

President's Monthly Report October 2011

The President's Objectives for 2011-12

The President's Objectives for 2011-2012 are to:

- PROVIDE LEADERSHIP TO TRENT UNIVERSITY IN ALL MATTERS INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL
- FOCUS ON ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
- ENSURE SUCCESS OF TRENT UNIVERSITY OSHAWA
- OVERSEE IMPLEMENTATION OF TRENT UNIVERSITY'S INTEGRATED PLAN
- ENSURE EFFECTIVE UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS
- IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE TARGETS AND METHODS TO IMPROVE UNIVERSITY PERFORMANCE

The President's Objectives for 2011-2012 were approved by the Board of Governors at the October 14, 2011 meeting. Detailed objectives, tasks, goals, timelines and measures for success were earlier considered by the Board Executive Committee and will be used in monitoring progress throughout the year. I am strongly committed to a collaborative leadership model, to engagement and participation, to ensure the best ideas and insights are available to support attainment of these Objectives and Trent University's success in the coming year.

AUCC and COU Activities

A number of major issues were discussed by COU Executive Heads at the October 13, 2011 meeting with perhaps the most time-sensitive being the advocacy and information sharing useful in preparing universities for the outcome of the October 6 provincial election. Generally, Ontario universities are supportive of a strong quality assurance framework, for example, which defines and measures quality in ways that are appropriate to understand learning outcomes and enhanced teaching strategies. And an early interpretation of the provincial priorities of next few years focused on the development of:

- Individual university *Strategic Mandate Agreements* (in which each institution focuses on what it does best and is appropriately funded to accomplish that mandate)
- The resumption of tuition framework/student aid discussions (including professional/graduate/and undergraduate programs and distribution of funding), and
- A strong emphasis on communications – getting the message out about Ontario university success and impacts in the communities we serve and in our outstanding student learning results.

The province will continue to explore 'bending the cost curve' for postsecondary institutions (typically expressed as per student costs), and new capital projects that might be introduced.

Some of the recent COU discussions appear to suggest the province is interested in 'system design' which could include additional satellite campuses, perhaps even 'undergraduate university campuses', in high demand areas suggested by student demographics. System design discussions could include the notion of still stronger university/college partnerships and a new vision for the overall goals of postsecondary education in Ontario to include undergraduate, teaching-only universities. A soon-to-be-

launched new book by the authors of last year's *Academic Transformation: The Forces Reshaping Higher Education in Ontario* (Ian Clark et al), and a recent editorial in the *Globe and Mail*, will no doubt raise the profile of this discussion (see <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/opinions/editorials/canadian-universities-must-reform-or-perish/article2195025/>).

At Trent University, our Vision confirms our commitment to link research and teaching rather than promote a separation of teaching from research activities... "We encourage the dynamic interplay of research, teaching and learning, which enhance and energize each other in the classroom and beyond." By connecting research to learning, students acquire the critical skills to meet the challenges of a fast-changing world.

This theme was also prominent during the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) two-day annual meeting in Montreal in October. A new Statement on Academic Freedom was released, which I will bring to the attention of the Trent University community through the Senate and the Board. The incoming Chair of AUCC, Stephen Toope, President of UBC, highlighted the following five Commitments as part of AUCC's New Narrative on Postsecondary Education:

- To broaden the view of education, and to invite and lead a cross-Canada conversation about the entire education system;
- To innovate in learning and enhance university students' learning experience to ensure it is research-enriched and globally engaged;
- To ensure that every student is fully equipped to play a role in a larger world and new kind of Canada;
- To concentrate the world's best minds on the world's toughest problems, with a commitment to continued growth of graduate students and robust research; and
- To cultivate engagement and reach beyond institutions to create alliances, partnerships and initiatives of shared purpose.

These Five Commitments were developed by Canada's university presidents over the past year through conversations with Canadians across the country. I am pleased to note that Trent's Vision, Mission, Strategic Directions, and the Integrated Plan, are clearly consistent with these national priorities.

Major Consultative and Administrative Activities

Capital Project Planning

In response to the Ministry's request for each university to submit Ten Year Capital Plans last year, Trent recommended an expansion of the Library in the form of a new Academic Learning and Student Success Centre, a new Environmental Science building, and additional development of Trent University Oshawa Thornton Road Campus based on new programming and student demand. Now is a good time to consider these project ideas in light of Trent's First Integrated Plan and the developing Academic Plan. This fall a process will be developed and consultations scheduled through Trent's new *Space Utilization and Construction Management Committee*, to be co-chaired by the Provost and Vice-President Academic and the Vice-President Administration.

Head of the Trent and Homecoming 2011

Thousands of alumni and their families returned to Trent University for the 41st Annual Head of the Trent and Alumni Homecoming on Friday, September 30 to Sunday, October 2. The Head of the Trent is North America's largest single-day head race regatta, and this year saw athletes from all over Ontario, Quebec and the North-Eastern United States representing more than 50 universities and clubs, take part. The Homecoming Festival was located in the Ceilie and Champlain College Riverside beside the Great Hall. Artist, activist and alumnus Spencer J. Harrison opened an art show and sale at Alumni House and also was a speaker in the new series to honour Tony Storey entitled *Ideas That Change the World*. Other panelists included John Wadland, Trent professor emeritus, who spoke about his experience at Trent and the importance of Canadian Studies, Nigel Roulet, a Trent alumnus and now professor at McGill who has made significant contributions in the science of climate change modeling, and Emily Morrison, incoming President of the Trent Student Business Association, who presented an interesting perspective of her business plan experiences which led to the People's Choice Award at an Innovation Conference in Toronto last spring. The Ideas session was followed by a reception and dedication of the Tony Storey courtyard at Alumni House.

The Annual General Meeting of the Alumni Association saw the election of Bob Taylor-Vaisey, a Trent alumnus who later studied at Cambridge and the University of Toronto, where he obtained his PhD in mediaeval law. Bob held the role of Assistant Archivist at U of T, and then joined Imperial Oil in 1980, retiring from Imperial Oil's Law Department last year. Bob previously served on the Trent University Alumni Council, is a key contributor to Council's 50th Anniversary Alumni Planning group, and will also now serve on the Trent University 50th Anniversary Steering Committee.

Dreamcatcher Event in Ottawa

Trent Chancellor Tom Jackson held a Dreamcatcher Event at the Trent University Alumni Association Chapter Meeting in Ottawa where he participated in a Panel Discussion on Social Responsibility, with Trent Alumni Karin Galldin, Jamie Benedickson, and Harvey McCue (also a member of Trent's Board of Governors). This outstanding conversation was followed by a Tom Jackson musical performance. The next Dreamcatcher Event is being planned at Trent to coincide with the Elder's Gathering, February 10-12, 2012.

New Associate Vice-President Physical Resources Department

The search for Trent's new Associate Vice-President Physical Resources concluded successfully and Mr. Seng Kho, P. Eng. joined Trent University on October 31st. Seng previously served as the Development Manager and Senior Project Manager at the University of Toronto, where he was responsible for managing various construction and infrastructure projects. I know all of the Trent University community will join me in expressing a warm welcome to Seng.

International Travel to Guyana

Dr Neil Emery, Vice-President Research and International, and I were fortunate to be invited by the President of Guyana to a ceremony at State House, in Georgetown, in which Trent University's Dr. Suresh Narine was recognized for his outstanding contributions to the science, technology and development of Guyana. Prof. Narine is the Director of the Trent Centre for Biomaterials Research, a professor in the Departments of Physics and Astronomy and Chemistry, and the Ontario Research Chair in Green Chemistry and Engineering. Suresh also directs activities of the Guyana Institute for Applied

Science and Technology (IAST), and we together took the opportunity to explore an even stronger future collaboration between IAST and Trent. These events were highlighted in a number of news releases and during the InFocus TV program broadcast in Guyana; however, the highlight of the visit for me was the afternoon flight into the Guyanese interior with the Guyana Minister of Aboriginal Affairs to visit Mainstay Lake, an indigenous community providing outstanding leadership in this 'six-founding-races country'. An interesting discussion occurred with elders in that community – who were aware of Trent's long-standing interests in this area and the development of Trent's Department of Indigenous Studies. Such an interesting experience – so far from home, yet so connected to the Trent ethos!

Internal and External Relations (October 1-31, 2011)

Internal Meetings

Trent University staff and faculty meetings (12)
Trent University students and student groups (8)
Trent University Board members, and committees/subcommittee meetings (6)
Trent University senior administrators (12)

External Meetings

Community leaders and community groups in Peterborough/Oshawa (3)
Other Organizations (19)

Events (8)

List of Books Recently Received in the President's Office

CHRISTENSEN, Clayton M. and EYRING, Henry J., 2011. The Innovative University: Changing the DNA of Higher Education From The Inside. Jossey-Bass An Imprint of Wiley.
FALLIS, Terry, 2007. The Best Laid Plans. iUniverse, Inc.
FALLIS, Terry, 2010. The High Road. McClelland & Stewart Ltd.
FULLEN, Michael and SCOTT, Geoff, 2009. Turnaround Leadership of Higher Education. Jossey-Bass An Imprint of Wiley.
GINSBERG, Benjamin, 2011. The Fall of the Faculty: The Rise of the All Administrative and Why It Matters. Oxford University Press Inc.
HEINTZMAN, Ralph, 2011. Tom Symons: A Canadian Life. University of Ottawa Press.
MacTAGGART, Terrance, 2007. Academic Turnarounds: Restoring Vitality to Challenged American Colleges/Universities (ACE Series on Higher Education). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
PAUL, Ross H., 2011. Leadership Under Fire: The Challenging Role of the Canadian University President. McGill-Queen's University Press.

The President's Monthly Report is available on the *Office of the President's Website* at http://www.trentu.ca/administration/presidentsoffice_reports.php. Questions or comments are welcome (sfranklin@trentu.ca).