

Installation Address
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MISTER CHANCELLOR, YOUR HONOUR, THE HONOURABLE THE PREMIER, HONOURABLE MINISTER, MISTER CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS, MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS, MEMBERS OF THE SENATE AND FACULTY, MEMBERS OF THE GRADUATING CLASS, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

Thank you, to all of you, for your sincere and generous welcome to this great university, and for being here on this wonderful and incredible day of celebration.

There is simply no greater honour for me, than to be appointed as the president and vice- chancellor of Memorial University of Newfoundland.

I am inspired by your confidence and trust, and will muster all of my talents and energy to earn that trust and your respect.

This is truly a life-defining event for me and also for Teresa, my wife and partner in all things important. The privilege of serving as your president would simply not be possible, or even contemplated, without her support, encouragement and tolerance.

Teresa and I feel so fortunate that two of our children, Elizabeth and Reg, of whom we are so proud, are here with us today, along with my mother, Teresa's parents, and brothers and sister and extended families on both

our sides. Thank you for travelling across the country to share in this special celebration. Peter, our youngest son, is cheering us on as he takes his mid-term exams in Edmonton.

I want to extend a special welcome and congratulations to all of our new graduands. I am honoured to join you on your special day of convocation, an event that celebrates and rededicates the university's primary relationship, its relationship with you, our students.

Your success is a direct expression of my primary responsibility as a president.

I remember my student days very well. That is why I am so pleased that my PhD supervisor and great friend, Dr. Dennis Rolston, and his wife, Mata, were able to be here today from California, and that they have been joined by past colleagues, students, and friends who have also made a special effort to be here. Thank you very much.

Finally, I want to acknowledge Dr. Chris Loomis, on stage now as our Vice-President (Research), but having just served as president *pro-tempore*. Your leadership and dedication to the university and your assistance with the smooth transition to my appointment are greatly appreciated.

In contemplating what it would mean to be president and vice-chancellor of Memorial, I had to closely examine what this university was - if you will, I had to divine Memorial's personality and see how I might fit it and how it might fit me.

So, for this prairie boy, with feet, mind, research career, and family firmly planted in the rich prairie soil, it involved no small amount of familiarization with Newfoundland and Labrador, and Memorial.

This involved looking to the past to where Memorial had come from and understanding what it had accomplished.

It involved learning about the connections between the university and this special place. A province where a vast resource-rich expanse of ocean has shaped its history, culture, and economy, and shaped the university's motto "*Provehito in Altum*" or "launch forth into the deep."

It involved an examination of Memorial's present capabilities, directions, plans and aspirations, and most importantly, its core values.

It involved a process of self-examination – looking at my professional, academic and research career and my passions to see how they matched with Memorial's, mission, accomplishments and direction.

And it involved a process of imagining what we could do together over the next number of years as this university goes through the natural and unending process of transformation.

I guess I had to determine if there was a role for me in that process. I had to determine what I could bring to this university and to this province that would complement and build on the great work of my predecessors in the president's office and throughout the university.

As many of you know, the mission of Memorial University recognizes its special obligation to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador

I like that. And I like the fact that it's written right into the *Memorial University Act*. I like that the faculty, staff, students, and alumni are proud of this obligation, and that the people of this place, this great province, expect the university to live up to its obligations.

Many other Canadian universities struggle with the challenge of connecting their activities to their communities. But at Memorial, it is not just a standard aspiration; it's a core value – and not only on paper.

It's a core value that shaped the founding of Memorial University College in 1925 and its subsequent growth to university status in 1949. The first president of Memorial University College, John Lewis Paton, had this to say at the official opening of the 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 value statement of deliberate engagement by the community to enable, shape, and benefit from the realizations of the university: the realizations of learning, research, scholarship and creative works.

It's a core value that has guided the leadership of Memorial's past presidents, but perhaps no more so than Memorial's sixth president: Mose Morgan, a Rhodes Scholar with eight honorary degrees, and companion of the Order of Canada. His biography, written by Cyril Poole, was given to me by a student leader, shortly after my arrival and it highlights President Morgan's “unwavering conviction that Memorial must not be a replica of a university to be found elsewhere.....It is and must remain unique, with its roots deep in the traditions and needs of this Province.”

Let me describe to you a real measure of Memorial's impact upon its community through its most important realization, the success of its students.

In August, a first-ever reunion was held for all students who had attended the university's original campus on Parade Street in St. John's. The "Memorial on Parade" reunion brought together more than 450 former students and their spouses for whom the university of the 1950s and earlier had provided the foundation on which they had built their very successful, and in many instances, influential lives.

They were from every corner of this province, reinforcing the fact that the reach of Memorial extended into every bay, cove and inland community in Newfoundland and Labrador.

They came home from across Canada and around the world, evidencing the contribution that this university has made to social, economic and scientific development nationally and internationally.

There can be no better measure of the impact of Memorial University than the successful lives and the stories of these students; people who built Newfoundland and Labrador's education system, who built its health care, legal and social systems, who built its infrastructure, who wrote the books, plays, poems and songs that tell the stories of this place, and what it means to have come from this place.

But Memorial's success has not been by accident. It is a university that has been shaped by a collaborative effort involving every segment of Newfoundland and Labrador society.

All sectors, joining hand-in-hand, contributed to the birth and development of this institution, a university that is, as has been said many times before, “intricately woven in the social, economic, scientific and cultural fabric of Newfoundland and Labrador.

It is through these kinds of collaborations that universities are imagined, and it is through these kinds of engagements that the ideals of universities are realized.

And in the short three months since I started, it has been remarkable for me to experience and learn about the history, legacy and accomplishments of this great university over the past 85 yrs.

In fact, I experienced significant aspects of the past, present and the future of this university and province on my first two days as president.

As many of you know, when the university was created in 1925, it was dedicated as a living memorial to the hundreds of young men from the many communities across this province who lost their lives in the First World War.

On my first day, July 1st, Canada Day, which is also Memorial Day in Newfoundland and Labrador, my first official duty as president was to join the Premier and other dignitaries at the National War Memorial in downtown St. John's, and lay a commemorative wreath on behalf of the university community.

On my second day, July 2, the 18th anniversary of the northern cod fisheries moratorium that forever changed lives and communities in this province, I again joined the Premier, but this time it was at our Fisheries and Marine Institute campus for the announcement of major new funding for fisheries research at the university, an announcement that fulfilled a vision that has been part of the *Memorial University Act* since 1949.

And each and every day since then has been a wonderful time of discovery and learning about this great university.

I've discovered that our Fisheries and Marine Institute campus, which joined the Memorial University family in 1992, is Canada's best kept secret. I've discovered that it offers a comprehensive set of education and training programs that are integrated to allow students to progress seamlessly through one-year certificates to two- and three-year diplomas, to four-year degrees and then on to masters degrees.... and hopefully soon PhD degrees, but that's for a future conversation.

I've learned that if student access and success is our metric, then the Marine Institute's approach to seamlessly integrated education programs should serve as an example for us and for our relationship with the College of the North Atlantic, an integral part of our external community that we need to engage more deliberately and explicitly.

I've learned about the Marine Institute's history with, and commitment to its Canadian Navy programs, and that combined with its other programs it trains over 70 percent of all mariners in Canada.

I've come to understand that if we combine the Marine Institute's capabilities with all of Memorial's capabilities in ocean and environmental sciences and engineering, northern, arctic, and coastal studies, and our external partners like the National Research Council Institute for Ocean Technology, and our offshore energy and marine industry partners, then the trajectory for Memorial University to world-class status is clear and unstoppable.

I've learned from numerous visits to our Grenfell Campus and the west coast, that if you were to map my own academic career, there is no doubt that I could thrive there as a teacher, researcher and community member.

I've learned that the Grenfell Campus is setting out to build on the success and expertise gained from over 35 years of providing quality programming, such as the theatre and visual arts programs that have shaped the talent, creativity, and originality that exist in abundance here in Newfoundland and Labrador, and then shared that with the nation, and the world.

And I've experienced the provincial government's support for Grenfell Campus, through its funding for a new academic building and residence, and substantial increase in its investment for administrative support, research opportunities, enhanced marketing and student recruitment that will increase enrolment and help Grenfell campus grow.

I've discovered that Grenfell Campus is a vital and important part of Memorial University that has so much to offer students. And I plan to be

there often and ensure that we build on its momentum with the introduction of graduate programs and growth in research activity and facilities, as key next steps in Grenfell's development.

On the St. John's campus, I've experienced the depth and breadth of disciplines and excellence consistent with, and necessary for, a great flagship, comprehensive, teaching-research public university.

A university that values the freedom of researchers to pursue research based on their individual and collective intelligence, curiosity, ingenuity and creativity, but a university where many choose to carry out this work in a way that is influencing and being influenced by the social, economic, scientific and cultural fabric of Newfoundland and Labrador.

And this world-class community engaged scholarship is producing new knowledge and insight that is relevant nationally and globally.

On the St John's campus, I've learned about new faculty hiring, program expansion, significant increases in important research, scholarship and creative activity, and research spending that approaches \$100M per year

I've learned that with more than 500 PhD students (double the number just four or five years ago), and more on their way, the St John's campus is continuing its transformation as a research-intensive university campus . . . though we are finding it increasingly difficult to give them a proper place to sit and work.

I've learned that in a little over a year from now, the university will hit a new historic landmark, the 50th anniversary of the official opening of the St John's Elizabeth Avenue campus.

And I've discovered that at ceremonies marking the start of the construction of the St. John's campus, almost 60 years ago, that the campus was to be ". . . the outward manifestation of the faith of the people of the province, in the future."

And I've come to hope that this 50th anniversary, perhaps at a 50-year, all-years reunion, would be an incredible and wonderful opportunity for the St John's campus be rededicated once again as "the manifestation of the faith of the people of the province, in the future" through the renewal of the campus with a new teaching, learning and research complex for the arts and sciences, the heart and soul of the university.

And finally, I've experienced the magnificent promise and beauty of Labrador. I visited our Labrador Institute, and Muskrat Falls, the site of the Lower Churchill project, and I've seen the new highways, and over 60 miles of the Labrador coast by small boat, and met Innu and Inuit community leaders.

I understand that we need to do much more in Labrador, and we will.

And guided by our recent *Report of the President's Task Force on Aboriginal Initiatives*, we will ensure that we meet our special obligation to ALL peoples of this great province.

In all provinces, demographics and socio-economic trends have influenced, and will continue to influence decisions that shape the nature of post-secondary education.

Here, we are fortunate to have had provincial governments that consistently recognized the importance of university education to the development of the province, and in recent years that level of support has soared to unprecedented levels.

You really know you are in a different place when you have the students praising the provincial government, as the Canadian Federation of Students did earlier this month...“The provincial government of Newfoundland and Labrador has done extraordinary work to keep tuition fees low, increase funding for the public college and university system, and implement measures to improve financial assistance.”

Given all that we have, we might ask ourselves what else we need to do to become a great university. How do we ensure that we add up to more than just the sum of our parts?

I believe it comes down to building relationships.

We are a large complex institution with multiple campuses, and facilities and institutions across Newfoundland and Labrador, and our Harlow campus in England.

Each of our campuses has its own history, culture, mandate, and stage of development, and within our campuses we have many different areas of established and emerging excellence.

And rightly so, all of our parts have their own aspirations and stories of success, and examples of positive university collaborations. But, they also have their stories of challenges and frustration, which can happen particularly when campuses are separated by significant distances and unique histories and cultures.

Our students know that in today's connected world, life and success do not happen in isolation, that we rely on the synergy, the exchange of new ideas, and the creativity of our peers to challenge, inspire and motivate us.

We support each other.

We are no different at Memorial. I believe we need to build our relationships within and across our campuses and facilities, to understand and appreciate our diversity, and recognize that we need each other in order to achieve.

Complex institutions and communities that value and facilitate the development of what is sometimes called social capital: a collective spirit of engagement, collaboration, cooperation, reciprocity and trust for mutual benefit, are simply more effective in meeting challenges, seizing opportunities, and achieving success.

Social capital is not easily measured, at least in any quantitative sense, but it is valuable, enriching, empowering, and the way forward to ensure and maximize our success. In today's globally-connected, competitive world, we need to work together to ensure that the best and the brightest faculty,

staff, and students, will come here, will stay here, and build this university and the communities that we want for our children and future generations.

Through it we build on our strengths, we emphasize what makes us unique, but we are still connected and support each other, and celebrate each other's success. The end result is that our students are successful, the university flourishes, and as a public university we fulfill our special obligation to the people of this great province, serve our broader mission to the nation and the world.

And look what has been achieved so far.

Our graduates are making their mark in Newfoundland and Labrador, across the country and around the world. They are building careers, raising families, winning awards and making a difference in the world.

And to our new graduates, about to write a new chapter in your lives, I know you will do all this as well, and wish you great success whatever your path.

This afternoon you will receive your degrees and commence the next phase of your lives. It's a transitional time for you and, with this installation as president and vice-chancellor of your university, I join you in that transition.

Today is our time for celebration. Tomorrow we get down to the challenges that lie ahead. I will meet these challenges bolstered by the tremendous support I can expect from the faculty, staff, students and alumni of Memorial, and from the people of this great province.

In meeting your challenges, you will be bolstered by your education, your knowledge, your family, and your university. You will be part of the 70,000-strong family of Memorial University alumni – that means your university will always be there for you.

And to all of you, I want to thank you once again, most sincerely, for the trust and confidence you have shown in me by appointing me your president and vice-chancellor. I look forward to working with you.

Thank-you