In light of declining public investment in post-secondary education across the country and a number of significant budget pressures, the University of Saskatchewan is looking to address a gap between revenue and expenditures that could reach $20-40 million per year by the end of the current planning cycle in 2016.

At a town hall meeting held April 3 in Convocation Hall, Provost and Vice-President Academic Brett Fairbairn and Vice-President of Finance and Resources Richard Florizone outlined the university’s financial position, which became clearer with the announcement in the provincial budget of a 2.1 per cent increase in the U of S operating grant for 2012-13. Florizone pointed out the university had requested a 5.8 per cent increase. It also asked for $24.6 million for targeted initiatives like program expansions, but received $18.2 million.

One of the initiatives that did not receive funding was the Health Sciences building. That means the university must cover the estimated $3-million expense in its 2012-13 budget.

In addition, the university is facing a change in how the provincial government is financing capital projects like Health Sciences, explained Florizone. Instead of providing cash, the province has asked the university to secure debt to cover the cost, but has committed to pay principle and interest in 2012-13. While debt “is a legitimate tool to finance projects,” Florizone pointed out it does affect the university’s overall debt capacity. “You lose a little bit of flexibility, and if future opportunities come along, you might not have access to that debt capacity.”

Fairbairn then explained how the provincial funding affects projections laid out in the multi-year budget framework that was approved along with the third integrated plan, which is entitled Promise and Potential. He pointed out the framework is a planning tool “that shows potential outcomes, and not our desired outcomes or intentions. It’s about estimates and pressures, and not about exact numbers.”

With the provincial grant, capital and initiative funding numbers plugged into the framework, there is a projected deficit of $12-15 million in 2012-13, and shortfall between expenses and revenue over the four-year planning cycle of $20-40 million per year by 2016 if no action is taken.

Detailing the specific financial pressures facing the university, Fairbairn said the lower than expected provincial grant reflects “a new environment for public funding of post-secondary education” where two per cent increases are the rule rather than the exception. He cited examples from the across the country of provinces rein in spending on universities and even reducing grants. The reduction in provincial funding contributes to what Fairbairn termed “a potential mismatch and emerging... See U of S, Page 2

For the complete town hall presentation and other information about the university’s financial position, visit usask.ca/finances

Send ideas and suggestions to finances@usask.ca

… spending on people, on our people and facilities are strategic choices that we make.

These aren’t just things that happen to us.

Brett Fairbairn

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From Page 1

"mismatch" between revenues and the university’s single largest operating expense—salaries and benefits. Those costs, he said, are expected to rise by more than four per cent in each year of the four-year planning cycle. That, combined with having to absorb operating costs for capital projects like Health Sciences, puts additional strain on the U of S budget.

“But spending on people, on our people and facilities, are strategic choices that we make. These aren’t just things that happen to us. These are things that we have chosen to pursue because they’re important to our plans and goals.”

Another budget challenge relates to pensions. Fairbairn explained the university is required to ensure its pension plans remain solvent. To do that, it could be facing, “in the best case scenario,” annual payments into the plans of $10 million per year for 10 years, and in the worst case, as much as $30 million annually over the next 10 years. This situation, he pointed out, is not a strategic choice but a legal obligation.

The final point Fairbairn made about budget pressures related to deferred maintenance, “the wear and tear on our facilities.” The U of S has spent less than its peer institutions on infrastructure maintenance and renewal, he said, but strategic investment in key capital projects is necessary to attract students, faculty and researchers.

Having outlined the financial situation and pressures, Fairbairn said work will begin on developing an action plan to address the projected shortfall.

“We know that we need to narrow the gap between our revenue and expenditures while still supporting the priorities that we’ve identified as a university. We need to recognize we have limited scope to increase revenue and therefore will need to make budget adjustments of some kind in order to lower the expenditures we make as a university.”

The institution has dealt with similar situations in the past and while those experiences are helpful to recall, “I also want to signal that we won’t necessarily do exactly the same thing next time. It’s clear in the context of what we know about the coming four years that focusing on our priorities more than ever is going to mean making choices.” He said there will be an active effort to encourage faculty, staff and students to contribute ideas, suggestions and creative solutions for ensuring the long-term sustainability of the university budget.

“We’re working on the best way to address the financial challenges the university faces and that best way is going to involve a collective effort and determination from all members of our university community.”

Fairbairn said information about the university’s financial position, including a video of the complete town hall presentation, is available online at www.usask.ca/finances. That site will be updated regularly as the budget adjustment plan takes shape. Ideas and suggestions can be submitted to finances@usask.ca.

Financial question and answer

The question and answer period following the financial town hall raised a number of issues and ideas.

Ajay Dalai, professor in chemical engineering, wondered where the university might focus its adjustment efforts in the 2012-13 budget.

Fairbairn responded that senior administrators will talk to the Board of Governors about strategies not for just 2012-13 but for the entire four years to achieve long-term sustainability in the university budget. “I’m really open at this point to all sorts of ideas and suggestions.”

A student asked if tuition will be affected, to which Fairbairn referenced the board policy that considers comparability, affordability and quality in setting tuition, but “I don’t think we are in a position to say that there will be no impact on students, there will of course be changes of some kind, but at this point we don’t know what those will be.”

Dave Hannah, associate vice-president, student affairs, asked about the timing of adjustments for 2012-13. Fairbairn said that a few weeks are needed to put a plan together before acting.

Margret Asmuss, sustainability co-ordinator, suggested that optimizing energy and water efficiency may contribute to a long-term solution reduction in operating expenses. She also suggested giving employees the option of a shorter work week with reduced income but unchanged pension contributions.

Vice-President Finance and Resources Richard Florizone acknowledged that there is certainly more the U of S could do in the area of sustainability.

Peter Stoicheff, dean of arts and science, asked if the gap between the funding request and the province’s response sends an implicit message to the U of S and the post-secondary education sector in the province.

“Obviously finances are tight in the public sector,” said Fairbairn. “They are tighter in some places than others, but all governments are making adjustments (and) many governments are still prioritizing higher education relatively highly among their priorities.”

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Rhonda Neufeld and Rodney Konopaki: New Work

Reception: Saturday, April 21st, 2-4pm
Exhibition runs April 21st - May 10th, 2012

The Gallery / art placement is pleased to present this exhibition of collaborative pieces by Rhonda Neufeld and Rodney Konopaki. The collaborative process begins with the two artists walking together, sharing a single drawing board and simultaneously recording images that are a synthesis of gesture and blind contour drawing. The drawings are then either left as is or translated to prints. Rodney Konopaki has stated, “Our idea about collaboration is that when we sit down together a new creator for the work will emerge, and we think that the emergent work will not look like what either of us does in our own studios but that it will belong to the new artist who appears in the creative, collaborative process.”

Images are online at: www.artplacement.com

The Gallery / art placement inc.
228 – 3rd avenue s. saskatoon, sk., S7K 1L9 664.3385
gallery@artplacement.com
www.artplacement.com
Pursuing their own interests
Students support initiatives through learning communities

Colleen MacPherson

The opportunity to engage with their peers and at the same time support the priorities of their university is proving to be very popular with U of S undergraduates.

DeLathouwer, learning community co-ordinator in the University Learning Centre, said the idea behind interest-based groups was to augment the course-based communities to pursue a particular passion, and they have come up with some interesting initiatives as a result. According to Erin DeLathouwer, the extra-curricular interest-based communities are a powerful draw for students passionate about creating something, and leaving something behind.

DeLathouwer said the learning community model introduced for first-year students in term one of the academic year. “We wanted to highlight different awareness of study abroad opportunities.” explained DeLathouwer, while those in the Road Trip Nation community focus on career and work experience, “asking the kinds of questions you want to think about leading up to graduation.” An interesting twist to the global experience group is that it has drawn students who are studying abroad right here at the U of S, she said, adding a distinct international flavour.

Broad guidelines are provided to each interest-based community, “but we’ve seen them evolve depending on the students’ interests. That’s what binds them together. And they’ve formed very deep friendships, much deeper than I ever remember from university.”

Although the communities wrap up at the end of the year and the term, DeLathouwer said many students are interested in carrying on next year, particularly those involved in the research journal proposal. “They’re keen to stay connected and see this through. The incentive for all the communities is learning about leadership, but it also has a lot to do with connecting with other students from across campus, and having the opportunity to engage in an educationally enriching experience.”

New options to pay for parking and for tickets

Parking and Transportation Services has reinstated a pay-by-phone service to make it easier for people to pay for their time at parking meters on campus.

Judy Wall, manager of the unit, said finding a new vendor has allowed the university to again offer the option of paying for parking by cellphone. When users register for the service by calling the number on parking meters, they provide their license plate number, which enforcement officers verify to ensure payment has been made.

There is also a new online payment option to pay for parking tickets. Wall said the service was made available in October 2011 and by March, about 35 per cent of all tickets were being paid online. The online payment option can be viewed on the Consumer Services’ parking website under violations.

And for those with tickets to pay: Wall said the university will no longer accept personal cheques starting May 1. This change is due to the high cost of non-sufficient fund (NSF) cheques, she said, but other payment options include the new online payment process and cash, debit or credit card payment at the Parking Services office. Money orders can be mailed in the ticket envelope but Wall warned against mailing cash. “It is legal tender but it’s not recommended because cash is not traceable if something goes wrong.”

She noted a 20 per cent increase in the number of tickets written on campus in the last year and suspects people are choosing not to pay for meters. Rather, they are risking a $50 ticket with an early payment option. To discourage this practice, Wall said the early payment option for meter and pay by space violations will be raised to $15 from $10 later in April.

Information about all of these changes, including instructions for registering for pay-by-phone service, downloading pay-by-phone apps and online violation payment can be found on the parking website: www.usask.ca/consumer_services/parking/.

The above pledge can be found on the second page of the “University of Saskatchewan Graduates in Community Record Book”. Convocation is the basic governance body of the university and is made up of its graduates. It is through this body that the chancellor and Senate are elected. Representatives of the Senate serve on the Board of Governors, which in turn appoints a president. Each graduate was required to sign the book, binding them to the behaviour stipulated in the pledge. The book remained in use until 1942. Mary Oliver is the book’s first signature in 1912. Father A.G. Morice is the lone entry for 1942.
Taking issue with name changes

(Editor’s note: this letter is in response to the story in the March 30 issue about the name changes for the university’s course and program catalogue, and the academic calendar)

Letter

Yeah, because it has been called the university calendar for, oh, how many decades, we must now change it because people are suddenly so brain dead they can’t figure out what it is. After all it is only the dates and times of where you are going to be when, doing what.

That is probably also why when you want to register at the university, you no longer look for the registrar’s office. You look for SESD. Because the nomenclature of that alphabetical blob makes so much more sense.

Beth Matheson
University Library

Reflecting on strengths, questions at GAA

In his final address as president to the General Academic Assembly, Peter MacKinnon chose to highlight three strengths in the Canadian post-secondary sector as well as three big questions institutions in that sector face, and how the University of Saskatchewan fits into each.

Speaking in Convocation Hall April 9, MacKinnon said he chose to stay away from a typical “last” address featuring “recitations of progress real or imagined, self-justifications and perhaps a few ruminations on what or might have been.” Those perspectives, he said, would be contained in a book he plans to write after he leaves office June 30.

Instead, he chose to discuss a growing reliance on evidence-based decision making, strong governance and a convergence of social, political and institutional ambitions as strengths of universities, including the U of S.

While not always complete or irrefutable, MacKinnon said the information available to university about activities, effectiveness, reputation and even administrative efficiency is much broader than ever before and “it has to be faced, considered and taken into account.” Such evidence improves decision making, he said, and at the U of S, “through our planning processes … we are better able to build on strengths and address weaknesses.”

Governance, he continues is a second strength among universities. “These are big, complicated, important institutions … (that) need to conduct their affairs and spend their money in ways that are internally coherent and externally acceptable and compelling.” In his first 20 years at the U of S, MacKinnon said he viewed its governance as weak, a situation turned around with a number of examples of this new governance was “our success in the years to come will require openness and adaptability to organizational and behavioural change.”

Turning to his three big questions, the president first queried the impact of technology on the university’s activities, wondering if technology is being fitted into traditional ways of doing things “or are we using technology to challenge traditional ways and perhaps develop new ones?” He admitted he does not have the answer but suggested much more attention should be paid to this question.

Who pays was MacKinnon’s second question, referring to the balance between public and private support for post-secondary education. With the benefits of university education going to both society and individuals, “there is no simple or lasting answer. What we can hope for and expect is that (the question) will be answered thoughtfully in a manner that respects the prerogatives of both governments and universities.”

His final question asked if universities will lead in finding solutions to the pressing issues of the day, “and if not universities then who, or what?” A growing world population, food security, water safety were among the social-political and environmental stresses “our space ship Earth is under … stresses that can be expected to increase.” Here, the University of Saskatchewan is well positioned to be a leader, MacKinnon said.

Pointing to the university’s proud history in the development of Saskatchewan’s agriculture industry, MacKinnon said taking on the pressing issues has been the institution’s approach since it was founded.

“Whether it is agriculture or health care, our university comes naturally to its civic responsibility to be engaged in addressing the great challenges of our era. It is in our university’s DNA.”

MacKinnon concluded his address by saying his views on the growing strengths of post-secondary institutions and the big questions those institutions must consider are informed by his 13 years in the office of president. He added he is grateful to have served in that capacity, “and how grateful I am for the guidance, advice and support I have received from so many in this great hall today.”

The schedule for 2012-13 will be printed in the next issue of On Campus News.

The Universe Before the Big Bang

On Campus News is published 18 times per year by University of Saskatchewan Communications. It is distributed to all U of S faculty, staff, graduate students and members of governing bodies, as well as to others in the university community, related organizations, some Saskatchewan government officials and news media. Subscriptions are available for $22 per year. Story and photo ideas are welcome. Advertising rates are available online or on request. On Campus News aims to provide a forum for the sharing of timely news, information and opinions about events and issues of interest to the University of Saskatchewan community.

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April 13, 2012

MacKinnon
What started with the question of why skilled immigrants are less prepared for life in Canada than those who came 10 years ago turned into a very fruitful research trip to India for Scott Walsworth and Kara Somerville, and a family experience that won’t soon be forgotten.

Study after study has shown that immigrants arriving in Canada with academic credentials are doing worse compared to earlier immigrants in terms of income and levels of satisfaction, explained Walsworth, assistant professor and Hanlon Scholar in International Business in the Edwards School of Business. “We’ve all seen the cab driver with a PhD. They come here with the expectation of earning a lot of money, expecting the streets are paved with gold and they end up driving a damn cab, cleaning rooms, bussing tables.”

Skilled immigrants are often the first in their family to come to Canada, and they come alone, said Walsworth. “They’re incredibly brave” but they appear not to be communicating the realities of life, including the challenge of finding employment in their chosen field, with friends and family in their home country.

In an effort to get to the heart of why they appear so unprepared, Walsworth and his colleague and wife Somerville, an assistant professor of sociology and associate member in the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, devised a study to survey university students in India. The Policy, devised a study to survey university students in India. The survey explored what they know and what they expect finding a job will entail. By the end of the trip three months later, they had stopped at more than 15 campuses in Trivandrum, Bangalore, Margao, Mumbai and Delhi, and had mastered the art of conducting their survey.

The first hurdle was getting onto Indian campuses, said Walsworth, but identifying themselves as professors from Canada opened many doors. “Then it was a matter of ‘hanging out in front of buildings and approaching students’ but that didn’t prove to be too successful.”

“At first I’d go alone but I guess I’m not that approachable. Then we tried all of us going together. Essentially we used the kids as bait,” he said, “because blond-haired, blue-eye children hold something of a fascination in India. They really broke down borders and gave us a chance to say a few lines.”

The combination of children and white university professors was almost irresistible, and Walsworth and Somerville found themselves warmly welcomed. They specifically targeted schools where the students’ degrees made them relatively mobile – agriculture, business, engineering and social sciences.

“We’ve all seen the cab driver with a PhD. They come here with the expectation of earning a lot of money, and they end up driving a damn cab.”

Scott Walsworth

Research travel with kids

Scott Walsworth has some advice for researchers considering travelling with their children: “Just do it. It seems scary but once you get out there, it’s a wonderful experience.”

Even though Walsworth and Kara Somerville, who took their four young sons to India with them, are experienced travellers in the developing world, “there were parts of every day that were difficult – finding food for the kids, or a green space where they could run and play.” And it was certainly no holiday when all four children were sick early in the trip.

Their philosophy, explained Walsworth, “was to put the kids in positions where they would ask questions.” That meant visiting non-governmental organizations and slums “where the kids saw people who were happy, who were having relationships with each other but were certainly poorer by our standards. The message for the kids was that money and happiness are separate.”

Kara Somerville speaks with Indian university students while her children patiently amuse themselves (lower right).
Recognizing excellence

For the 20th year in a row, the U of S Students’ Union has recognized the enthusiasm, commitment and fairness of instructors across campus with its Teaching Excellence Awards. The awards were handed out March 25. Among those recognized for teaching excellence were:

- Karla Griffin: Art and Art History
- Wayne Dyck: Educational Psychology and Special Education
- Donald Story: Political Studies
- Barbara von Tigerstrom: Law
- George Keyworth: Religion and Culture
- Bruce Sparling: Civil and Geological Engineering
- Glorie Tebbutt: English
- Diomne Pohler: Edwards School of Business
- Lorin Elias: Psychology
- David Schreyer: Anatomy and Cell Biology

The USSU also recognized individuals for their contributions to other aspects of the student experience and campus life. Those who received the awards were:

- Academic Advising Award: Phil Thacker
- Pride Centre Doug Wilson Award: James Sambrok
- Help Centre Award: Natalya Mason
- Women’s Centre Award: Ricquelle Germain
- Doug Favell Staff Spirit Award: Richard Florizone and Mandy Elash
- Engaged Alumni Excellence Award: Bryan McCrea
- Vera Pezer Award for Student Enhancement: David Konkin, Briana Mackow, Alex Gao and Drama Club
- Walter Murray Leadership Award: Shira Fenyes

Why I give...

“Education is our future. As an alumnus I am pleased to be able to support the excellent students and programs at the U of S. Supporting the U of S gives me the opportunity to help ensure top quality post-secondary education will be accessible to Saskatchewan students.”

Kathy Burnyeat
Clerical Assistant at the U of S Bookstore

To make your gift to the Annual Fund Campaign for Students visit www.usask.ca/whyigive or call Sandra Lazar at 966-7910
Preparing for a new president

Colleen MacPherson

There are always a few things that need to be done when a new employee joins an organization, but when that new employee is moving into the president’s office, the list gets just a little bit longer.

Irene Busch-Vishniac will be taking over as U of S president July 1 but the wheels have been turning since her appointment in December to ensure her transition into the position is as smooth as possible. It has been 13 years since the university welcomed a new president and, according to University Secretary Lea Pennock, some aspects of the process are quite different these days.

“Searches for presidents have really changed a lot,” said Pennock, who, in her role as secretary, provides support to the Board of Governors. “Search consultants have a much broader reach to bring in potential candidates, and there is a communications component now to keep people updated on progress. My sense is that there’s a lot more structure around searches.”

As soon as Peter MacKinnon announced his intention to step down, Pennock began collecting information about presidential transition. At the Canadian University Boards Association (CUBA) conference, hosted by the U of S last April, Pennock spent time gathering “tips and wisdom” from colleagues with recent experience managing the transition. “They helped me think about not only supporting the outgoing president but also about everything involved in the transition – the installation, the contract, dinners, celebrations, the briefing book, even housing. I even have a colleague who did her dissertation on presidential searches so I had her send me some material. You think it’s the end of something when it’s actually the beginning of something.”

Once the appointment was made, Pennock worked with Busch-Vishniac’s current employer – McMaster University – to co-ordinate the announcement. “Then I started thinking about what a new president needs to learn quickly about the institution and who she needs to meet with.” While Busch-Vishniac was in Saskatoon for the appointment announcement, Pennock organized meetings for her with those who report directly to the president. Meetings with other officials, including college deans, have been scheduled for Busch-Vishniac’s subsequent visits to campus.

In addition to the formal meetings, the incoming president has used her time in Saskatoon to find temporary housing. Pennock explained Busch-Vishniac and her husband Ethan Vishniac will be moving to Saskatoon in mid-May to give themselves time to settle in before her term begins. They will move into the President’s Residence at the end of the summer to allow time for some renovations to be done. (OCN will have a story in the April 27 issue about renovation plans for the residence.)

The president designate has also been back to Saskatoon to attend some special events, including the College of Law’s annual Sorokin lecture and meetings with members of the Aboriginal community. Busch-Vishniac was back again just two weeks ago for the Huskie Athletics anniversary celebrations and to give a lecture in the College of Engineering where she is seeking an academic appointment. Ethan Vishniac is also seeking an academic appointment, in the Department of Physics and Engineering Physics.

One important piece in the transition is the briefing book, a presidential version of the orientation material provided to new board members. Pennock said the book contains a wealth of information about university history, its governance structure, finances, land holdings, staff complement, centre and institutes, its government relations, strategic plans and even a list of acronyms and initialisms. “It’s a broad base of knowledge you need to understand the university,” she said.

Also on Pennock’s to-do list is organizing Busch-Vishniac’s installation ceremony, which will take place Oct. 27 in conjunction with fall convocation. The first order of business was a new presidential gown updated to match the university’s PhD robes but with silver braid (the chancellor’s robe has gold braid). Busch-Vishniac has already been to the Toronto robe maker for her first fitting.

The pomp and ceremony of the installation also involves organizing a large dinner the evening before, selecting the music and sending invitations to university presidents across the country who often attend each others’ installations. “We’re expecting a larger than usual platform party,” said Pennock. “Through many conversations, I think it’s the end of something when it’s actually the beginning of something.”

Lea Pennock

Secretary Lea Pennock, some aspects of the process are quite different these days.

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RVS vaccine in the works

Researchers at the U of S are closing in on a needle-free vaccine for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), a major cause of respiratory illness in children under two years of age.

Sylvia van den Hurk and her team have developed a vaccine candidate that shows promise against RSV, “one of the most important respiratory infections in young babies,” said van den Hurk in a U of S news release. In developing countries and northern Canada, babies die from RSV, said van den Hurk, a professor of microbiology and immunology and a research fellow at VIDO-InterVac. The project recently received a $740,000 grant from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). The vaccine being investigated is expected to move to human clinical trials in about two years.

Mary Buhr, dean of the College of Agriculture and Bioresources, was elected chair of the Prairie Swine Centre Board of Directors at its recent annual meeting. The centre is a non-profit research corporation affiliated with the U of S that advances pork production in the areas of nutrition, engineering and applied animal behaviour.

Mary Freeman has joined the Council of Health Sciences Deans office in the position of associate director of learning services. In that role, Freeman will work with the health sciences programs and education advisory committee to provide leadership for the operation and resources for the clinical learning area.

Three professors have taken up appointments in early 2012 in the School of Environment and Sustainability. Tim Jardine, assistant professor, comes to the U of S from Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia, where he held a research fellowship with the Australian Institute. Jardine is also affiliated with the Northern Ecosystems Toxicology Initiative at the Toxocology Centre. Naveed Khaliq joins the school from Environment Canada as associate professor. An expert in statistical hydrology and stochastic processes, he is affiliated with the Global Institute for Water Security. Also a new assistant professor affiliated with the water security institute is Karl-Erich Lindenschmidt, who was formerly a hydrologic modelling research engineer with the Government of Manitoba.

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science schools—and ended up completing 500 surveys "although the students would do the survey with the understanding we could talk a bit afterward."

The survey data is not yet compiled but Walsworth and Somerville did make some initial observations. The students were fascinated by western culture, he said, "by the MuchMusic culture and the stories of wealth, but the thought they’ll come to Canada and drive a cab or clean hotel rooms is absurd.”

And while many of the students were communicating with people in Canada “there’s some weird black box around the economic information.” Immigrants are often viewed as the winners who are able to leave home for a better place and Walsworth suspects there is an element of family pride and personal shame that prevents them from sharing the realities of their situation.

Some blame can also be laid at the feet of the immigration consultant industry in India—they’re the ones feeding people with these ridiculous expectations.”

Another issue related to the economic success of immigrants could be that Indian university degrees are not well respected in Canada. Walsworth is curious as to whether the data will show that a better strategy for the students might be to earn their degree here.

Walworth expects three journal papers to come out of the research, with findings that may eventually influence policies and programs that address issues like foreign credential recognition. “In some ways, this is a very satisfying area of research, seeing others who can take that intellectual leadership and put it to use.” That said, he believes the U of S could do more to support out-of-country research that holds so much potential back home.

The India trip was difficult to organize, largely because India shares Canada’s academic calendar so the two had to be away from their teaching responsibilities to conduct their research.

“I recognize it’s a challenge for the department but there needs to be more support, more flexibility. We were privileged to be able to go and do this research but it also comes with tremendous responsibility in the form of meaningful papers in peer-review journals. It’s worth it for the university to have its faculty out there travelling. It’s the only way we’re going to truly internationalize the university.”
Medicine moving forward with accreditation action plan

With a comprehensive action plan in place and changes already being implemented, the dean of the University of Saskatchewan’s College of Medicine is confident the accreditation bodies for medical schools in Canada will be satisfied with the college’s progress toward full compliance with accreditation standards.

Dr. William Albritton said the action plan addresses 10 areas of non-compliance among the 130 accreditation standards set out by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) and the Committee on the Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools (CACMS). While the college maintains its full eight-year accreditation, the two committees require it to address the 10 areas of non-compliance that Albritton described as largely administrative. “They are all being addressed,” he said, “and they (the accreditation bodies) are coming back in March 2013 for a limited site survey to cast fresh eyes on the previously identified weaknesses.”

Included in the action plan are issues such as removing delays in reporting students’ final marks, providing consistent mid-rotation feedback for students and creating a centralized review of student performance data. Changes to administrative procedures and meetings with college faculty and staff are moving the plan forward, he said. Later this year, college administrators will travel to Regina to ensure faculty and staff in that location are also fully aware of the requirements and their responsibilities in meeting the accreditation standards.

Albritton added that although all 17 medical schools in Canada currently have full accreditation, “there’s not a single one that isn’t dealing with issues of non-compliance.”

One of the challenges in the compliance process is the heavy workload for both students and faculty. Albritton pointed to the requirement that the college increase awareness of its mistreatment policy. “We give students a lot of information at the start of the year and maybe a pile of that gets set aside. They may simply not remember that they’ve received that information.” Another area of non-compliance—sharing information about the objectives of a medical education program—requires deliberate reminders “as a way of supporting busy faculty, faculty with clinical responsibilities as well as teaching and research responsibilities.”

The dean added that it is important to understand that the LCME and CACMS surveyors who will visit the college next year will not be expecting everything in the action plan to be completed. “They’re looking to see that we’ve got a plan, that the plan will fix the problem and that changes are underway.”

In addition to following the action plan, the dean said faculty, staff and students in the college are considering a concept plan that describes structural changes including the creation of three new divisions to support increased research performance, clearer accountability for clinical instruction and streamlined service to the health regions. Developed by Albritton, Provost and Vice-President Academic Brett Fairbairn and Martin Phillipson, acting vice-provost faculty relations, the proposed structure is designed to ensure the college maintains full accreditation for the long term. ■

Review of Dean
College of Graduate Studies and Research

In accordance with the board-approved Search and Review Procedures for Senior Administrators, a committee has been established to review the performance of the Dean, College of Graduate Studies and Research, Lawrence Martz.

The review committee invites members of the university community to provide feedback on Dr. Martz’s performance as Dean, College of Graduate Studies and Research.

Submissions can be made by letter or e-mail. Respondents are encouraged to use the framework of accountabilities (expectations) and competencies (skills) from the position profile to provide their feedback, although the review committee recognizes that not everyone can comment on each area. The profile is available on PAWS in the Provost’s Office group files: Dean, Grad Studies Review or by contacting Lori Auchstaetter, secretary to the review committee.

All submissions received through this process will be considered by the review committee in raw form. Names will be removed to protect the confidentiality of the respondents when the feedback is shared with the incumbent.

Please make your confidential submission by April 20 (4 p.m.) to Lori Auchstaetter, secretary to the review committee, Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic (by e-mail: lori.auchstaetter@usask.ca, in hard copy: 208 College Building, or by fax: 966-4316).

Edna Jen Warrington is Retiring

Join Us to Appreciate & Celebrate Edna’s Friendship and Dedicated Service

Dr. Vicki Williamson, Dean of the University Library, and Heather Magotiaux, Vice-President of University Advancement, cordially invite you to a come-and-go retirement celebration in recognition of EDNA JEN WARRINGTON’S contributions to the University of Saskatchewan community.

Edna’s kindness and generosity have touched every corner of campus, and her dedicated service to students, faculty, staff, and alumni has been an inspiration to us all. From volunteering at reunions to baking holiday rum balls, Edna’s impact has been significant and her commitment has enriched the University experience for everyone.

DATE: Thursday April 26, 2012
TIME: 2:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
LOCATION: ‘The Link’ Exhibition Space in the Murray Library

In lieu of gifts and at Edna’s request, please consider supporting the newly created Edna Jen Warrington Bursary for Student Library Assistants. This bursary was created by the University Library in recognition of Edna’s outstanding support of the student experience at the University of Saskatchewan. To donate now, please visit give.usask.ca/library or call toll-free 1-800-699-1907.

Join us in saying thank you to EDNA!

“Few people have influenced the campus community as widely and positively as Edna. As a colleague, a volunteer, a donor, and a friend, she is simply remarkable.”

– President Peter MacKinnon

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Other than the College Building, there wasn’t much behind the greenhouses shown here in 1957. The dirt roads are long gone and the backdrop for what is now called the Horticulture Building has grown to include the Administration Building, which opened in 1987, and the Kinesiology Building, which opened in 2003, replacing the Physical Education Building.