



## **The Foundational Document on Outreach and Engagement: *Linking With Communities For Discovery and Learning***

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In the *Strategic Directions (2002)*, the University of Saskatchewan collectively asserted that connections to community, defined as ‘sense of place’, is one of our distinguishing features, setting us apart from institutions of similar stature in Canada, enriching both the University and the province and reflecting our significant and sustained commitment to address the needs and aspirations of Saskatchewan’s citizens. In the *Integrated Plan (2004)*, we confirmed our commitment to assist the province to achieve its goals and meet its challenges and we indicated that our approach would be based on an extended concept of engagement with Saskatchewan and Canada. As we approach our second century, we are mindful that the footprint of the University of Saskatchewan in the province of Saskatchewan is substantial and that expectations of the University are strong and growing. We see our future contribution through even closer connections to communities and society. We believe that adopting the concepts of outreach and engagement which support and enhance our already impressive array of academic, research, and service initiatives will benefit our students, faculty, staff and alumni and crucially also the people of Saskatchewan and Canada.

This Foundational Document is intended to guide and inform University planning processes by describing outreach and engagement, by encouraging units to develop corresponding initiatives in their planning, and by suggesting ways in which the University as a whole can organize itself to move in the direction of wider outreach and more intensive engagement. At the outset, we acknowledge that this document is not a University-Community document. It is a necessary first step on the path towards achieving ‘sense of place’ as envisioned in the *Strategic Directions*. As with other Foundational Documents, the University will need to decide the priority it wishes to ascribe to outreach and engagement. As that priority increases, many more external communities will have to be involved in discussions with many parts of the University to realize the vision contained within this Foundational Document. In this regard, we view this text as a ‘living document’, not the final word on this planning dimension.

While respecting our proud history and being mindful of the institution’s many current obligations, our focus here is on possibilities. We acknowledge that there are already within the University many current examples of activities that can be conceptualized as outreach and engagement. We believe that there are also fresh possibilities embedded in these two concepts, which overlap and interlink more familiar terms such as research<sup>1</sup>, teaching, extension, and public service.

It is sometimes the case that we understand concepts most clearly when we consider concrete examples from elsewhere. This is even true —some might argue especially so— when we are heavily involved, as an institution, in similar activities ourselves. Consider the following:

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<sup>1</sup> All references to research in this document are intended to include scholarly and artistic work.

A group of faculty members from architecture and political science, English and biology, engineering and theatre (among other disciplines) is working together to address a perceived decline in civic participation and democratic citizenship. One of the problems they have chosen to tackle is low electoral participation, especially in inner-city neighborhoods affected by poverty and exclusion. Both the faculty and the students are involved in coordinated research. A geography class compiled computerized information on voting districts and shared the database so others in the network could use it. A politics class surveyed county registrars about voting mechanisms and turnout patterns. Communications students studied the role of the media in the elections. Graduate students studied how the undergraduates doing the above projects were learning and changing. These class assignments, along with the various research projects of the faculty, were informed by lunchtime discussions with community members and by small-group work that identified community issues. The result is “a curriculum of consequence” in which the regular work of faculty and students is related to the well-being of communities.

The concepts of outreach and engagement are illustrated in the activities of *The Laboratory for Public Scholarship and Democracy* at Pennsylvania State University, one aspect of which—the work on voter participation—is described in the example above.<sup>2</sup> If we analyze the activities in this example, most of them are the activities faculty and students normally perform. Students are doing assignments in class. Faculty are teaching and doing research, scholarly, and artistic work. We may say that service is involved. But they are doing all these things in a way that is coordinated around a partnership with community representatives who have their own voices.

Penn State is an old land grant university which has dedicated itself to a new vision of outreach and engagement. In their case, they have created the institutional structures of a cross-disciplinary Minor in Civic and Community Engagement and an organization of Public Scholarship Associates. These initiatives grew out of a “campus compact” that was concerned with “service learning”: in other words, their involvement in community research grew out of their teaching program.<sup>3</sup> All of the particular organizational features might be different at another institution. It is the idea behind the activities, not the particular structure, which defines outreach and engagement.

Outreach and engagement are not “extension” or “public service,” though they may involve or grow out of those activities. In the example, faculty are not “extending” knowledge from the university to the community, but creating it in partnership. Nor are they volunteering, sitting on boards, or supporting worthy causes which may or may not be connected to their academic work. Rather, they are teaching their students through examination of pressing issues—helping them learn for credit, towards degrees. They are organizing student and faculty scholarship within a framework that is externally connected and integrated as appropriate across disciplines. They are doing this by choice and by their own initiative because it fits with their sense of what is important in their jobs. In short, engagement is primarily part of their teaching and research: the core responsibilities that define universities and set them apart from other institutions in society. Other kinds of outreach (including extension and public service in older and narrower senses) may be desirable, but they are not at the heart of this particular story.

<sup>2</sup> For more information about the laboratory, see <http://www.publicscholarship.psu.edu/>.

<sup>3</sup> For more information on this group, see <http://www.publicscholarship.psu.edu/history.htm>.

There is a danger in appearing to define something by giving examples. Outreach and engagement are approaches that can be developed in uniquely different ways by different faculty, staff, and students. It is simply not possible to predict or list the creative ways that these principles are already applied and can be applied. By giving an example that is focused on the engagement of faculty and students through their research and teaching, we have already left out nonacademic staff who have critical roles in the outreach missions of the university. By citing an example that is more from the area of social sciences and politics, we have left out health sciences and professional colleges and many other fields. By giving an example that flows from teaching, we may have minimized the role of research. By talking about community representatives, we have omitted the roles of professions and organizations. In the pages that follow, we will attempt to be more systematic, defining the interest of the University of Saskatchewan and the principles of outreach and engagement in ways that are flexible and widely applicable across the institution.

There is also a danger that in identifying new concepts existing activities and initiatives are devalued. At the outset, we acknowledge and emphasize that the University of Saskatchewan already has many initiatives which can be characterized as either outreach or engagement. It is not our intent to indicate that these are less valued because they have not been consciously designed with these concepts in mind; rather, they provide us with a solid and substantial foundation on which to build, a way to describe what we do to the world outside the University, in ways which are meaningful and relevant to 21<sup>st</sup> century society. Indeed, it is because we have this solid foundation that we can begin to contemplate how we might improve on our current efforts, nurture and build connections with communities in Saskatchewan and beyond, and, as a consequence, ensure that we are known amongst our peer institutions as a University with a distinctive mission and a true connection to its 'sense of place'.

## **I. What is Outreach and Engagement?**

Before we review the history and significance of outreach and engagement for our own University, it is important to define further what we mean by these terms. In the United States, where these concepts are well advanced, one source is the landmark report of the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land Grant Universities.<sup>4</sup> This Commission argued that universities need to organize their activities in support of an 'outreach' mission (a re-conception of the historical extension mandate of American land grant colleges) representing a more deliberate connection of the wider academic goals of the institution to the communities surrounding it, however these might be defined. Outreach was defined more broadly than 'extension' or 'public service' and it involved non-academic as well as academic units.

Outreach includes all activities specifically designed to inform or involve external publics, including community lectures or workshops, clinics, consulting and policy work, off-campus courses for degree credit or for certificates, public information and communications, relations with alumni and donors, co-operative education programs and internships, applied research and projects conducted with external organizations... activities too varied to fully catalog. Considering the breadth of the term, it may be better to consider outreach as an approach or attitude within many fields of work rather than as a discrete set of activities.

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<sup>4</sup> Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities (1999). *Returning to our Roots: The Engaged Institution*. National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges. This report, as well as other related information can be viewed at [http://www.usask.ca/vpacademic/integrated-planning/plandocs/foundational\\_docs.php](http://www.usask.ca/vpacademic/integrated-planning/plandocs/foundational_docs.php) or <http://www.nasulgc.org/Kellogg/kellogg.htm>.

While a number of American universities have developed extensive outreach operations, the Kellogg Commission's seminal contribution rests in their definition of engagement: going beyond the traditional practices of public service and extension towards a reciprocal and meaningful co-creation of knowledge in partnerships with external groups. It is not just about bringing teaching and research to a wider community (one kind of outreach) or the contemporary expression of the traditional third mission of universities (service). It is ***a mutually beneficial partnership involving the core missions and functions of the University – teaching, research, scholarly, and artistic work, and service*** – bringing together the best of what the university and the community have to offer one another for the enrichment of both.

Outreach encompasses many familiar activities, while engagement systematizes a distinct way of thinking about them. While outreach potentially diffuses institutional effort, engagement focuses and integrates it around partnerships that are connected to academic missions.

In a subsequent publication, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) elaborated on the definition: “The publicly engaged institution is fully committed to direct, two-way interaction with communities and other external constituencies through the development, exchange, and application of knowledge, information and expertise for mutual benefit.”<sup>5</sup> The AASCU document describes four key dimensions of an engaged institution.

***Engagement Is:***

***Place-Related.*** While the demands of the economy and society have forced institutions to be nationally and globally aware, the fact remains that state colleges and universities are inextricably linked with the communities and regions in which they are located. Exercising ‘stewardship of place’ does not mean limiting the institution’s worldview; rather, it means pursuing that worldview in a way that has meaning to the institution’s neighbours, who can be its most consistent and reliable advocates.

***Interactive.*** The etymology of the word ‘engage’ speaks to the intertwining or meshing of entities. In this context, engagement refers to a spirit of give and take by the university and its partners. For institutions this means occupying the role of learner as well as teacher. For community and regional partners, this means looking to the university as a resource, not necessarily as ‘the answer’.

***Mutually Beneficial.*** Engagement should inure to the benefit of both parties involved. These initiatives should expand the learning and discovery functions of the institutions while enhancing community capacity to address and resolve the issues they confront. The work of the engaged institution is to be responsive to public needs in ways that are appropriate to the institution’s mission and academic strengths. Engagement initiatives should also build greater public understanding of and support for the role of the campus as a knowledge asset and resource.

***Integrated.*** At a campus level, engagement must permeate all levels of the institution, and be integrated into its policies, incentive structures, and priorities. At a departmental level, engagement cuts across the imperatives of teaching and scholarship to bring unparalleled opportunities for the entire campus community – faculty, staff, and students.

The Kellogg Commission and others have suggested that it is helpful to think about *learning, discovery, and engagement* as the new missions of higher education. In this context, engagement becomes “the partnership of university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility;

<sup>5</sup> AASCU, 2002, *Stepping Forward as Stewards of Place: A Guide for Leading Public Engagement in State Colleges and Universities*. p. 9.

address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good.”<sup>6</sup> Similar ideas lie behind the vision of “the engaged university” articulated by the Association of Commonwealth Universities:<sup>7</sup> engagement should not be just a thing we do; it should be an organizing principle behind how we do the things we do.

Outreach and engagement is carried out at the University of Saskatchewan in the context of its primary mandates: 1) the pursuit of excellence in scholarship, as articulated in the University’s Foundational Document on Research, Scholarly and Artistic Work; and 2) the delivery of undergraduate and graduate programs of the highest quality, which will be outlined further in the Foundational Document on Teaching and Learning.

The dedication of the faculty, staff, and students to outreach and engagement, through public and professional service to the people of Saskatchewan, is a heritage in which this University takes great pride. This service, normally flowing from individual initiative, has led to an integration of community and university that is uncommonly close when compared to other universities within Canada and beyond. From our students who serve as mentors and resources in the community, to researchers who can take us to the frontiers of knowledge, to scholars who enrich and enhance our lives and society, to the office of the President, our people reach out, and all are welcomed to reach in. This commitment, and our philosophy that a university must serve the needs and interests of the people, makes outreach the business of all of us. Such service to the people has been, is, and will be, a hallmark of the University of Saskatchewan.

As the University looks to the future, the growing strengths of our research and learning environments will create even greater opportunities for engagement, in ways that will enrich our own programs, and transfer to our colleagues, students, industry, and society the benefits that can emerge from collaboration.

At the University of Saskatchewan, ‘outreach and engagement’ is a comprehensive philosophical approach, a commitment to thinking about the needs of the world around us and developing partnerships with others for mutual benefit, as we decide among the many competing priorities for our time and resources. Engagement is a guiding philosophy throughout the institution, assisting us in a host of challenges and problems, including our teaching and research programs. Our openness and accessibility as an institution, both in terms of physical space and in terms of transparent processes; the culture of our workplace and our focus on solving problems rather than promoting bureaucracy; and our responsiveness to the needs perceived by the public we serve, all should find expression in a commitment to outreach and engagement.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Committee on Institutional Cooperation, *Resource Guide and Recommendations for Defining and Benchmarking Engagement*. Draft Report. February 2005, p.2. The draft report is posted at: <http://www.cic.uiuc.edu/groups/CommitteeOnEngagement/index.shtml>.

<sup>7</sup> See for example S. Bjarnason and P. Coldstream, eds, *The Idea of Engagement: Universities in Society*. London: The Association for Commonwealth Universities, 2003.

<sup>8</sup> The first draft of this document contained a typology and diagram of outreach and engagement dimensions in teaching, research, and service. Some found the diagram helpful because it provides an indication of the types of activities which can constitute ‘outreach’ and ‘engagement’, while others told us that drawing boxes on a page seemed to emphasize the separateness of things rather than the interconnections. Bearing in mind these points, those who wish may consult the typology and the diagram at [http://www.usask.ca/vpacademic/integrated-planning/plandocs/foundational\\_docs.php](http://www.usask.ca/vpacademic/integrated-planning/plandocs/foundational_docs.php).

## II. Why Outreach and Engagement? — Linking Past to Future

Nearly a century ago, our pioneer founders envisioned a world class university in a vast prairie landscape. They understood implicitly that the success of the new province was vitally connected to the availability of advanced education and research. They vested their hopes in a unique combination, within Canada, of education in the arts and sciences with agriculture, reflecting their strong views about the essential connections between the enrichment of the arts, the benefits of the sciences, and the advancement of learning from the University to what was then a primarily rural, agricultural, economy. They also vested their new University with the responsibility of sharing its wealth of knowledge with the province's citizens.

The University's first president, Walter Murray, closely linked its mission to 'service' to society in his first presidential report (1908-09). "What is the sphere of the university? Its watchword is service – service of the state in the things that make for happiness and virtue as well as the things that make for wealth. No form of that service is too mean or too exalted for the university." As early as 1907 the President and others began to refer to the University of Saskatchewan as the 'people's university'. According to its most recent biographer, no other university in Canada can make that claim.<sup>9</sup> From the outset, then, it was clear that the University of Saskatchewan would be a university which would, through the practices of public service and extension, directly connect to its public funding and vitally reflect its public purposes.

In the years that followed, numerous initiatives resulted from the founding vision. An Extension Department was created in 1910, and soon took over provincial agricultural extension programs with the University receiving an appropriation from the government for this work. A Better Farming Train (1914-1922) enabled faculty members in the College of Agriculture to take their knowledge to rural areas. Historians launched heritage preservation efforts including a joint partnership with the provincial government to create the Saskatchewan Archives Board (1945). Engineers consulted on Saskatoon's 25<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge. The Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra was created by the first music professor at the University and found its first home in Convocation Hall in the College Building. As more professional colleges were added to the University, their faculty became intimately involved with their professions and the public. Until the 1930s, all professors at the University were expected to be involved in extension work of one form or another. Carlyle King, one-time head of the Department of English, writing in 1959 and looking back over the first fifty years of the University, summarized the effort thus: "The University in all its branches has continued to fulfill its first duty – to teach the young; through its scholars and scientists it has played a useful part in extending the boundaries of knowledge; but it has not forgotten its obligation to a wider constituency beyond academic walls. In home economics as in plant ecology, in mathematics as in medicine, its professors have been ready to make their talents available for any public good."<sup>10</sup>

Many changes set in during the 1960s-70s and after given the University's preoccupations with the task of rebuilding through the mass influx of faculty, many from other countries, and with organizational changes created as a result of the establishment of the University of Regina. Although some colleges, notably the College of Agriculture, continued to expect faculty members to perform extension activities, the Extension Division was the unit with primary responsibility for the management of the University's external relations. Created as a unit reporting to the President, with academic staff of its own to further the University's public service agenda, the Extension Division

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<sup>9</sup> See Michael Hayden, *The People's University? The University of Saskatchewan and the Province of Saskatchewan*. Unpublished article, October 2004, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> See Carlyle King, *The First Fifty*, p. 123-124.



allocated a faculty member to each region (based on community college boundaries) with the expectation that they would bring back to the campus a listing of the educational and research needs of the region. The Division also provided leadership in efforts to improve teaching, especially in the application of adult learning principles. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Extension Division was instrumental, along with the Division of Media and Technology, in the development and delivery of televised and online distance education within Saskatchewan. Regional Colleges and Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology (SIASST) campuses became critical partners for the University in these endeavours.

The legacy of these activities is a University that defines itself more than most by its relationships with communities. It is also a legacy where even today many of our faculty, staff, and students are involved in a wide array of outreach activities. A survey of college and department initiatives conducted during the development of this Foundational Document suggested a substantial interaction ranging from public lectures and artistic performances, to large community-university research projects such as *In Motion* and *Bridges*, to work with Aboriginal communities in land management, to preparation of income tax returns by students in the College of Commerce for senior citizens, to the annual Open House for potential students, to the opportunities provided by the University's museums and galleries for visits to the campus, to the physical beauty of the campus expressed through its buildings and grounds. To further illustrate: in the Fine Arts, our contributions have been substantial, ranging from the Emma Lake Artists' Workshop which is a training ground for some of the country's best painters and sculptors, to the Department of Drama's Summer Stock/apprenticeship program which has long been a fabric of Saskatchewan culture, to the Department of Music's Unifest, the University Chorus, the Jazz Ensemble and the Amati Quartet, all of which have contributed immeasurably to the cultural life of the province and nation. On an institutional scale, the University's research park, Innovation Place, serves as a major talent attractor for the province and a home for dozens of high-tech spinoff companies. We cannot possibly mention all the activities undertaken at the University. Instead we refer readers to a separate product of our process, the first Inventory of Outreach and Engagement: University of Saskatchewan 2005.<sup>11</sup>

As we acknowledge these numerous activities and reflect on them in light of the concepts of outreach and engagement, a couple of additional observations are in order. First, at the institutional level there are many more obvious examples of outreach than of engagement. While this University remains in some ways a leader in Canada, it is not in advance of the vision of the Kellogg Foundation or of the Association of Commonwealth Universities. Second, outreach is unevenly pursued. The overall array of activities is a sum of many disconnected efforts by individual units or, indeed, individual faculty and staff members. While this may not be bad, it is not apparent (third) that the outreach efforts in which the University is involved are the ones that are most complementary to its other missions. To put this another way, outreach activities may not be planned, prioritized, or resourced within their respective units as they would be if an 'outreach-and-engagement' perspective were applied. Because of this, we may be missing important community needs or opportunities for the University to make distinctive contributions.

At the same time as we are doing all this, our institution, like others, finds itself facing an increasingly competitive environment, stalling enrolments, inadequate financial support from governments, and a demanding public with high expectations.

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<sup>11</sup> The inventory, now developed as a stand-alone document given the length of this Foundational Document, is posted at <http://www.usask.ca/vpacademic/integrated-planning/>.

**Differentiation among post-secondary institutions** matters more than ever before. Competition for students is one aspect: in Saskatchewan, adverse demographic trends mean the University will have to do more to attract enough students to sustain the range of choices and programs it now offers. We will have to offer more interesting options for Saskatchewan students, particularly those who have low participation rates such as students of Aboriginal background and those from rural areas; at the same time, as our Enrolment Plan indicates, we will have to attract more students from outside the province. Meanwhile, we also need to continue to recruit and retain faculty members who will establish national and international reputations for themselves and the University: such faculty members are highly mobile and will be sought after by many institutions which are also renewing themselves. As a result of this increased competition, the literature on higher education is full of references to uniqueness and distinctiveness. A university cannot compete by being a standardized ‘McU,’ but only by having a commanding presence in its chosen fields and a sure sense of its own identity.

A new **interplay of the global and the local** is another part of the current context. Successful universities will have to address and function in a global environment. Not only knowledge but experience of the world will increasingly be needed from every graduate and every employee. At the same time, the University of Saskatchewan’s *Strategic Directions* commit us to a “sense of place.” We need to find the spaces where our global and local missions intersect: where our global connections have something to offer to Saskatchewan communities and vice-versa. And if we are to reach out successfully, we will need to be connected in multi-dimensional ways: to agencies, to governments, to Aboriginal communities, to regions, to other post-secondary institutions.

These challenges overlap with another that is arguably the most important influence on universities today, both in Canada and abroad: the **declining adequacy of government support**. Our situation in Saskatchewan reflects national trends. A review of the operating-grant support provided by the provincial government over the past decade reveals that the operating grant has declined proportionately from 79% of the University’s operating income in 1987-1988 to 59% in 2002-2003; tuition fees and other revenue now provide twice as large a share of the total budget as they did fifteen years earlier. The University of Saskatchewan will remain a public institution, but it is not clear how this role may be affected if, as soon may be the case, less than half the budget comes from the public purse.

It is important to remind ourselves that it is not only universities that are suffering. People and communities are living through huge changes as well. Many of the communities we serve are grappling with socio-economic and development issues, and are increasingly aware of the advent of a knowledge economy that might either help them or shut them firmly on the outside. One of the most important messages in the external consultations concerned the desires of communities for assistance from the University in their development challenges. These desires take various forms: different communities mentioned availability of degree-credit and other forms of learning and skills in off-campus settings, to be sure; but also accessible upgrading and further-education opportunities for professionals to help retain them in communities; direct contact between manufacturing and processing firms and university-based engineers; and general animation of the intellectual liveliness and healthiness of communities to make them all-around more attractive places for educated people to live. The bottom line is that more people want more contact in more ways with the kinds of knowledge creation that happen in and around universities.

We also heard, in those same consultations, that some of our friends and supporters outside Saskatoon believe that the University’s reputation has suffered; that we are no longer seen as being particularly receptive to and supportive of communities; that our programs often do not look innovative compared



to others available from our competitors; and that the children of our own alumni often look east or west or south of us for an education. When asked how the University can and should approach their communities, the most eloquent answer we heard was: *with humility*.

All these different trends and trajectories may seem overwhelming, but there is a place where they intersect: in the idea that this University's traditions of what we now call outreach and engagement may provide answers for how we can compete distinctively, how we can serve communities effectively, and how we can build support and recognition for the important things we do. We are not alone, but we are well-placed, to consider outreach and engagement as a form of renewal suited to the context in which we find ourselves.

In the context of engagement as described above, the University of Saskatchewan has much to offer and much to gain by even closer connections and partnerships to its local, provincial, national, and international communities. Benefits will flow to a variety of the University's constituencies: to students, to faculty, to the University itself, and to citizens, organizations and communities outside the campus. The *Integrated Plan* envisioned it this way:

The University of Saskatchewan has demonstrated a strong commitment to the communit[ies] and the people of Saskatchewan from its early days to the present. Over this planning cycle, the University will take steps to strengthen that commitment. The programmatic and organizational changes outlined [in this *Integrated Plan*] are premised on an extended concept of engagement of the University with Saskatchewan and Canada. Engagement means communication, partnerships, openness, and attentiveness. It involves putting the knowledge inside the University at the disposal of the people of the Province and beyond.

...The challenges facing the Province and the country are daunting. Arresting environmental degradation, ensuring economic growth, nurturing healthy populations, promoting inclusiveness, and generating sound public policy are challenges to which our University can and will rise. Of course, these are global challenges and all universities have a contribution to make. Our contribution is made with the needs of the people of Saskatchewan in mind. This marriage of the local and the global is less paradoxical than it may appear. No local challenge, that deserves the word, is without its global manifestation; no global challenge fails to touch us where we live. And we live in Saskatchewan, a province that has nurtured a major public university in the hope and expectation that this university will assist in meeting these challenges.<sup>12</sup>

For the University of Saskatchewan, the concept of engagement presents a real opportunity to re-focus and re-dedicate ourselves to a way of thinking in which the things which we are excellent at are connected to, draw upon, and enrich communities. We believe that the University of Saskatchewan is uniquely positioned to build a solid reputation for these concepts within Saskatchewan and beyond. Indeed, we believe the case to be so compelling that it is not a question of 'whether' the University should tread this path; rather, the debate for the University of Saskatchewan is the extent to which our current and future efforts will distinguish us from other universities within Canada and around the world. Ours is an enviable position: to select from a host of possibilities 'what we will do' and 'how we will do it'. It is to the principles that should govern our actions that we now turn.

### **III. Outreach and Engagement: Principles for Planning**

With our new understandings of outreach and engagement, we can begin to identify priorities for our immediate attention. We will need to discuss the implications of those priorities on our future work,

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<sup>12</sup> University of Saskatchewan, *A Framework for Action: The University of Saskatchewan Integrated Plan, 2004-2007*. May 2004. p.9.

as well as the organizational supports they may require. It is helpful in this context to identify a series of principles to guide our efforts.

In explaining these principles, it is important to stress that this is a planning document, and planning is about the reconciliation of limited resources with ambitious aims. The preceding discussion suggests and implies many things that would be valuable, but the remainder of this document is about the fact that we cannot do all of them, certainly not at once and with equal priority. The following principles are meant to offer suggestions for the development of plans and the allocation of resources by the University as a whole in the next five to ten years.

***Principle One:*** *Outreach and engagement should enrich the academic environment and provide powerful, stimulating, intellectual experiences for our students and faculty.* This should be the primary motivation from the University’s side for the adoption of outreach and engagement as concepts: our collective will to create a compelling and stimulating intellectual environment, —a truly ‘liberating’ educational experience,— coupled with a genuine commitment to academic freedom, critical and informed debate, the creation, sharing, and pursuit of knowledge in all its dimensions. This recognizes that outreach and engagement is centered in the academic mission and involves, primarily, students and faculty in its realization. Without the direct involvement of either of these two forces, the transformative opportunities associated with these concepts cannot be achieved.

***Principle Two:*** *Outreach and engagement should enhance existing partnerships and provide opportunities to build new partnerships with a broad array of communities and sectors within the province and beyond.* From the work of the Kellogg Commission, and its successor, the Task Force on Public Engagement organized by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, we know that partnerships are crucial to the success of engagement initiatives.<sup>13</sup> Other observers of higher education have suggested that the successful university of the future “will be academically independent but constructively partnered.”<sup>14</sup> To do this most effectively will require us to reaffirm existing linkages and to establish new mechanisms beyond our traditional boundaries. Given the importance of communication to the development and maintenance of effective partnerships, we should strengthen vehicles for communication between the University and its current and potential community partners and establish protocols for interacting with communities. To be perfectly clear: this Foundational Document is about how the University can begin to organize itself to engage in more such partnerships. Outreach and engagement will not actually be achieved until communities have input based on their needs and ideas.

***Principle Three:*** *Outreach and engagement initiatives should build on the unique expertise available at the University of Saskatchewan.* The things the University does well —the areas in which it is at or near the leading edges of knowledge creation— are also, by and large, the areas that are most attractive or promising for community partnerships. Communities want and need access to top people; the University has these in abundance, in the areas where we have hired and developed. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the University of Saskatchewan has been responsible for steadily increasing the knowledge base of the province. Saskatchewan residents need to know that they can continue to look to the University of Saskatchewan and depend on it to help them make sense of their world. They will not look for this only to us: our particular strength lies in the close relationship of our faculty to the frontiers of knowledge. We represent much of the

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<sup>13</sup> AASCU, 2002:11.

<sup>14</sup> Frank H. T. Rhodes, *The Creation of the Future: The Role of the American University*. Ithaca New York: Cornell University Press, 2001. p. 237.

province's investment in the so-called knowledge economy. We are important and essential originators and contributors to the province's and Canada's innovation goals on a variety of issues. Not only does our work link scholarship to a prosperous and exciting future for current and future citizens, it reflects our broader responsibility to society – the classical role of the university in any society. Stated differently, the University is the only institution where the creation of advanced knowledge in the public interest and professional expertise are linked; this unique identity gives the University special responsibilities. For the professional colleges (Commerce, Education, Medicine etc), this linkage is particularly important as it informs the active delivery of services to outside organizations and to the profession.

***Principle Four:*** *Outreach and engagement should pervade the University of Saskatchewan helping to give it a distinctive identity from peer institutions.* The University, its faculty, staff, and students, will realize few of the benefits of outreach and engagement unless these concepts are widely evident in University research and teaching programs. Faculty research will not benefit if faculty are not involved. Students will not benefit if opportunities are not available to them in their academic programs. The University will not be able to claim a distinctive identity if outreach and engagement activities are narrowly defined and compartmentalized. The benefits that are worth striving for come from widespread, creative, and voluntary development of outreach and engagement within many different programs of learning and scholarship within the University. From our academic and research programs, to our programs for future students, to the ways we reach out to alumni and friends, to encounters at all levels with the general public, we need to be sure that mutually beneficial relationships are incorporated in what we do. And, we need to ensure that we are 'open' to new ideas from external communities. It is impossible for the University as a whole to engage with its external communities all at once or through a single process. There are many external communities that define themselves in many ways. Meaningful engagement with diverse communities can happen only with multiple linkages by many units and by groups of faculty and students related to all their different interests, contacts, and expertise. The end result should make our University unique or different from other universities in Canada.

***Principle Five:*** *Outreach and engagement efforts should be encouraged, rewarded, celebrated, and supported through a variety of mechanisms and structures.* Specific initiatives developed by faculty members, in groups or as individuals, which include a substantial outreach and engagement component in either their teaching or research activities (or both), should be encouraged, supported, recognized, and rewarded. A key ingredient of such encouragement and support should involve enlarging the 'space for innovation' in order to provide opportunities for creative synergy and to harness the best of the University's human resources to achieve its engagement goals. Engagement initiatives might be given greater prominence within the University's communications vehicles, such as *On Campus News*, the *Green and White*, the *Sheaf*, and in press releases and publications of all sorts. Faculty and students involved in them might be encouraged to share best practices and innovative ideas, perhaps through networks, informal meetings, or conferences. Similarly, as we move towards a more engaged University, we will need to find ways to celebrate our partners and their achievements.

***Principle Six:*** *Outreach and engagement requires a supportive culture as well as leadership.* Fostering outreach and engagement is a question of developing the institutional culture as a whole, not just creating a separate office to accomplish this goal. To be successful, ideally all parts of the University must be expected to participate and contribute, although not necessarily in equal measure. For outreach and engagement to succeed as a guiding philosophy, there must be leadership from and encouragement of those faculty, students, and staff members who see opportunities for outreach and engagement in their own work. Individual faculty members will take leadership roles in advancing the University's goals. Additionally, at the institutional level,

through the colleges, schools, departments, and administrative units, there must be a collective and shared desire to participate in outreach and engagement and to lead in selected areas. While some offices will have leadership roles, accountability for outreach and engagement is critical and progress will be measured through agreed-upon frameworks and reporting structures. Within the context in which outreach and engagement initiatives are ultimately developed, implemented, and sustained by individual faculty members and/or their academic and research units, institutional culture at all levels will need to support and encourage innovation, be more flexible in accepting new and emerging ideas which build on concepts of outreach and engagement, and where appropriate, selective risk-taking.

The consultations about this Foundational Document indicated that more clarity was needed about how the preceding principles might apply. There are two points we wish to elaborate.

***Academic focus of outreach and engagement.*** Running behind and among the above principles is the idea that, in an environment of scarce resources, we cannot do all kinds of outreach and engagement equally or simultaneously. We have to make choices at many levels in the University; the principles above are ways to guide such choices and determine which, out of all the types of outreach and engagement we might do, are the activities and proposals we should actually pursue in the next few years. We are mindful that in our consultations some argued that the University should value outreach and engagement for its own sake as an independent activity. But resource limitations do not make it feasible to value all outreach and engagement equally —nor do we value all teaching and research equally, for we give general priority to particular levels (degree) and types (peer-reviewed).

*The type of outreach and engagement in which we should concentrate our new initiatives in the near future is engagement linked to academic teaching and scholarly work: which enriches the academic environment, develops partnerships, is based on unique expertise, and so on as described in the principles above.* This focus makes sense because we will never be the only kind of institution that offers service or reaches out to communities, but we will be the only kind of institution that offers degree learning and the research that goes with it. A university does not have a distinguishing outreach and engagement mission except insofar as this is connected closely to its academic mission.

One of the implications of the above principles is that *most new outreach and engagement initiatives for faculty and students will be through teaching and research.* As Principle One indicates, the types of outreach and engagement in which we concentrate for new initiatives should be the forms that enrich teaching and learning and contribute to innovative, high-quality, high-impact research, scholarship, and artistic work. This has the advantage of emphasizing degree programs, both on and off-campus, including those offered now in partnership with regional colleges and others by distributed methods of delivery. This also has the advantage, in an environment of limited resources, of not asking faculty members who choose to be involved in outreach and engagement to fragment their time among unrelated activities.

***Other forms of outreach.*** We have suggested that outreach and engagement through teaching and research will be the primary concern in new initiatives over the coming period and the main way in which faculty and students are likely to become involved in new initiatives. We are not suggesting general expansion in other kinds of outreach such as nonacademic outreach by other employees of the university, a proliferation of new certificates and non-degree education, public service not connected to teaching and research, or practice of professional skills for their own sake. With this said, many other kinds of outreach, besides degree teaching and related research, will still need to occur. We expect these should mainly happen within the frameworks of community-university partnerships that also have teaching and/or research dimensions, or where they directly support the teaching and

research missions, or they make minimal drain on resources. Examples of non-degree activities that make sense in this way can include the following:

- certificate programs linked to degree programs, to faculty research interests, or to community-university partnerships
- professional development programs lodged within partnerships between colleges and professions (continuing professional education)
- clinical services that have spinoff benefits for student learning or for research
- the efforts of Student Enrolment Services Division (SESD) to recruit students into academic programs
- the work of alumni and development staff to keep the University in touch with alumni and donors
- facilitation by the Communications Office of two-way communication with the public about the University's academic programs and research

In our view these also meet the standard of being forms of outreach and engagement that are linked to academic missions of units and programs. A higher priority might be placed where such activities are undertaken within formal, collaborative partnerships (engagement as opposed to outreach), but all of these types of activities need to occur in various measures to support the academic mission of the University. The *Integrated Plan* recommends the establishment of a Continuing Education Unit intended to promote some of these forms of outreach as well as distance and off-campus degree programming.

Outreach activities that are not really linked to programs or research will also still occur, as they have in the past, where different staff and units see them as making sense on a small scale. However, the implication of this Foundational Document is that such unlinked activities, occurring outside of partnerships that have academic dimensions, should be a low priority for application of resources and development of new initiatives. We are aware from consultations that public service is equally important with teaching and research in some parts of the University. We observe only that this is not the case across the University; the suggestion to pursue particularly those kinds of public service roles that illustrate concepts of engagement and partnership may still be helpful in colleges and units where public service is an active and equal tradition.

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We hope it is apparent from how we have discussed the above six principles that outreach and engagement is an evolutionary process. A more 'intentionally engaged' university will not be created overnight. To do so will oblige us to build on our traditional strengths in outreach and public service and, in a more deliberate fashion, align these with our teaching and research programs through the concept of engagement. As we do this, and keeping in mind that the University of Saskatchewan will not be the only University to do this, engagement would be part of a distinctive identity for the University, building on our unique 'sense of place' within Saskatchewan and Canada. With this understanding and these principles in hand, we can now turn to a discussion of five strategies on which the University as a whole should concentrate over the coming five to ten years.

#### **IV. Outreach and Engagement: Strategies for Development**

The consultation process for this Foundational Document, presented ten specific, –although not mutually exclusive,— areas of activity for consideration as priority areas for development. Through the consultation process, we learned of other potential areas of interest as well as areas of activity

which should be assigned priority. Utilizing the principles enunciated above should assist us in distinguishing among a host of competing and tantalizing alternatives for advancement. As we do so, we need to keep in mind that the University of Saskatchewan is a complex one, and it is a University with a strong track record in public service and extension. Our goal is to make outreach and engagement at least as integral within the University of Saskatchewan as public service and extension have been. And, while the planning process challenges us to identify priorities, we do so in the full awareness that setting priorities and making choices can be controversial. Given the resources we have available to us, it is essential that we place greatest emphasis on those activities which propel us forward most quickly and which define us even more specifically from other universities in Canada and elsewhere. Although the strategies outlined below emerged from the consultation process that we followed, all of these strategies will require ongoing dialogue with external communities to ensure that we understand their needs and expectations and take these into account in our academic and research programs.

***Strategy One: Service Learning.*** *Our teaching and research programs will become more distinctive by systematically building in community-based service learning opportunities for students throughout the province and beyond.* Students already expect, and increasingly demand, that their experience of university education be engaged with the world beyond the classroom, the library, the laboratory, or the studio. Students want a meaningful learning experience that will prepare them for full participation in the world in which they live.

Service learning is a form of experiential education that involves students working in communities or on community-related issues and engaging in critical reflection about their experiences. The recently created Canadian Association for Community Service-Learning defines it as follows:

Community Service-Learning (CSL) is a powerful vehicle for experiential education that has clear objectives for both the learning that occurs by the involved students and the service being provided in the community organization setting. There is a strong emphasis on inclusive partnerships with non-profit agencies through their direct involvement as co-educators, providing community expertise in all phases of the learning process from planning through to the experiential and evaluation stages. In addition, CSL programs place a high priority on ensuring that the service being provided significantly addresses real needs identified by the community itself.

CSL programs are most effective when including key elements drawn from experiential education theory, especially developing critical thinking tools and implementing intentional components. Carefully designed and implemented CSL programs and courses assist students to make meaning from the community experiences, to connect real-life experience to more theoretical classroom study, and to develop as individuals, in relation to their values, their sense of social responsibility, and their leadership skills.<sup>15</sup>

As we can see from the above, service learning involves a structured, designed, and intentional connection between the curriculum and a community.<sup>16</sup> Service learning is not “service” *tout court* because it emphasizes reflection, assignments, and evaluation within the context of a formal for-credit course or program. But it is not simply “learning,” either, because it involves learning about specific things or in doing specific tasks that are also of interest to external communities: it

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<sup>15</sup> See [http://www.communityservicelearning.ca/en/welcome\\_what\\_is.cfm](http://www.communityservicelearning.ca/en/welcome_what_is.cfm). This website provides valuable information about community service-learning in Canada.

<sup>16</sup> For additional information on service learning, see <http://www.communityservicelearning.ca/en/> or <http://www.usask.ca/vpacademic/integrated-planning/csl/links.php>.

illustrates, for students, the principles of engagement. It can be as small as an assignment within a course or as large as a full-time paid employment for a period of months, all depending on context, goals, and needs. “Co-operative education” programs, internships, practica or project courses, study tours, and case studies within courses are familiar examples of experiences that may fit under the heading of service learning, particularly if they are structured formally to involve reflection, evaluation, and program credit as well as benefit to external groups that have a voice in the process.

The field of service learning is expanding across North America as a primary vehicle for engaging post-secondary students in direct and reflective involvement with communities.<sup>17</sup>

While diverse in its forms, the goals of service learning typically include:

- The direct provision of service, based on community needs.
- The development of students’ understanding of community life and capacity for critical reflection.
- The inspiration of students’ commitment to civic responsibility and social justice.
- The integration of theoretical (discipline-based) knowledge with practical (community-based) experience.

In many universities where service learning opportunities are offered, students are granted credit equivalent to a three-credit course for work that they do in the community. Some universities aim to have every student have an experiential learning opportunity (such as a service learning experience) before they graduate. Students are also developing ‘portfolios’ or ‘electronic portfolios’, a resource which they can use to demonstrate skills and abilities they have learned and experiences they have had over their educational experience.

At the University of Saskatchewan, students are already participating in experiential learning initiatives in many colleges, ranging from clinical practica, to study abroad programs, to cooperative education/work study arrangements or internship opportunities, or research projects inside the classroom. We provide four examples below of initiatives which are closely aligned with the definition of service learning provided above. We anticipate that the Teaching and Learning Foundational Document will provide guidance on experiential learning opportunities of all types.

- Through the *Student Wellness Initiative Towards Community Health (SWITCH)* students in the health science colleges on campus are designing service learning opportunities for themselves. SWITCH is a student driven extra-curricular program, inter-professional in design, in which students from a variety of health science backgrounds participate, under supervision, in the delivery of health care services during the late hours and weekends at the West Side Community Clinic in Saskatoon. They also conduct ancillary health programming at the Community Clinic and other facilities such as the White Buffalo Youth Lodge. One of its strengths is that it provides services to an underserved community while giving students from nine health related disciplines, three universities, and SIAST a meaningful learning experience. This student-led group, which operates from the West Side Community Clinic, held its grand opening launch in October 2005.

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<sup>17</sup> More information about service learning can be found at (for example) the following websites: <http://service-learning.osu.edu/>; <http://www.communityservicelearning.ca/en/>; <http://www.compact.org/>; <http://www.pewundergradforum.org/project%20campus%20compact.html>; <http://www.evergreen.loyola.edu/~rcrews/sl/>



- Through the *Leadership Advantage* program, students are offered an opportunity to develop the interdisciplinary, broad-based, skills required for effective leadership in any field. Developed as an extra-curricular, non-credit, program for undergraduate students, Leadership Advantage has six components, one of which is a community service learning component. In 2004, students participated in many worthwhile service learning projects with a variety of community organizations (such as Canadian Blood Services, Frontier College, Friendship Inn, Cosmopolitan Industries, Rainbow Community Centre, Science West, Engineers Without Borders) and have gained valuable contacts and experiences in the process. Businesses which have participated in the program are hiring program graduates; students have decided to pursue leadership study at the graduate level or at other universities; community partners have available to them an essential resource.
- St. Thomas More College (STM) offers both degree-credit and co-curricular service learning opportunities. The *Service and Justice Project*, a co-curricular service-learning project in its third year, encourages students to draw connections between the university classroom and community settings by involving them in placements which give them new experiences and providing them with opportunities to gather for reflection to interpret the meaning of their experience. In 2004-05, 25 students committed to an average of two to three hours per week of volunteering in the community per term (excluding examination and holiday periods), a one hour bi-weekly reflection session to allow the students to interpret the meaning of their experience, paying particular attention to its social and political context, and, participation in 5 community agency suppers in which agencies come to STM to explain their work in the community. 2004/05 marked the debut of *Cultivating Humanity*, an interdisciplinary course offered by faculty in STM in which students spend time in a service learning placement and are graded on the academic work they produce, such as reflection papers on the links between academic concepts and service experiences. Based on these successes, STM is now establishing a pilot 'Engaged Learning' office and hiring a coordinator who will be expected to work with faculty to build capacity for service-learning and to assist them in partnering with community agencies as well as monitoring and evaluating students in their placements.
- To fulfill degree requirements, pharmacy students participate in the *Structured Practice Experiences Program* which provides professional experience rotations in community, hospital, and other institutional environments throughout their four year program. It includes two four week summer rotations in community pharmacy, hospital, or extended care settings during years 2 and 3. Designed with progressively more interaction with a variety of health environments, students are expected to provide direct community service, but also to learn about the context in which the service is provided and to understand the connection between the service, the patient/client, and the academic course work. Each student is supervised by an assigned clinical instructor/Pharmacy preceptor.

While these examples provide only an initial description of how undergraduate and graduate students can become more connected with external communities and organizations, they certainly demonstrate the power of service learning. We anticipate that many more experiential learning opportunities, including student internships, cooperative education, international study-abroad programs as well as community service learning opportunities, will develop as faculty reach out for inspiration for discipline-relevant learning opportunities and as students express continued interest in innovative, rather than traditional, learning experiences. As we look forward to creating a diverse set of experiential learning initiatives, we particularly seek to create service learning opportunities in partnership with First Nations and Metis peoples. Our students and faculty have much to learn from interactions with Aboriginal peoples and our academic and research programs can only benefit from these interactions.

Other universities in Canada are identifying particular aspects of experiential learning as particular niches for themselves (UBC, for example, in international exchanges, University of Guelph in peer-learning and cooperative education). Given the array of service learning opportunities already available on campus, the University of Saskatchewan's differentiating feature can be 'service learning' within a comprehensive outreach and engagement philosophy. Because we have a provincial mandate, we will need to reach out beyond Saskatoon to the province in identifying service learning opportunities. Reaching out beyond our provincial borders to provide a truly global educational experience for our students and to ensure that our faculty's expertise addresses global questions could make our contribution even more comprehensive and appealing to current and future students.

From discussions during the consultation process it is clear that the University will have to further define and share examples and categories of service learning appropriate to our academic goals, and to develop approaches for making service learning widely accessible in a variety of programs, locations, and community settings, students. The forthcoming (2006) Foundational Document on Teaching and Learning has a key role to play in these tasks.

***Strategy Two: Community-University Research Partnerships.*** *Our participation in innovative community-university research programs will position us to be a national leader in community-based research and in public policy.* The University of Saskatchewan has a growing national reputation and a remarkable track record of success in community-university research. The University has entered into a number of formal partnerships with external groups and organizations for the collaborative design, conduct, interpretation, and communication of research relevant to those external communities. Many of these collaborations involve the social and health sciences, but humanities, other sciences, and professions are also involved. Some of them focus on the specific challenges of First Nations and Metis peoples within Saskatchewan. These kinds of research partnerships have taken on new significance in recent years due to increased emphasis by the federal granting-councils on demonstrating the impact of research as well as on support for Community-University Research Alliances (CURAs). These are mutually-beneficial partnerships in which the University has moved beyond the traditional model of dissemination of knowledge to co-creation. Examples of existing community-university research partnerships include:

- The *Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR)* established in 1999 is a partnership between a set of community-based organizations and faculty and graduate students from the University of Saskatchewan. CUISR aims "to serve as a focal point for community-based research and to integrate the social research needs and experiential knowledge within the community with the technical expertise available at the University." The partnership structure is expressed in two co-directors, one from the University and one from the external community, and a board with equal membership from the University and community. Three research modules have been the primary focus: Indicators of Quality of Life, Community Economic Development, and Health Determinants Health Policy. Since its establishment, CUISR has broadened the origins of research questions and dissemination of research findings with over 40 community-based organizations participating in community-based research initiatives. It has also supported students through fellowships to conduct research projects of interest to the communities.
- The *Indigenous Peoples Health Research Centre (IPHRC)* is a collaborative venture supported by First Nations University of Canada, the University of Regina, and the

- University of Saskatchewan. IPHRC is funded jointly by CIHR and the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation. IPHRC funds capacity development in health research by supporting researchers, post-doctoral fellows, graduate students, and summer students nearly all of whom are of Aboriginal descent. It also funds small community-based research projects that are a partnership between university researchers and indigenous communities. While the research interests of IPHRC are primarily in the sociohealth and cultural health areas, support of trainees occurs in all health disciplines. IPHRC has a major interest in the ethics of research in indigenous communities, and has an advisory board on which the majority representation is Aboriginal.
- The *Centre for the Study of Co-operatives* was established in 1984 as a contractual partnership among the University, large Saskatchewan and Canadian co-operative enterprises, and the Government of Saskatchewan. The centre's faculty and staff conduct research, teach courses, provide workshops, and publish research relevant to co-operatives and the social economy. The centre's advantage in conducting leading-edge research relevant to communities and membership-based businesses is its interdisciplinarity. Currently, academics from six colleges are involved in the centre. It is home to a 2002-2006 SSHRC strategic grant to look at issues of social cohesion and co-operative membership in communities across Canada with the collaboration of 15 academics at 9 Canadian universities and over 20 community-based partner organizations. The centre's research and outreach, the teaching of its faculty, and its network of contacts connect the University to an important part of the Saskatchewan business community, and at the same time to almost half the province's population who are the members and owners of these enterprises.
  - The largest-ever SSHRC grant received at the University of Saskatchewan was announced in November 2005: *Linking, Learning, Leveraging: Social Enterprises, Knowledgeable Economies, and Sustainable Communities* is a joint project of two of the organizations profiled above, the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives and CUISR. The grant involves a wide network of academics and community-based organizations in Northern Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan using an engagement model of 50/50 decision-making between academics and community representatives. Academic and community co-directors share planning, decision-making, identification of major research questions, adjudication and evaluation of student research at all levels of the project.
  - *In Motion* is a co-governance initiative created through a partnership of four core agencies (Saskatoon Health Region, the City of Saskatoon, the University of Saskatchewan, and ParticipACTION Canada) to develop a comprehensive program 'building community capacity and health promotion research'. The model's strength is that researchers and research users create, translate, and disseminate knowledge together; the collaboration involves sharing responsibility for each stage of the research process, including formulating the question, designing the project, determining measurement tools and the knowledge gathering process, collecting and interpreting data, and disseminating findings. Described as a 'refreshingly original example of university-community research collaborations', the project enjoys the participation of faculty and graduate students from diverse units on campus (Kinesiology, Physical Therapy, Medicine, Psychology, Community Health and Epidemiology, Education, Nursing, Geography) and over 40 community organizations. It provides funding for undergraduate and graduate internships, community sabbaticals, base operations, and personnel. It includes a visiting scholars program which has funded four international researchers to share and expand the relevance of their findings and to begin work on collaborative international research initiatives.

- The University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina together support the *Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit (SPHERU)*, an interdisciplinary research unit committed to policy-relevant, community-sensitive research on population health determinants. SPHERU conducts research into the social and environmental determinants of population health under two broad categories: research on health determining conditions, the relationships within and between those conditions, and the policy and programmatic implications; and evaluation studies of policy and programmatic interventions to make social and environmental conditions more health-promoting, and more equitable in their allocation of health risks and opportunities among different population groups. It has established an innovative post-graduate training initiative with an interdisciplinary approach to population health research, focusing on creating new health knowledge and applying research findings through partnerships with community constituencies, community-based organizations, policy makers and government.
- The *Institute of Agricultural Rural and Environmental Health (I.A.R.E.H)* (formerly the Centre for Agricultural Medicine), now approaching its twentieth year, is the only organization in Canada devoted entirely to health issues in agriculture. The institute provides a comprehensive approach to education, research, and service to the people in rural Saskatchewan and Canada by sponsoring service, education, prevention, and research in four competency areas: agricultural (health promotion specific to farmers, their families, workers and others in agricultural production); rural (fostering health of rural and remote communities, including acute and chronic care, emergency services, and communication); environmental (preserving clean air and water, conducting research into pesticide exposure, ecosystem health, and risk assessment); and occupational health (through research, service and health promotion aimed at farm, forestry, and other rural based industries and workers). Its success is based on strong linkages with industry, co-operatives, and rural organizations, as well as funding from the Saskatchewan departments of Health, Agriculture, and Labour and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and other foundations.

Formal collaborations of these kinds epitomize the concept of engagement as a “two-way street.” In a future where such alliances are likely to become increasingly important, the University of Saskatchewan has a distinct advantage because of its early successes in both community-university research alliances and in networks and centres of excellence programs. At the same time, such alliances almost invariably require universities to work in collaborative and interdisciplinary modes, posing challenges for some university processes and structures. The examples demonstrate both the need for structural changes, and the opportunities inherent in engaged scholarship as a way to generate both creativity and effectiveness in research. They also demonstrate a need for responsiveness to societal needs and require that we develop processes which are inherently more receptive to ideas even if these are not fully developed when they are presented to internal bodies for approval.

In the *Integrated Plan*, a School of Public Policy was proposed to position the University to engage in issues of emerging and critical importance to the province and the nation.<sup>18</sup> Currently, University of Saskatchewan faculty and staff are regularly asked to contribute opinions to the social discourse on a broad range of topics, such as explanations about particular legal decisions, or the ethical implications of particular actions, or nature of the farm crisis, or the sustainability of the economy, or the perceived crisis in health, or requests to act as local experts for radio and television programs. Much of our applied research provides us with a tremendous opportunity to

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<sup>18</sup> See the *University of Saskatchewan Integrated Plan*, pages 18-19.

participate in a coherent and concentrated way in the public policy debates of our day. The idea is to bring together the various initiatives that are currently underway (or in development) so that a central presence and a focal point could be established for our effort. The Task Force on Changing Structures has suggested that schools would play an important role in the University's outreach and engagement goals. The proposed School of Public Policy might connect the expertise available on our campus with the interests and needs of the provincial and national communities.

We close this section with a reminder: in addition to these large, interdisciplinary, community-university research initiatives, the University needs to systematically highlight the many contributions of individual faculty members, students, and staff through active partnerships with community-based organizations, agencies, groups or individuals. There are many examples and exemplars of curiosity-based research which could fit under this strategy. Submissions from colleges and other units have so far highlighted scores of individual projects across the University that illustrate the partnership approach of engagement with various communities through teaching or research as well as service dimensions. Individual faculty members are creative, effective, and remarkably successful in practicing engagement approaches, often not because they have studied engagement in a theoretical way, but rather because they see ways to connect through their regular academic activities with the needs and interests of communities. In some cases they teach individual courses, or direct individual for-credit projects within such courses, that address interests and issues of external communities who are consulted and have voices. In other cases, individual faculty members have developed programs of research, scholarship, or artistic work in partnership with external organizations or groups and have gained recognition for their success both in the University and in the communities concerned. Such contributions need to be recognized and celebrated, although in this Foundational Document we hesitate to name individuals for fear of being arbitrary. We favour the development of systematic processes at the unit and University levels to document, celebrate, and appropriately reward individuals engaged in such innovative work. We anticipate that the Inventory of Outreach and Engagement, referred to earlier in this document, can contribute to these processes as it evolves and grows over the coming decade.

***Strategy Three: Economic Development, Technology Transfer, and Knowledge Creation.*** *We will provide leadership in the sharing and co-creation of knowledge with Saskatchewan industry and communities in support of economic and other development objectives.* In the October 2000 Speech from the Throne, the federal government enunciated the goal that Canada strive to become “one of the top five countries for research and development performance by 2010.”<sup>19</sup> In the *Integrated Plan*, the University described its commitment to the people of Saskatchewan, in particular its goal to be a driving force for prosperity and growth for Saskatchewan by providing innovative educational programs in health; science, technology and society; environment; business and entrepreneurship; and public policy, programs which address the multi-faceted and multi-dimensional needs and challenges of the people of the province.

At the University of Saskatchewan, we already have a strong track record of putting our research to work for the betterment of society. Thorberger Thorvaldson was instrumental in the development of concrete for northern climates. The Cobalt treatment for cancer was developed in

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<sup>19</sup> Government of Canada, Speech from the Throne to open the first session of the 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament of Canada, 2000, page 4 of the website version. The entire speech can be accessed at [www.wft-ddt.gc.ca/sftddt\\_e.htm](http://www.wft-ddt.gc.ca/sftddt_e.htm).

Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan pioneered the kidney transplant. Agriculture faculty at the University have successfully bred many crops which are currently sold worldwide. Innovation Place is one the most successful research parks of its kind in North America providing opportunities for over 130 companies to develop in close proximity to the University, and, more often, in partnership with our faculty and staff while contributing substantially to Saskatoon's and Saskatchewan's economy.<sup>20</sup> Over the years we have created nearly 40 "spin-off" companies or innovators as a direct or indirect result of research by individual faculty on campus. These companies are in areas as diverse as human and animal health, agriculture, forestry, manufacturing and engineering, and include, among others, Agricol Research Investments Inc., SED Systems, Prairie Swine Centre Inc., V-Com, Envirotec Laboratories, MCN Bioproducts Inc., Cellfor Inc., and Adnavance Technologies Inc. We have made a substantial contribution—innovations coming out of our laboratories are seeds of the future economy of Saskatchewan—but we can do more in both knowledge creation and knowledge transfer through a strategy of proactive engagement with industry sectors, communities, cities in economic development.

We have begun to put greater emphasis on our industry liaison services, especially for fresh ideas with market potential. Established following a strategic review of activities conducted by UST Inc (the former technology transfer arm of the University), the Industry Liaison Office under the supervision of the Vice-President Research has put into place a strategy to connect University of Saskatchewan researchers and industry partners. Building on a model that relies heavily on close personal relationships, ILO has established teams and located them in satellite offices in key colleges to ensure that regular interaction between the ILO professional, the university based researcher and industry occur. ILO staff are involved in developing relationships with a wide variety of businesses and groups, such as the Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority, Sask Pulse Growers, Sask Cancer Agency, the Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce, Ag Canada, and Westlink (among others). In addition, ILO acts as mentor to new companies which act as receptors of our technologies and to provide funding support for researchers to do prototyping and proof of principle work.

Development, however, is not only about economic development or technology transfer. One of the meanings of the term "knowledge economy" is to denote an environment in which the attraction, retention, creativity, and engagement of educated people is key to success in a community, province, region, or nation. Saskatchewan businesses, health districts, educational institutions, governments, and organizations of all types need skilled people. The University hires such people into the province and trains many thousands of graduates, thereby contributing to the social and economic prosperity of our province. But also, by providing a lively intellectual environment in the community, with opportunities for educated people to improve their knowledge, universities help other organizations retain motivated and skilled individuals. Scientific, artistic, and cultural activities, together with opportunities for professional development and upgrading, help attract and keep so-called "knowledge workers" in Saskatchewan's economy and local communities.

We should not forget the contributions of talented faculty to the intellectual life of communities, and that communities outside Saskatoon also desire access to these talents. Two immediate possibilities are, first, to make better use of the provincial network of Regional Colleges, and,

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<sup>20</sup> In a recent economic impact study published by the *Star Phoenix* (February 18, 2005), Innovation Place was reported to contribute \$184 million to Saskatoon's economy in 2004 and a further \$262 million to the provincial economy over the same period. It also reported that demand by clients is such that Innovation Place is at capacity.

second, the world-wide network of U of S alumni. This can also be done within Saskatchewan without necessarily launching elaborate new programs. As indicated above, interesting scientific, artistic, literary, and cultural events are part of the development of successful communities. To do occasional lectures or workshops within their areas of expertise is a common role for faculty. Why not consider exploring with faculty the possibility of choosing to do one or two such presentations per year in various locales in Saskatchewan? Every time a faculty member did this, particularly if this was done in connection with community partner organizations which did the organizing and advertising, it would reinforce the University's profile and might make a substantial difference within the communities concerned. Even if a small number of faculty chose to do so, the benefit to the University's contacts, reach, and reputation would be substantial.

As a 'talent attractor', bringing together highly educated, highly qualified professional people with a set of particular skills and training to live and work on problems of all types, large and small, personal interest and public good, for specialized audiences or mass consumption, the University of Saskatchewan has a special obligation to the people of the province. While we are one of the largest employers in Saskatchewan, we need to ensure that we enhance the cultural vitality (as well as the prosperity and economic development) of society, not only in Saskatoon but also in other places we serve. As our first President stated, the research work that we do must better the lives of Saskatchewan's residents.

As we participate in the innovation agenda, we must retain our critical perspective. We must also participate in sustainability efforts and initiatives to protect the finite resources of our planet. Universities the world over are re-conceptualizing their role in the economic development of their respective jurisdictions. Here, at the University of Saskatchewan, through the *Strategic Directions* and in the *Integrated Plan*, we have committed to playing a leadership role in the 'revitalization of our province'.

***Strategy Four: Lifelong Learning and Continuing Education.*** *Continuing education programs and initiatives will be developed and delivered in selective areas to complement and enhance our degree-level program offerings and to provide lifelong learning opportunities to the people of Saskatchewan and beyond.* We begin this strategy with a reaffirmation of our commitment to provide high quality degree and degree-level certificate programs, primarily to the people of Saskatchewan, but also to people from other parts of Canada and the world. This is our distinctive mission and our particular contribution to Saskatchewan. We will cherish and safeguard our roles and responsibilities to ensure our students receive the best education available, that our graduates have access to high-end career opportunities, and are well-prepared for the world. We will also carefully nurture opportunities for students throughout Saskatchewan and elsewhere to participate in our degree-level programs, through off-campus courses and distributed (online, televised, satellite, distance, correspondence) delivery methods. This will continue to require strong collaborative partnerships between the University of Saskatchewan, its colleges and departments, and other educational providers, including the Regional Colleges, SIAST, First Nations University of Canada, Campus Saskatchewan, St Peter's College, and other affiliated institutions. In so doing, we hope that we contribute to community development by expanding educational capacity throughout our province.

While the University's degree credit programs are its unique and distinguishing feature and will continue to be our leading priority for resource allocation, our academic priorities or mission nevertheless give us important reasons to be interested in pre-degree, non-degree, and after degree education. Most importantly our interest lies in continuing education for our alumni, for



community partners, and for the general public where our expertise speaks to community needs. Many units of the University, including the Extension Division and professional colleges, already deliver non-degree credit educational courses and programs of various kinds and under various arrangements to people in Saskatchewan and, in some cases, to people in distant corners of the world. While this may remain a field characterized by considerable diversity of programs, the University should either anticipate or encourage more targeted development in strategic areas of interest. Some of these will be by colleges and some will be in areas where colleges do not choose to be active. The proposed Continuing Education Unit will have an important role in identifying opportunities for the University to pursue cost-efficient programming in personal and professional growth and development where these do not already exist.

One possible area for further development is continuing professional education conducted in partnerships between professional colleges and their communities. Opportunities for growth exist in collaboration with professional organizations, and should obtain greater prominence in our organizational and program planning. The Colleges of Agriculture, Commerce, Dentistry, Education, Engineering, Law, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy and Nutrition, and Veterinary Medicine are all, to varying degrees, engaged in the development, organization, supervision, or delivery of continuing education programs for their graduates. There is a growing need in many professions for high quality continuing education programs which build on the unique expertise of our faculty. Many of the colleges are challenged to find ways to provide this service given current funding sources and other demands on their time; some (most notably Agriculture) have looked to the Extension Division to assist in the delivery of continuing professional education programs. Such programs represent an important opportunity for professional colleges to partner with professional bodies and associations to offer programs in a collaborative fashion throughout Saskatchewan. With the right conjunction of academic interest, partnership commitment, and community needs, the University might play a more prominent role in the continued development of Saskatchewan's 'knowledge workers' and might, as a byproduct, build its partnership base.

Another possibility is non-degree-credit education that has wider academic implications. Certificates that provide genuine opportunities for laddering into degree programs or connect closely with the academic priorities of colleges are especially important. In some cases, for example, certificate or noncredit education may help recruit students into degree-credit programs. In other cases, the connection is research. In consultations about this Foundational Document, colleagues in Labour Studies pointed out that their program is an example of outreach and engagement in this sense: non-degree-credit education in Labour Studies occurs as part of a relationship between the active research interests of the faculty involved and the Saskatchewan labour movement. If we did not have active faculty researchers, whose activities involve a relationship with the community concerned, we would not likely have such a program. The point in a planning approach is to devote resources to things where they fit, not just because there is a need or because we can.

There are other educational needs in society that may not relate to the expertise and interests of groups of faculty, the missions and priorities of colleges, or to our degrees. The University is one of many providers of such education, and will undoubtedly continue to be. We are well aware that the educational needs of Saskatchewan residents have changed substantially since the early days of the last century, or even those of a generation ago. While the changing educational needs and interests of the population of Saskatchewan must drive our non-degree-credit educational offerings, the University must concentrate its resources on meeting those needs that are closest to our central academic mission. This means giving priority to degree-level programs and related research first, and second to those non-degree-credit courses that are closely related or that are embedded in community-university partnerships that have teaching or research dimensions.

Unrelated or loosely related programs and activities must be a low priority for the use of university operating resources. This will undoubtedly necessitate some fundamental changes in the University's existing units involved in non-degree-credit programs, notably the Extension Division. In all cases, the challenge will be to broaden from extension and public service to outreach and engagement, while keeping the institution focused on its teaching and research, scholarly, and artistic work missions.

***Strategy Five: International Outreach and Engagement.*** *We will strengthen our collaboration with scholars and educational institutions around the world to bring a broader array of educational experiences to our students and to provide increased opportunities for scholarly initiatives for our faculty within the international community of scholars.* Universities are inherently international institutions. The spirit of outreach and engagement encourages our faculty, students, and staff to reach out to distant parts of the world, learn from others, share our expertise with them, and address issues and challenges of mutual interest. The University of Saskatchewan participates in international networks in virtually every sphere of its activity, serving both to bring world knowledge and experience to Saskatchewan and to take this province's expertise to the world.

The scope of current international activities across the University is almost impossible to summarize.<sup>21</sup> International students enrich the University of Saskatchewan, facilitate our contacts with different regions of the world, and constitute a means by which the University shares its intellectual resources with far-flung corners of the globe. Besides international students who come to the U of S to register in our degree programs, many colleges offer training and workshops here, on location in other countries, or over the internet to learners from other countries. International curriculum content is built into many undergraduate and graduate programs through courses and study opportunities about world issues or institutions, and about different regions of the world, their societies, cultures, religions, histories, politics, geographies, economies, literatures, and so on. Such curriculum content promotes scholarly engagement by faculty and students with the world and its peoples. Departments such as History, Languages and Linguistics, Political Studies, and others teach many such courses, and the interdisciplinary program in International Studies in the College of Arts and Science brings these and others together into an internationally focused degree. The Language Centre (formerly the Centre for Second-Language Instruction) offers non-degree-credit training in a number of languages. International research is conducted in almost every part of the University. Most science-based departments and colleges are involved in collaborative international research.

A strategy of proactive engagement with the global community could manifest itself in a number of ways. For example,

- International study tours and student exchanges are increasingly common and contribute in important ways to student learning. The Chernivtsi exchange with Ukraine is one of the best-known, but there are study tours to China and Costa Rica offered by the College of Education, as well as a term-abroad program in Guatemala and an increasing number of international student exchange programs in Europe and elsewhere offered by the College of Arts and Science. The College of Commerce provides international opportunities and

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<sup>21</sup> See *Globalism and the University of Saskatchewan* – the Foundational Document on International Initiatives at [http://www.usask.ca/vpacademic/integrated-planning/plandocs/docs/new\\_International\\_Plan\\_FINAL\\_ApprovedbyCouncil.pdf](http://www.usask.ca/vpacademic/integrated-planning/plandocs/docs/new_International_Plan_FINAL_ApprovedbyCouncil.pdf).

- experiences for students through its Centre for International Business Studies, which also helps promote Saskatchewan's participation in international markets.
- Faculty exchanges, reciprocal visits, and inter-institutional partnerships are also increasing. New partnerships are developing on and beyond our campus as expertise and associations are reconceived within the global context. For instance, the Departments of Educational Administration and Sociology are working closely together on educational initiatives in China; this new synergy is also creating new opportunities for the College of Graduate Studies and Research and other units on campus. The University of the Arctic international consortium, which the University of Saskatchewan recently joined, is another framework for such international linkages and exchanges.
  - International development assistance is provided by faculty from many colleges who participate in CIDA and other projects to assist in social, economic, or political development in other parts of the world. This constitutes an important form of outreach and contributes to the University's scholarly engagement with the world. Several health-sciences colleges have been involved in health training and promotion in Mozambique for many years. The College of Agriculture is home to a CIDA-funded Tier I project in Training for Rural Development in Mongolia.

While the University's international activities are increasing, it would be fair to say that in this area, as in others, outreach is more common than engagement. This appears to be changing. In a number of the above examples, there are formal, academically grounded partnerships with universities, government agencies, or communities in other countries; our partners help define the research questions and approach, serving as sources of knowledge and wisdom to enrich our programs and not only as objects of study. The engagement dimension of such activities likely needs to be deepened as international activities grow in number. Study tours and student exchanges could more frequently be reciprocal and collaborative, so our students learn together with their peers elsewhere. Where there is international interest in our subjects of instruction, notably in the developing world, the University could signal openness to new initiatives, redesigning what we do to fit with things others do, and build a portfolio of academically sound programs that respond to the needs of learners throughout the world. In international development projects, the University could adopt a longer-term approach, following up successful projects to build and sustain collaborative learning and research initiatives with institutions in the developing world. These are just some of the ways our international connections could become richer as the concepts and approaches of engagement spread.

Engagement does not conflict with other priorities of the University, but rather offers a fresh and distinctive way to address those priorities. The educational environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> century demands students and faculty who are citizens of the world. While we must be cognizant of our commitment to our province, we must also demonstrate our commitment to our global sense of place, our place within the worldwide community of scholars. It is urgent that we attend to being a visible and prominent participant within the Canadian and international higher education community. To do so will require us to provide more opportunities for students to experience other environments, different languages, cultures and traditions. Some of those experiences should relate closely to the Indigenous peoples of the world and reflect our University's particular commitment to providing teaching and research programs which emphasize our province's particular opportunity.

The recent creation of the Global Commons (announced in February 2005) is a first commitment towards international outreach and engagement; the Office of Global Relations and the School of International Studies (proposed in the *Integrated Plan*) are others. They are all aimed at bringing new prominence to our international activities and efforts. They represent opportunities to co-ordinate our

activities and provide a focal point for internal and external contacts. The University's alumni network provides an obvious focus for new international connections, just as it does for new connections within Saskatchewan.

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**The preceding five strategies —development of service learning; expansion of community-university research partnerships; leadership in economic development, technology transfer and knowledge creation; targeted involvement in lifelong learning and continuing education; and deepening of international outreach and engagement — represent priorities for the use of institutional resources in the next five to ten years.** These strategies flow from the concepts of outreach and engagement, from the principles we have identified, and from our consultations with many groups. They are achievable without any revolution in our institution's mission or structures, but they do represent new approaches that will work best within a supportive institutional culture and framework. We anticipate that implementation of these strategies will enhance the University of Saskatchewan's presence within Canada and establish it as one of the nation's most engaged universities. In doing so, we will reaffirm our commitment to 'sense of place'.

While a Foundational Document is just that —a resource for units and leaders to turn to in their own planning and development of new initiatives —it is also important to suggest implementation measures and especially first steps. We turn to this in the final section of this document, with the caveat that while these proposals have acquired some momentum of their own, they are suggestions only for plans that others may develop.

## **V. Outreach and Engagement: Towards Implementation**

The University's approach to outreach and engagement, as defined within this Foundational Document, is firmly centered on and connected to the academic missions —teaching, research, service— of universities. The primary participants are students and faculty. When taken together as a guiding philosophy, outreach and engagement connect teaching and research with broader communities. They do this through innovative programs and initiatives aimed at providing meaningful and beneficial experiences to stimulate student and faculty learning and intellectual growth. A key aspect is the establishment and nurturing of mutually-beneficial partnerships and connections between the University and the outside world.

We know that many faculty, staff, and students, as well as colleges, departments, and administrative offices have taken an active and ongoing interest in ensuring that the University of Saskatchewan reaches out to the province and beyond. Through the discussion provided in this Foundational Document, we have demonstrated that there are already a number of strong examples of outreach and engagement initiatives throughout the University, even though they have rarely been identified as such. We need to nurture these initiatives carefully, depending as we do on the work of many individuals and units within the University. We should build on these successes as models from which we can learn, nuclei around which new initiatives can assemble. In doing this, we also need to ensure that the University does not only undertake widespread activities, but also that these activities are self-conscious and reflective, incorporating the concepts of outreach and engagement as defined within this Foundational Document as fully as appropriate in each case.

This Foundational Document suggests to the University's leaders and decision-making bodies that they consider five categories of actions to ensure that outreach and engagement develops as desired and needed: first, to strengthen leadership for outreach and engagement at the institutional level; second, to foster internal/external networks that will provide frameworks within which new outreach and engagement opportunities can emerge; third, to ensure that central facilitation and support is in place to help units develop new initiatives in response to opportunities they identify — including new central support units as well as modified roles for some existing offices and units; fourth, to have specific implementation plans for each of the five strategies outlined in this document; and finally, to have a plan for gradual cultural change in the institution to promote widespread innovation in outreach and engagement.

### 1. Institutional Leadership

Leadership at a high level within the institution is required to draw attention to outreach and engagement and to create and sustain institutional momentum.

- **Leadership on outreach and engagement should be provided by the Office of the President.** The President is the University's chief spokesperson charged with explaining its goals, programs, and activities, in advocating on behalf of the University to government and other partners, agencies, and organizations, in establishing worldwide connections and partnerships, in celebrating the University's successes within Saskatchewan and beyond, and in responding to questions from parents, students, teachers, and the general public. On our campus, the President is already a strong advocate for outreach and engagement. Given the nature of the Office and its activities, we believe the President is the most appropriate leader for this initiative, but we believe that the Office should be strengthened to fulfill the enhanced roles envisioned in this Foundational Document.
- **The President should be supported in this leadership role by a Round Table on Outreach and Engagement.** This would be a permanent body comprised of outreach and engagement leaders from on and off campus with some or all of the following features:
  - The Round Table would be drawn from both the University and external communities with provincial representation (at least). Its members would include people who have knowledge of and experience in outreach and engagement: highly involved faculty, staff, and student representatives from widely spread parts of the University; administrators responsible for major initiatives; and leaders in community and professional organizations. If colleges have designated individuals responsible for leading outreach and engagement, those individuals should be part of the Round Table.
  - The role of the Round Table should be to nurture and support the University's outreach and engagement efforts. It should provide advice and guidance on areas of need and emphasis, reflect on outreach and engagement initiatives on campus, and foster university-community relationships to help generate new and ongoing partnerships that provide opportunities for involvement of diverse segments of the University in outreach and engagement. Its meetings should provide opportunities to consider institutional policies and structures that affect outreach and engagement, develop new strategies and approaches, and ensure that best practices are shared.
  - The Round Table should organize events and consultations that help inform and animate the campus and off-campus communities around outreach and engagement. We suggest that one of the first tasks of the Round Table be to convene a university-community symposium on engagement, with broad participation from many communities and parts of the campus, to honour and celebrate existing initiatives, to

build awareness and understanding of the concept of engagement, and to begin the process of identifying future areas of need and priority.

- **An Office of University-Community Relations should be created under the supervision of the President to provide administrative support for the Round Table, to serve as a clearinghouse for information about initiatives and opportunities, to act as a resource for the development of new partnerships, and to provide a primary point of contact for internal and external inquiries about the development of community-university engagement partnerships.** Through a combination of existing and new resources, we envision that this office would facilitate new community-university partnerships by accompanying and guiding approaches from the public into the University and by accompanying University groups and assisting with the organization of their initial approaches to particular communities. It might be in charge of collecting, compiling, updating, and making available both to internal and external audiences information on outreach and engagement initiatives and opportunities. At the request of the President or in support of the Round Table, it might also be responsible for conducting or commissioning studies of emerging needs and opportunities for outreach and engagement in Saskatchewan communities or elsewhere and bringing these to the attention of the University community through strategic reports. It would need to work closely with other units reporting to the President or Provost.

## **2. Institution-Level Networks**

Many different networks will be needed to connect the University and its various parts to many different external communities. These networks will have to be flexible and will have to exist at different levels. At the institutional level, some existing networks should be developed and formalized to provide broad frameworks of relations within which outreach and engagement opportunities can arise. While these examples illustrate possibilities at the level of the whole institution, they are not meant to preclude networks attached at the college, department, or unit level, particularly where partnerships are involved that have research and teaching implications.

- **Faculty choosing to participate in outreach and engagement can be connected and recognized for their participation through the creation of a new network of associated public scholars.** These would be faculty members involved in outreach and engagement who, on a rotating and selective basis, would be given the opportunity to develop engagement initiatives in their teaching or scholarly work and share their experiences with others on campus or off. These leading public scholars who would share their insights and experiences with the Round Table and the Regional Advisory Councils (see below) and in so doing stimulate new ideas for engagement partnerships.
- **The University can be connected more closely to Saskatchewan communities through the Senate's Regional Advisory Councils.** These will be incorporated under University Advancement, specifically the Communications Office, to reflect their key role in shaping communication between the University, educational partners, business and community leaders. They would also provide an important place for the University to discuss engagement opportunities with community participants. The Regional Advisory Councils could potentially have a closer connection to the University's Alumni Association and might provide a focal point for the development of alumni groups within Canada and beyond. Additionally, while the print medium has been the traditional means to communicate our achievements, the Regional Advisory Councils might also be effectively supported through digital telecommunications given the resources and expertise now available, particularly those in the Division of Media and Technology Services.

- **Saskatchewan and international outreach and engagement can also capitalize on the tremendous, yet largely untapped, advantages offered by our alumni around the world.** Our graduates have connections in their communities by virtue of their positions within society. Our alumni need to be well informed about developments on campus, about our achievements and our goals, about our plans and our prospects. We need them to assist us in raising awareness about the issues facing higher education today, to shape the public policy debates, and to identify solutions. We need them to provide experiential learning opportunities for our current students, and to contact us to support and provide services for communities across Saskatchewan, Canada, and the world. With their assistance, University students, staff, and faculty can be more readily engaged in many kinds of communities.

The creation of the position of *Vice-President, University Advancement* in 2004 signalled the importance of such areas as Communications, Development, and Alumni Relations, to the University's future and should play a central role in two of the outreach and engagement networks described above.

### 3. Central Services and Support

With leadership from the highest levels and the Integrated Planning process for considering proposals developed by units of the University, an important remaining need is for central points where units can access specialized expertise to assist them in the development of initiatives. These support organizations provide expertise and contacts in response to requests from inside or outside the University. They do not take over the leadership functions associated with the President's Office or the planning functions that belong to each unit of the University. Their role is to support these functions.

So far, thinking and discussions around Outreach and Engagement have identified a variety of services or resources that units might wish to access in preparing plans or initiatives.

- **Assistance with implementation of community service learning in courses and programs, engagement and learning design: the New Learning Centre.** A special priority should be attached to the promotion and development of community-based service and experiential learning opportunities –local, provincial, and international– for students throughout the University. These opportunities should be developed and sponsored in collaboration with the New Learning Centre currently in the early planning stages. More about its role is anticipated through the Foundational Document on Teaching and Learning. For present purposes, an important point is that the centre is intended to contain instructional designers with expertise in various instructional formats such as technology-enhanced learning and curriculum/course design. Our proposal is that service learning should be seen as a form of experiential learning that can be designed into a wide variety of courses. Specialists in service learning should be added to the New Learning Centre to create a concentration of expertise that can be called upon by academic units.
- **Assistance with development of community-university research partnerships and technology transfer: Office of the Vice-President Research.** The Vice-President Research office has expanded its services and assistance to faculty who are developing grants and projects. The services and expertise of this office should be expanded further to provide assistance, start-up funding, and other services to units and to groups of faculty who are attempting to develop or build on existing community-university research projects and technology transfer. We recommend that specialists in community-university, collaborative, and interdisciplinary research be added to this office where they can be called upon to assist academic units and initiatives.



- **Assistance with off-campus, distributed delivery, and non-degree-credit courses: Continuing Education Unit.** The *Integrated Plan* called for the creation of a new Continuing Education Unit which will lead and coordinate the delivery of off-campus and distributed delivery courses as well as provide additional non-degree credit, ‘lifelong learning’ opportunities to the people of Saskatchewan and beyond to supplement those provided by colleges in connection with their academic missions. Standalone non-degree credit programs will be offered on the basis of recovery of a substantial portion of costs. Units will be able to call on this centre for assistance with off-campus courses, distributed delivery courses, and non-degree credit education while retaining academic authority for courses and programs. It will be the primary point of contact in the University for Regional Colleges and others interested specifically in courses.
- **Any other questions: Office of University-Community Relations.** The three agencies outlined above will deal with many of the most common inquiries about outreach and engagement, and will support the University’s major strategies as outlined in this Foundational Document. As the main point of contact for outreach and engagement inquiries, the Office of University-Community Relations will refer people to these services where needed and handle remaining inquiries under the direction of the President.

**Impact on the Extension Division:** Some of the functions outlined above, such as coordination of off-campus courses, are presently conducted within the Extension Division. Others would be new services, such as service learning and facilitation for community-university research on a University-wide scale. While this Foundational Document implies a substantial reallocation of University resources to support outreach and engagement efforts, it does not, nor should it, specify how the Extension Division will be affected. We note that the *Integrated Plan* anticipated reorganization of the Extension Division<sup>22</sup> and we anticipate that, in support of the University’s outreach and engagement goals, Extension Division staff will be offered the opportunity to work in units where their expertise fits.

#### 4. Strategy Implementation Plans and Accountabilities

Attentive readers will notice that there is a broad correspondence between some of the new structures proposed above and the strategies outlined in the preceding section of this document. This is not an accident. The strategies represent the recommended priority activities of the University in the coming few years, and each will need guidance and support. We would like to recapitulate the strategies and related measures proposed above, and elaborate a little on the tasks and responsibilities involved. In each case, the leader identified for each strategy will be responsible for reporting on progress.

**Strategy One: Service Learning. Our teaching and research programs will become more distinctive by systematically building in community-based service learning opportunities for students throughout the province and beyond.**

*Implementation.* Adopting service learning as a priority will require that we provide a ‘home’ for these activities, at minimum a place where a compendium of such activities can be housed along with contacts for the variety of service agencies seeking our help and assistance. As indicated above, we anticipate coordination of effort and advancement of experiential learning will be an integral role for the New Learning Centre described in the *Integrated Plan* and currently under development. Over the planning cycle, resources need to be provided to the New Learning Centre to create a focal point for experiential learning

<sup>22</sup> The Provost’s Office is developing a proposal which will be presented to University Council for approval following consultation with its committees and the Extension Division itself.

initiatives, in this case, for service learning. The centre will need to work with the colleges and departments to find ways to define and acknowledge these initiatives through academic credit as well as through portfolios of student achievement. It will also need to work with the colleges to build on existing efforts and programs. The Provost and Vice-President Academic should be responsible for leading the University's overall service-learning strategy.

**Strategy Two: Community-University Research Partnerships. Our participation in innovative community-university research programs will position us to be a national leader in community-based research and in public policy.**

*Implementation.* As indicated above, the Vice-President Research should be responsible for this strategy and for providing support, expertise, and assistance to units and groups of faculty to accomplish it. The proposed new School of Public Policy should also have a role to play in this area. In the initial stages, partnerships that may develop research dimensions will be facilitated by the Office of University-Community Relations. As partnerships take shape, the office should facilitate the connection to the appropriate part of the University, in this case the Vice-President Research, and withdraw to work on new partnerships.

**Strategy Three: Economic Development, Technology Transfer, and Knowledge Creation. We will provide leadership in the sharing and co-creation of knowledge with Saskatchewan industry and communities in support of economic and other development objectives.**

*Implementation.* The Office of the Vice-President Research should also be responsible for this strategy. We will need to build our industry liaison services and support for fresh ideas with market potential. The Office of University-Community Relations should also have a role in establishing community collaborations that are more broadly developmental, passing on the more precisely economic aspects of these, such as technology transfer, to the Research Office.

**Strategy Four: Lifelong Learning and Continuing Education. Continuing education programs and initiatives will be developed and delivered in selective areas to complement and enhance our degree-level program offerings and to provide lifelong learning opportunities to the people of Saskatchewan and beyond.**

*Implementation.* Where degree-credit courses are offered off-campus or by distance methods, the University depends on important partners such as Regional Colleges and others to link us to communities and learners. It is important that these relationships be preserved in any reorganization; that the programmatic and outreach roles of our partners be, if anything, enhanced; and that they continue to have a single point of administrative contact in the University for matters related to courses. The Continuing Education Unit should be responsible for central coordination of these activities. It should also be responsible for mounting, on a cost-recovery basis to be determined, non-degree programs that supplement those offered by colleges and departments in connection with their academic missions. Colleges may continue to offer certificates and non-degree courses and programs, for example, continuing professional education, related to their degrees, research initiatives, and external partnerships as they currently do. Where colleges desire assistance with non-degree programs or with distance and online delivery of courses, they should be able to call on the contacts and expertise of the Continuing Education Unit. Overall, the Provost and Vice-President Academic should be responsible for the University's strategy in lifelong learning and continuing education.

**Strategy Five: International Outreach and Engagement. We will strengthen our collaboration with scholars and educational institutions around the world to bring a**

**broader array of educational experiences to our students and to provide increased opportunities for scholarly initiatives for our faculty within the international community of scholars.**

*Implementation.* The Offices of the Vice-President Research, Student and Enrolment Services, and the University Secretary should share responsibility for implementation of this strategy. As part of the restructuring of international services which occurred on campus in 2004, *the Office of Global Relations* was created as the primary gateway into the University for international visitors. This element of the University Secretary's Office organizes protocol and programming for international academic, governmental, and corporate officials, thereby maximizing guests' time on campus by focusing on shared programming priorities and the enrichment of our teaching and research environment. This office tracks partnership agreements and other contractual arrangements with global partners, coordinates international communications, and assists outbound delegations from the U of S. In the other direction, we have already established *the Global Commons* to coordinate international efforts and opportunities abroad for students. It will be important for the activities of the Global Commons to continue to expand not only to meet the University's internationalization objectives, but also to promote engagement approaches within these objectives. Finally, *the Office of the Vice-President Research* should support collaborative and engagement approaches in international research and development projects as it does for research projects of other types.

In closing this section, we are cognizant that outreach and engagement can only be effected through the work of faculty, students, and staff in the various colleges, departments, and units of the University. To discharge their responsibilities, in addition to the central supports described above, colleges may wish to consider designating or hiring outreach and engagement leaders (who might be attached to the University-level Round Table) or facilitators/coordinators (who might be connected to the Office of University-Community Relations). Through the Integrated Planning process and plans for the second planning cycle, colleges and units will undoubtedly be encouraged to articulate a set of coherent initiatives and to pursue strength in outreach and engagement over time.

## **5. Cultural Change and Innovation**

As is clear from the discussion throughout this Foundational Document, outreach and engagement will only flourish through the goodwill, support, and interventions of the colleges, departments, and the faculty associated with them. While the President is the University's first ambassador, clearly that office depends on the active support of the entire University community to create the kind of climate in which innovative programs and initiatives, hallmarks of outreach and engagement, can thrive. The University throughout its administrative and academic units should be ready to assist the President by being responsive to ideas of communities, ready to see potential and possibilities, and open to new partners and relationships. To accomplish this we will need to foster an institutional environment supportive of faculty and student learning as well as a collaborative approach to outreach and engagement, which cannot be seen only as jobs for others to do.

Throughout the consultation processes for this Foundational Document, persistent faculty voices suggested that more mechanisms for reward of effort be created. The existing standards seem to provide plenty of opportunities to recognize and reward outreach and engagement, particularly those forms which are related to the teaching and research missions of the institution, but a number of faculty have indicated that there is an issue. To address this we propose the following:

- Collegial committees should consider outreach and engagement as components of the teaching and research missions and reward these efforts through promotion and tenure mechanisms as well as salary considerations. To do this, colleges should ensure that their

existing *Standards for Tenure and Promotion* provide sufficient acknowledgement of this effort and adjustments should be made, if necessary, to more fully reflect their commitment to outreach and engagement within the collegial decision-making processes.

Collegial standards are not the only forms of recognition that matter. A great deal of outreach and engagement already occurs and will benefit from being conceptualized more rigorously and conducted more self-consciously. These initiatives will also benefit by being featured more prominently, by providing opportunities to learn from each other, and by celebrating achievements. For example:

- At the University level, this might happen through *On Campus News*, special service awards, and other events. Departments or colleges might have their own special awards and communications vehicles.
- The University (or its colleges) could create an award or other opportunity to recognize outstanding community partners.
- The associated public scholar network (proposed above) might be a way to recognize distinguished faculty contributions in engagement and reward the faculty concerned with time and resources to develop their engagement initiatives further.

Like other Foundational Documents, this one articulates a planning dimension—outreach and engagement—for units to consider in developing and proposing future initiatives. Not all faculty members, staff, or students will be involved in outreach and engagement, though we expect the numbers to increase as a result of the approaches suggested here or through contact and discussion with faculty actively involved in outreach and engagement initiatives. Various units will be active in different ways and to different degrees according to their situations and the priorities they set. The goals of this document are to encourage those who do get involved because they see the connections of outreach and engagement to their other missions and responsibilities, and to propose ways in which the University can organize itself to support their efforts.

## 6. Measuring Progress

Throughout the consultation process for the development of this document, we were encouraged to think about how we would know if our efforts were succeeding. We agree that we will need to report our progress, including successes and failures, regularly, and especially at the end of each planning cycle. To gauge our progress, we will need to identify benchmarks and indicators of success. We can learn from the best practices of others. The Big Ten universities in the United States have developed, through the Committee on Institutional Cooperation, a set of recommendations for defining and benchmarking engagement (February 2005).<sup>23</sup> These benchmarks include, for example, evidence of institutional commitments to engagement, student involvement in outreach and engagement activities, degree of faculty/staff participation with external constituents, and measures of the impact and outcomes of engagement.

We will need to agree on a set of benchmarks which will capture our progress on outreach and engagement as important planning dimensions for the University of Saskatchewan. We anticipate that these will be refined as we develop tools to assess our efforts on a variety of planning dimensions, including outreach and engagement. Whatever process we develop, our measures will need to be sufficiently robust to ensure that we can confirm progress on each of the strategies we have proposed.

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<sup>23</sup> Additional information on benchmarking by the Big Ten Universities in the USA can be found at the Committee on Institutional Cooperation website, [www.cic.uiuc.edu](http://www.cic.uiuc.edu).

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The preceding measures constitute a well-rounded and comprehensive suite of the functions and services needed for the units of the University to pursue outreach and engagement. The implementation steps above will establish leadership, a central guiding Round Table, a central point of contact and clearinghouse, formalized networks, and central support functions for the most common kinds of outreach and engagement questions that units will encounter. Each department, college, or other unit will proceed and will access these services according to its own need, situation, and academic priorities.

The recommendations described in the preceding passages represent an opening up of the University towards new possibilities of engagement, excellence, and innovation. The steps we have outlined are ways for the University to renew its commitments and begin to re-conceptualize its efforts, and to begin to integrate outreach and engagement into its teaching and research-related missions in broad new ways. These are initial steps only: ways for the University of Saskatchewan to organize itself and begin a dialogue, not only internally, but, critically, externally with people and organizations in communities.

## **VI. Conclusion: Looking Ahead to Engagement With Communities**

As we have said a number of times, this Foundational Document is a planning document about outreach and engagement: it is not, itself, outreach and engagement in practice. It is true that input from external groups, notably Regional Advisory Councils and the communities and organizations represented in the University Senate, has been critical in shaping this Foundational Document. All of that is appropriate given the topic. Nevertheless, it is also only a beginning. Engagement, apart from the successes we have detailed in these pages, is still to come.

Ultimately outreach and engagement will be shaped by the processes of interaction with communities and by the grassroots involvement of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and other community members. The concepts of outreach and engagement described in this Foundational Document provide a framework and a philosophical approach for the University's largest and most enduring mission, and with this, we hope, a compelling vision for its future. As we approach the University of Saskatchewan's centennial, we re-commit ourselves to a 21<sup>st</sup> century vision of our founding principles.

Throughout the development of this Foundational Document, we have listened to faculty and staff tell us that this report must take account of the work and accomplishments, the labours of commitment and passion, that are conducted in widespread colleges and units of this University. It is time to shine a spotlight on those under-examined achievements, to honour them, to nurture them, and to respect them by learning from them. We have also listened to members of this University's community who live hundreds of kilometers away tell us that the University of Saskatchewan is in danger of losing its reputation of old, that we sometimes seem too rigid, too distant, and too self-absorbed. Dignified and respected community leaders told us, also with passion, that the most important thing of all is for members of this University to approach communities with humility. We will respond to those challenges, not with a bureaucratic policy, not with a mechanism, not with the stroke of a pen, but with the dedication of faculty members, students, and staff who engage with communities because it enriches their work, because they believe in doing so, and because it makes sense in every way.