

Address to Rotary
Dr. Gary Kachanoski, President and Vice-Chancellor
February 5, 2015

Thank you and good afternoon everyone. I want to begin by thanking the members of the Rotary Club of St. John's for once again inviting me to speak, and also for your ongoing support of your university.

Through student scholarships, through individual philanthropy, and through many of you being involved in our activities, you make Memorial so much better. So on behalf of the entire university community, I thank you for that, and for all the good work that Rotary does in our community.

I also want to acknowledge another group of community citizens and volunteers – Ms. Iris Petten, chair of our Board of Regents, our chancellor, Dr. Susan Knight and many other members of our Board of Regents.

We also have a number of new members of our senior leadership team or people in new roles. From our senior leadership team this past year we have Dr. Noreen Golfman, provost and vice-president (academic) *pro-tempore*; Dr. Ray Gosine, vice-president (research) *pro-tempore*; Dr. Carlo Marra, dean of the School of Pharmacy; and Dr. Alice Gaudine, dean of Nursing.

This is my fifth presentation to the club and it's been wonderful getting to know many of you, and to have the opportunity to keep you updated about all the noteworthy happenings and activities at Memorial.

It has certainly been a very busy and exciting year. Across all our campuses, we are focused on meeting the needs of students, developing

innovative living and learning spaces, and creating appropriate infrastructure for 21st century teaching, research and public engagement – and making a difference in your communities.

There is so much to celebrate at Memorial as our students, faculty and staff continue to amaze us with their leadership and achievement that distinguishes them at a national and international level. A number of those accomplishments and stories are highlighted in our newest president's report, and like last year, the report is an interactive, multi-media web site.

We've brought along brochures with some highpoints that you'll find on your table. I invite each of you to take one with you when you leave, and I am pleased to share just a few examples with you today.

All of our Sea-Hawks student athletes make us proud but this year we had an additional reason to celebrate when the women's Sea-Hawks soccer team won the 2014 Atlantic University Sport Championship. It is the first AUS soccer banner for Memorial since 1973, and the first ever in the women's team history.

We also were proud that Memorial had 37 Academic All-Canadians – exceptional Sea-Hawks athletes with an academic standing of 80 per cent or better.

Our Enactus Memorial student team once again won the national championship and represented our university, our province and our country on the international stage as Team Canada at the Enactus World Cup in Beijing, China.

Memorial's teams have won seven national championships in past nine years – a feat unmatched in the world. They have been world champions once and runners-up once.

However, more important than the championships is the impact this group is having here, across Canada and beyond. Social entrepreneurship initiatives created by Enactus Memorial improve the lives of community participants, provide our students with important opportunities to expand their social awareness and engagement, provide invaluable opportunities to learn about leadership and take on leadership roles in their communities.

And speaking of leadership, Devin Grant, a St. John's resident, was awarded Newfoundland's and Memorial's newest Rhodes scholarship, so we are very proud of that. He is currently completing an honours degree in applied math with a minor in computer science at Memorial, and he will begin a master's program in mathematical modelling and scientific computing at Oxford in October.

This past fall, a team of Memorial graduate students competed against top graduate student teams from leading business schools and universities, at the prestigious international 2014 G20 Global Business Challenge. Teams were challenged to develop an innovative business case solution to use, recycle and/or manage water to achieve large-scale impact. Our team won first place and were crowned the best in the world, taking the top prize of \$100,000.

Memorial researchers also continued to get national recognition, winning two of five national research awards at the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada's national Impact Awards ceremony in

Ottawa. This is the first time a university has won two awards and these are the top research awards in Canada.

Dr. Beverly Diamond, a faculty member in Memorial's School of Music and Faculty of Arts was presented with the 2014 Gold Medal, the highest research award one can receive, and the SSHRC Talent award for top graduate student in Canada went to Kirk Luther, a PhD student in our psychology department.

Dr. Barbara Neis of the Faculty of Arts, Department of Sociology, has been named Memorial's latest fellow of the Royal Society of Canada for her groundbreaking research, including significant contributions to community engaged research on sustainable coastal communities.

The national recognition of our research reflects the significant upward trajectory of our research enterprise with external sponsored research funding more than doubling over the past decade or so. We are now rated number 17 nationally and very close to the middle of the pack compared to other universities.

Our new research intensity plan, approved just this past fall by Senate and the Board of Regents, outlines our aspirations and expectations of continued growth, with a goal of doubling again the impact of our research and development over the coming decade.

Recent examples highlighting research investments include our November announcement of a \$50 million partnership to strengthen health research in the province. Partners include the Government of Canada, the Government

of Newfoundland and Labrador, jurisdictional partners and private-sector partner IBM.

And in December we officially opened the \$6.8 million Suncor Energy Offshore R&D Centre. The centre will house innovative ocean- and offshore engineering-related R&D projects that will be carried out in collaboration with local and global industry partners.

In addition to the significant upward trajectory of our research activities, we are particularly proud that despite challenging provincial demographics, Memorial continues to experience strong demand for our academic programs.

The province's K-12 student population and number of Grade 12 graduates have decreased by approximately 25 per cent since the year 2000, and is expected to continue to decline between 10 to 15 per cent in 10 years.

Despite these demographics, enrolment in our undergraduate programs has remained relatively stable over the past decade. Some of our programs have been impacted, but with some planned program growth, undergraduate enrolment is expected to remain stable or increase slightly over the next five years.

For example, we continue our aggressive plans to double the Faculty of Engineering over the next five years with a projected increase of 500 undergraduate students, as well as 300 graduate students.

The big story, however, is graduate student enrolment, with full-time enrolment up again by over four 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 3,600.

Of particular note is our number of PhD students, rising from 300 to more than 700 this year, directly reflecting our upward research trajectory. Our enrolment plan is to continue to increase graduate enrolment by another 1,500 students by 2020, with an emphasis on PhD students. So our PhD enrolment could double again.

As the recent auditor general's report has indicated, a key aspect of our enrolment is that over 30 per cent of our students, originally from outside the province and Canada, now call Memorial and this province, home. We believe, of course, that our quality academic programs and our great province are the primary reason that any student would choose to come to Memorial.

But there is also no question that the low cost for tuition, the generous student loan and grant programs in the province, and the significant and sustained investments by the provincial government to Memorial have allowed us to compete successfully for students.

We were created to be a comprehensive university for Newfoundland and Labrador, and stable enrolments have allowed us to continue to fulfill our mandate and maintain a comprehensive set of programs for Newfoundland and Labrador students.

This is also great news for the city and the province since we are simply not now producing the number of high school graduates necessary 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.

This has been recognized by the Board of Trade, and certainly by the province through the expressed need for more immigration and a population growth strategy.

I also want to emphasize that our focus on growth in PhD and graduate level education is related directly to meeting the needs for research and development in the province, and ensuring we support innovation and economic diversification from that R&D. As a recent Harris Centre report indicated, Memorial is a key component of the regional innovation ecosystem.

The Conference Board of Canada in its web report, *How Canada Performs: A Report Card on Canada*, continues to give Canada a “D” in innovation, relative to other OECD countries.

They emphasize that advanced graduate education, particularly at the PhD level, are the underpinnings of innovation and economic diversification. Quoting the Conference Board: “Highly skilled people are key to the creation, commercialization and diffusion of innovation. They are not only qualified to conduct advanced research, but they are also an important receptor community that takes new ideas and technologies to produce new or improved products and services. With their knowledge and expertise, masters and doctorate holders are well positioned to create new firms and jobs that will advance the economy.”

The Conference Board gives Canada a “D” in PhD education relative to other OECD countries.

We sit slightly below the Canadian average for number of PhD graduates per 100,000 population (ages 25 to 39), but our recent trajectory and planned growth in PhD education will soon have us on par with or above the Canadian average.

But as indicated, despite plans to significantly increase graduate enrolment, particularly PhDs, we will still be significantly lower than many countries (e.g., USA and Germany).

And make no mistake, we are in a competition for these talented people. 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, 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 and R&D 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 all of this, it should come as no surprise that infrastructure renewal has been – and remains – our university's top priority.

Certainly, the size of our infrastructure challenge and the need for a long term plan to address the university's aging infrastructure and maintenance was well documented in the recommendations of the recent auditor general's report of Memorial. More than half of our 103 buildings and infrastructure assets are 40 years or older, many needing significant maintenance or replacement.

This past year, after significant work and extensive consultation and evaluation, we completed a multi-year infrastructure plan, which was approved by our Board of Regents and will be updated yearly.

Given fiscal constraints, we understand the importance of ensuring we are wisely using all of the resources the province has invested in Memorial, and we have committed, in partnership with the provincial government, to being part of the solution for funding our significant infrastructure deficit.

As the provincial government's response to the auditor general's report has indicated, Memorial has implemented a multi-year efficiency review that will examine all aspects of our budget and operational costs.

Non-salary operating budget is flat-lined, so all inflationary increases are coming from our review of expenditures, and all new non-targeted income is directed at our highest priority – renewing our infrastructure.

Through this process to date (one and a half years), Memorial has committed to funding \$300 million for infrastructure renewal, which includes \$200 million for our highest priority project, our new core sciences building.

With the design and development of 425,000 square feet of new state-of-the-art core sciences infrastructure set to commence – we plan to have shovels in the ground this spring – we are embarking on what is arguably the most ambitious university re-development plan since 1950 when the St. John's campus was first conceived.

The re-development has a great head-start given the completion and official opening of a number of significant infrastructure projects this past year.

A new 200-room residence on our Grenfell Campus in Corner Brook officially opened early last year.

And this past fall here in St. John's we officially named and opened our new modern student residence complex adding an additional 500 beds.

In keeping with our history, and the launch of our WW100 commemorative program, we named our residence complex, Macpherson College, after Dr. Cluny Macpherson, who invented the gas mask used by Allied troops, and whose family farm once occupied the land on which Memorial's St. John's campus sits today.

Cluett and Shiwak Halls make up the complex and are named for Ms. Frances Cluett, one of Memorial's earliest alumnae who served with the Voluntary Aid Detachment as a nurse in WWI, and John Shiwak, an Inuit hunter from Rigolet, and a member of the WW1 Newfoundland Regiment who came to be known as one of the best snipers in the British forces.

This fall we also officially opened the new Medical Education Centre on the bottom floors of the newly completed Faculty of Medicine building. This new centre will allow for an increased medical class size from 60 a year to more than 80, with all of the 20 new spots reserved for students from this province. The upper floors of the building will provide space for the growth of leading edge genetic research activity in the Craig L. Dobbin Genetics Research Centre.

The Battery redevelopment project is proceeding on schedule and on-budget. The property is being revitalized with a graduate student residence expected to be open this coming September, and the rest of the property becoming the physical hub of our public engagement activities.

Detailed architectural drawings are expected shortly. In Phase 1, several key outreach units will be moving there including the Gardiner Centre, the Genesis Centre, the Harris Centre and the Office of Public Engagement.

This will free up at least 40,000 square feet of space on campus allowing us to reduce external leased space costing approximately \$1 million per year, and create over 100 new graduate student residence units.

We are developing a vision for Phase II and the remaining space in the facility to further enhance the ability of the university to engage with the people and organizations of the province.

I hope you get the sense that through our responsible budget management and our integrated strategic plans, we are committed to building and creating an innovative learning and research environment to foster continued success for our students, staff and faculty, and through that continue to have a tremendous positive impact on the social, cultural and economic development of our great province.

The blue pamphlets on your table include some highlights of an analysis prepared by Dr. Wade Locke and Professor Scott Lynch from our Department of Economics, on the economic impact of Memorial.

They gave a public presentation on the report this week, and the entire 200-plus page report is available on-line, so I won't discuss it in any detail.

Two examples from the report that I thought might interest you are:

First, student expenditures: Total student spending is approximately \$141 million per year, \$129 million each year right here in St. John's. And an additional \$6 million per year in spending comes from people visiting them.

Approximately 60 per cent of all students here on St. John's campuses are not from the St. John's catchment or commuting area. So they moved here from the rest of the province and from outside the province to go to Memorial, and that group spends approximately \$100 million per year here in St. John's on things such as rent, food, etc.

Second: Over \$51 million per year is paid to MUN pensioners, with 80 per cent (\$40 million plus) having Newfoundland and Labrador addresses. And by the way, our Memorial pension plan is 93 per cent funded and will very soon be fully funded.

I could continue with many more examples from the report but I don't have time today and as I said earlier the entire report is on-line and available for you to read.

I would be remiss in not mentioning today that history was made in the fall when the Joyce Foundation, created by Canadian entrepreneur Dr. Ronald Joyce of Tim Horton's fame, provided \$5 million to Memorial University and \$2 million to College of the North Atlantic to create bursary funds that will assist students who are committed to education, but face critical financial need and personal challenges to attend post-secondary education.

This marks the single largest donation ever received by each institution from a foundation, and it is investments such as these, and others too numerous to mention, that contribute to student success at Memorial.

To close, I thought I would recount what the people of Newfoundland and Labrador think about whether Memorial is doing a good job. An October 2014 Corporate Research Associates poll, conducted for the Association of Atlantic Universities, indicated that:

- 93 per cent of people asked think Memorial is doing a good job of meeting the needs of the community in terms of the quality of education we provide.
- 87 per cent believe the university is doing a good of meeting the needs of the business community in terms of providing a well-prepared workforce for the future.
- And 84 per cent believe we are catalyst for economic development.

All of these positive opinions about Memorial are 20 percentage points higher than Maritime public opinion about any other Maritime university.

Ladies and gentlemen, from a mere 55 students in 1925, Memorial is now a multi-campus, multi-disciplinary teaching-research university recognized nationally, and beyond. We have educated tens of thousands of students from the province and now welcome students from more than 90 nations.

And just as we have evolved over the past 90 years since our original iteration on Parade St., so will we continue to grow and evolve in the future. 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.

Thank you for inviting me here today to speak with pride about the accomplishments and achievements of your Memorial University.
