

Address to Rotary: Dr. Gary Kachanoski

President and Vice-chancellor

Thursday, Feb. 7, 2013

(Check against delivery)

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. I want to begin by thanking the members of the Rotary Club of St. John's for once again inviting me to speak about Memorial University, and also for your ongoing support of our university.

Through student scholarships, through individual philanthropy, and through so many of you being involved in the university community and in our activities, you make Memorial University so much better. And on behalf of the university community I want to thank you for that.

We have enjoyed another full year of accomplishments and successes across all of Memorial. A number of those accomplishments and many of our other stories are highlighted in our new president's report, called *Dare or Truth*, copies of which I've once again brought with me today and are on your tables. I encourage you to read more about all of the wonderful activities at your university.

Memorial continues to distinguish itself as a nationally competitive, flag-ship, teaching-research institution – a public university unequivocally committed to the public good and to fulfilling our special obligation to the people of this great province.

So I am pleased to take a few moments to speak today about some of the more noteworthy happenings from the past year, as well as new initiatives and the direction we plan to take over this next year and in the years to come.

I know that many of you are alumni of the university. In a year that was event-filled, there are two particular initiatives that stand out from the perspective of alumni.

The first was *havin' a time*, our all-campus, all-year, all-faculty reunion that was held last August.

It was an outstanding success with thousands of participants involved in more than 70 events over a five-day period. Certainly the Wicked Memorial Variety show with Ron Hynes and the Wonderful Grand Band was an extraordinary event.

Our ultimate goal was to enable alumni to reconnect and stay connected with Memorial. We wanted to leave a legacy for future reunions, and provide a channel for alumni locally and living away to stay in touch and support their university. And I think we accomplished that.

The second initiative was our fundraising campaign, which we called *Dare To*. Our goal was to raise \$50 million. At last count more than \$63 million had been raised, and that was some months ago, so we know the number is higher still.

All of this is evidence of the tremendous faith that people and companies and organizations have in Memorial University, and in our ability to deliver on our mandate. On behalf of the university community, I can't thank our

donors enough for this investment in student and faculty success, in research, and in the quality of Memorial's facilities. I also thank our superb campaign cabinet and volunteers, chaired by General Rick Hillier.

The most recent donation was celebrated on January 15 when we announced \$1 million for the Bruneau Centre for Excellence in Choral Music from Drs. Jean and Angus Bruneau.

I just mentioned the contributions of General Rick Hillier, and this year was certainly one of transition for us at the governance level.

We said good-bye to Rick as chancellor and welcomed Dr. Susan Dyer Knight as Memorial's seventh chancellor. Rick was tireless in his service to Memorial, particularly leading our successful *Dare to* fundraising efforts and raising our profile nationally and internationally.

I know that our new chancellor, Dr. Susan Dyer Knight, is very familiar to you all as she has participated in many of your club functions with her husband, Dennis, who has been a stalwart member of the Rotary Club of St. John's for some 30 years, and a past president.

Suffice to say that, with her national and international reputation, Susan is a wonderful choice as our new chancellor and we look forward to seeing both her and Dennis's involvement as they become even more active in the university community.

We also said good-bye in November to Bob Simmonds as chair of the Board of Regents. Memorial benefitted greatly from the leadership, integrity, common sense, and unfailing good humour that Bob brought to our community.

We expect the province will announce his successor soon, but we are very pleased in the interim that Eleanor Swanson, the vice-chair and longest-serving member of the board, is employing her considerable experience and skills as our acting chair.

This past year we also filled two key academic leadership positions. In July Dr. Lynne Philips was appointed dean of the Faculty of Arts, one of our largest and dynamic faculties. She joined us from the University of Windsor where she served as professor and head of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminology.

Shortly after her arrival, she helped celebrate major national research awards to the Faculty of Arts from Canada's premier funding agency for social sciences and humanities research.

A team of 42 researchers from 22 universities and four countries led by Dr. Barbara Neis, University Research Professor in our Department of Sociology received \$2.5 million to study the spectrum of employment-related geographical mobility in Canada, from extended daily travel, to long distance travel for a period of weeks, months and even years, and its impact.

And a second project with 62 researchers from 24 countries led by Dr. Ratana Chuenpagdee from our Department of Geography, received \$2.5 million for her project, *Too Big to Ignore: Global Partnerships for Small-scale Fisheries Research*, in an effort to address issues of small-scale fisheries in national and international policies and to develop research and governance capacity to address global fisheries challenges.

Our other decanal appointment was Dr. Greg Naterer who joined us in August last year as dean of Engineering and Applied Science. Prior to his

appointment he was associate dean of engineering and applied science, and a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in Advanced Energy Systems at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology.

He has already been busy implementing our plan to double the size of our Faculty of Engineering over the next five to 10 years. The budget for this was announced by the provincial government last spring and will involve adding approximately 50 new faculty, and increasing enrolment by 500 undergraduates and more than 300 new graduate students. All this is designed to place us among the top engineering programs in the country.

We also have some very recent news on the senior executive front that I want to share with you. Effective June 1, 2013, Dr. Richard Marceau will be the next vice-president (research) at Memorial University.

Dr. Marceau comes to Memorial from the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, where he currently serves as provost and vice-president (academic), and where he directed that institute's explosive growth since 2005. Prior to that he served as dean of engineering at the University of Sherbrook, among many other endeavours.

He succeeds Dr. Chris Loomis, who many of you know, and who has led the research portfolio at Memorial for many years, spearheading the significant growth of our research activities.

Between that and the invaluable institutional leadership he provided when he served *pro tempore* as vice-president (academic) and president, and earlier as dean of pharmacy, as a teacher and researcher of considerable note, Dr. Loomis has given his all to Memorial.

On behalf of the entire community, I extend sincere thanks to him.

The significant upward trajectory of our research enterprise is clear from the growth of our research funding, which has more than doubled over the past decade or so, from approximately \$50 million to almost \$110 million.

To guide that growth in the coming decade, we've developed a new Research Strategy Framework. There are copies of the framework booklet on your tables.

As is our manner, we have taken a unique approach in presenting the plan for future research at Memorial, this time as a graphic novel. It sets the vision, mission and guiding principles, and identifies the goals and objectives necessary to achieve success.

In addition to the significant upward trajectory of our research activities, the president's report illustrates that despite challenging provincial demographics, with declining K-12 enrolment and significantly fewer Grade 12 graduates, Memorial continues to experience strong demand for our academic programs.

The province's K-12 student population has decreased by approximately 20 per cent in the last decade. It is approximately half of what it was 20 years ago, and is expected to continue to decline an additional 12 to 15 per cent over the next 10 years.

Despite these demographics, enrolment in our undergraduate programs has remained stable over the past decade and has actually increased in recent years, and with planned program growth is expected to increase again significantly.

In addition, graduate student enrolment is up again by over six per cent this year. And over the past 10 years, we have seen a doubling of the number of graduate students to a total of just under 3400 graduate students.

All of this enrolment is great news for the university and, of course, also for the province since we are simply not now producing the number of high school graduates, let alone those qualified to attend Memorial, to keep this province running.

The province and the country face a shortage of skilled workers, so recruitment and retention of highly qualified people must be a priority. Estimates are that we'll need 70,000 new workers over the next decade.

So we need to bring people into this province, and keep them here to live and work and raise families. With the tremendous budget support of the provincial government, we have been able to recruit and will continue to recruit the talented people (students, faculty and staff) necessary for the province. It's a responsibility we readily accept.

But make no mistake, we are in a competition. We are fighting with every other jurisdiction in Canada and beyond for brain power. Universities everywhere are all vying for high quality students, faculty and staff.

For example, over the next five to 10 years we can reasonably expect a faculty turn-over rate of approximately 40 per cent.

So in addition to student recruitment demands, we'll also be looking to hire, and we need to have what it takes to attract and retain the highest quality people.

From Memorial's perspective that's directly related to capacity on the ground here, and the development and operation of 21st-century teaching, research and development 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.

So given our significant growth in research activity, increased enrolment and planned growth, and the age of many of our buildings, it should come as no surprise that infrastructure renewal has become the number one priority at Memorial.

And we are so pleased that it is occurring. Today, you see some great things if you drive around our campuses.

In St. John's the new residence buildings are nearing completion, with the first one set to open this fall, and the second about this time next year. And there are building extensions underway to the medical school and the engineering building, both of which should be completed in the next year or so.

Out at Logy Bay, the \$16 million extension and renovation to the Ocean Sciences Centre, known to many of you as the Marine Lab, is winding up.

At the Grenfell Campus, the new academic building has opened, and work continues on new residences and environmental science laboratories.

At the Marine Institute, infrastructure needs are acute and an increase in its base budget from the provincial government last spring will result in new programs and more undergraduate and graduate students. Part of the answer to the space crunch will be the new Holyrood Marine Base.

We've recently moved the staff and expertise at the Marine Institute's Centre for Applied Ocean Technology to the Conception Bay base as part of our commitment to develop the ocean technology sector in partnership with the local community.

And then of course, there is our highest infrastructure priority – our new, state-of-the-art core science facilities at Memorial, replacing our current out-of-date 50 year-old science facilities.

In perhaps the biggest infrastructure announcement to come since the creation of Memorial's Elizabeth Avenue campus, the provincial government has committed funds for the development of 425,000 square feet of new core science facilities on our St. John's campus. Premier Dunderdale identified this as a priority project.

I said it at the time of the announcement, and it bears repeating, this is a game changer for the university. And just as importantly, it will pay a dividend to Newfoundland and Labrador for decades to come.

The initiative will enable the university to recruit and retain faculty and students, and significantly increase the size of our research, innovation and development programs to help the province diversify and build the knowledge-based economy of the future. Our planning for the core science infrastructure is well underway.

Of course, one of our more visible and talked about infrastructure initiatives came about last fall when it was announced that the university has made an offer to purchase The Battery Hotel.

We are just now concluding due diligence before we hopefully complete the purchase, but we certainly believe the university moving into The Battery and into downtown St. John's is good news on many levels.

We suffer from a chronic space shortage on the St. John's and Marine Institute campuses. In fact, we spend close to a million dollars a year leasing off-campus space, and have demands for more lease space to accommodate our growing activities.

Redirecting off-campus lease expenditures and revenue generated through the use and activities at The Battery mean that the building and operations would be cost-neutral to the university.

The Battery's 140,000 square feet would enable us to consolidate a number of units that could be appropriately housed closer to the city's downtown core freeing up space on the campuses.

We will develop a comprehensive usage plan for the facility, but one of the possibilities includes using a portion of The Battery to house the growing number of graduate students from all over the world who are choosing Memorial.

Memorial's purchase is an investment in St. John's, and in Newfoundland and Labrador. And as for the sensitivity of the location, I want to state clearly that Memorial respects the integrity of the communities in which we live and work, and, as elsewhere, we would be committed to integrating into the surroundings and values of The Battery neighbourhood.

Many universities in Canada are establishing downtown locations and partnerships, but few have the provincial reach and mandate as The Battery

would provide to Memorial. It is the perfect platform for increasing public engagement with the community while alleviating a pressing space problem.

On that note, next week we are set to release our new Public Engagement Framework. This is part of a full schedule of activities that we're calling *Engage Memorial Week*. We've put the schedule of events and activities open to the public on your tables, and I invite you to attend and participate.

As I stated earlier, Memorial is committed to fulfilling its special obligation to the people of this province. Connecting to our communities is not just a standard university aspiration – it's a core value that distinguishes your university.

It's a principle that shaped the founding of Memorial University College in 1925, and guided its subsequent growth to university status. The first president, John Lewis Paton, had this to say at the official opening of Memorial University College in September, 1925:

“A university is the consciousness of a community reaching out to a realization of the higher powers of the mind.”

A powerful statement of deliberate engagement by the community to enable, shape and benefit from the creation of the university – the realization of learning, research, scholarship and creative works.

The Public Engagement Framework reflects this. It establishes a vision for shared values, goals and objectives to guide the university's faculties and units in establishing engagement priorities. It will help all of us to connect better with all of you, and vice-versa.

As a key added benefit, many of the students we attract from outside the province will also become more involved with the community and more connected to the province. And thus, hopefully will choose to stay here when they graduate.

I want to show you a short animated video that we've produced that captures what we expect from the Public Engagement Framework.

Video

Our university as it stands today bears little resemblance to its first iteration on Parade Street, or even the four-building campus that opened on Elizabeth Avenue in 1961. I don't think our founders could have imagined where we find ourselves today.

And as we go forward, Memorial's continued success will be shaped by the same collaborative effort involving every segment of Newfoundland and Labrador society that has brought us this far.

With the right investments, strategic planning and continued support from the people of this great province, we are positioning Memorial University, and Newfoundland and Labrador, for continued success.

Thank you.