

**Convocation Address  
Grenfell Campus Session  
Dr. Gary Kachanoski, president and vice-chancellor  
Friday, October 8, 10 am**

**B.A., B Sc., B.N., B.F.A. (Visual Arts), B.Ed. (Prim. /Elem), B.B.A., M.A.**

Good morning and congratulations to all of our new graduands. I am honored to join you on this special day.

Congratulations also to your parents, your families, friends and professors who have a part in the success that you have achieved today. They have nurtured and supported you, opened your eyes to new ways of looking at the world, offered their direction, guidance, and encouragement.

Ultimately, of course, it was your efforts and talents, your learning and transformation that got you to today's convocation, so congratulations.

This morning we have with us our Honorary Graduand, Minnie Vallis, who is being recognized for her devotion to the well-being of her fellow citizens. She is a community builder who has built many important relationships over her many years as a volunteer and accomplished great things.

Also joining us at today's convocation is Dr. Adrian Fowler, a retired member of the faculty here at Grenfell campus. He has had a distinguished career as a professor of English and will receive the esteemed designation professor *emeritus*.

We will hear more about these accomplished people later in Convocation.

Convocations are special events in the life of a university because they celebrate and rededicate the university's primary relationship....It's relationship with you, our students. We celebrate not just the outcome from our relationship the past few years, but also our

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combined future as we welcome you to the Memorial family, as alumni of this great university.

The relationships you have built here over the past few years are significant ones and will continue to influence you, to define you, as you go out into the world to begin your careers, to continue with your education, or to pursue your passion.

I remember this stage in my own life very well, and I still value the relationships that helped me become the person I am today. I'm certain many of you in the audience and here on stage have similar reflections.

This is also a very special event for me. It is my first time to address Convocation as president, and I am pleased to be here, in Corner Brook, speaking to you.

My wife Teresa also joins me here today. Of course, this is not our first appearance at Grenfell Campus or in the Region. We have visited numerous times since I started as president of Memorial last July, and we certainly hope that both our faces are becoming more familiar

We plan to be here on the west coast often, and have been fortunate to meet many warm and generous people here, to visit many communities and tour facilities such as our Bonne Bay Marine Station, and the Safety and Emergency Response Training Centre in Stephenville, and to also enjoy the theatre at Cow Head performed by Grenfell students and alumni.

I feel at home here, and my own background is a good fit for Grenfell Campus. If you were to map my own academic career, there is no doubt that I could be here, and thrive here as a teacher, researcher, and community member. As a scientist, I have spent my career focused on the environment and renewable resources. I grew up in rural Canada, in Saskatchewan, and so it might have been predictable that I was attracted to soil sciences as a field of study!

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In my research I have looked at the ways that water, chemicals and gases move through soil and landscapes, and I know this work has relevance in this region, where scientists have been involved with the Humber River Basin project.

Over the course of my career I have worked with communities in many different ways. For example, I have worked with rural communities and farm producers and organizations in Western Canada and Ontario to carry out research, and help share information, to promote innovative management for soil and water conservation.

Through our close relationships, community partners shared their insights and knowledge of the problems, and when this was combined with new knowledge through my discovery research, then...together.... we were able to provide many new solutions that advanced soil and water conservation!

And now, as President, I am excited about starting my relationship with you as we begin a new chapter for Grenfell Campus, Memorial University of Newfoundland. The name change for Grenfell means that we are all working together to grow and develop our university system into one of the best in the country.

We are setting out to build on the success and expertise gained here from over 35 years of providing quality programming that does the people of this region and this great province proud. Grenfell Campus is a vital and important part of Memorial University, and has so much to offer students.

It has established itself as an important presence in the social, economic and cultural life of the region, and the province.

The theatre and visual arts programs introduced in the 1980s 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. We don't have to look very far to

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see the contribution Grenfell's graduates are making to the artistic and cultural life of this province and this country.

My wife Teresa and I consider ourselves fortunate to be living in the midst of such rich cultural traditions.

Of course, there is lots of other great work happening on this campus. Students taking environmental studies and sciences, sustainable resource management and tourism studies find so much to inspire them in this beautiful place.....

.....And the introduction of graduate programs and growth in research activity are key next steps in Grenfell's development. A new Masters of Arts in Environmental Policy is in advanced stages of approval with the goal of launching in the fall of 2011, and other programs are in the planning stages.

So, there is success to build on, and this past year the provincial government made a substantial increase in its investment in Grenfell. Vital funding for administrative support and increased research opportunities that will help Grenfell campus grow, and funding to support enhanced marketing and student recruitment as we focus on building enrolments

A new academic building is well underway and set for opening in 2011, and new residences will be constructed. We are building on that momentum, and on the strengths that you have nurtured since Grenfell's opening in 1975.

A priority for me is to fill the new position of vice-president for Grenfell Campus – the person to take this job will have a pivotal leadership role on campus, and within the Memorial University community.

The position has been filled on an interim basis by Dr. Holly Pike, and I want to take this opportunity to thank her for the capable leadership she has provided in this role.

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So the stage is set for positive growth, and the possibilities are many. We have substantial investments of people and infrastructure and operating resources; we have a history of quality to build on, in a most scenic location here in Corner Book, and on the steps of a spectacular world heritage site at Gros Morne National Park.

Given all of this, we might ask ourselves...what else do we need to ensure that all of these factors add up to more than just the sum of their parts – to ensure that Grenfell Campus builds on its success and reaches its full potential?

I believe, once again, it comes down to building relationships.

Our new graduates know that in today's connected world, life and success does 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, to recognize that we need each other in order to achieve.

Grenfell Campus came about because of the desire to make university education accessible to people here in the western region of the province, and to have the advantage of a university for social, cultural, and economic growth and development in the region. It didn't just happen. People working together made it happen.

I know that over the years Grenfell and the St. John's campus have worked closely to introduce new programs, and I know there have been challenging times as well, which can happen when communities are separated by significant distances and unique histories and cultures.

But challenges, if squarely met, often lead to great progress.

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And complex institutions such as universities, 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 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 success. In today's globally connected, competitive world, we need to work together to ensure that the best and the brightest will come here, will stay here, and build the place 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 benefit, the university flourishes, and as a public university we serve our mission and special obligation to the people of this great province.

Look what has been achieved so far...

Our graduates are making their mark in Newfoundland and Labrador and across the country and 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.

Thank you

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