MUN Board of Regents hold summer retreat at St. Anthony

There have been many achievements in Newfoundland and Labrador over the past 100 years, but none as significant as the establishment of Memorial University of Newfoundland.

That’s the view of Chris Decker of Roddickton. He made the comments as chairperson of the Board of Regents of Memorial University when the group gathered at St. Anthony last month for a series of meetings.

“I’m very proud of Memorial University,” he says. “Look at the contributions which the alumni have made to the province, the country and the world. Nothing is as important as the establishment of the old Memorial College.”

Represented at the time the Board of Regents held its summer retreat on the Northern Peninsula was Mr. Decker, who assumed the position of chairperson when Edward Roberts was appointed Lieutenant-Governor, says he was so pleased when it was suggested to him that the board meet at St. Anthony.

The former clergyman, businessman and politician says his association with the Board of Regents has enabled him to “go” to know the university “better than I’ve ever known before.”

In addition to discussing regular business, members of the Board of Regents visited places such as the Grenfell Historical Properties and Anne am Meadows National Historic Site.

During a dinner for board members and invited guests, Dr. Axel Meisen, president and vice-chancellor of the university, delivered a presentation on the institution. He noted that with an enrollment of 17,000 students and 2,300 faculty and staff, MUN is the largest university in Atlantic Canada.

One of the challenges facing the university, he says, is to maintain that enrollment level when fewer students are graduating from high schools in the province. That is especially true on the Northern Peninsula.

Dr. Meisen projects out where 80 per cent of graduates attend the university.

Provincially, enrollment from high school graduates in the province will decline from 8,000 to 4,000 in 2030.

Dr. Meisen says the university is countering that trend with an aggressive recruitment drive that targets students who live outside the province and country.

He notes that several students from the peninsula have distinguished themselves as student leaders at the university. They include Holly Symes, Christine Wu and Denis O’Keefe, all of whom are graduates of Rossachi Central.

Among those attending a summer retreat on the Northern Peninsula were students from Roncalli Central, O'Keefe, all of whom are graduates of Rossachi Central.

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