Presidential search committee complete; consultation will inform position profile

With the addition of four elected representatives from the General Academic Assembly (GAA), the committee charged with selecting the University of Saskatchewan’s next president is now complete.

University Secretary Beth Williamson said the GAA representatives—Claire Card, professor of large animal clinical sciences; Pamela Downe, head of the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology; Len Findlay, professor of English; and Lisa Kalynchuk, professor in the Department of Medicine—were elected from a slate of nine candidates, four put forward by the nominating committee of University Council and five nominated from the floor at Council’s October meeting.

About two-thirds of Council members participated in the electronic voting.

The make up of the presidential search committee is set out in the university’s Search and Review Procedures for Senior Administrators, explained Williamson. In addition to the four GAA members, the committee includes Greg Smith, chair of the Board of Governors, Grant Isaac and David Dubé, members of the board, Blaine Favel, the University Senate representative; Michael Atkinson from the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy and Dr. Preston Smith from the College of Medicine selected as representatives of deans and executive directors; Max Findlay, president of the U of S Students’ Union; and Izabela Vlahu, president of the Graduate Students’ Association.

Williamson, who provides support to the committee, said among the first orders of business will be discussions about how best to communicate progress of the search to the entire stakeholder community. “The goal is to keep the community informed, recognizing that much of what the committee deals with is confidential,” she said. “Part of that effort will be using the website usask.ca/presidentialsearch which we will be launching soon.”

After a competitive bid process, the university retained the global executive search firm Perrett Laver to assist with the presidential selection, said Williamson. It is the first time the U of S has worked with Perrett Laver, and the secretary noted the company was also involved in the search for the University of Alberta’s new president.

One of the search committee’s initial tasks will be to look at the position profile for U of S president, and update it if necessary. To help in the process, Williamson said the committee will be seeking input from the university community and stakeholders about the institution’s strategic goals and objectives. Comments collected at presidential.search@usask.ca will be shared with the committee, as will the results of interviews the search firm will do with senior leaders at the U of S and with leaders of key stakeholder groups.

“All of the input,” she continued, “will help draw out themes that will inform the position profile. With all of this feedback, the committee will review the profile and make any adjustments it deems necessary.”

The consultations and review of the job profile for the position U of S president are expected to be completed in early January.
A true test
The challenge of scheduling space for exams

The numbers are staggering: 53,656 “bums in seats” in 119 rooms over 14 days writing 1,181 final examinations. And it is Debi Bokshowan’s job to set an exam schedule where no student is double-booked or writes more than two exams in a 24-hour period.

“I’m trying to create a schedule that is the best and optimal for the students,” said Bokshowan, who works in Registrarial Services in the Student and Enrolment Services Division at the University of Saskatchewan. “It’s a high-stress time for them.”

Bokshowan likens exam scheduling to putting together a puzzle. She begins gathering the pieces even before the term starts. In mid- to late-August, she updates the database by adding new courses. The Room Scheduling Office in the Facility Management Division provides a list of rooms available during the exam period. Then, a couple of weeks into the term, Bokshowan contacts instructors, asking about any special circumstances that need to be considered, such as a requirement for slides to be projected on a wall.

Irregularity is a fact of life. “It’s time to go, but it’s not that we press a button and it runs,” said Bokshowan.

The exam scheduler, a software program called Infosilem, runs in batches, starting with the classes with the most students. It schedules the exams randomly throughout the exam period. A few hours in, Bokshowan has a preliminary schedule.

“I go through it with a fine-toothed comb. And I tweak the data. There’s always something.”

Because the scheduler doesn’t know room locations, an engineering exam may have been scheduled for the Health Sciences Building. Bokshowan changes those kinds of glitches before sending the preliminary schedule to the instructors.

Sometimes, an instructor will then ask for a change to the schedule. Infosilem provides such detailed information that Bokshowan can tell the instructor that students in the class would have a conflict if the change were made. The instructor would then be responsible for making alternate arrangements for those students.

By early October, the exam schedule is posted.

“When it’s posted, I can relax. It’s usually when I book holidays,” said Bokshowan with a laugh.

That was a tough year.”

Bokshowan enjoys her job and the challenges that come with it.

“It’s fun. You have a sense of accomplishment when you can schedule that many students in that many exams in such a small time period without creating a conflict.”

Lana Haight is a Saskatoon freelance writer.

Task force launched to review rankings

University rankings are unique in the methodology and information they use, but all have a common purpose—they are a tool potential students and faculty use to gauge a university’s overall performance and reputation.

“Over the years, we have seen our performance in rankings fluctuate from one year to the next,” said Troy Harkot, director of institutional effectiveness in Institutional Planning and Assessment. “But we’ve done little to examine the methodologies and details of the rankings instruments that account for these fluctuations. This year, in particular, we saw a decline in our performance in a few of the rankings we know our students and faculty are watching, and I don’t think these results are representative of the great work we are doing.”

To address this, Harkot is pulling together a task force to take a more detailed look into the university’s performance in rankings and to provide recommendations on where resources should be focused that could help improve future performance.

“This task force will be looking at all the different rankings to determine the common elements in each and where we are lagging behind our U15 peers,” he said. “It will also determine which of these rankings are most important to

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Master of mysteries
Rick Long, newest U of S master teacher

It’s all about mysteries for Rick Long, the university’s newest master teacher.

“The world is a mysterious place and we need to make sense of it,” said Long, professor in the Department of Human Resources and Organizational Behaviour and Hanlon Scholar in International Business in the Edwards School of Business. “Learning needs to be about solving those mysteries.”

So Long approaches each course he teaches as an opportunity to solve mysteries, asking his students questions like, have you ever wondered why...?

“Of course they need to be mysteries that they students care about,” said Long, who received the university’s highest teaching award at fall convocation. “You need to care about why we need to know this, what it will help us explore or understand, and how it will inform our future.”

Beyond the mystery component, Long said he always uses PEP—partnership, engagement, and participation—in the classroom.

“For learning to be enjoyable rather than a painful struggle, it needs to be a partnership between the students and the teacher, who needs to create opportunities for engagement and participation by the students in applying concepts.”

One of Long’s more infamous courses—both for the rigorous workload and for the level of student engagement and fun—is on compensation.

“That course is a real SOB,” said Long with a laugh, adding that he has heard that it is about three times the amount of work as other courses. “But to make it fun, I have made the TV show Survivor the theme of the course. The students work in teams to outwit, outplay and out-compensate each other.”

The concept of PEP is one that is woven throughout the university’s Learning Charter and that’s not surprising considering that Long was chair of the university’s teaching and learning committee during that document’s development.

“I think the Learning Charter is the only one of its kind in Canada that outlines the goals, roles, rights and responsibilities for the students, instructors and the university related to teaching and learning. I’m really proud of that document,” said Long, who has been at the U of S for 37 years and admitted he never intended on becoming a university professor.

“I grew up in Alberta; I was going to be an oilman,” recalled Long, who was convinced by one of his professors to pursue an undergraduate degree.

Certainly no regrets on the career choice, Long said. “From my point of view, I’m always learning, I learn from students, I learn from my research, I learn from my colleagues. It involves so much learning on my part, but it doesn’t get any better than when it ‘clicks’ for students. That is a gratifying experience.”

There is, however, one mystery that Long is having a tough time solving.

“It’s kind of a a mystery that I received the Master Teacher Award. There are so many excellent and deserving teachers on campus. I was surprised. Excited, but surprised.”

CLS expected to be major isotope supplier by 2016

Scientists at the Canadian Light Source (CLS) have made the first shipment of medical isotopes produced in its dedicated linear accelerator.

The Medical Isotope Project (MIP) facility at the CLS is the first of its kind in the world, relying on powerful X-rays to produce the isotopes, unlike traditional nuclear reactor-based methods, according to a Nov. 14 media release.

The MIP uses a particle accelerator to bombard a target made of enriched molybdenum-100 metal (Mo-100) with high-energy X-rays. The X-rays knock a neutron out of the nuclei of some of the Mo-100 atoms in the target, converting them to the isotope Mo-99. The Mo-99 decays into technetium-99m (Tc-99m), which is used for tagging radiopharmaceuticals for medical diagnostic tests. After the Mo-99 has decayed, the remaining Mo-100 in the solution is recovered and recycled into additional targets.

The release noted that Tc-99m is by far the most used medical isotope in Canada; it is used in about 5,000 medical scans daily. Two or three accelerator systems like the MIP facility could produce enough medical isotopes to supply all of Canada.

The MIP will continue to test the production of the isotopes until approval from Health Canada is obtained. By 2016, it is expected it will be the leading supplier of isotopes to health-care facilities across Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Northwest Ontario.

“Resisting rust

Douglas Knott joined the faculty of the College of Agriculture in 1952 and became an internationally recognized expert in wheat stem and leaf rust resistance. He was also a successful plant breeder, developing a number of high-yielding durum varieties.

He retired from the U of S in 1993, but maintained an active research program. Knott received the Order of Canada in 1999 and was inducted into the Saskatchewan Agricultural Hall of Fame and the Saskatoon Sports Hall of Fame as a builder.

This issue we have Douglas Knott of Crop Science inspecting a field crop inside a laboratory sometime during the 1970s. Knott joined the faculty of the College of Agriculture in 1952 and became an internationally recognized expert in wheat stem and leaf rust resistance. He was also a successful plant breeder, developing a number of high-yielding durum varieties.

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NEW TO US

Phil Loring

Two key experiences propelled Philip Loring towards sustainability-focused research: a summer spent in Central America and a poignant piece of literature. Shortly before traveling to Guatemala for an archaeology field school, he read a book by American writer Daniel Quinn that completely changed the way he looked at the world.

“I think it’s about big environmental problems and where they really come from, and I’m a lot about food and sustainability,” he said. “While in Guatemala, I really enjoyed being in the community and learning the recent history of their efforts to farm coffee and cacao. It was sustainability from the ground-up.”

“These experiences converged and I knew I wanted to go to grad school, work in anthropology and learn about indigenous perspectives on sustainability.”

A native of Scarborough, Maine, Loring pursued his masters and PhD at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. He joined the School of Environment and Sustainability (SENS) last fall as an assistant professor of sustainability science. His research focuses on food security, and fisheries in particular, interact with water and energy security against the backdrop of a changing climate in the North American Arctic.

Loring enjoys having the benefits of a large U of S university, paired with the small city feel of Saskatoon. He is also particularly fond of the weather.

“Coming from Fairbanks to Saskatoon has been fantastic. There’s way more to do here and the weather is amazing. The weather here is beautiful . . . the weather was a big draw, as well as SENS’ interdisciplinary focus. It gives me the flexibility to publish where it makes the most sense and where my research will have the greatest impact.”

In January 2015, Dryden’s multi-presenter course INCC 398.3: Making the Future will be offered for the first time at the University of Saskatchewan, simultaneously and in real time with McGill, Calgary, Ryerson, Bishop’s and Memorial Universities. On each campus, students will gather in class-rooms outfitted with screens, microphones and cameras to listen interactively to lectures by Canadian experts addressing subjects as wide ranging as the workplace, health and health care, diversity, Canada in the world, religion, public engagement, philosophy and politics.

Dryden will appear in each of the cities during the 13-week program, although he will not actually be present. Students will have input into subject matter and write about them as if you were in the room, or in other Canadian university campuses, an educator, one curious about—and involved in—how life in Canada can be in the future. “Students are optimistic,” Dryden said in a recent telephone conversation. He explained that in his course, students examine different aspects of Canadian life, present and past, before shifting focus to the future. “In our first class, I ask them to write one page to tell me the story of a day in their life 10 years from now.”

“Students are optimistic,” said Dryden. “Anyone who is 20 (years old) needs to be and naturally. It’s easy to write a cautionary tale, to see everything that’s wrong. But the aspirational tale is more interesting and important.”

Dryden came up with the program after he lost his seat as a Liberal MP. He began to question the roles of citizenship, government and opposition.

“The things we imagined doing (as a government) were not up to what we as a country are,” he said. “None of us really understood Canada . . . If you have the wrong understanding, you go in the wrong direction or pursue with less ambition than it’s in you to deliver.”

Dryden pitched the pilot program to McGill University, and after two years there, it grew into a joint McGill-University of Calgary class. In 2015, it will be a six-campus offering, running through the College of Arts and Science at the U of S.

“I tell my students, you have another 40-plus years, working 40-plus years. How do you want to live those years?” Dryden said. “What do you want this Canada and this world to be? I challenge them. I say, ‘Don’t just give me a vision—visions are easy. Delivery of a vision—that’s hard. Start along the path to how you’d achieve that vision. Your world will change overwhelmingly in your lifetime.’”

Phil Loring
Survey checks student mood on campus

"The information we have gathered through this survey, along with conversations in the coming months, will directly inform how we support our students moving forward, and where we need to invest time and energy," said McDougall. "It will also provide us with a baseline to help measure our progress to make sure we continue to improve the university experience for all of our students."

Full survey results are available at usask.ca/ipa

Jennifer Robertson is the communications officer in Institutional Planning and Assessment

ON CAMPUS NEWS  November 21, 2014

Jennifer Robertson

How are U of S students feeling these days? Do they feel welcome on campus, respected and supported?

For the most part, the answer is yes according to a campus climate survey done last fall, but the survey results also show there is still room to improve the student experience at the University of Saskatchewan.

The results are positive overall and show that our students do feel welcomed, supported and respected," explained Tanya Robertson-Frey, research analyst in Institutional Planning and Assessment. "But we were also able to pinpoint some key areas that need to be addressed, especially related to specific groups of students who rated their experience lower than their peers."

More than 5,200 students answered the survey, an initiative of the third integrated plan and the first project of its kind at the U of S. The survey results were released earlier this month.

The survey included questions in five main areas: overall campus climate, campus experiences, classroom experiences and interactions with staff and faculty, helpfulness of support services, and how to improve the campus climate.

"There are areas where we were pleased to see students rating the university quite highly," said Robertson-Frey. "For instance, 85 per cent of students felt that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed at the U of S, and 89 per cent of students feel they were treated fairly by professors. We also saw that very few students have experienced harassment, exclusion or discrimination."

Although results were positive overall, the survey did highlight areas in which further work is needed.

"Those reporting less positive campus experiences were often students who self-identified as Aboriginal and sexual-minority students, as well as those indicating a disability. We also saw that, on average, students indicating a mental-health condition had fewer positive experiences than other students," Robertson-Frey explained.

Patti McDougall, vice-president teaching and learning, said that based on the results, "the university now needs to dig down a little deeper to determine where changes need to be made and which of these changes are the most pressing."

McDougall will spend the next few months meeting with key members of the campus community who work directly with students to get their thoughts and opinions on the results, and their input on where the university should focus its attention moving forward.

The result will be an implementation plan outlining a series of actions to be taken. It is expected this will be shared with the campus community in the spring.

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Full survey results are available at usask.ca/ipa

Jennifer Robertson is the communications officer in Institutional Planning and Assessment

Goals and priorities remain focus

From Page 2

us right now in terms of our reputation and our ability to attract students and faculty, so we can focus on those." 

Although each ranking instrument is different, it is common to see areas like reputation, research performance and funding, teaching, student services and student aid considered as factors in the outcome. In each, additional is embedded depending on the ranking. Harkot explained.

"With the work we undertake, it’s important to keep our university goals and priorities top of mind, and not have our performance in rankings be our sole focus," he added. "That said, I believe there is plenty of opportunity for us to improve and become more competitive.

When reviewing the survey results, a number of key areas were identified where improvements are needed and efforts will be made to make adjustments. These areas include safety, student services and student engagement.

The recent announcement of $100 million for the university is providing an opportunity to attract top students and faculty, and the provost’s committee on institutional planning and assessment will examine these priorities and would result in improvements to our performance in rankings.

Harkot hopes to present the task force’s recommendations to the provost’s committee on institutional planning next spring.

Jennifer Robertson is the communications officer in Institutional Planning and Assessment.

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Jennifer Robertson is the communications officer in Institutional Planning and Assessment.

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ON CAMPUS NEWS  November 21, 2014

Seminars/Lectures

WVCM Lectures
• Dec. 2, 12:30-1:30 pm, Room 2002, the J.G. Quinney Law Centre: “Deconstructing Leadership” to be presented by Jason Clay, senior vice-president, World Wildlife Fund. Come and gain a Scholarship in Sustainable development by providing more sustainable food production.
• Dec. 9, 12:30 pm, Room 3115, the Robert Wilson Room: Re-inventing the Indigenous Monument are producers of Stronger Than Stone: Alberta College of Art + Design, the

Litigation
• Nov. 30, 6-8:30 pm, Neatby Timlin, the free Philosophy in the Community Series. The show, “Genetic Motor of Justice” continues until the end of the year. It is about the genetic diversity of the human body and its role in shaping the world around us.

Corey L. Agnew, Colleen Pilot, Lesley Biggs, Beverley Brenna, Richard Breitkreuz, Kenneth Van Rees and Jay Wilson McNauly, president of the University of Saskatchewan, Alberta Art Galleries, the Mendel Art Gallery and Warsawwold Heritage Park and the Thompson River State Park. (Rendering the Indigenous Monument international and emerging artists from around the world who are interested in exploring their work in this field and who wish to participate in the 2015-2016 program, the deadline for online applications is Dec. 5. Available at research.usask.ca/ilo)

St. Thomas More Gallery
Opening: Drop by the gallery until Dec. 10. “Everyday...” by David Dyck, an exhibition “Almost Invisible. The road to handmade and a testament to the psyche of laboring.” There will be an artist’s reception Nov. 29 from 7 to 9 pm.

A Not-So-Traditional Holiday Concert
The University of Saskatchewan Wind Orchestra presents A Not-So-Traditional Holiday Concert Nov. 28 at 8 pm at St. Joseph’s High School. The concert will feature works by Anderson, Ned, Bosen, Fininger and Vaughan Williams. All are welcome. Admission is $10; $5 for students and seniors.

Fall Semester Concert
Glen Gillis will direct the University of Saskatchewan Concert Band in its Fall Semester Concert Dec. 5 at 7:30 pm in Quasaine Theatre, Education Building. The concert will feature a variety of works by Allan Gilliland, Frank Ticheli, Scott McAllister, Peter Leemans/John Bourque, Edward Elgar/Alfred Reed, Noelshin/Iwa, and John F. Hoke. Admissions is by silver collection.

Chamber Music
The U of S Chamber Ensemble will perform Dec. 3 and 4 in Lutherological Theological Seminary chapel.

Kendre Art Gallery
The U of S Art Gallery celebrates Canada’s 150th anniversary. History, an exhibition of work by a number of artists whose work explores the lives between familiar and fictive, allowing alternative readings to emerge. The show, the work by Leah Taylor, includes works by Vikki Alexander, Alfonz Clay, Chris Cuen, Paul Frouard, Angela Grooms, Mary Longman, Jayson Salkum, Tony Scherman and Douglas Walker.

College Art Galleries
• Nov. 26-27. 1:30 pm, Market, Library, Bm 616

Huskies @ Home

Women’s Hockey
Nov. 21 at 10:45 am and 2pm, Lethbridge
Nov. 28 at 8 pm and 29 pm, MBU
Nov 29 at 7:30 pm and 17:00 in KU
Jan. 23 and 24 at Manitoba
Feb. 8-9, Regina
Women’s Basketball
Jan. 4 and 5 at Lethbridge
Jan. 19 and 20 at Calgary
Jan. 26 and 27 at Alberta
Volleyball
Nov. 29 at 7:30 pm, UBC
Jan. 9 and 10 vs. Brandon
Jan. 23 and 24 at Manitoba
Feb. 6 and 7 vs. TRU

The Arts

Gordon Snaggletooth Gallery
Opening: Drop by the gallery and continue until Nov. 26. Come to Counterpoint by Kathryn Forbach and Rachael Wall, work by senior print making students.

The U of S Art Gallery

The U of S Art Gallery is presenting “In Our Time: The Photography of Milne’s History produced in collaboration with the Canadian Museum of Nature entitled Expedition Arctic. Images and artifacts help visitors explore the goals, successes and drama of the Canadian Arctic. Expedition of 1915-18, one of the world’s last great journeys of discovery before the age of modern communication and air reconnaissance. The exhibit will open in 2015.

Miscellaneous

Business Plan Competition
The Industry Canada Official’s Annual Venture Challenge gives entrepreneurs the chance to lead a technology based business idea with the winner receiving $150,000 plus office space to get the venture off the ground. The deadline for online applications is Nov. 28 with the top 10 teams to be announced Dec. 10. Information and the online application form are available at research.usask.ca/ilo

Submit

Next OCN: Friday, Dec. 5
Deadline: Thursday, Nov. 27
Email ocn@usask.ca

For his 6 years of service as the Provost and Vice-President Academic for the University of Saskatchewan

DECEMBER 10, 2014  4:00 - 6:00 (presentation begins at 4:30)
University Club, 101 Administration Place
To make a gift contribution and/or sign the card, please see Danielle Fabushuk (room 204 Peter MacKinnon Bldg) by November 20th.
Invited to participate in a film project for the University of Saskatchewan’s Exploring Cultures Working Group of the Neil Richards Archive, researcher and writer Fiji Robinson immediately knew she wanted to incorporate a “great excerpt” about painter Dmytro Stryjek from the unpublished memoirs of U of S Professor and art collector Peter Millard.

In the end, her film incorporated much more, including interviews with Norman Zepp, Judith Varga and Neil Richards, all of whom had been close to both Millard and Stryjek. Her focus was on Dmytro’s personal story, his artistic endeavours and his relationship with Millard.

She needed as many images as possible to make the film visually stimulating and found them in University Archives and Special Collections in the University Library. Robinson used the Millard and Stryjek fonds, amongst others, and Thelma Pepper’s gorgeous photo series of Dmytro. In return, she provided the Library with more than 90 digital images for the collection and for others to use.