

Spring Convocation
Grenfell Campus, Memorial University
Dr. Gary Kachanoski, President and Vice-Chancellor:
Thursday, May 12, 2016

Welcome to our 2016 spring 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 every one 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.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in congratulating all of our graduating students.

I would like to acknowledge and welcome the member of the Board of Regents. All of our regents volunteer their time and contribute significantly to our university. Would you please join me welcoming and acknowledging our regents.

Ladies and gentlemen, as president of Memorial University for almost six years, it has been my pleasure to personally connect with this campus and this community. I've enjoyed watching the positive impact of important and strategic initiatives and investments here at Grenfell, and to experience

each of these successes with our extended community here on the west coast.

There is so much to be proud of as we consider the incredible growth of Grenfell Campus over more than 40 years – the arts and science extension, the wonderful residence complex, new partnerships and academic programs, and expanded students services including new campus health services with a family practice physician.

An expanded research portfolio is reflected in Grenfell's new MSc program in boreal ecosystems and agricultural sciences, Memorial's first program in agriculture, and the appointment of Dr. Benjamin Zendel, the campus' newest Canada Research Chair in Aging and Auditory Neuroscience.

And this is so important because, now more than ever, Newfoundland and Labrador needs Grenfell Campus, not just to support advanced education and the growth and development of the west coast of the island, but for the entire province.

Grenfell's success and engagement with communities are due in no small part to the great work being done by Dr. Mary Bluehardt, our vice-president for Grenfell Campus. Dr. Bluehardt was just recently re-appointed for a five-year term effective July 1, and based on her record to date, we are sure that she will continue to provide visible, innovative and visionary leadership to Grenfell Campus and to the entire university. Please join me in acknowledging her.

One important development at Grenfell undertaken this past year is the change to a decanal system of deans and schools. This academic structure better reflects Grenfell's rightful place among peer university campuses

across Canada. It acknowledges the multi-campus structure of Memorial itself, and empowers Grenfell's academic aspirations and leadership.

Through all of this, Grenfell's impact and reach will only continue to grow.

And of course, its future success, like its past, 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 government, community and municipal leaders and other western Newfoundland partners for your unwavering support of Grenfell Campus again this year and, through that, your support for all of Memorial University.

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

And in these uncertain, and perhaps unsettling times, it is more important than ever to stay true to our values and focus on our vision and mission.

And we want and need you, our new graduates, alumni, friends and partners to continue with us on that challenging journey.

So it is important that every spring and every fall, Memorial's Grenfell Campus community gathers here in Corner Brook for convocation to admit the graduands to their degrees, one of the most important tasks we undertake today.

But university convocation is more than that.

Convocation is an assembly of our university community, which provides the opportunity to re-affirm and express our on-going responsibilities to serve the public good and fulfill our special obligation to the people of this great province.

The university embodies an aspiration of those who founded Memorial University College – to be the living legacy of those who fought and died for our freedom in the First World War and subsequent conflicts, a living legacy for the advancement of our society through education.

As we mark the 100th anniversary of the First World War, and in particular the 100th anniversary of Beaumont Hamel this July, we remind ourselves of this legacy, and that through teaching, research and public engagement, we work towards a better world.

The Danger Tree sculpture and new memorial site, which will be officially unveiled by Her Royal Highness, the Princess Royal, on campus in late June this summer is a tangible reminder of our unique origin, and a reminder that in times of adversity, it is important to have a vision and focus on the future.

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

You are the rightful heirs of the bold young people who stepped forward to preserve our freedom, generation after generation. The torch now burns brightly in your hands.

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. Now, more than ever, we need your ingenuity, your know-how and your leadership to advance this province and our country.

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