

A LEGACY OF IMPACT

Dr. Annette Trimbee

President and Vice-Chancellor
The University of Winnipeg, 2014-2020



THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG



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Image 01.
Presiding over Autumn
Convocation, 2019

CULTIVATING RELATIONSHIPS — GROWING LEADERS

by Diane Poulin

There is something very specific associated with Dr. Annette Trimbee that people mention over and over — there she is, grabbing a bowl of soup in the cafeteria, and before you know it, you're sitting with her and chatting about your day, your research, or your thoughts on reconciliation. This is true if you are a student, professor, staff member or visitor to campus. She is curious, and she listens.

Trimbee served six years as President and Vice-Chancellor. Along with her team, she has accomplished many things by fostering collaborative partnerships both on- and off-campus. One of the first challenges she tackled was creating a blueprint, a series of strategic directions to guide planning and decisions at all levels of the University.

Eric Johnstone started his term as Chair of the Board of Regents almost to the day that Trimbee walked into the President's office in Wesley Hall in 2014. They would develop a close working relationship.

“One of the most important pieces of work to come out of the Board and President's office was the strategic directions,” says Johnstone. “Our objective was to measure what we were trying to accomplish. It helps to make choices within the context of a framework of priorities. Annette really took that to heart. She respects the role of governance and the strategic directions came organically out of the relationships that she was building with students and faculty and with stakeholders. It has accomplished what we were hoping, which is to help us understand who we are, and want to be, and what roads to go down.”

Five key areas became the focus of the University during Trimbee's tenure: academic excellence and renewal; student experience and success; Indigenization; research excellence, knowledge mobilization and impact; and financial and institutional resilience.



1977

Graduated from The University of Winnipeg with a BSc

2014

Returned to UWinnipeg as President and Vice-Chancellor

2015

Established UWinnipeg's strategic directions

2016

Launched the Indigenous Course Requirement

2018

Reinstated for second term at UWinnipeg

2020

Resigned to become President and Vice-Chancellor at MacEwan University

She wants the University to be a hub of knowledge mobilization.

Image 01.
Annette Trimbee, Fiona Green, Axworthy Lecturer Anita Sarkeesian,
Christina Fawcette, Sharanpaul Ruprai, Tracey Whalen, 2018



01.

Creating a culture of support and inclusion

UWinnipeg is comfortable with 10,000 full and part-time students, large enough to offer a wide range of programs and small enough to feel like a community. Under Trimbee's direction, there is a strong emphasis on broadening the diversity of the student population and understanding the supports they need to succeed. The campus Wellness Centre expanded — home to all counselling services for students, and a new Accessibility Services and Resource Centre opened to assist those students whose academic plans may be impacted by health or disability. Two academic advisors were added to connect with students at risk of leaving the University early. Very importantly, student scholarships, bursaries, and awards increased to \$5.7 million.

"My time at UWinnipeg was one of the best experiences that I have had because there is an incredible sense of community from peers and professors, from everyone there, it is a very welcoming place," says recent graduate Janelle Gobin, who arrived from the small rural community of St. Claude in 2015 to study political science. She earned UWinnipeg's prestigious Walter Leatherdale Entrance Scholarship and is now studying law.

According to Dr. Paul Lawrie, Associate Professor, History and Chair of the Axworthy Lecture Series, Trimbee fosters collaboration across disciplines, which creates a robust faculty community that is willing to engage with each other, and with students. The Axworthy Lecture Series, which brings high-profile speakers to campus such as Cornell West, Dr. Jane Goodall,

Reflections

"She is a powerful, aspirational role model. For students like me, interested in public administration, to see a woman president, and with her past experience in government, here is someone who has achieved so much. She held a round table with student scholarship winners, and she was always genuinely interested in what students had to say."

Janelle Gobin

Recipient of UWinnipeg's prestigious Walter Leatherdale Entrance Scholarship, graduated from political science (Honours) in 2019 and is now studying law at the University of Manitoba

“Annette is committed to supporting the development of the next wave of leadership.”

– Jarita Greyeyes

and Vandana Shiva is an example. “Trimbee is instrumental in helping us build an intellectual community and bring the broader community on to our campus. She wants to bring in decision makers from different disciplines to make us a hub of knowledge mobilization, to make us leaders in that field. She is intimately involved in helping us shepherd these successful events.”

In 2017, Trimbee reached an historic 10-year agreement with Manitoba Métis Federation President David Chartrand, adding \$600,000 to enhance Métis research at UWinnipeg. The new funding supports post-doctoral fellowships and visiting scholars, and broadens our knowledge about Métis history, culture, and perspectives.

This builds on the very successful Louis Riel Bursary program, which helps approximately 70 Métis students every year achieve their dreams. Since 1999, the MMF and its educational arm, the Louis Riel Institute, have provided more than \$2.1 million in bursaries to Métis students attending UWinnipeg.

“Dr. Trimbee understood the wall that prevents more students

from going forward in school, and she helped build the ladders to overcome that wall,” says Chartrand. “These students are pivotal, they are our brain trust, and we need to invest in them. They are the next leaders of tomorrow for all of Manitoba.”

Dr. Jaime Cidro is an Associate Professor (Anthropology) and Canada Research Chair in Health and Culture and Director of the Master’s in Development Practice program. She recently received UWinnipeg’s largest ever grant of \$3.5 million from the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) to support an Indigenous-led health research project.

“Trimbee brings pragmatism and realism to move things along and she surrounds herself with lots of ‘doers’ who can take ideas and make them happen fairly quickly,” says Cidro. “So for instance, we created the Weweni Future Scholars Award, which financially supports an Indigenous UWinnipeg graduate in their first year of a PhD program. This is important because it highlights that Indigenous people can receive advanced degrees, and it helps meet the immediate needs in that critical first year of a PhD.”

Recently UWinnipeg secured a federal grant for an important Equity, Diversity and Inclusion initiative. This supports concrete programming to tackle the challenges encountered by underrepresented groups, everything from ensuring that professors from diverse communities feel welcome and respected, to valuing their work

in terms of tenure and promotion. UWinnipeg currently has eight Canada Research Chairs, and three are Indigenous women, unprecedented across the country.

“Trimbee has deep respect for academic work. There is a feeling of the institution really breathing and being open to a wider, more diverse community,” says Dr. Catherine Taylor, Professor, Acting Chair of sociology, and Director of the RISE. Taylor has led several large-scale national research projects focused on helping build inclusive school climates for LGBTQ students and staff.

Jarita Greyeyes is the first recipient of the Weweni Future Scholars Award, and is currently pursuing a PhD in Education at Stanford University in California.

Greyeyes is nēhiyaw from the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation and the Red Pheasant Cree Nation, both located in Treaty Six territory. She is a graduate of UWinnipeg, and the University of Victoria.

“California is very expensive and this award is so important in allowing me to focus on my program of study, which is very demanding, and not worry about where the money is coming from to live on,” says Greyeyes. “What is clear to me is Annette is committed to supporting the development of the next wave of leadership, understanding that UWinnipeg is a really good incubator for Indigenous leaders and those leaders go on to do many things in society.”

REFLECTIONS

“When Dr. Trimbee first started as president, she went to every department and met with everyone. That is a lot of effort. I was struck by how much homework she had done when she came to the Anthropology department for the first time. She knew who I was and my research area, and that made me feel valued as a faculty member. She shows a genuine interest.”

Dr. Jaime Cidro

Associate Professor, Anthropology,
The University of Winnipeg, and Canada
Research Chair in Health and Culture

“Annette has been a terrific ally to the Two-Spirit and queer community at the UWinnipeg, she has worked with us to make things happen and she has done it enthusiastically. Her presidency has taken us to a whole other level in terms of who is actively and enthusiastically welcomed into the university community. We will miss her.”

Dr. Catherine Taylor

Professor and Acting Chair of Sociology,
The University of Winnipeg

“I am very grateful to have been able to be part of projects that will outlast our individual time at UWinnipeg, and that speaks to the visions of the projects and leadership. Leadership is about initiating projects that go beyond your tenure, and Annette has done that.”

Jarita Greyeyes

UWinnipeg alumna, PhD student, and
former manager at The University of Winnipeg
Wii Chiwaakanak Learning Centre

“Dr. Trimbee understands that education is the answer to addressing poverty. We built a relationship based on trust, and in our Indigenous culture, that is everything, trust and respect. When you have that, doors open.”

David Chartrand

President,
Manitoba Métis Federation



**New student spaces
— Leatherdale Hall,
Merchants Corner**

Trimbee oversaw completion and opening of several important new student-oriented buildings designed to promote scholarship and community interactions, both managed by UWinnipeg’s Community Renewal Corporation. Leatherdale Hall is a bright and welcoming space, connected to Wesley Hall, that encourages conversations and connections, both for students and the broader community. It was made possible by the lead gift of \$2.5 million from Louise and the late Dr. Douglas Leatherdale, and a tireless fundraising campaign led by “the two Jims” — Dr. Jim MacDonald and Dr. Jim Richardson.

The Merchants Hotel in Winnipeg’s North End has been transformed into an education hub offering community-based educational and cultural programs, thanks to the efforts of tireless community leaders. UWinnipeg’s Urban and Inner-City Studies department is located within Merchants Corner, and offers a unique Inner City Work Study experiential learning program. Students from diverse backgrounds spend time in the classroom and work placements

at North End community-based organizations. It is funded by a generous \$500,000 gift, from RBC’s Future Launch. It was initiated by Winnipeg City Councillor Brian Mayes in 2017, with funding of \$200,000 annually in 2017 and 2018.

For Sherri Walsh, director with UWinnipeg Foundation, the University has a critical role to play in promoting social sustainability and community capacity-building.

“In the last six years, UWinnipeg has been very much focused on that inclusivity,” she says. “Annette is careful to identify and break down barriers. Merchants Corner is geographically not that far from main campus, but it is in fact a world away for many people. Many students who would not think of going to university will enter Merchants Corner, and that is truly transformative.”

Still ahead for campus, Trimbee initiated a plan to modernize the library. Students, staff, faculty, the Indigenous Advisory Circle, and the Library Advisory Committee were consulted on a functional review, with a fundraising campaign expected to follow.

Reflections

“Everything Annette does, she does very thoughtfully and carefully, with tremendous integrity and heart. She is also fun, with a twinkle in her eye, and all of that contributes to a very successful leader.”

Sherri Walsh

*Lawyer and Director,
UWinnipeg Foundation*

Did you know?

Leatherdale Hall is home to Tony’s Canteen, a revival of the original – named for Tony Kozyra – which opened in Wesley Hall in 1936 when the University was still United College.

Image 01.
Grand opening of Downtown Commons, Annette Trimbee,
Minister Scott Fielding, Robert-Falcon Ouellette, 2016

Reflections

“Annette has a balance of confidence without arrogance, she empowers people and guides them along the right path and she gets the team to work well together to achieve what needs to get done. She listens and facilitates, she does not command.”

Mike Emslie

*Vice-President, Finance and Administration,
The University of Winnipeg*

Did you know?

The University's biomass heating system is one of only a handful of biomass projects in Manitoba and the first in an urban area. Biomass is a renewable fuel source that comes from burning wood or other organic materials.

A steady hand at the helm

In 2016, the Board of Regents approved a multi-year budget strategy, aimed at increasing revenues, decreasing expenses, and producing a balanced annual budget. Significant progress has been made during Trimbee's tenure to curb internal expenses.

According to the Canadian Association of Business Officers, UWinnipeg is among the top three most efficient universities in Canada in terms of dollars spent on administration, versus dollars dedicated to the academic core.

“We have been very successful in growing revenue, and we reduced senior management by 25 percent,” say Mike Emslie, Vice-President, Finance and Administration. “As a result, that empowered more front-line people to have impact, to find efficiencies and reduce unnecessary expenditures, which were reallocated to our core mission.”

Trimbee has the deep experience necessary to anticipate and plan for change. “Her analysis in dealing with the Manitoba government, given the desire across the Manitoba landscape

to reduce costs, is one of her greatest accomplishments,” says Chancellor Bob Silver, who has more than 35 years of corporate know-how. “She was ahead so whenever the province asked for A, B, or C, she had already done it.”

In 2015, the University of Winnipeg Students' Association raised the issue of divestment on campus. Following campus-wide consultations led by the President's office, in 2017 the University of Winnipeg Foundation established a new Responsible Investment Policy. It incorporates environmental, social, and governance factors in the investment process that align with the duties, vision, and mission of the Foundation, as well as the values and direction of the University and the Collegiate.

Creating an environmentally sustainable campus is also an important part of institutional resilience. UWinnipeg continues to lead the country with an assertive target of achieving carbon neutrality by 2035. A biomass heating system was installed, and UWinnipeg will soon be home to one of the largest solar panel systems inside the city, with 540 solar panels installed on the roof of the Axworthy Health and Recplex.

She empowers people & guides them along the right path.



01.

Partnerships and research with impact

UWinnipeg researchers received just over \$12 million in external research funding last year, the highest level of research revenue in UWinnipeg's history. Industrial partnerships have been an important part of this rise in activity.

Trimbee has created a culture that values strategic partnerships and collaboration within UWinnipeg and beyond campus. The goal is to take the considerable expertise of UWinnipeg researchers out into the community and apply it in real world situations, in what has come to be known as “knowledge mobilization,” and it's happening across faculties.

As an example, for the past several years, Trimbee has been central to an important initiative that is bringing machine learning and

artificial intelligence to a variety of sectors in Manitoba, including the emerging area of precision agriculture. This has many implications for farmers.

The Enterprise Machine Intelligence and Learning Initiative (EMILI) includes UWinnipeg's Dr. Christopher Bidinosti (Physics) who is leading the research, and Dr. Christopher Henry (Applied Computer Science). They are in the weeds. Literally, as it turns out.

“Right now farmers blanket spray a whole field with herbicides several times a season to kill weeds,” says Henry. “We are developing a system that allows a machine to recognize and treat individual weeds, which significantly reduces the use of herbicides and increases the efficiency of farming. We are taking 20,000 images a day as we need millions of these images. That is what machine learning can accomplish.”

Their research team, which recently received \$2.4 million from Western Economic Diversification, includes UWinnipeg students who gain valuable experience as well as experts from Red River College, the University of Saskatchewan, Northstar Robotics, Sightline Innovation, the Canola Council of Canada, and Manitoba Pulse & Soybean Growers. EMILI's vision is to be an accelerator of the Manitoba economy.

(EMILI) is chaired by Ray Bouchard, President and CEO of Enns Brothers Limited. “Right out of the gate the two Chris's had a vision of what they wanted to build,” says Bouchard. “Having an academic institution with researchers that could put together a public asset that would be available to private industry is a huge catalyst in advancing research, innovation and ultimately, commercialization.”

Change on the horizon

When Trimbee was leading the table of post-secondary Presidents (2017–2019), a reoccurring conversation focused on demonstrating the value of working more closely with the business community. The challenge was how to better align what universities and colleges are doing, and what businesses need today and into the future. Employers value critical thinking and teamwork and collaboration, what Trimbee calls the “durable skills” that come with a post-secondary education. At the same time, students increasingly want work integrated learning, practicums or experiential learning opportunities. A collaborative effort with the Business Council of Manitoba ensued.

The result is a well received report, Horizon Manitoba, released in January 2020 which outlines the importance of maintaining close linkages between post-secondary and leading employers, and increasing work-integrated learning opportunities so that students can gain valuable experience, and connections to employers in their chosen field of study.

Don Leitch is former President, Business Council of Manitoba. “Annette brought an excellent understanding of how government operates, and its objectives and accountabilities,” says Leitch. “Many provinces are taking a hard look at post secondaries. We had a committed and diverse team of people coming together for a common purpose, and as a result both the province and federal governments have shown keen interest in Horizon Manitoba, so it is an amazing success story that will be transformative. It is good public policy that will lead to better outcomes for people, and the province.”

Paul Vogt, former President of Red River College, participated in developing Horizon Manitoba and agrees that Trimbee's collaborative approach gets results. “We shared the attitude that this is about providing education for the entire province, programming that is needed for Manitoba as a whole, not competing institutions. That shared goal helps bring institutions closer together to function better for the sake of students.”

Reflections

“From my very first meeting with Annette, it was clear she had a vision for what could be when you bring together academia and industry and government. What was refreshing for me was her keen understanding of how all sectors of the economy can work together in collaboration for a greater outcome. Annette has been a key influencer of that thinking on our Board, and of finding ways to partner and move the economy ahead.”

Ray Bouchard

President and CEO of Enns Brothers Limited, Chair of the Board, The Enterprise Machine Intelligence and Learning Initiative (EMILI)

Did you know?

EMILI works with industry and academia to ensure people are empowered to succeed in a digital economy. Part of this work is offering work-integrated learning opportunities for students at innovative digital agriculture and technology organizations.

Image 01.
David Datzkiw, Dr. Annette Trimbee,
and Dr. Tabitha Wood, 2015



The University of Winnipeg is located in the Heart of the Métis homeland and has a strong history of collaboration with the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF). After returning to Manitoba in 2014, Trimbee explored her own Métis roots, and is now an official member of the Manitoba Métis Federation and a proud Métis citizen.

Did you know?

The University offers language courses in Ininew (Cree) and Anishnabemowin (Ojibwe), the two most commonly spoken Indigenous languages in Canada.

Reconciliation and Indigenization

UWinnipeg has among the strongest rates of Indigenous student participation in Canada with 12% of incoming students self-identifying as First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. The commitment to support Indigenous scholarship and reconciliation has deepened over the past six years.

UWinnipeg’s approach to reconciliation is informed by the seminal Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, released in June 2015, many of which are focused on education and the need for all Canadians to better understand our history and the reciprocal relationship with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

Student leaders at UWinnipeg wanted all undergraduates to be exposed to some Indigenous knowledge, across all disciplines. Peyton Veitch was President of University of Winnipeg Students’ Association at the time. “I give credit to Indigenous student leaders who championed this idea, Kevin Settee and Sadie Phoenix Lavoie. I am so proud of the implementation of the Indigenous Course Requirement. Dr. Trimbee championed it and used her position to bring people together to make it a really collaborative process.”

In September 2016, UWinnipeg became one of the first universities in the country (along with

Lakehead) to implement the Indigenous Course Requirement. There are now more than 70 courses students can select from ranging from Indigenous Women’s History to Confronting Racism in the Inner City.

For Dr. James Hanley, Professor and Chair of History Department, good process was key. “This had to be implemented in such a way that there is buy in from faculty. Trimbee listens and builds consensus. I think our history department and the joint Masters of Arts in History program with University of Manitoba are making a strong contribution in achieving some of the TRC Calls to Action around education. It is a defining issue of our time. Reconciliation with Indigenous people has been a long time coming.”

Taking that approach to reconciliation off campus and into the broader community, a unique partnership formed between UWinnipeg and Canadian |Museum for Human Rights (CMHR). Together they developed and launched a new Indigenous and Human Rights Executive Leadership Program in 2018.

Designed for executives, it responds to an expressed need from many business leaders for guidance in shaping inclusive and respectful workplace cultures. Topics explore the impacts of colonization and the multigenerational trauma of residential schools to peoples’ stories of lived experience.

REFLECTIONS

“In Manitoba we have an advantage in that we are not that big, we can have face to face meetings and build relationships. With Annette it was very easy to get together for lunch or breakfast, and you get to know people as they really are. I enjoyed talking things through with her, she is very evidence-based. For her it is about trying to get to the right answer, with no separate agenda. It is a relationship I very much value.”

Paul Vogt
*Former President of Red River College,
incoming President and CEO of College of the Rockies*

“Dr. Trimbee is a highly visible presence on campus. She has flagged me down to have lunch with her, and I cannot believe how many times I have seen her attending our conferences and lectures. I co-hosted a conference and historians from across Canada were stunned that a president was there in attendance. That kind of extraordinary commitment matters. People notice.”

Dr. James Hanley
*Chair, History Department,
The University of Winnipeg*

“Many weekends we see Annette and her husband Kevin at Wesmen events. That tells our student athletes and coaches that athletics is an important part of the University, and that she cares. She is an outstanding leader, and to work under her is inspiring.”

Dave Crook
*Director of Athletics,
The University of Winnipeg*

“Annette is a mentor and a friend and a visionary. I can see myself reflected in her leadership. ”

Dr. Julie Nagam
*Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Arts,
Collaboration and Digital Media*

Image 01.
Dr. Annette Trimbee and
David Chartrand, 2019

She brought a confidence & team approach that will serve the University very well.

Image 01.
Entering Spring Convocation
wearing Métis stole, 2018

“I think there has been a real shift in consciousness, beginning with the President, to make sure there is a lot of space for Indigenous leadership,” says Dr. Julie Nagam, Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Arts, Collaboration and Digital Media. Nagam also served as Chair in the History of Indigenous Art in North America — a joint appointment between UWinnipeg and the Winnipeg Art Gallery. In that role, she co-curated WAG’s largest exhibition of contemporary Indigenous art, the popular INSURGENCE/ RESURGENCE, a groundbreaking exhibit focused on leading and emerging Indigenous artists from across Canada.

“I think UWinnipeg is seen as a leader in Indigenization across the country. We are known as a community-oriented university with lots of opportunities for high calibre scholarship,” says Nagam.

For Andrea McCluskey, the smaller things also matter. She is the welcoming presence that oversees the Aboriginal Student Services Centre, a home away from home for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students.

When Trimbee presides over Convocation ceremonies, she is cloaked within her Métis identity, wearing a stole gifted to her at UWinnipeg’s first Spring Feast, which was established to honour all who contribute to Indigenization at UWinnipeg.

“A real highlight for me is our Convocation ceremony now, where Indigenous teachings are incorporated,” says McCluskey. “We explain why we give our land acknowledgment, the meaning of the sash, and the tassels. These are subtle ways of inclusion that are important to us.” Stoles are now an option for all Indigenous graduating students, created by Anishinaabe designer Destiny Seymour. Convocation also features a star blanket photo booth, and a new podium reflective of Indigenous design.

For outgoing Chancellor Bob Silver, Dr. Annette Trimbee’s six years as UWinnipeg’s President and Vice-Chancellor is best characterized this way:

“She brought a confidence, and a team approach to UWinnipeg that will serve the University very well going forward.”



01.

Jarita Greyeyes (now a PhD student) and Dr. Jaime Cidro surprised Trimbee with a beautiful blue stole, adorned with bright Manitoba flowers and sacred plants which represent the territory, Trimbee’s Métis heritage, and her family. The stole was designed by Ryan and Shannon Gustafson with input from Jarita and Angeline Nelson. Ryan and Shannon are Anishinaabe and often deliver workshops at the University.

Did you know?

The podium is crafted from reclaimed Manitoba oak representing the importance of the land we stand on, carved with four rivers symbolizing how water binds us all together, and inlaid with copper designs to honour the history of Indigenous peoples in Manitoba.

IN HER OWN WORDS

Q I picture you as 19-year-old Annette strolling across the UWinnipeg campus on your way to a lab, not knowing of course that one day you will be running this place. What advice would you give that young woman?

A I absolutely loved being a student at UWinnipeg. I loved the lectures, the labs, studying in the library, the opportunity to do research with my genetics professor and even exams. But I did have doubts about whether I really belonged. I admired Wesley Hall but had never ventured inside when I was a student here. I thought the castle was for other people. So I would say to that young woman: “You do belong here. You have the talent to be an academic and being an academic does not mean you need to change the essence of who you are.” It means a lot to me that my mother used to say, in her later years, that one of the things she was most proud of me for, was that even though I had a PhD, I could still talk to anybody and make them feel comfortable.

Q Over the course of six years as President, what surprised you about this job?

A My former role was as a Deputy Minister and I often get asked how the two roles compare. What surprised me early in my tenure as a university President was how much more political and public a role it is. I joke that never

before in my working adult life did anyone care where I went to elementary school. I was so happy to share that I attended Wayoata school with Nick Martin, the Winnipeg Free Press education reporter at the time.

Being a university President is a bit like being both a Cabinet Minister without a Cabinet and a Deputy Minister without a department. In the role, you have to balance diverse perspectives, internally and externally. Or put another way, I have multiple constituents, governors and funders, dare I say bosses to serve. Even an obvious statement like “students first” can get complicated as I need to think about serving future as well as current students. I report to a 35 member board, chair a 70 plus member Senate, get advice from an Indigenous Advisory Circle and serve on the board of the UWinnipeg Foundation.

I had big shoes to fill following Dr. Lloyd Axworthy, and to boot I was an atypical hire who had not spent decades working as a faculty member. I am so very grateful that I was accepted and allowed to lead.

What surprised me was how joyful a role it is. There is a saying that “the cause and the company are great”. What an honour to spend time with incredibly gifted students, faculty and staff at an institution with such a strong sense of purpose. I love the rituals, celebrations, the convocations.

Q You have had many memorable moments and days during your tenure. What are the few that really stand out for you, that you will most cherish?

A June 2, 2015 stands out for me. That was the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, and it was live-streamed in Riddell Hall. That was such a privilege to gather to share that event and the hope that came from that moment. The people in that room, students, faculty staff, the community, people of all backgrounds and ages — the shared interest in what was happening and the significance of what was to come. (Now Senator) Murray Sinclair is from Winnipeg and Winnipeg is such a special place in Canada in terms of reconciliation. It felt like we were in the right place. Our Senate approval of the student-led initiative to create a mandatory Indigenous Course Requirement for all our undergraduates happened shortly after the release of the TRC Calls to Action.

When we talk about Indigenization we can look at various places along a continuum. It begins with inclusion and then the next level is reconciliation and then the next level is decolonization. Inclusion is “please come and feel welcome here”. Reconciliation is “please come and feel welcome here” and there is a willingness to include more than one way of knowing and seeing the world. And decolonization is about processes and decision making. For example we have a strong partnership with the Manitoba Métis Federation to support Métis students, scholarship and research. What I like about our partnership is that it includes doing policy research to questions that the MMF has, so it is not us deciding what questions are relevant, it is the other way around. I see that as a decolonized relationship.

At a special meeting on June 24, 2014, The University of Winnipeg’s Board of Regents unanimously appointed Dr. Annette Trimbee as the seventh President and Vice-Chancellor. She was reappointed in 2018 for a second term.

She grew up in Transcona and graduated with a science degree from UWinnipeg in 1977. She would go on to complete a Master of Science at the University of Manitoba, and a PhD at McMaster University in aquatic ecology, and was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Alberta where she researched algae and the nutrient dynamic of lakes.

Previously, Dr. Trimbee served as Deputy Minister of several departments in the Alberta government, including Finance and Treasury Board, and Advanced Education and Technology. Dr. Trimbee currently serves on the board of Universities Canada, the voice of Canadian universities at home and abroad, and is the board of directors’ Chair for USports, which oversees sports at 56 Canadian universities, as well as for the Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN), which is a partnership of Canadian universities dedicated to expanding digital content for the academic research and teaching enterprise in Canada. In August 2020, Dr. Trimbee will become the new President and Vice-Chancellor at Edmonton’s MacEwan University.



The Board of Regents approval of our strategic directions meant a lot to me because it revealed the next steps for the University going forward. We built on Lloyd Axworthy’s legacy, and the Board, faculty, and staff embraced it wholeheartedly. It’s not just a document sitting on a shelf. I think most faculty could actually name our five strategic directions. So it has relevance.

The opening of Leatherdale Hall and Tony’s Canteen is a wonderful new attachment to an old building (Wesley Hall), fully paid for by generous donors and philanthropic support. I walk through there daily and I see how much students use that space and interact with one another. The Collegiate is an important part of UWinnipeg’s community. My favourite lunch at Tony’s Canteen is soup!

Merchant’s Corner, UWinnipeg’s satellite campus located on Selkirk Avenue, is an impossible idea that got done because of the incredible tenacity of champions within the community and UWinnipeg. I arrived at the right time to see that project come to fruition, which adds so many opportunities for students and youth in the North End.

I am very proud of our strong collaborations with other post-secondaries, industry, and the Manitoba Business Council, which has resulted in innovative ways of thinking about how to best meet the needs of students and employers, and the role we play in the future of our province. We are also really engaged in what we call knowledge mobilization, moving the expertise of our researchers out into the community for the benefit of all (*details on pages 12 and 13*).

I love university sports and our Wesmen athletes, I think they embody student excellence. The Duckworth Challenge is delightful because it has a long history, and I was pleased that during my time we beat

the University of Manitoba on more than one occasion... a little crosstown competition is a good thing!

Every Convocation is so special, as are Convocation dinners, and our Spring Feast and graduation Pow Wow honouring the hard work of our students and faculty. I was especially happy to be here for UWinnipeg’s 50th anniversary (in 2017), and the spectacular dinner in Convocation Hall where we had such a warm and intimate evening. And then we had the “Party Like it is 1967,” and that was so much fun dancing with (alumnus) Rocky Rolletti performing.

My favourite place on campus is Convocation Hall because it has a certain energy that I feel when I walk into that space. It is grand. I bumped into (actor) Christopher Walken filming a movie in Convocation Hall. It looks so colonial and yet the room was full of people from diverse backgrounds, all from Winnipeg. It struck me in that moment that I am leading a university that started as a colonial institution but is also in a city with a lot of diversity. In Convocation Hall, memories seem to ooze from the walls.

Q When you returned to Manitoba in 2014 you spoke about wanting to explore your own Métis roots and history. What has that journey been like for you?

A Very rewarding. My first year back, I attended parts of an evening course on Métis history and culture taught by Sharon Parenteau and elder Myra Laramee on campus and like for many other students in the class, it was an awakening. It helped me understand my father’s choice to downplay, even deny his Métis heritage. I am now an official member of the Manitoba Métis Federation and a proud Métis citizen. I was pretty thrilled when I found

Image 01.

Dancing at the “Party like it is 1967” to commemorate UW’s 50th anniversary, 2017 (photo credit: Ruth Bonneville, Winnipeg Free Press)



01.

an academic paper on the Métis community Pointe a Grouette, which eventually became St. Agathe. It includes very detailed information on my memere’s family, apparently her grandfather was the mover and shaker in the town that started a school. But that’s all history. What is most rewarding for me is seeing growing numbers of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students enrol and succeed at UWinnipeg and our policy research partnership with the Manitoba Métis Federation.

Q What impact do you think it has for our broader community to see First Nations and Métis women in leadership positions?

A Hugely important, we have a long way to go. I still suffer some days from imposter syndrome, in particular when the people I am with start talking about their parents’ and grandparents’ academic pedigrees and appointments. I care as much about how I get things done as what I get done. I think that is true of many leaders, in particular women and in particular First Nations and Métis women.

Q How would you describe UWinnipeg as it is today, and the impact our faculty, staff, students and alumni have in our province and beyond?

A I would say UWinnipeg is relevant and will play an incredibly significant role in Manitoba’s recovery, what some are calling a reset or a reboot, from COVID-19.

UWinnipeg has been graduating leaders for more than 50 years. Our alumni are everywhere in this city — prominent writers and storytellers, researchers, educators, artists, accountants, athletic therapists, doctors, politicians, business owners, public servants. And in other Canadian cities too. I sometimes start public speaking engagements by asking people in the audience if they or members of their family had attended UWinnipeg and a whole lot of hands usually go up.

Our graduates have learned how to learn, are resilient, and they get jobs. Our graduates successfully compete for entry into medical and other professional and graduate programs. Our graduates are innovators that are changing

the future. I often get asked by employers if our students will be ready for the future of work. I like to turn that around and say where do you think these disruptions — whether in technology or ways of thinking, come from? Will you be ready for our graduates?

Our faculty are talented educators and researchers who also serve the public good in ways that often go unrecognized. The research enterprise has grown significantly over the last five years and we now have eight Canada Research Chairs. Our contributions to city building, environmental and social issues are well known. What is lesser known and needs to be celebrated are the very significant contributions to fundamental science and emerging fields such as precision agriculture.

Our faculty and support staff are top notch, dedicated and very agile as demonstrated by recent events and their willingness to do what just weeks ago was unimaginable, and finish the winter term using alternate delivery methods.

UWinnipeg has changed a lot since my time here as an undergraduate — more students, faculties and buildings but what is constant is that UWinnipeg offers a life-changing experience, an experience based on relationships.

Q Is there anything else you would like to reflect upon relating to your time at The University of Winnipeg?

A I am blown away by how accepting the UWinnipeg community has been and the many remarkable people I have gotten to know. I want to specifically acknowledge the sage advice I have gotten from our fantastic Chancellor Bob Silver, and thank the Board of Regents Chairs I have worked with — Eric Johnstone, Albina Morin, and Rohith Mascarenha. And I must single out John Bulman, who is in his 90s and still coming to our Convocations, full of joy and positivity.

The senior executive team has been incredible, as are my staff, and that is true of all the faculty and staff who are so dedicated to our students. I feel very good about the capacity of the UWinnipeg community.

Image 01.
Marching with UWinnipeg in the Winnipeg Pride Parade, 2018

Image 02.
Kevin and Annette Trimbee, 2017



02.

Annette Trimbee has a strong partner in her corner. Her husband, Kevin, who put his career as a flight paramedic on hold in 2014 to come to Manitoba, is a visible and active participant in campus life. Dr. John Bulman is Chancellor Emeritus, and the recently retired secretary of the Foundation, with more than 50 years of dedicated service to UWinnipeg.

“Kevin is a real caretaker, a very helpful person,” said Bulman. “His support of Annette is very important. She was under a lot of pressure and he is very encouraging and that helps her do her job. Kevin has been a real part of the University, we will miss him very much. My wife Laureen and I have so enjoyed our association with both Kevin and Annette.”



REFLECTIONS

“One time I was waiting to write an exam so I went to the RecPlex to pace for a few minutes. Dr. Trimbee saw me and asked if I was okay and then she reassured me by saying you have worked really hard, you will be just fine. It is that personal touch, her taking the time to make that personal connection that I was very fortunate to experience. That is the kind of leadership I would like to portray as I move forward in my career.”

Evan Podaima

*Graduate, Faculty of Business and Economics (2017),
currently studying law at the University of Manitoba*

“Annette is one of the most intelligent and capable leaders I have ever worked with. The thing that separates her is the quality of thought and dedication she applies to her work and her expectation that others do the same. Whether preparing for a meeting, developing a report for the province or our governance bodies, preparing for convocation or responding to a student email, the question isn’t if it’s good enough; the question is if it’s ready. Annette inspires all of us to be better and to work harder. She has changed the culture at UWinnipeg for the better and has shown us what leadership excellence looks like, both in pursuit of our academic mission and in providing service to all the people who make up our beautiful, inclusive, and diverse community.”

Chris Minaker

*Senior Executive Officer, External Engagement,
The University of Winnipeg*

Image 01.
Shaking hands with Mayor Brian Bowman
at launch of Duckworth Classic, 2019



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