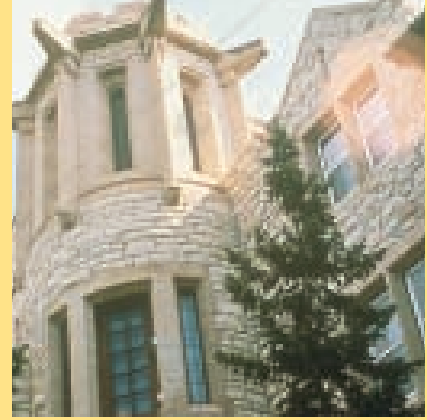


University of Saskatchewan Strategic Directions
2002



Renewing the Dream

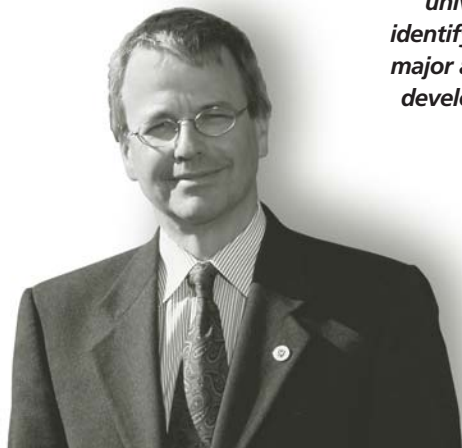




The university environment as we enter the twenty-first century

The University of Saskatchewan is charting a course for its future. We are determined to make the changes that are required to place the University of Saskatchewan among the most distinguished universities in Canada and in the world. We will set high goals for ourselves and we will work together to attain them.

These Strategic Directions are our pathway to the future. They will guide the renewal process at our university by providing focus and direction for the newly established integrated planning process. They represent the first step in establishing academic priorities for our university by identifying four major areas for development.



Message from the President

Most important, they signal the type of university we aspire to be.

I am confident that Renewing the Dream will inspire us to achieve the bold vision of our founders, who, nearly a century ago, envisioned a world class university at the edge of a swift flowing river surrounded by vast prairies.

These Strategic Directions challenge us to build on that vision as we prepare for our second century. The future has never looked brighter for the University of Saskatchewan.

Since the creation of the University of Saskatchewan almost one hundred years ago, our university community has continued to be inspired by the bold dream of our founders. Establishing a university in a province barely two years old was a remarkable feat, but those university pioneers understood that the success of a new province was vitally linked to the availability of advanced education and research. Our founders were guided by a vision: a wide range of first-class academic and professional programs, scholarship and outreach on a campus of outstanding beauty, in a province of tremendous potential.

Now it is time for the University of Saskatchewan to renew that dream. We stand at a defining moment in our history, one that calls for decisive choices and action. To guide those choices, this Strategic Directions Statement identifies distinctive features for which our university will be known in its second century and the strategic directions which will begin to take us there. Together, they will serve as a beacon for university planning, and position this University to embark on its second century as boldly as it embarked on its first.

As we enter the twenty-first century, and our university's own second century, we face challenges that were unimaginable in the days of our founders:

- Rapid change has become a defining feature of our culture. Universities must learn to be responsive and flexible, without losing sight of those core values that have made them the most enduring of the world's institutions.
- Boundaries are becoming less distinct. The new global environment demands students and faculty who are citizens of the world.
- Knowledge is the new currency. As a university, we have a weighty responsibility to develop and transmit that knowledge, to enable our province and our graduates to participate fully in the knowledge economy.

- Pressure on university enrolment is likely to increase over the next decade, but may decline thereafter; thus measures taken in the short term must be sustainable. Here in Saskatchewan, where participation rates are already high, we expect — and hope — that the growing Aboriginal population will increasingly engage in university education, and we must work towards that end.

- Competition for faculty will intensify. Roughly one-third of the nation's faculty are due to retire in the next decade, while the University of Saskatchewan's turnover is likely to be 500 or more faculty positions — more than half of our current complement — by the year 2010.

- Government funding is shifting from general operating budget support to more targeted, strategic initiatives. Canada's innovation agenda has spurred federal investment in programs such as the Canada Research Chairs, which require specific university plans. At the provincial level, the university must make effective use of targeted funds, while dealing with operating budget shortfalls in other areas. Increasingly, universities must explore non-government sources of funding.

- The intensity of competition, fiscal constraints, and the strong innovation agenda are leading to more marked differentiation among Canadian universities. Those which offer a wide range of undistinguished programs, develop no areas of research leadership, and are perceived to lack direction will lose public support and face an increasingly precarious existence.

Such challenges demand urgent and difficult choices. Here at the University of Saskatchewan, there are a few who argue that our choice should be to surrender and let it be known that we cannot or should not compete in the new environment. However, this option would diminish a great university at precisely the time our province needs one. As we enter the information age, we will increasingly see a division between those who participate in the knowledge economy and those who are merely observers. If Saskatchewan is to be a participant rather than an observer, then this university must compete vigorously and effectively among the major research universities of the country. We must make strategic choices to shape our future, actively, in ways that are true to our origins and our history.

For what will the University of Saskatchewan be known in its second century?

The University of Saskatchewan will be known for its adherence to international standards in all its activities.

As we approach the strategic choices that will distinguish us in our second century, the University of Saskatchewan has a unique advantage over other institutions faced with similar

challenges: the powerful, living connections between our scholarly activities and our sense of community. The kind of university that will do justice to both scholarship and community, that will inspire all who work and study within it, and that will take us and our

province far into the future, will be distinguished by three interrelated features: international standards; academic pre-eminence; and sense of place. Shaped by our aspirations and driven by the new imperatives of our environment, these three features will, together, define the direction that the University of Saskatchewan takes into its next century.

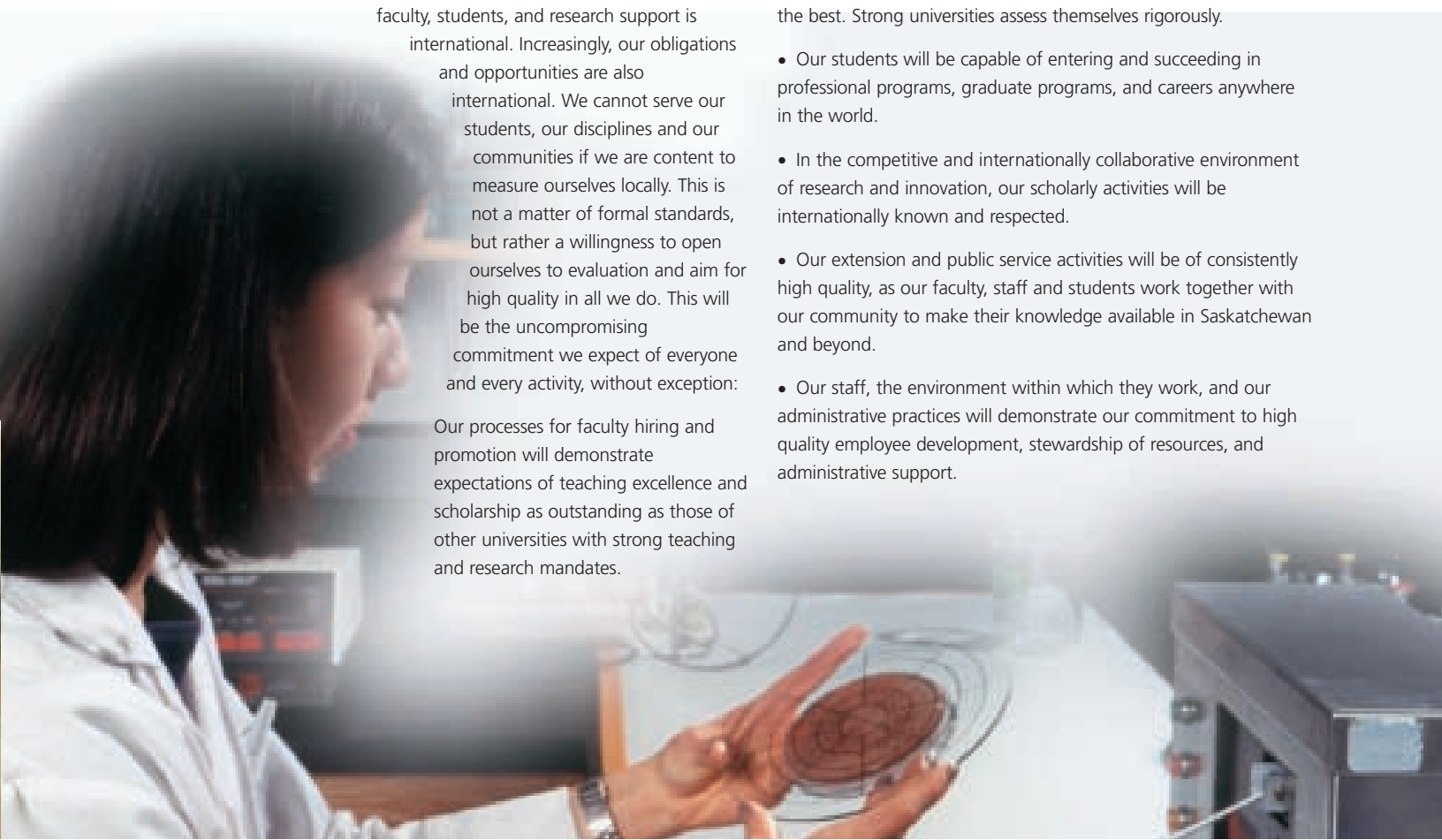


1 International Standards

In the new global environment, our competition for faculty, students, and research support is international. Increasingly, our obligations and opportunities are also international. We cannot serve our students, our disciplines and our communities if we are content to measure ourselves locally. This is not a matter of formal standards, but rather a willingness to open ourselves to evaluation and aim for high quality in all we do. This will be the uncompromising commitment we expect of everyone and every activity, without exception:

Our processes for faculty hiring and promotion will demonstrate expectations of teaching excellence and scholarship as outstanding as those of other universities with strong teaching and research mandates.

- Our academic programs will be assessed against the standards of the best. Strong universities assess themselves rigorously.
- Our students will be capable of entering and succeeding in professional programs, graduate programs, and careers anywhere in the world.
- In the competitive and internationally collaborative environment of research and innovation, our scholarly activities will be internationally known and respected.
- Our extension and public service activities will be of consistently high quality, as our faculty, staff and students work together with our community to make their knowledge available in Saskatchewan and beyond.
- Our staff, the environment within which they work, and our administrative practices will demonstrate our commitment to high quality employee development, stewardship of resources, and administrative support.



The University of Saskatchewan will be known for its pre-eminence in specific areas of creative academic programming and scholarship.

No one university can aspire to be pre-eminent in all areas, especially one with the broad array of programs that we offer. In keeping with international standards, we expect all our programming to be of high quality; but

in the explicitly competitive environment of the new century, we must excel in a few well-chosen areas, nationally and globally, if we are to thrive. Experience has shown that recognition as a centre of excellence in some areas will act as a catalyst for all: the entire institution will benefit in terms of quality, reputation, and recruitment of students, faculty and staff. The selection of areas will evolve over time, as we build on our existing strengths and seize exciting new opportunities.

2 Academic Pre-eminence

- Thanks to our founders' vision of combining the liberal arts, science, agriculture, engineering, health sciences and other professional colleges on one campus, we are particularly well placed to lead in innovative areas of interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary programming. It is in such areas, at the interfaces of traditional disciplines, where solutions will be found to our world's most pressing challenges. In an institution such as ours, with many small departments, multi-disciplinary work can also establish "virtual critical mass" to tackle problems and obtain funding. We have already established a commanding presence in the study of co-operatives, infectious diseases, and plant, animal, and human genomics — to name just a few — while new initiatives in areas such as biotechnology, indigenous peoples and justice, northern ecosystems toxicology, structural biology, and the health sciences network are poised to integrate disciplines and attract top-calibre faculty.
- The university plans to play a leading role in Aboriginal education and scholarship, as proposed in our *Conceptual Framework*. Not only is this vital to the economic viability of our province; we have a moral imperative to ensure that Aboriginal students participate fully in university education, to encourage the integration of indigenous knowledge into the curriculum, and to work in partnership with Aboriginal communities in the realization of their outstanding potential.
- The Canadian Light Source synchrotron, the largest Canadian scientific investment in a generation, is a powerful symbol of our opportunities. However, we must ensure that the University's own researchers are fully engaged in CLS applications, otherwise we will forfeit its benefits and find ourselves mere caretakers.

These are only a few examples among the many in which our University already excels or is well placed to excel. The pre-eminence of areas of scholarly activity and teaching will change as disciplines, issues, and our own strengths and opportunities evolve.



3 Sense of Place:

The University of Saskatchewan will be known for its connections to Saskatchewan, Western Canada, the North and the Great Plains environments of the world.

Some may fear that in striving for international standards and pre-eminence, the University may forget its roots. However, this university, more than most, has always nurtured connections with its community — connections

which, far from limiting us, have enriched both the university and the province. Sense of place, in some ways the most uniquely 'Saskatchewan' of our defining features, will ensure that we sustain this commitment into our second century. At the same time, that commitment will be immeasurably enhanced through the new emphasis on academic pre-eminence and insistence on international standards; we will make a greater contribution locally by cultivating a stronger national and international presence, serve our community best by being among the best.

Sense of place permeates the university's activities, at all levels:

- We will continue to offer a broad range of high-quality undergraduate programs to the young people of this province, build on our strengths in distance delivery to enhance access, and educate the skilled professionals who serve our population.

- Many of our pre-eminent areas of research, scholarly and artistic work will continue to reflect the needs and opportunities presented by our region, our community, and our environment, even as they extend beyond these boundaries.

- True to the spirit of service in which this university was founded, we will nourish our strong tradition of public service and extension activities, and maintain our integral role in the cultural fabric of this province.

- Sense of community will be a hallmark of our operations. We will build on our enviable level of popular support to celebrate the university within the province and beyond. Partnerships will be fostered with community, industry, government, international, and other sectors, and especially with Aboriginal communities. The university community itself will be characterized by collegiality and a sense of belonging, and we will be known as a welcoming place, on and off campus.

- As a university of our place and of our time, we recognize that our community is in many respects international, and we must enable the people of our province to participate fully in that community. By pursuing our activities at high standards, in a globally competitive environment, and bringing the fruits of international scholarship to our region, the university will play a leadership role in the revitalization of our province.





Strategic directions for the University of Saskatchewan

If the University of Saskatchewan is to become known in Canada, and abroad, for these distinguishing features — high international standards, academic pre-eminence in specific areas, and a strong sense of place reflected in our teaching, research and service missions — then our choices over the coming years will be critical. The university community has identified four key strategic directions to guide these choices. Mutually supportive, yet occasionally in creative tension, these four directions provide a framework for university, college and unit decisions through the immediate planning period of 2002-2007. The strategic directions are described below, together with an illustrative sampling of initiatives for implementation (some of which are already underway).

1. Attract and retain outstanding faculty

Faculty hiring is an investment in the future, probably the single most important investment any university can make. We need only reflect on the careers of our distinguished scholars and teachers from past and present to realize the impact of faculty choices. It is the faculty at the cutting edge of research, at the forefront of knowledge and creativity, the enthusiastic teachers and mentors, who tend to define our strengths and act as a magnet for additional faculty, students and resources. As we recruit five hundred and more new faculty in the increasingly competitive environment of the next decade, and strive to retain our current outstanding faculty members, we will:

- intensify our commitment to the recruitment, support and development of faculty who meet international standards;

- create a university complement plan which provides more flexibility within the appointments process, encourages faculty who embrace the teacher-scholar ideal, and facilitates collaboration across units and disciplines to build critical mass;
- establish the infrastructure, support staff and climate needed to attract outstanding faculty and enable new and existing faculty to thrive;
- encourage a diversity of faculty talent to ensure the rich and complex mission of the University of Saskatchewan is appropriately realized.



2. Increase campus-wide commitment to research, scholarly and artistic work

Intensifying research efforts was identified as a top priority in the University's 1998 *Framework for Planning*, and increasing our commitment to scholarly activities will continue to be a feature of our strategic planning. Scholarly activity is critical: it enhances the intellectual and creative vitality of an institution; faculty within a robust environment of intense scholarly activity will be more likely to remain and to attract others; teacher-scholars promote student learning and enthusiasm through their active engagement in scholarship; and research is essential to the well-being of this province as well as to society at large.

- 'Campus-wide' does not entail an equal obligation for every individual, and 'commitment' does not imply pre-eminence in all areas; but the commitment to creative, intellectual, peer-reviewed work must increase generally, across the university and across all programs.
- Our sense of place will inspire us to continue pursuing research, scholarly and creative activities in areas relevant to this province and its people. From agriculture to health, indigenous studies to the fine arts, and in countless other areas, our scholarship finds application within this region and beyond.

- While we will continue to engage in significant research sponsored by other sources, there are now compelling reasons to increase our Tri-Council funding. Many federal programs allocate resources according to each institution's share of Tri-Council funds, and such resources have a substantial impact on institutional research capacity, campus-wide.

- As we contemplate alternative areas of research investment, we cannot afford to be overly constrained by disciplinary boundaries or departmental loyalties. Funding agencies have opened up new possibilities for interdisciplinary research; the university will stretch its resources to assist those who rise to the challenge. Our wide range of programs lends itself to fruitful collaborations across disciplines, and our many small units will benefit from involvement in larger working groups; but greater institutional flexibility must be developed if we are to capitalize on the advantages of interdisciplinary study.

- Encouraging the fruits of scholarship requires enhanced infrastructure and an environment within which research and creativity can flourish, together with responsiveness to both established and emergent research opportunities.





3. Establish the University of Saskatchewan as a major presence in graduate education

Graduate students are vital to the scholarly enterprise of any major university. In recent years, however, the University of Saskatchewan has experienced an unhealthy decline in graduate enrolment, and we find ourselves now with a graduate/undergraduate ratio far below the Canadian average, particularly at the doctoral level.

- To redress the balance in keeping with the newly-developed *Enrolment Plan*, we will vigorously recruit and support higher numbers of graduate students, restore both capacity and scholarly vitality, and establish this University as a major presence in graduate education.
- Graduate students are the faculty of tomorrow. Trends show that fewer than 40% of new PhDs enter the academy, thus graduate

enrolment must be expanded to accommodate the current wave of faculty renewal.

- Graduate students have much to contribute: they renew the enthusiasm of their supervisors and colleagues, challenge them, and enrich their scholarly activities — in many cases making those scholarly activities possible — and enhance the undergraduate learning experience through teaching assistance and mentorship. We owe it to these students to provide effective supervision and training, and a rich learning and research experience through which they can discover all aspects of academic life, and, we hope, be encouraged to choose academic careers.





4. Recruit and retain a diverse and academically promising body of students, and prepare them for success in the knowledge age

The University of Saskatchewan has traditionally served the youth of this province as a key point of access to higher education, and this need is escalating as we enter a global, knowledge-based economy. Guided by the newly-developed *Enrolment Plan*, we will build on our existing strengths in undergraduate education and enrich graduate teaching and learning, in order to equip our students with the skills they need to succeed in this new environment. Among specific initiatives, we will:

- enhance educational quality and services inside and outside the classroom: continue to improve the quality of instruction through the Gwenna Moss Teaching and Learning Centre and the recognition of teaching excellence in faculty and sessionals; improve student retention, with a special focus on the first year experience; support the international students who so enrich our learning environment; and implement the recommendations of the ROSS Project (Registrar's Office and Student Services Redesign and Restructuring) to provide the best possible service to students;
- provide a stimulating and supportive learning experience for Aboriginal students, in all program areas, so that we are known as a welcoming place for students of Aboriginal ancestry;

- capitalize on our expertise in distance learning, and make effective use of new developments in information and communications technology to offer our students courses in new, more flexible formats;
- offer more enriching opportunities for our students: international exchanges so they can cross boundaries of culture, language and geography; experiential learning such as internships and co-op programs in partnership with the community, industry, government and others; undergraduate research experiences; and interdisciplinary programming to broaden our students' horizons and hone skills of synthesis and problem-solving;
- increase our efforts in this highly competitive environment to actively recruit the top students of our province and of Western Canada, encourage students of outstanding potential to choose this university, and work vigorously towards a more diverse student body.

Establishing a supportive environment for the strategic directions

Scholarship will flourish best in an enabling environment, with the support of appropriate resources: human, financial, information, and physical. The University of Saskatchewan is well placed to create an environment within which its key strategic directions can be achieved, but certain areas require special emphasis:

Cultivate an environment of collegiality and trust: True to its sense of place, the University of Saskatchewan recognizes that a university depends, first and foremost, on its people: its faculty, staff, and students. As a community of scholars, we will enable faculty to transcend boundaries, to come together in collegial discourse, and to take pride in each others' successes. As an institution of higher learning, we will offer students a supportive and inspiring learning environment throughout their university experience. As an employer, we will establish a healthy and productive work environment, characterized by teamwork, open communication and trust, in which employees at all levels have a strong sense of belonging and are committed to achieving international standards. Administratively, we will improve decision-making processes and reduce bureaucratic complexities. We will continue to be driven by principles of human dignity and fairness in all we do, including strategies for equity and diversity, in education, employment, and all our activities. For work and for study, the University of Saskatchewan will be a destination of choice.

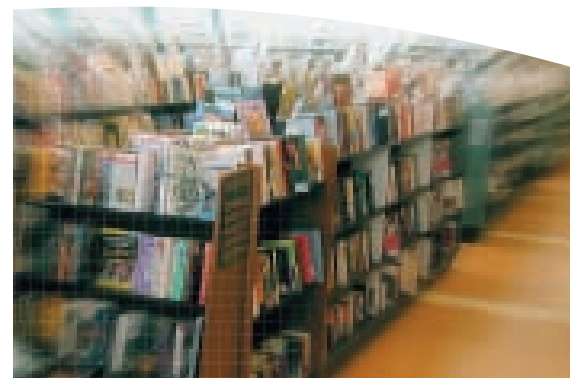
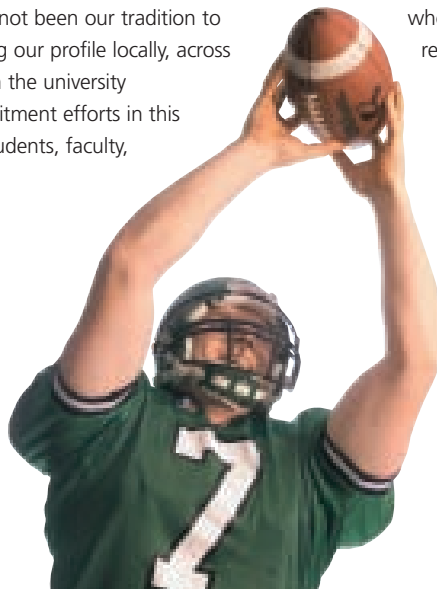
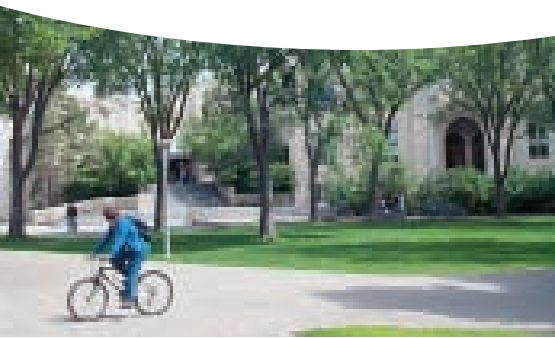
Celebrate the university locally, nationally, and internationally: This university has much to celebrate. A small sampling of achievements would include our disproportionate share of Rhodes Scholars and Nobel Laureates; Innovation Place, North America's most successful university-related research park; the Canadian Light Source synchrotron, the largest science project in Canada in a generation; the economic impact of this university on the city and province; and our students' accomplishments and enviable level of satisfaction with their programs. However, it has not been our tradition to broadcast these achievements. Raising our profile locally, across the nation, internationally, and within the university community itself, will boost our recruitment efforts in this competitive environment. As staff, students, faculty,

alumni, and supporters in the community, we can all act as ambassadors for the university, locally and abroad, but we must be better coordinated and more attentive to the task.

Enrich the resources and physical environment of the campus:

The original plans for the University of Saskatchewan created one of the finest campuses in Canada — perhaps the finest. It exemplifies our three distinctive aspirations: attention to high standards, pre-eminence in selected areas, and above all our unique sense of place. Increasingly in this age of differentiation, an inspirational campus will be an important factor in attracting students and faculty. But campus resources extend beyond the physical environment. A setting for scholarly excellence must also include facilities and infrastructure such as up-to-date laboratories and classrooms, effective and innovative information technology, and a major research library. Issues such as deferred maintenance and environmental obligations must also be addressed. And in planning for the future, we should also allow ourselves to dream beyond the current critical priorities for capital projects, and consider, for example, how facilities such as a health sciences complex or performing arts centre would enrich the university and the city.

Enhance our revenue opportunities: The trends in public funding indicate that large-scale government reinvestment in post-secondary education is unlikely, and so to support the campus, its people and its programs in the ways signalled by the strategic directions, we will need to enhance and diversify our revenue opportunities. As we look to our initial planning cycle, several initiatives come to the fore, most notably the President's capital campaign linked to the university's upcoming centenary, the transition to tuition fees which are more in line with national norms, and creative use of endowment lands which have been identified as surplus to the needs of the university — such as the *Preston Crossing* real estate development, whose proceeds will add to our scholarship and bursary resources for students.



Charting our future

This is just a beginning. We are aware of the significant trends that will shape the post-secondary environment in decades to come: the global, knowledge-based economy; enrolment trends; competition for faculty; the changing profile of public funding; and increased differentiation among universities. We have identified the features, anchored in those trends, by which the University of Saskatchewan will be distinguished as it enters its second century: adherence to international standards in all our activities; achievement of academic pre-eminence in specific areas; and maintenance of the strong sense of place that has guided this university throughout so much of its history. We have identified a set of strategic directions that flow from those features, directions which will lead to concrete strategies for action and serve as guideposts for every member of the university community. We are now well placed to shape our own destiny, and to renew the bold dreams of our university's founders, together.



Integrated Planning
at the University of Saskatchewan

Renewing the Dream



University of Saskatchewan Strategic Directions 2002

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