Fall Convocation, Corner Brook
Dr. Gary Kachanoski, President and Vice-Chancellor
Thursday, Oct. 5, 2017, 10 a.m.

Welcome to our 2017 fall convocation for Grenfell Campus, Memorial University. We are so pleased that you have joined us for what is always a special time in the life of a university, a time when we celebrate the success of our students.

So, of course, a special welcome and congratulations to each of you, our graduating students.

I know that your parents, families, friends and professors all played supporting roles in your success, but make no mistake – ultimately it was your dedication, hard work and talent that brought you here today, so congratulations on your accomplishments.

Joining us on stage this morning representing the provincial government is the Honorable Al Hawkins, Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour. Minister, on behalf of the Memorial University, thank you for joining us today to celebrate the success of our graduates. Your personal interest is greatly appreciated and makes a difference.

Also joining us today is Iris Petten, chair of the Board of Regents of Memorial, and a dedicated and passionate supporter of our university.

We held a board meeting at Grenfell Campus yesterday and a number of new regents are with us here today. All of our regents volunteer their time and contribute significantly to our university. Would you please join me in thanking our regents?

This morning a special individual will join the ranks of those who have received the university’s highest honour, the honorary doctorate degree. I am speaking of Maxine Stanley, a dedicated, accomplished and much-loved music teacher. Indeed, her name is synonymous with music education here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

For her long and considerable service to her community and her province, Ms. Stanley will receive an honorary doctor of laws this morning. You will hear more about, and from, Ms. Stanley a little later.

Ladies and gentlemen, as president of Memorial University for the past seven years, it has been an honour to personally connect with this campus and this community, to experience the positive impact of important and strategic initiatives and investments at Grenfell Campus, and share each of these successes with our extended community here on the west coast.

There is so much to be proud of as we look back at more than four decades of university education here on the west coast of Newfoundland.

Grenfell’s success is due in no small part to the great work done by the senior academic leadership team here in Corner Brook. And though he doesn’t officially start until Nov. 15, I am so pleased to welcome on stage Grenfell’s new vice-president (designate), Dr. Jeff Keshen, to his first Memorial University convocation.

During his academic career, Dr. Keshen has had great success in the development of programs that encourage leadership in young people, including programming with specific interests in vulnerable and Aboriginal students. He is committed to student success and fostering an engaged university that is connected to the community. I am confident that he will play an integral leadership role for Grenfell Campus and for the Memorial University family.

I would also like to welcome and acknowledge Dr. Kelly Vodden to the position of associate vice-president (Grenfell) Research and Graduate Studies. Dr. Vodden is a prolific and tireless researcher, a valued and award-winning teacher, and a constant source of inspiration on how to initiate effective community engagement.

Please join me in acknowledging these two new senior leaders to Grenfell Campus.

Finally, I would certainly like to thank Dr. Ivan Emke for assuming the role of vice-president *pro tempore* as we searched for Grenfell’s new vice-president. We knew Grenfell would continue to thrive in his capable hands. Please join me in thanking him.

The accomplishments and successes at Grenfell in the past number of years have put the campus in an exceedingly solid position -- with academic program growth, infrastructure improvements, enhancements to the research profile and expanded public engagement opportunities, just to name a few developments.

Building on an encouraging eight per cent increase in enrolment this fall at Grenfell, we know we can expect great things in the future with the continued implementation of Grenfell’s Vision 20/20, the five-year strategic plan to attract and retain a diverse and growing community of enthusiastic students, faculty and staff who choose the unique environment of Grenfell Campus for their education and employment.

Through all of this, Grenfell’s impact and reach will only continue to grow. And, of course, its future success will continue to build on the strength and integral connections that exist between this university campus, this city and this region.

So I would like to take this opportunity to thank our community and municipal leaders and other western Newfoundland partners for your unwavering support of Grenfell Campus again this year, and through it, your support for all of Memorial University.

Now, more than ever, support from all of our partners is vital. Only by working together can we ensure that we will continue to fulfill our important mandate – fostering student success, and the social, cultural and economic development of our great province.

Ladies and gentlemen, our university’s unique origin, our vision, mission and core values, paint a picture of who we were, who we are and what we aspire to become.

Memorial is focused on meeting the needs of our students, developing innovative living and learning spaces, building and renewing appropriate infrastructure for 21st century teaching, research and public engagement, and making a difference in our communities.

The university embodies the aspirations of those who founded Memorial University College in 1925 – to be the living legacy of those who paid the ultimate price for our freedom in the First World War and in subsequent conflicts. A living legacy dedicated to the advancement of our society through education – a legacy that the Danger Tree sculpture on Grenfell Campus commemorates.

Graduands, you are part of this legacy and this aspiration. You walked into this hall today as students who have completed the requirements for your degrees. You will leave as alumni of Memorial University, joining a family more than 90,000 strong.

You have earned the rights and privileges associated with your degree. And now this is your time – time to take to heart the responsibilities that also come with your degree and make your mark in Newfoundland and Labrador, across the country and around the globe.

Best wishes to each of you as you leave here today to begin the next adventure in your lives.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me once again in congratulating our graduates**.** Thank you.