



EVENT: State of the University address

DATE/TIME: Wednesday, October 4, 2017 at 12:30 pm

LOCATION: Convocation Hall

DURATION: 25 minutes plus Q and A with audience

AUDIENCE: Faculty, staff and students

PART ONE:

- I begin by acknowledging that we are gathered here on Treaty One Territory, in the heart of the Métis homeland.
- We acknowledge with respect the history, spirituality and culture of the peoples with whom Treaty One was signed. We acknowledge our responsibility in the spirit of collaboration as Treaty members, and we honour the heritage and gifts of Métis people.
- It is surprising for me to realize that this is already my third State of the University address.
- Life on campus moves quickly, but a constant for me is that I continue to be impressed by the quality of work that happens here, and the reach we have in the broader community.

- As you know this has been a special year for us as we celebrate our 50th anniversary and roots that go back more than 145 years.
- We have nurtured decades of talented people who have shaped our province, our country and beyond.
- What does an award-winning Métis storyteller, a student selected as African Entrepreneur of the Year, and a children's health researcher have in common?
- The answer is: Us. They each started their pursuit of higher education on this campus.
- Let me share a few stories about the extraordinary people who have passed through our doors.
- Our alumna Katherena Vermette is a Métis storyteller. Her debut novel *The Break* has been winning literary awards.
- Katherena returned to school as an adult, she says, so she could take classes with Catherine Hunter and Margaret Sweatman.
- A recent computer science graduate named Lester Aidoo, originally from Ghana, realized that students were homesick for their favorite African products. So he created an online marketplace.
- Some of his profits go to supply books to African countries. Lester was honored with the African Male Entrepreneur of the Year by Frost Management.

- Dr. Meghan Azad graduated in 2004 with a degree in Biochemistry. Today she is a scientist at the Children's Hospital Research Institute of Manitoba.
- You may have recently heard about her research on maternal peanut consumption during breastfeeding as a factor in the prevention of peanut allergies, widely reported in the media.
- This is an issue that affects many, many families, including mine.
- Our scientists are often not household names, yet it is hard to imagine a more worthwhile career than improving life for children.
- There are dozens of these profiles on our 50th anniversary website. These are the patchwork stories of individuals. Woven together, they form a quilt of our collective history.
- If you have not already visited this site, I would urge you to do so: It is a rich and inspiring collection of people, some of whom are well known, and many others who are not. They are quietly going about their lives while serving the community in their own way.
- It is one of the reasons I feel so connected to this place.
- As Manitobans, we tend to be a humble group. When I look out across this room I see world-class researchers and top-quality educators who are impacting the lives of young people every day: yet many of you carry on this important work outside of the spotlight.

- I regularly get asked, what is the big vision for UWinnipeg? What is next?
- I came here in 2014 because I was grateful to UWinnipeg for giving me the confidence to lead. I was aware of UWinnipeg's impact here and elsewhere and I wanted to be part of it.
- My role is to focus on our over-arching purpose, to constantly look for ways to build on our existing strengths, and to solidify our foundation.
- *My* role is to support *your* work, to develop an environment where faculty and staff support each other.
- That allows you, in turn, to support and inspire our students.
- Our vision is both rational and attainable. I say “our” because collectively we have identified our key strategic directions that are guiding us today.
- I am proud that there has been support from faculty and staff and a commitment from our Board of Regents in shaping this direction.
- This is not a document that is sitting on a shelf. Our strategic directions are a series of actions.
- I would like to share with you some of the progress we have been making, often quietly and behind the scenes, in implementing these directions.

PART TWO:

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND RENEWAL

- Our mission is the pursuit of academic excellence and that is our first strategic direction. We often talk about the “academic core,” which we understand to be the foundation of what we do; teaching and research.
- Any house, big or small, new or old, requires a strong foundation. We know that our strength lies in the activities that are led by you, our faculty, inside and outside the classroom.
- We are strengthening our foundation in a strategic and deliberate way.
- Many of you helped inform the Integrated Academic and Research Plan.
- We have made substantive progress on that plan.
- For example: we are looking to more actively recruit and prepare organizations to host practicum students and interns.
- As part of our commitment to support academic excellence and student success, \$30,000 was allocated to support nine experiential learning projects.
- Here’s the impact those grants are having: Dr. Dawn Sutherland is offering an Education Field School in Philippines. This year her students will be running an outreach program for street children in Manila.

- Dr. Dean Peachey is offering a Field Course in Israel and the West Bank. His students have an opportunity to see and hear first-hand the realities experienced by people living on both sides of the “Green Line.”
- We are looking for more experiential learning partnerships. For instance, we are currently developing a climate change course with the City of Winnipeg.

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE, KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION AND IMPACT

- Within our academic mission we identified our second strategic direction: Research Excellence, Knowledge Mobilization and Impact.
- This is one of our greatest strengths. I would like to share just a few examples of how we are mobilizing knowledge and contributing to our community.
- Dr. Anuraag Shrivastav’s research team is developing tests that could aid in the early detection and diagnosis of colorectal cancers — possibly through a simple blood test.
- Canada is integrating thousands of refugees from Syria. More than half are under the age of 17. Dr. Jan Stewart is leading a Canadian study and this research is helping educators do what

is best for refugee children, so they can succeed in their new country.

- When a woman from a Northern Manitoba First Nation is going to have a baby, she most often boards a bus or plane alone, and makes the long journey to Winnipeg, leaving her family behind. This causes unnecessary stress and potential harm to both mother and baby.
- Dr. Jaime Cidro is the principle investigator looking at Indigenous doulas for First Nations women. She works closely with the First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba.
- Dr. Janis Thiessen has some delicious research underway. Her new book explores the history of Canadian snack foods and the producers and workers who make Old Dutch Potato Chips, Hawkins Cheezies, and Ganong chocolates.
- And we all love our elm canopy. This summer, in cooperation with the City of Winnipeg, students with our Centre for Forest Interdisciplinary Research conducted field research on Dutch elm disease. With Dr. Richard Westwood's guidance, the students monitored infected trees to determine which should be cut down quickly. This could slow the movement of disease-carrying beetles.

- These are tangible examples of the impact each of you is having in the broader community, and how we add value and expertise.
- As part of our knowledge mobilization efforts, in June we joined a new national non-profit called The Conversation Canada.
- This web platform shares analysis and commentary based on research, evidence and insights generated by Canadian universities.
- Four of our faculty have been published so far: Dr. Shannon Sampert, on female politicians; Dr. Jan Stewart, on war, trauma and children; Dr. Jason Hannan, on trolling and Trump; and Dr. Sylvie Albert, on Smart Cities.
- We also welcomed Shannon back this spring as director and editor-in-chief for Evidence Network, which is now here on campus. The Evidence Network creates original media content on health policy topics for publication in the mainstream media.
- These tools help us get your expertise known to a broader audience, nationally and beyond.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND SUCCESS

- Our third strategic direction is strengthening student experience and success.
- Over the past year, we have started to really drill down and better understand who our students are and how we can best support them.
- This means collecting more detailed and specific data and allowing our experts in Institutional Analysis to crunch numbers and offer insights.
- On this front we have discovered some very interesting things specific to UWinnipeg students:
- Our data shows that our students work hard in class and outside in the job world.
- Three quarters attend school full time and also work while attending school.
- They are more likely than the national average to use their own money to finance their education.
- 58% live at home with parents while attending UWinnipeg compared to just 36% nationally.
- And here was something very surprising to us: Two thirds of our students (64%) do not carry any debt.

- It appears our students have a strong Prairie work ethic.
- We delivered \$4.5 million dollars in scholarships and awards to students last year. So this information is useful in helping us better target the students who really need financial supports to make it through school.
- We also want to expand our understanding of the specific benefits of obtaining a UWinnipeg degree. We know our students graduate with important skills such as critical thinking, social engagement, communication, respect for diversity, and problem solving.
- Where does that take them?
- We have developed our first-ever Graduate Outcome Survey. It hits the field this fall to help us understand the employment rate of graduates and their aggregate economic impact, levels of civic engagement, the relevance of graduates' program of study to their life after university and many other important factors.

INDIGENIZATION

- In the classroom and hallways, people are engaging in crucial conversations about reconciliation.
- It was two years ago, June 2, 2015, when the nation paused to listen to (now Senator) Murray Sinclair deliver the seminal Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report. More than 700 of us gathered in Riddell Hall to witness that event.

- The TRC is a blueprint for change.
- Reconciliation, education and collaboration are interwoven strands of the same braid. We each have a role to play in this journey.
- We have among the strongest rates of Indigenous student participation in Canada with 13% of incoming students self-identifying as First Nations, Inuit and Métis.
- Yet we also recognize that many Canadians have not been exposed to Indigenous history or perspectives.
- That's why last year we heeded an important Call to Action and became one of the first universities in the country to mandate that new students have a foundational knowledge about Indigenous people and culture.
- Last year, there were more than 1,500 registrations in the 27 courses offered that met the Indigenous Course Requirement. Many of the students are surprised how little they knew about Indigenous people and perspectives.
- It's worth remembering that this idea came from our students.
- They asked for an enhanced understanding of who Indigenous people are and the important role the Indigenous community plays, not only in Winnipeg but across Canada and beyond.
- Yes, there are growing pains. We are still learning how to effectively deliver on this initiative and fully support faculty and

students. But we are on the right path and we know that there is a genuine desire to embrace the spirit of reconciliation.

- I want to thank faculty members for embracing this new opportunity.
- We are doing other things as well: we recognize the central role of language as the carrier of culture, tradition and knowledge. We are offering more Ojibwe and Cree credit courses, and through the *Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre*, we have free Ojibwe classes for neighbourhood residents.
- This summer we offered a very effective Indigenous Summer Scholars Program. Eight students worked on projects ranging from water facilities in First Nations to climate change. The students were supervised by faculty and earned a salary for their work.
- Most importantly, these students felt mentored and supported. I had lunch with several of these remarkable young people and I know they are already role models.
- Half of the Indigenous students who attend UWinnipeg self-identify as Metis. We have just announced a new partnership with the Manitoba Metis Federation which will provide us with \$600,000 over the next ten years for Metis-related research projects.
- This is in addition to long-standing partnership with the Manitoba Metis Federation and its education arm, the Louis Riel Institute,

which has allowed more than 600 of Metis students to follow their dreams here at UWinnipeg.

- Our new fall enrolment numbers show that Indigenous students seeking advanced degrees at UWinnipeg has doubled to 7.5 %. That is an upward trend we hope will continue with the right supports in place, like the Indigenous Summer Scholars program.
- Also this summer we tried out an interesting pilot project in the North End called YouthUnited@Winnipeg. Inspired by the TRC report, the course blended community work with in-class learning through our Urban and Inner City Studies department. It is a unique partnership that is funded by the City of Winnipeg and it will run again in 2018.
- We also offered a host of interesting spring and summer institutes that combined Indigenous knowledge with experiential learning.
- To touch on just a few: Dr. Shailesh Shukla offers a field course on-site at Fisher River First Nation, and he also takes students to Keeseekowenin First Nation, near Riding Mountain National Park, for a course in Ethnobotany. In partnership with Elders, students are exposed to plants and their medicinal and nutritional properties.
- Dr. Mark Ruml takes students to participate in local Indigenous ceremonies to learn about Indigenous healing and worldviews. Students went to the Bannock Point Petroforms in the

Whiteshell in May, and camped out at the Spruce Woods Sundance in June.

- Dr. Roland Bohr moves students out of the classroom and on to a Bison Ranch, near Rosburn. Students worked with Elders from nearby First Nations communities to learn about bison culture and traditional technologies, such as tanning hides and making archery equipment, while living in traditional tipis.
- It makes me want to be a student again. The variety of ways in which we are using our expertise as educators to build roads of reconciliation is both creative and remarkable.

FINANCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE

- Our fifth strategic direction is Financial and Institutional Resilience.
- As you know, we rely on provincial government grants and currently in Manitoba, we are living in a period of austerity.
- In May our Board of Regents approved an operating budget that eliminated \$3.7 million dollars in costs. The good news is we did achieve a balanced budget as required by provincial legislation.
- We have had to make some tough choices to ensure our foundation remains strong. We elected **not** to reduce expenses across the board, but rather, to take a targeted approach that aligns with our Strategic Directions. Our top budget priorities

are preserving academic excellence and front-line student services.

- We also anticipated and complied with the provincial directive to reduce senior management positions by 15%.
- We are nimble. By every measure --- and believe me, Mike Emslie has many graphs on this --- by any measure, we are one of the most efficient universities in the country.
- Faced with these fiscal challenges, we are also creative. We are strengthening our diversified revenue stream with increased contributions from the Collegiate, English Language Program and Professional, Applied and Continuing Education division.
- The UWinnipeg Community Renewal Corporation is also a contributor to our bottom line. Initially created to address our infrastructure needs, CRC has managed over \$200 Million in campus and community capital projects.
- Building on that success, CRC **2.0** is now up and running. The idea is to take the skills, competence, experience and principles that UWCRC has developed over the past decade to further revitalize urban communities and in so doing, create a modest revenue stream for UWinnipeg.
- To reduce some of the pressure on our operating budget the UW Foundation has also increased its contribution to entrance scholarships.

- Forming strong partnerships has always been part of our DNA. Maybe it is because of our smaller size, or our downtown, community-entrenched location – it makes us natural collaborators.
- We see the value of building on this strength to enable more research opportunities, for faculty and students.
- Our faculty members already attract more than \$ 7 million dollars annually in research money onto campus from traditional granting bodies.
- But we are also leveraging our expertise in innovative ways:
- With the help of a private donation, we are setting up a cutting edge centre for applied parallel computing.
- The GPU Lab ---- that stands for **g**raphics **p**rocessing **u**nit for us lay people --- is an initiative led by the two Christophers: Dr. Christopher Henry (Applied Computer Science) and Dr. Christopher Bidinosti (Physics).
- What started as video game computer chips has now spread to scientific computing. Our team is part of this new shift which has tremendous implications across all disciplines.
- It is expected that machine and deep learning and the shift to artificial intelligence will touch every industry over the next decade.

- This new GPU lab will open in January in Lockhart Hall and we already have at least four students set to occupy it. One student is working on agricultural robotics, and the other is working with a local music company.
- Dr. Angela Failler, our Canada Research Chair in Culture and Public Memory, is establishing a knowledge mobilization lab, to encourage faculty networking.
- It will be up and running early in the near year, centrally located in Centennial Hall.
- These collaborative research partnerships have external impact, and just as importantly, they are contributing to our internal resilience, and helping to chart our way forward.
- Over the past year, The University of Winnipeg Foundation has also done much work to examine how it aligns with UWinnipeg's overall values and mission.
- This spring it announced the establishment of a Responsible Investment Policy.
- The policy strengthens our financial resilience by incorporating environmental, social, and governance factors in the investment process. This aligns with the mission of the Foundation, as well

as the values and direction of the University.

- Our Foundation has also joined The Intentional Endowments Network. It supports universities in aligning their endowment investment practices with their mission, values, and sustainability goals without sacrificing financial returns.
- Also as a result of the conversations initiated on campus, there is news to share on the pension front.
- A new divested fund called the “RBC Fossil Fuel Free Global Equity Fund” is now available to all members in the Defined Contribution plan.
- These are steps that are consistent with what most universities in Canada are doing and they help move us toward a more sustainable future.
- Another key element in creating strong institutional resilience is our ambitious and attainable sustainability strategy.
- Led by Alana Lajoie O’Malley, about 2,400 people participated in the campus-wide engagement process last fall. This informed our new Sustainability Strategy, a blueprint that includes 19 measurable targets.
- We are continuing to be sustainability leaders in Canada.

- Our big goal is to cut our campus emissions in half by 2020. We then aim to achieve zero emissions by 2035. These are ambitious targets.
- Here is an example of one project currently underway.
- We are installing a small biomass heating system for the Ashdown Heating Plant. This will represent the first downtown application of biomass technology in Manitoba.
- It will help us hit our target of having 5% of our total energy use coming from renewable energy sources such as solar, geothermal, wind, and sustainable biomass by 2025.
- Alana's team is also in the early stages of developing a campus-based social enterprise that will deliver waste auditing services to business throughout Winnipeg. This is another form of knowledge mobilization, sharing our expertise while providing new experiential learning experiences for our students.
- As you can see, the strategic directions we created together are finding life throughout our institution.

PART THREE:

We have many things on the go. What else might be ahead for 2018?

- Our last major capital campaign ended six years ago, in 2011. It was ambitious and allowed for a decade of renewal which was overdue.

- It helped to revitalize our campus and added important facilities to our surrounding community, including more housing, recreation and daycare spaces.
- The daycare expansion is currently underway and will allow us to welcome 32 new children and nine new employees to campus.
- This summer we also added the beautiful addition next door....Leatherdale Hall, made possible by the lead gift from Louise and the late Douglas Leatherdale. This new space enhances our ability to bring people together to share ideas and knowledge.
- And it brought back the much-loved Tony's Canteen back to life.
- So we spent a decade expanding and building.
- Today, our needs are different.
- Last spring, many of you came to brainstorming sessions to participate in The Asset and Campus Enhancement process --- ACE for short.
- We wanted your insights and direction to help shape our next fundraising effort, which will be targeted and pragmatic.
- We also want to make sure that what we do next specifically aligns with and advances our five strategic directions and complements the hard work that has gone into IARP, our

sustainability strategy and other campus initiatives already underway.

- So what did we find out during ACE?
- Here are a few high-level key findings:
- First, there was a real understanding and consensus that we are the right size now. We don't need to chase more growth.
- Second, there is a strong desire to invest in the general renewal of our campus and pay attention to the smaller things.
- We heard that our classrooms need to be more flexible and cutting-edge, and that we need general "sprucing up" of spaces and furnishings to ensure learning comfort.
- We need more student lounges and other amenities to support groups and collaborative projects among students across campus.
- We need to invest in a better "connected" and "powered" campus.
- And the couple of big items that everyone seemed to agree with:
- The modernization of Centennial Hall is a priority.
- And the library requires specific attention to become a "learning commons" for the 21st century. Every discussion table agreed on that.

- There was also the desire to provide more visual incorporation of Indigenous life on campus.
- One of the accomplishments in the past year that I find quite striking is the addition of ASIN at the entrance of the Axworthy Health and Recplex.
- This is a collaborative artwork between Ebb and Flow First Nation, the university and artist-architect Eduardo Aquino.
- We also heard during the ACE process that we could explore more supports for Indigenous faculty and staff.
- It is an interesting read: the ACE What We Heard document is posted on our website. Thanks to the ACE members who volunteered their time.
- The ACE report will help inform our discussions with the Province on operating and capital funding, and the Board of Regents. We expect to launch our next capital campaign in 2018.
- Also ahead for early 2018 is the complete transformation of Merchants Corner on Selkirk Avenue.
- This has been a labour of love by the North End community. Dr. Jim Silver, from Urban and Inner City Studies, has been a passionate advocate dedicated to seeing this project through.

- This ambitious makeover is creating a seamless educational hub and it will also provide new affordable housing opportunities in the North End.
- We are proud to be a partner in this community-building project. Stay tuned for the grand opening in the coming weeks.
- Finally, let me close by saying this special 50th anniversary year has been fun.
- It is also afforded me and others the chance to reflect on the really important multiple roles that we play.
- The idea that universities have an obligation to serve the public good dates back to at least 1200 AD.
- There exists this dichotomy: on the one hand, universities are among the most enduring institutions in the world (where else do wear medieval robes as we do at convocation?).
- And at the same time, universities are under tremendous pressure to change, to be innovative, to add more value (as seen by whoever is calling for the change).
- We are a “civic university” with a strong sense of purpose. We contribute to society through teaching, research and community service.

- Ideas, expertise, passion and energy will never be in short supply on our campus.
- Our 50th anniversary reminds us that we have a long history here as an integral part of the fabric of our community.
- Our incredible and dedicated faculty and staff ---- that's you ---- have challenged, nurtured and inspired generations of students who are now out in the world adding value.
- The 50,000 graduates from United College and UWinnipeg are community leaders and engaged citizens. That is because of the education and life experiences they gained here on this campus.
- As our 50th anniversary year draws to a close, I would like to let you know about a series of short videos prepared by our communications and media services staff for our Legacy Dinner last month. Please have a look.
- Thank you for coming out today. If you have any questions I am here.