

Economics celebrating 50 years.

My hearty congratulations to all of you for 50 successful years as the Department of Economics, and I also want to offer my gratitude to the Department for inviting me to this very special celebration.

Economics has had a long and illustrious past, playing an integral role in the evolution of Memorial University. Its strength, in my view, is its ongoing, close attention to the needs of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. From economic development policy to the prevention of moose-related accidents, the Department has for decades focused on producing knowledge that can aid the province as it moves forward.

I came from a place where economists sat alone in a room with their mathematical models, without too much connection to the outside world. So it was a very pleasant surprise when I arrived in 2012 to find an engaged economics department housed in the Faculty for which I was to be Dean.

I think it is fair to say that Economics is one of the key anchors for the social sciences – it informs so much about how we think of our lives and how we might change the societies in which we live for the better. Economists here are concerned with a wide range of contemporary issues, including unemployment, income inequality, immigration, entrepreneurship, innovation, international relations and even the role of the university in the provincial landscape.

During my time here I have observed that the Economics department is a generous department. For example, it has played a significant role in supporting the Business program; it teaches a good number of its students. And it has been a generous contributor to the MER program (Master of Employment Relations), an interdisciplinary graduate program that depends on the teaching contributions of faculty from both the Social Sciences and Business.

Economics also has a unique organization in CARE. This is a research hub financially supported by ACOA, the Energy Industry and the NL government. The broad-based advisory committee for CARE (on which I sit) plays the important role of annually assessing the research and policy development to date and suggests what research gaps are still missing or newly emerging for the province. CARE financially supports faculty members, both inside and outside of the department, to undertake research, and it widely disseminates research results in the form of policy or research papers on the department's website.

For most of the time I have been the Dean of HSS Dr. Wade Lock has been the Department Head. Though we haven't always seen eye to eye...☺ I have always had great admiration for his dedication to the Department. Wade has worked hard to make the department the best that it can be, and he has brought hope to the unit – to faculty, staff and students – that it will continue to have a bright and prosperous future ahead.

I'd like to take this opportunity to applaud Wade and the department's efforts to ensure that more women are full-time faculty members in the department. The recent arrivals of Drs. Kundhi, Masoudi, and Gambin – all strong researchers and effective instructors – join Dr. Waples – to bring greater gender equity to the full-time complement of the department.

And while we are on the topic of teaching...I also want to congratulate the part-time instructors in Economics for maintaining high standards and making such rich contributions to the department over the years. (Allison Coffin comes to mind, but I know there are others.)

Speaking as the Dean of the Faculty... well of course I love all of HSS departments equally, but I think Economics should get the prize for bringing in the most (and the most diverse) outside speakers of any department – and on a wide range of topics from the impact of oil on the Newfoundland and Labrador economy to the social and economic determinants of health in Canada. And these are also probably the best-advertised events in the Faculty, thanks to the wonderful staff of Susan and Barbara.

Watching the department evolve, I need also to praise the department's inclusion of students in its business matters, particularly through the opportunity for students to contribute to the widely circulated *Labour Market Review* to which both faculty and students offer their take on labour market trends.

These are all excellent signs of a department dedicated to public engagement.

And so, my assessment is that the Department of Economics has come a long way in the last 50 years. And I fully expect that it will have another 50 healthy years (at least!) to go.

I want to thank each and every one of the faculty members in the Economics Department for your many contributions over the years. And I'd like to thank the

other stakeholders in the room for your unwavering support of the Department.
Congratulations to you all!