importantly, it will provide me with an opportunity to thank you in person for all of the contributions you continue to make to our University and provincial communities.

Please confirm your attendance by registering at:

<https://uofr.inviteright.com/facultystaffholiday>

I hope you can attend, but if I don't see you before the semester ends – thank you for your work throughout 2015, and I wish you all the best in the new year.

Sincerely,

Dr. Vianne Timmons
President and Vice-Chancellor