

2018 State of the University
Delivered by Dr. Annette Trimbee
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Convocation Hall, The University of Winnipeg

- Good afternoon.
- Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge that The University of Winnipeg is located on Treaty 1 land, in the heart of the Métis Nation.
- Making this acknowledgement is a positive step towards reconciliation, but it is just a small step in a long journey to get where we need to be.
- Similarly, in the context of today's address, we are headed in the right direction, have taken positive steps, and still have a ways to go.
- I'd like to thank you all for being here today.
- Typically we hold this address later in October, but we decided to move it up to September this year to coincide with the start of the academic year.
- There's a great energy on campus at this time of year with hallways once again filled with students, alumni returning for Homecoming, and Wesmen teams starting their seasons.
- On our first day of classes last Tuesday, the staff in Student Central served over 900 people.
- You may have noticed that rather than lining up on Portage Avenue, students take a number and sit in the AnX by Starbucks.
- Dr. James Currie and I walked over to grab a coffee and see the activity.
- You may or may not know that our Provost and Vice-President, Academic is both an active mathematician and magician who always has a deck of cards on hand to perform a magic trick.
- As we waited in the Starbucks line, James's inner voice came out and he debated whether or not to entertain the students who were waiting with some magic.

- He chose not to but it made me think about the magic involved in getting everything up and running for the start of a new year — registration, orientation, scheduling classrooms, perhaps even scrambling the week before to hire instructors, renovations, the list goes on and on.
- All this to say — you are talented magicians in your own right and we are grateful for all you do.
- Today I'll be walking through our strategic directions, and updating you on our progress.
- I wanted to take a different approach this year, and dive a bit deeper into how we are defining our success.
- On your way in, you were handed a booklet that contains my recent report to the Board of Regents. It's also available online.
- This booklet has a lot of visuals to give you at-a-glance updates on where we are at.
- Much of the data I'll reference today is included in this report, so I encourage you to take a look through it later.
- As much as I emphasize the value of data, I do absolutely get that above all else we value relationships and that many of the things that make you want to be a part of the UWinnipeg community are simply not measurable.
- This past year has been an incredibly rewarding one to serve as President.
- We have introduced new academic programs, such as a Master in Management and a Master of Arts in Criminal Justice.
- We have formed exciting new partnerships with groups like the Manitoba Metis Federation, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, and the Enterprise Machine Intelligence and Learning Initiative.
- We celebrated one of our largest and most diverse groups of Honorary Degree recipients — Drs. Jane Goodall, Jack Zipes, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Maria Campbell, Peter Agre, and Albert McLeod.
- Hearing each of these recipients had such a lasting impact on me personally, but perhaps most memorable was the opportunity to travel with a cohort of students to Maria Campbell's home — the former home of Métis leader Gabriel Dumont — near Batoche, Saskatchewan to present her degree in person.

- It was a powerful experience to be able to meet her near the site of the North-West Rebellion, an event that forever shaped the lives of the Métis in Canada.
- We also refreshed some of our spaces, opened new ones, and renamed one very special one — the former Spence Street Promenade, which now goes by the name Marsha Hanen Way, in honour of our pioneering former president who helped break glass ceilings and transform the University.
- This year has also been a challenging one in several respects, which I will be touching on.
- But before that, I would like to step back and look at some of the challenges that all post-secondary institutions are facing today.
- As the future of work changes, so do the expectations of universities.
- These expectations are very different today than they were 10 or 20 years ago.
- Employers expect that our graduates leave here job-ready with an adaptable skill set.
- Students expect an education that prepares them for a shifting job market — one that is being disrupted by new ideas and technologies.
- Our students are also becoming more aware and attentive to issues that impact their health and wellbeing.
- And we want to be there to meet their needs.
- That means creating new policies, such as our newly approved sexual violence prevention policy, and our upcoming review of the student accommodation policy.
- It's important to remember that addressing these challenges takes resources, and the reality is we are being called on to do more with less.
- What I hope to share with you today is that we are being deliberate in how we approach each of our strategic directions, and that we are focused on delivering services that prioritize quality.

Academic excellence and renewal

- When we developed our strategic directions three years ago, we chose to focus on our strengths.
- The University of Winnipeg has a long reputation for academic excellence, and we wanted to make sure our decisions enhanced this part of our culture.
- We know a large part of our culture is defined by the close connections our students and faculty share.
- This unique learning environment empowers our undergraduate students to contribute to research and scholarly work, and provides them the leadership skills necessary for success after they graduate.
- To this end, we set a goal of maintaining the size of our student body at around 10,000 students. I am happy to say that overall enrollment is quite stable.
- Our University has always been known for its small class sizes, and we continue to see the benefits this learning opportunity affords our students today.
- Students like Kaitlyn McEachran.
- Kaitlyn graduated with a four-year Bachelor of Arts in economics in 2017, and just completed her Master of Arts in Environmental, Resource and Development Economics.
- Her professors helped her find and grow her unique skills, which she is now using in a career for a government agency.
- Kaitlyn is one of the students recently featured in our “Education with Impact” campaign, which you may have seen highlighted around the city, as well as online.
- The goal of the campaign is to draw a line from specific programs at our University to the impact that our graduates are making in their respective fields.
- For example, we showed how studying chemistry at UWinnipeg can lead to a career in medicine or agriculture, or how studying geography can lead to designing more efficient communities as a city planner.
- We will be building on the success of this campaign by highlighting a second group of programs. Stay tuned.

- While our overall student size remains the same, our students are changing.
- Our student population is now made up of 10% Indigenous students, which is up from 8% in 2013.
- Our number of international students saw a similar jump, and in 2017 was at 7.5%, which is up from 5.5% in 2013.
- What we are seeing is far more meaningful than a simple increase in numbers.
- These increases represent more classroom discussions that are better informed by a range of perspectives.
- More alumni using the skills they learned here to help people from their home country or community.
- And more students seeking a learning experience that is reflective of who they are, such as was the case with the Indigenous Course Requirement.
- Simply put, our University is enriched in every aspect by diversity and inclusion.
- While we are encouraged by the diversification among our students, on the faculty and staff side, we have more work to do in order to set and meet our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion targets.
- In particular, Indigenous staff and faculty, people with a disability, and self-identified members of racialized communities are all areas that need our attention.
- Over the summer, we were pleased to meet with The Honourable Kirsty Duncan, Minister of Science and Sport, who was here on campus to host an event on the Athena SWAN program.
- Athena SWAN was established in 2005 in the United Kingdom to promote the advancement of women researchers in STEM fields. Minister Duncan was here to discuss how the program could be adapted in Canada.
- One of the key things that we came away with from that meeting is that our approach to improving Equity, Diversity and Inclusion will be evidence-based.
- Wherever possible, we want to make sure we are collecting data so we can establish targets and measure our progress.

- We also want to make sure we put data in the proper context. For example, when comparing our student and faculty diversity, it's important to note that faculty turnover does not happen as quickly as student turnover.
- Over the next year, we will be reviewing our hiring practices to help address the gaps we have already identified, as we move towards becoming a leader in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Student Experience and Success

- In everything we do, our ultimate goal is to provide students a quality education that sets them up for success.
- The definition of success is different for every student.
- Many arrive here after high school looking to learn how to utilize their talents, while others join us later in life looking to upgrade their skills, take a new career path, or re-enter the workforce.
- In general, we want students to attend here and finish their course of study, whether that's a pre-professional program, baccalaureate, post-baccalaureate, or graduate degree.
- But we also know that along the way they need to learn skills like critical thinking, effective communication, and problem solving.
- We know this because we hear from employers that these skills are increasingly in demand.
- We are succeeding in our goal of providing a well-rounded education to students.
- When we asked graduates about their experience at UWinnipeg, the majority of them responded that their education had at least some impact on their ability to think critically, write clearly, conduct research, relate to different people, and learn their chosen field.
- And we are seeing these skills in action.
- We see them in people like Matt Schaubroeck, who graduated with a BA in Politics and French Studies in 2011.
- Matt's career has taken some interesting turns. He succeeded as a communicator and business analyst for government, non-profit and private organizations.

- He eventually co-founded his own company, ioAirFlow, which specializes in creating software to make buildings more efficient.
- And there are many more examples like Matt. A recent survey found that 92% of our students are satisfied with their decision to attend the University.
- Grads are finding employment and are earning a good salary within a few years of graduation.
- And two-thirds of our grads leave here with no debt.
- Evidence of our students' success can be found in many areas, but perhaps one of the most revealing ways is to look at a map.
- This is a map of UWinnipeg alumni in the world that our Geography department created. I have been fortunate to meet many alumni directly, or have learned their story by talking with the faculty who taught them.
- If you zoom in, you will find countless stories of alumni in different sectors and stages of their career, each of them finding success in their own way.
- In Montreal, Calculus grad Darren Baccus helps grow Canadians' pension plans in his role as Senior Vice President and Chief Legal Officer at the federal government's Public Sector Pension Investment Board.
- Across the border in New York City, you will find David Kille, who not too long ago was learning social and cognitive psychology as a Research Assistant in our Faculty of Arts.
- Today he uses those same skills to help discover the next big social media phenomenon in his role as a Product Researcher at Instagram.
- Head overseas to the U.K. and you will meet Joelle Erickson, an economics grad who has spent time with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.
- Joelle now works in London as an Analyst for one of the world's largest financial groups.
- There are still areas we need to work on to ensure our students are provided every possible opportunity to succeed.
- We need to make sure we are meeting the needs of the one-third of students who leave here with debt because they have chosen to invest in their education.
- We also recognize that our retention rates are below the Canadian university average.

- To help address these issues, we will be revamping the Opportunity Fund so that it's providing the right amount of financial support to those who need it.
- Our students lead busy lives, often working multiple jobs or supporting families, and many face significant challenges and barriers to get here.
- They also have different learning styles that don't necessarily fit with the traditional classroom model.
- Our accessibility is deeply embedded in our identity, and it's something that all of us take pride in.
- We want to keep opening new pathways to a UWinnipeg education, as well as strengthen existing ones.
- We will be taking a closer look at all available supports — including bursaries, student aid, and health and wellbeing supports — to make sure we offer the right mix for our students.
- We also want to provide students more opportunities for experiential learning, integrated work placements, and international exchanges.

Indigenization

- Our approach to Indigenization continues to be informed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, many of which relate to education.
- But it's also informed by our relationships with Indigenous peoples, both at the University and within our communities.
- As I mentioned before, our Indigenous student numbers are up, which is a positive sign that we are moving in the right direction.
- I recently ran into Perry Bellegarde, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, in the airport, and I shared with him these numbers.
- He said to me, "That's great, Annette, but are Indigenous students graduating at the same rate as non-Indigenous students?"
- His comments illustrated how important it is to not only bring Indigenous students in, but to make sure we are providing meaningful supports to them during their time here.

- We also want to make sure that Indigenous students have equal learning opportunities across all of our faculties.
- Indigenous students are under-represented in science and business.
- We know the reasons for this are complex.
- We also know that role models are key, and we need to increase the number of Indigenous faculty across all areas.
- In January, we announced an agreement with the Manitoba Metis Federation that will see them contribute \$60,000 a year for 10 years towards research into Métis policy.
- It will also include the creation of an annual Métis-Scholar-In-Residence position to support a full range of research possibilities.
- We are also building a stronger relationship with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, building on Kevin Lamoureux's one-year secondment with them.
- These partnerships are an example of the collaborations we are making with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit groups to enhance our approach to reconciliation, and support our Indigenous students and faculty.
- Our community has made a number of important steps towards Indigenization over the last few years.
- Of course, introducing the Indigenous Course Requirement is a major part of this.
- We have learned a lot of lessons through the launch of the ICR, but it's important to remember that we learned many of those lessons by being one of the first universities to jump into this.
- We are proud to be at this stage. The ICR is here, and it couldn't have reached this point without all of your resolve and feedback.
- I would like to commend all of you for embracing it.
- As with acknowledging territory, the ICR is a step towards reconciliation but not the end.
- We have a number of new academic programs underway, including our Summer Scholars program that sees Indigenous undergraduate students participate in 10-week research assistantships with faculty researchers from a variety of areas.

- We officially opened Merchants Corner in April, marking the completion of a multi-year project to transform the 100-year-old Merchants Hotel on Selkirk Avenue into a mixed-use centre for community-based education and cultural programs.
- In June, we launched an exciting new partnership with the Canadian Museum for Human Rights to offer executive leadership training in Indigenous and Human Rights, delivered on-site at the museum.
- We also introduced several changes to Indigenize convocation this year, including offering special stoles to our Indigenous graduates.
- The stole is custom-designed by Destiny Seymour, an Anishinaabe interior designer. Destiny's design is inspired by the repeated and delicate pattern stamping found on local Indigenous pottery, along with colours that reflect the University.
- Going forward, we will continue to look at how to Indigenize more events and spaces on campus, to reflect our commitment to welcoming Indigenous peoples, cultures, and ways of knowing.
- The new Spring Feast, which will be an annual celebration of student and faculty excellence, and the recently unveiled Star Blanket mural on the Helen Betty Osborne Building are both examples of these efforts in action.
- Seeing the neighbourhood come together in celebration at the mural unveiling really underscored the importance of education's ACCESS programs and the community programs taking place in the Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre.
- Wrapping the building in a Star Blanket mural is a beautiful way to honour and protect those teachings, as well as the teachers and students inside.
- We are pleased with the Indigenization progress we have made, but we know we have a lot more work to do.
- These next steps will be challenging, and could take time to fully realize. We are going to continue to listen, and be mindful of the relationships we have built to help guide us to this point.

Research Excellence, Knowledge Mobilization and Impact

- The next strategic direction is one that we have a lot of be proud of, and that's our commitment to Research Excellence, Knowledge Mobilization and Impact.
- Our reputation as a research institution is growing. It's fair to say we are punching above our weight.
- This is thanks to your incredible work, which continues to have measurable impact here in our local communities and across the world.
- And your efforts aren't going unrecognized. Last year marked the University's highest-ever external research funding at over \$8 million.
- I'm also happy to say that our overall research funding is up 31% from 2013-14.
- Our faculty and student researchers are at the forefront of developing solutions to some of society's most difficult and long-standing issues.
- For example, as Canada continues to figure out how to meet the needs of thousands of newcomers, here at the University, we have several researchers devoted to easing the transition for refugees.
- Researchers like Dr. Ray Silvius and Dr. Carlos Colorado, who last year released a study that found many of the housing resources in place for Syrian refugees were temporary, and have since been removed.
- Their report makes recommendations to both the federal and provincial governments on how to ensure the successful housing and settlement of Government-Assisted Refugees.
- Or Dr. Jan Stewart and Dr. Lorna Martin, who authored a guide for teachers that helps them provide culturally responsive guidance to new students who have lived through the trauma of war, family separation, and loss.
- Just as The University of Winnipeg is known for its social conscience, our research into social issues has become an area of recognized strength.
- We have also built significant capacity in historical research — using data from the past in order to create a better understanding of today's world.

- For example, Les Sabiston, who recently joined the anthropology department as a Research Scholar, is dedicated to building new understandings of the experiences of Indigenous youth in the legal, health, and social service systems.
- In particular, he is looking at how those systems impact the lives of people diagnosed with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders.
- Another example is Dr. William Rory Dickson, from our religion and culture department, who co-authored an introductory text on Sufism, which is Islam's popular tradition of spiritual transformation, art, and philosophy.
- Unlike other historical texts, Dr. Dickson's book takes a unique approach, starting in contemporary North America and moving backwards to the ancient origin of Sufism.
- A third established area is natural science that leads to applications with global impact.
- This is the type of research that impacts all kinds of people in all kinds of ways.
- It could be an everyday thing like finding ways to make your smartphone more portable and power-efficient, which could result from the work of Dr. Chris Wiebe, our Canada Research Chair in Quantum Materials Discovery.
- It could also have dramatic consequences on your health.
- For example, Dr. Melanie Martin and her team have found early signs of Alzheimer's disease in the brain using MRI.
- Or Dr. Renée Douville, who is studying the link between viral genomes in our DNA and diseases like ALS and schizophrenia.
- These aren't the only areas of research we are excelling in. Our strength and capacity is growing in a number of areas, including Indigenous research, environmental research, and computational chemistry, machine learning and artificial intelligence.
- We will be looking at a number of ways to support these areas going forward, including fundraising for academic chairs.
- On top of our record research funding, we are also gaining significant credibility and trust.
- More and more people and groups are seeking our expertise to help guide policy and inform Canadians.

- When the federal government needs input on housing issues, they turn to our experts in the Institute of Urban Studies.
- This July, the institute was awarded a standing offer to undertake housing and socio-economic research for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.
- Essentially, they are one of a limited number of research groups pre-approved to take on this research — a recognition of the high caliber of work to emerge from the institute over nearly five decades.
- When the media needs expert opinions on trending topics, they turn to the team at the Media Centre for Public Policy and Knowledge Mobilization.
- Launched in July, the Centre seeks to understand how policy-making decisions are influenced by media and how research institutions commit to knowledge mobilization.
- It will also house the Evidence Network, which works with researchers to provide media with op-eds, backgrounders, and podcasts on important policy issues.
- Our researchers have had op-eds published across Canada through the network, on highly relevant topics including gender equality, bilingual Indigenous education, and the impact of legalized marijuana.
- The University is also a founding partner of Conversation Canada, an independent news and commentary site that pairs academics with journalists to produce reliable and accessible information.
- When you add all of these up, it results in hundreds of thousands of people engaging with the work of our researchers.
- This is an incredible accomplishment, but it's important to remember that before all this work reaches out into the world, it starts here on campus.
- Our researchers are collaborating with one another and with peers from across the world.
- Our research team at the national nuclear laboratory TRIUMF, for instance, has physicists and students hard at work here on campus, at the lab in Vancouver, and at multiple other institutions in Japan and Canada.
- Consider looking down the hall the next time you find yourself seeking inspiration. You may be surprised at who is interested in collaborating on a research project — they may specialize in an entirely different field.

- A great example of this is Dr. Pauline Greenhill and Dr. Steven Kohm, who combined their strengths and expertise in women's and gender studies and criminal justice for their research into Canadian crime films, and how they shape our understandings of justice in our country.
- Or Dr. Melanie O'Gorman in economics, who teamed up with Dr. Shelley Tulloch in anthropology to study the factors contributing to and detracting from the success of Inuit students in the North.
- And at higher level, the Richardson College for the Environment with the Campus Sustainability Office will be hosting a mix-and-mingle event in the Power Corporation of Canada Atrium next Monday, September 17 for faculty, staff, and students interested in sustainable development research and education. The goal is to spark some new collaborations.
- Events like these illustrate the importance of a supportive environment where collective success benefits everyone.
- Our ability to mobilize knowledge — both within campus and across the research community — is a defining trait for the University, and we plan to do everything we can to support these kinds of encounters.

Financial and Institutional Resilience

- Finally, I'd like to take a moment to address the overall health of the University.
- As I mentioned at the beginning of the address, we are being called on to do more with less.
- Two years ago we implemented a three-year budget strategy that would help us advance our strategic directions while eliminating the operating deficit.
- Up until this point, the University had run deficits in nine of the previous 10 years.
- Since implementing the strategy, our financial situation has improved substantially.
- It's taken a lot of tough decisions to get to this point — we have curbed many of our internal and administrative costs, including a 20% reduction of senior administration.
- Our administration costs are among the lowest in the country, and at 4.3% of our total budget make us one of the most efficient Canadian universities.

- Through this process, we have prioritized maintaining our position as an accessible University that invests in its students' success.
- We are increasing amounts for scholarships, bursaries, and awards to help students hardest hit by tuition increases.
- Our budget this year includes an additional \$200,000 in financial help for students, an increase of 16.5% from last year and 32% from 2016-17.
- This will help ensure that we remain a viable option to under-represented and non-traditional students.
- Our revenue-generating units are helping us to meet our goals.
- Our PACE and English Language programs are providing in-demand services, and creating pathways to and from our academic core.
- The Community Renewal Corporation is now pursuing projects outside of the University, providing a niche service in between private development and not-for-profits.
- On the fundraising side, The University of Winnipeg Foundation continues to have success, and this year raised over \$3.5 million towards scholarships, capital projects, programs, and research.
- Our next fundraising steps will include the launch of three mini campaigns — several of which I have alluded to throughout this address.
- These will include campaigns focused on the Opportunity Fund, our academic chairs, and a capital campaign for renovating Sparling Hall, Centennial Hall, and the Library.
- We also continue to make great strides towards our sustainability goals, including our primary target of achieving carbon neutrality by 2035.
- Most recently, we partnered with Manitoba Hydro to bring biomass heating to campus.
- You may have seen the large metal silo outside as you enter Manitoba Hall — this structure houses the locally sourced wood pellets that fuel the system.
- In addition to helping keep us warm, the project fulfills more than half our goal of having 5% of campus energy come from unconventional, renewable sources.

- What each of our strategic directions share in common is a set of guiding principles that we used to originally create them in 2015.
- Three years later, we are staying true to those principles, and the result is measurable progress.
- First, we are focused on quality. We want to make sure that we are achieving excellence across all of our strategic directions.
- Second, we are being deliberate and intentional in our growth. We want to make sure that where we do expand, it's not coming at the expense of any of the other areas.
- Third, we are using an evidence-based approach to track success and identify areas in need of more work.
- And finally, and most importantly, we are keeping you — our faculty, staff, and students — at the heart of our decision-making.
- Each step we take has a rippling effect — on your careers, your studies, your research.
- I recognize that, and I want you to know that we are always considering how to foster an environment that supports your success.
- I'd like to thank you once again for joining me here today. I look forward to meeting with you over the weeks and months to come, and learning more about your work, and your impact.
- Please have a wonderful year.