

Dr. Gary Kachanoski
Rotary Luncheon
April 12, 2012

Thank you President Glenn.

Rotarians, guests, colleagues and members of the Board of Regents, it is a pleasure to be at Rotary once again. I am honoured to be part of this annual tradition of reporting to the community about the people and activities at Memorial University.

Another annual tradition seems to be postponing my original engagement! Like last year, we were forced to delay this because of the weather. And like last year, these circumstances allow me the opportunity to provide even more information about what has been happening in the ensuing weeks at Memorial, because as I'm sure you all know, we never stand still at your university.

So today I want to share some of our accomplishments and challenges from this past year, and to provide some details on where we plan to take the university in the future.

A number of those accomplishments are summarized in *The President's Report*. It is a comprehensive review of our activities and initiatives over the past year. In our unique marketing way, we titled it *Great Minds Think Differently*. There are copies on your tables and I hope you take one home and take time to review it.

Some of you may remember that at last year's Rotary luncheon, we provided each of you with the 2010 research report, *The Shining*, which used movie titles as an entrée to the specialized world of Memorial's research "stars."

Well, in January that report received its latest international award, this time from the Association of Commonwealth Universities.

Out of more than 500 universities in the entire Commonwealth, *The Shining* was chosen as best annual report. We've also brought a few copies of that along today in case you'd like to have a look at it again.

Of course, the importance of these publications are the activities and accomplishments of our faculty, staff and students, and the impact they have on the lives of the people in the province, and beyond.

Our professors continue to receive acclaim. For example, this year in our Music faculty, Dr. Clark Ross received a Juno Award nomination, while two other faculty members – the husband and wife team of Dr. Nancy Dahn and Mr. Timothy Steeves – performed the music for a Juno Award winner in composition.

If you follow the media, you'll know the national and international press often turns to our professors as experts in various fields.

This year, following the Costa Concordia cruise ship disaster in the Mediterranean, Captain Christopher Hearn, director of the Marine Institute's Centre for Marine Simulation, was tapped to host a *Globe and Mail* Live Discussion, taking readers' questions on the life, code and responsibilities of a ship's captain.

At the same time, Dr. Ross Klein, of our School of Social Work, was swamped with interview requests from journalists from around the globe looking to tap his expertise on the cruise ship industry, and he testified before the US senate committee hearing on oversight of the cruise industry.

Even President Barack Obama turned to a Memorial University professor this year. President Obama used the innovation tax credit research of Dr. Jeffrey Pittman, of our Business faculty, to help make his case for American business tax reform.

And then there was our Genesis Centre which was named Canadian business incubator of the year. The centre is a support network developed to help provincial knowledge-based businesses create high-growth enterprises. Twenty-nine companies have

graduated from the Genesis Centre. Those successful companies now employ almost 400 people and have raised approximately \$19 million in private equity, 65 per cent of which has come from outside Newfoundland and Labrador.

We know we have to do more of this to continue to translate the investments in research into innovation and development to build a sustainable, diversified economy for the province.

Our students are shining as usual. Our SIFE Memorial team, whom I know need no introduction, was once again chosen as national champions last fall, and represented Canada at the international SIFE World Cup in Malaysia. Since 2006, SIFE Memorial has represented Canada in the world championships on five different occasions.

SIFE is on their way to repeating their award-winning track record this year, having won each of the events at the regional exposition in Halifax last month, and they are now headed to Calgary in May for the national competition

Last year in my remarks to you I congratulated our Memorial student curling team who had just become national champions when they won the Canadian Inter-university Sport Championship. They earned the right to represent Canada at the World Championships in Japan, and in January they won a silver medal for Canada, losing out on the final rock, in an extra end, in the gold medal game.

Catherine Danielle Leonard was named Newfoundland and Labrador's next Rhodes Scholar. The 21-year-old physics and applied math student from Portugal Cove-St. Philips, is in her final year of a Bachelor of Science. This fall she will have the opportunity to study at Oxford and hopes to pursue a doctorate in mathematics.

Another stellar student has been named the nation's best in co-operative education by the Canadian Association for Co-operative Education. Laura Pittman, a fifth-year mechanical engineering student, was chosen as Co-op Student of the Year. This is the

highest honour in co-operative education in Canada and a significant milestone for both Ms. Pittman and Memorial University.

Last year at this time, we were concluding the searches to complete my senior leadership team and I am pleased to report that the team is now in place.

At Grenfell Campus, Corner Brook, Dr. Mary Bluehardt joined us on August 1 as the new vice-president. Throughout the ensuing months, she was joined by Gary Bradshaw, associate vice-president (Grenfell – administration), Dr. David Peddle, associate vice-president (Grenfell – academic), and finally Dr. Antony Card, associate vice-president (Grenfell – research).

In August we welcomed Dr. David Wardlaw as provost and vice-president (academic), for Memorial University.

Finally, many of you know Glenn Blackwood, of course, as a fellow Rotarian. This fall, I was also pleased to appoint Glenn as Memorial University's newest vice-president, with direct responsibilities for the Marine Institute.

The Board of Regents will continue to be chaired by Bob Simmonds, who has served as chair since 2008, and who last fall accepted another three-year appointment from the provincial cabinet.

Serving on our Board of Regents is an entirely volunteer position. Mr. Simmonds has given so freely of his valuable time that the university and its extended community, and the province, are indeed in his debt. I want to personally thank Bob and all members of the board for all that they do.

Memorial was built on the premise that it should be a driving force behind the economic, social, cultural and scientific development of the province.

And every day we work to honour that obligation to help make life better for people living in this province. That includes the people of Labrador, and I just want to take a moment to highlight some of our activities in that region.

We have a significant presence there and we want to grow it even more. To achieve this we have doubled the base budget of our Labrador Institute. The Institute is headquartered in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, but it also has facilities in Labrador West and North West River.

We're doing this in an effort to build regional and northern research capacity. We have ongoing programs being offered in Labrador through our Marine Institute, with a variety of training and academic offerings.

In Social Work, we offer a program that integrates Aboriginal content and reflects Inuit cultures and values.

In Medicine, we host pre-medicine orientation for Aboriginal students who are interested in becoming physicians.

We've created a new position of Special Advisor for Aboriginal Affairs, not just for Labrador but for the entire province, and appointed Dr. Maura Hanrahan to the new role.

We're planning a lot more initiatives and setting the groundwork for the future development of university education throughout Labrador. We are committed to working with communities, Aboriginal groups, government and industry partners to help Labrador grow and prosper.

The President's Report illustrates a number of important statistical stories from this past year and indicates the continued upward trajectory of the university.

For example, despite challenging provincial demographics with declining K-12 enrolment and significantly fewer Grade 12 graduates, Memorial continues to experience enrolment growth.

At Grenfell Campus in Corner Brook our enrolment has grown to 1,262 students this winter. That's a 5.3 per cent increase over this time last year. This includes 143 out-of-province students and 17 international students.

This year's total enrolment at all campuses was just under 19,000 students – a 1.1 per cent increase from the last year.

Graduate student enrolment has increased again by almost six per cent to a total of just over 3,100 students in the fall, growing to over 3,200 graduate students this winter.

This follows double digit growth of 11 per cent last year for graduate enrolment. Over the past few years, we have seen a doubling of the number of graduate students on campus, and a doubling of PhD students in the past 4-5 years.

The significant increase in graduate students reflects the growth of Memorial's research program, with annual research funding approaching \$100 million, up significantly from last year.

All of this is great news for the university and for the province, but success does come with challenges. As I indicated last year, space at our Elizabeth Avenue and MI campuses is at a premium, and in programs such as Kinesiology and Engineering, we are receiving two to three times the number of applications for the available seats in the program.

And of course, many of our other programs such as Music, Pharmacy, Social Work and Nursing have had limited and competitive enrolment for some time.

So, ladies and gentlemen, it should come as no surprise that infrastructure renewal has become the number one priority at Memorial.

We currently have one big construction crane operating over our St. John's campus. We need to see more.

We have begun another internal assessment of our space needs and challenges. We are exploring how to optimize existing space, investigating appropriate and affordable off-campus space, and we have developed a vision for future anchor facilities.

Over the years, the various governments of Newfoundland and Labrador have provided the resources necessary to help us build the fine institution that Memorial has become.

And I am heartened by what I've read and heard in the public discourse concerning the government's priorities in education. Both in the government's campaign Bluebook which explicitly singled out Memorial University's core science infrastructure need, which is our highest priority, and in the recent throne speech.

So, together, we all recognize the need and the urgency to renew and rebuild the Memorial University of the 21st century. Those are the kinds of investments that will support the development and diversification of our economy as we move to a post-oil future.

For example, Newfoundland and Labrador can and should be a world player in ocean technology and marine sciences. We have a solid foundation of facilities and expertise on which to build. And in this regard, Memorial's strategic plans are very much in alignment with those of the provincial government and industry.

We've shaped our planning around the objectives of both the government's *Oceans of Opportunity* strategy and the marine industry's plans as set out by the province's OceansAdvance group.

We're engaged in that conversation with industry and government about what kind of partnership we need in place to develop the facilities and attract the highly qualified people that we all will need to drive innovative research and development.

For example, in February, Dr. Lesley James was appointed as the university's first chair of Petroleum Engineering (Chevron Chair). Dr. James will research ways to maximize the recovery of oil from offshore Newfoundland and Labrador fields.

But there are many challenges. There is a recognized need for increased and focused collaboration between industry and the university.

The province and the country face a shortage of skilled workers, so recruitment and retention of highly qualified people must be a priority.

From Memorial's perspective that's directly related to capacity on the ground here, and the development and operation of 21st-century R&D infrastructure, which will attract the best and the brightest faculty and staff, and provide students with access to the programs and education they need and deserve.

The first infrastructure priority has to be brand new, state-of-the-art core science facilities at Memorial, replacing our current out-of-date 50-year-old science facilities.

Our plan for core science infrastructure will enable us to deliver on our aspirations to be a world leader in ocean sciences, and to re-configure a number of other faculties, giving us the physical space to, for example, double the size of the Faculty of Engineering. That's something that I think is absolutely essential to meet the general demand for engineering education across all sectors.

It's also time for our Marine Institute to take its rightful place, nationally and internationally.

Over the past six years, the MI has grown in scope, scale and reputation as a centre of advanced marine technology, education and training. It educates and trains the next generation of men and women who will be the leaders of the Royal Canadian Navy. Its simulation, aquaculture, ocean safety and fisheries work is renowned globally.

I've put this next slide in here just to illustrate how the Marine Institute is changing. You can see by these graphs that as we have expanded MI programs into advanced technical degrees and masters degrees, the number of students enrolled in them is growing at a rapid pace.

The demand is there for more, and with the right investment of resources we can realize our plans to be a world ocean institute, setting the standard in education, training, innovation and research.

When you take the people, activities and facilities of our Marine Institute and you add to them those of our faculties of Science, Engineering and Business, of C-CORE and of the partner institutions that share our campus like the National Research Council, I think it's fair to say that Memorial can lay claim to being Canada's Oceans University.

In building our plans for the future of the university, we will never lose sight of the need to remain engaged with you and with the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. The most recent manifestation of this commitment is the development of our new Engagement Framework.

This initiative is being led by Dr. Rob Greenwood, who is executive director of our new Office of Engagement, as well as continuing with his on-going responsibilities with the Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development.

The Engagement Framework is building on our strengths in working with citizens, communities, industry and government – engagement that links teaching and learning, and research and creative activity, with the needs and opportunities across the province, and beyond.

It will help us adjust our efforts across a wide range of existing activities such as life-long learning, and identify new priority areas for investment.

We recently completed public consultations on the draft document and hope to have a finalized framework in the near future.

I expect some of you will have provided input into our Engagement Framework, which would have been invaluable to us because the Rotary Club of St. John's has been, and continues to be, a tremendous positive force for creating and developing the social support networks in our society.

On that note, and on behalf of the university community, I want to thank you, Rotarians, for all you have done and all that you do, not only for the university – and that is considerable, especially in the areas of scholarship support for our students – but for the community at large.

Rotary came to Newfoundland in 1921, just a few years before Memorial University College was created, so our histories run parallel and intersect. And over the years we have worked together to build a strong society and a strong university. Today, we continue that legacy of collaboration and co-investment.

This is what our new fundraising campaign, *Dare To*, is all about. Co-chaired by Chancellor Rick Hillier and Vic Young, and with many volunteer teams in place locally and across the country, *Dare To* is a \$50 million campaign to boost scholarship and bursary funding, increase research chairs, professorships and fellowships, and renew and rebuild appropriate and competitive teaching and research facilities and infrastructure.

When we launched the campaign on November 1 last year, we were pleased that Premier Dunderdale could participate. She spoke of the future that evening, and I echo her comments that great things are happening in this province and with all of this opportunity it's an exciting time to be a student here.

And of course I agree wholeheartedly with her also that this institution – Memorial University – will be pivotal in the lives of so many young people, preparing them to take advantage of our province's success.

So, I would like to close by sharing with you three remarkable stories of how Memorial University is able to touch people's lives in real, tangible and dramatic ways.

Inspiring people from all over Newfoundland and Labrador telling inspiring stories about how our university – your university – Memorial University – has changed their lives for the better. I can think of no better way to conclude my report to you this year.

Thank you, Rotarians.
