

INFORMATION SHEET

FIRST NATIONS UNIVERSITY OF CANADA February 2005 to June 2006



Forensic Audit

- After receiving an affidavit regarding financial wrongdoing by senior officials at First Nations University of Canada (FNUUniv), the Chair of the Board of Governors sought legal advice and initiated an independent forensic audit. All the information received within the audit was protected by legal counsel and used only to evaluate the allegations of financial mismanagement of those entrusted with the funds of the university. As a result of the preliminary report from the auditors, on 13 May 2005 President Eber Hampton sent an email informing all staff that, based on the auditor's report, the Vice President of Administration "has been dismissed for cause. I wish I were wrong, but I believe this is the right thing to do based on what I now know." The Vice President of Administration has not filed a lawsuit. The forensic audit is in the hands of the Commercial Crime Unit of the RCMP.

Board of Governors

- In February 2005, the Board of Governors consisted of 31 members: this was the same board structure that existed when the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College was granted membership in the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) in 1994. The Chief's Task Force recommended a different Board structure, consisting of 13 members, but as a result of consultations with First Nations communities in Saskatchewan, discussions with the Board of Governors and the Saskatchewan Indian Education and Training Commission, a resolution was passed on May 30th 2006 at the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) Legislative Assembly to establish an interim Board for FNUUniv while a review takes place of all FSIN Boards and Commissions through the Office of the FSIN Legislative Assembly. The interim Board, which will be in effect until March 31st 2007, will consist of 19 members. Tribal Councils and Independent Bands, which can appoint up to 14 members, will determine the process, the selection criteria, and the tenure of office of their respective appointments.

Task Force

- The FSIN Task Force report was presented on November 29, 2005. The 16 recommendations with regard to management have been or are in the process of being resolved or instituted, while the majority of the 16 recommendations on governance are already implemented.

Relationship with the University of Regina

- On July 11th 2005 Kathy Heinrich, Vice President (Academic) of the University of Regina, sent a letter to Interim President Charles Pratt expressing her concern that the quality and integrity of the degrees might be compromised as a result of changes that had been taking place at FNUUniv. She asked that documentation with respect to our instructors and to all courses being offered in the Fall 2005 be provided to the U of R. In a letter of October 31st she wrote to President Pratt, saying that the information she received "enables us to state definitively that despite all the challenges FNUUniv

may have experienced since February, there has been no impact on the academic quality of courses, programs or instructors. In particular, we can make this statement to AUCC.”

- In a two-page document of “Frequently Asked Questions” that the U of R has prepared for the Fall 2006 semester, the final question and response are as follows:
What if the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) withdraws its support for FNUniv?

Should FNUniv lose its membership in AUCC we would begin discussions to determine the impact of loss of membership and how we could continue to work together. The federation agreement between the University of Regina and FNUniv does not require FNUniv to be a member of AUCC.

- Our relationship with the University of Regina continues to be a strong and cordial one, with the two Vice Presidents of Academics meeting regularly to discuss a variety of issues.

Students

- From June to December 2005, a crew made up of the Department of Indian Communication Arts (INCA) graduates, instructors, and students produced 40 video vignettes and ten public service announcements to air on the Saskatchewan Communication Network (SCN), CBC, and CTV as the “Centennial Scene” Project, in conjunction with the Saskatchewan Centennial office.
- Total student registrations for 2005-2006 were up 3.7 % from 2004-2005.
- There are approximately 1200 full time students enrolled at FNUniv. This does not count the many University of Regina students who take our classes.
- So far, registration for the Fall 2006 semester is consistent with previous years.
- In the Fall 2005 Convocation held in Saskatoon there were 70 graduates; over 300 people attended the ceremony. At the Spring 2006 Convocation held in Regina there were 111 graduates; over 500 people attended the ceremony.
- In April 2006 an Honouring Circle and Awards Tea sponsored by the FNUniv Scholarship Committee was held to celebrate student achievements.
- A Department of Indian Languages, Literatures and Linguistics (DILL) student has been offered a Rhodes Scholarship based on her research work into Indigenous languages.
- An English major from FNUniv successfully defended his Master’s thesis in English through the U of R this spring. His supervisor is a member of the FNUniv English department.
- An alumni of FNUniv received her Master of Arts in Psychology from the U of R. She received special recognition at our Spring Convocation.
- INDG 104—Introduction to Indigenous Higher Learning—was approved as a 3 credit hour course in 2006. This course is designed to give our students the necessary skills to be successful in their program of study. In addition to the critical skills labs associated with the course, Student Success Services offers a wide range of academic support programs and services directed at increasing student success. This year marked the introduction of the Academic Improvement Plan where students work with coordinators in developing individualized retention strategies. Since the introduction of this retention strategy our RTD (Required to Discontinue studies) numbers have decreased from 114 to 92 (students).
- Effective September 2006, Reading and Writing 120 and 121 (formerly English 90 and 91) will be counted as 3 credit hours each toward the degree in the Faculty of Arts.

Faculty and Academic Departments

- More than 60 full time faculty and over 90 sessional lecturers offer approximately 800 courses per year at FNUniv.
- Eleven new faculty positions have been approved for the 2006-2007 budget year: one for the Department of Indian Fine Arts, one for the Department of Indian Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics, two for the School of Business and Public Administration, two for the Department of Science, one for the Department of Indian Education, and two for the School of Indian Social Work. Our Northern Campus, the largest growth area at FNUniv, will have two new faculty

positions (Indian Education and Indigenous Studies), two new program coordinators, one new Academic Advisor, and one new Administrative Assistant.

- As is the practice with other universities, and in accordance with AUCC stipulations, we shall begin conducting periodic reviews of all our academic units, with the first two reviews beginning next semester (Winter 2006). Each unit will undergo a review every six years.
- We are set to begin renegotiating the Collective Agreement with our faculty members. We anticipate no major changes to the Agreement, and the Board of Governors has instructed us to maintain wage parity with the University of Regina.
- Academic freedom is protected by the First Nations University of Canada/University of Regina Faculty Association Collective Agreement.
- We continue the practice of mentoring promising First Nations faculty members. Last year, four faculty members received their PhD's and one received her Master's degree.
- Two of our faculty members were awarded Indigenous Peoples Health Research Centre fellowships to work on their PhDs. From January 1st 2006 until December 31st 2007, they can devote almost all of their time to their research and writing; they do not need to teach classes or do administrative work.
- The promotion and tenure process at FNUniv is virtually identical to that of the U of R and to other Canadian universities.
- Almost all tenured and tenure-track instructors are in place. Universities regularly experience faculty changes from year to year, and this university is no different.
- In February 2006, eight faculty members received renewals of probation, two received permanency, and three received promotions in rank. One education leave, three sabbatical leaves, and four research leaves were granted.
- Contrary to some media reports, there have in fact been three grievances with respect to academic freedom since February 2005: one grievance, relating to comments made by two faculty members, has been resolved; another, relating to a faculty member wishing to present a paper at an Assembly of First Nations conference, is in arbitration; a third, related to the copying of the hard drive and email system, is still underway.
- We would welcome an independent assessment of the status of academic freedom at our University.
- Jean L. Okimasis was awarded a honorary Doctorate of Literature from the University of Regina in June 2005 in recognition of her many years of dedication to her Cree language and culture.

New Academic Programs

- The Certificate of Extended Studies in Aboriginal Education has been taking new admissions since May 2006.
- The Certificate of Extended Studies in First Nations Languages (offered jointly by Indian Education and DILLL) will be ready for admissions by Fall 2006.
- The Bachelor of Health Studies (a partnership between the U of R Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies, the U of R Faculty of Arts, and FNUniv) will begin in September 2006. A formal media launch is planned for the fall.
- There are seven new programs starting this fall at our Northern Campus, programs in Southend, Black Lake, Lac La Ronge, Montreal Lake, Beardy's and Okemasis, Onion Lake, and Thunderchild.

Partnerships

- The Department of Indian Communication Arts (INCA) along with CanWest/Global & MGM (a Saskatoon based advertising agency) launched *Shout* magazine in October 2005. Targeting a youthful audience, the magazine has a growing distribution list (currently at 10,000 per issue) with a focus on Aboriginal content. The editor is a graduate of the FNUniv INCA program and the designer is a graduate from the department of Indian Fine Arts.

- For the fall semester of 2005 we partnered with North West Regional College and the Meadow Lake Tribal Council to deliver a Teacher Education Program. They anticipate 25 graduates within the next couple of years.
- In January of 2006 we established a Centre for International Academic Exchange, which formalized relationships with universities in mainland China and Taiwan for the exchange of Indigenous students and scholars.
- In December 2005 we signed a 5-year funding agreement with the University of Regina and the Saskatchewan Crown Investment Corporation to allow our institutions to strengthen recruitment and retention strategies with regard to Aboriginal students, and to enable us to offer programs to develop leadership and cross cultural skills. The agreement is valued at over \$4.5 million.
- Within the next two years, in conjunction with Dalhousie University in Halifax, we plan to offer a First Nations Community Planning Diploma Program.
- We have had a fruitful preliminary discussion with the University of Saskatchewan, one of the partners in the Nursing Education Program (NEPS) that we offer in Prince Albert. We hope to work across disciplinary boundaries and better connect NEPS with other Health Sciences in order to provide more opportunities for our students. We also plan to expand the program to our Regina campus.
- By Fall 2008 or 2009, along with the University of Regina, and likely with the participation of Canadian universities offering strong Native Studies programs, we will be offering a PhD in Indigenous Studies.
- We are in the process of finalizing the Memorandum of Understanding and the Contribution Agreement between Health Canada and the National School of Dental Therapy (NSDT), at our Prince Albert campus, that will secure funding for the next three years.
- We are also finalizing an agreement with Health Canada's First Nation and Inuit Health Branch to administer, largely through our Department of Science, the National First Nations Environmental Contaminants Program.

New Policies, Practices, and Installations

- Following consultation with department heads and Academic Council members, in November of 2005 the office of the Vice President of Academics drew up a new set of policies and procedures for course evaluations.
- On December 15, 2005 the FNUniv Registrar's office and the Vice President of Academics office developed a manual entitled "Academic and Administrative Procedures Regarding Students of First Nations University of Canada."
- On June 5th and 6th, 2006, the FNUniv Registrar and Student Success Services offices from the campuses in Prince Albert, Saskatoon, and Regina met in Regina for two days to work on a policies and procedures manual. The intentions are to ensure that all policies and procedures are aligned with those of their counterparts at the U of R, that these procedures are consistently followed at each of our three campuses, and that duties and tasks are precisely detailed so that when someone is on leave, someone else can easily fill in.
- We are in the final stages of implementing a new financial package. Microsoft Dynamics (formerly known as Great Plains) was selected as our program of choice in September 2005. The installation / transition is being performed with the assistance of Callow & Associates Consultants, Inc. Our first actual payroll run will occur mid June 2006. The full conversion will be completed by the end of July. Among the several significant improvements are faster data entry, with more error-checking to prevent duplication of data or data entry errors; integrated payroll module capable of processing payroll in a matter of hours rather than days; improved grant / research project management functionality; vastly improved reporting capabilities, including the ability for senior management and directors to review their current budgets "on demand" through a web-based interface Electronic PO System, creating new efficiencies in our purchasing process with fewer missing POs for finance to deal with.
- Other achievements in our Information Technology (IT) area this past year include an online staff leave request/ scheduling system with staff self-service for current leave status/balances; an online

inventory management system to improve asset tracking; redevelopment of the student registration data base for our stand alone programs (NEPS, NSDT); improvements to our overall website technology and Content Management System.

- Plans for summer 2006 in the IT area: 1) Final expansion and rollout of our VoIP telephone solution to our remote campuses. Not only will this provide a more cohesive and responsive telephone system, it will also save an additional \$25,000 per year in the first 3 years of operation (and approx \$40,000 / year in the following years); 2) Establishment of an Inter-Campus VPN (Virtual Private Network). This will allow staff members to work from any office, at any campus, at any time, and have full access to all of their normal resources (potentially even their telephone). It will also improve security on all communication and exchanges of data throughout the campuses.
- The office of the Vice-President of Administration is completing a master Policy and Procedures Manual. Two sections, on Human Resources and Finance, have already been completed and submitted to the Board of Governors for review.

Finances

- On July 1, 2005 FNUUniv hired a Chartered Accountant as Chief Financial Officer to oversee the financial area of the University. In addition to the new accounting system being installed, several improvements in personnel, policies, and reporting have been implemented to ensure the financial integrity of the information produced. A change in policy was instituted last fall enabling the CFO to report directly to the Board.
- In December 2005, 4Sight Consulting was contracted to assist with fundraising and development to support initiatives such as a child-care centre, a memorial tipi to honor First Nations Veterans, to acquire space for classrooms and offices, and to provide more scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students. The University has identified a fundraising goal of \$8 million; funding sources include corporate donations, government funding, individual donations, and fundraising events.
- Stipends for sessional lecturers have been increased from \$3,762 per class in 2003 to \$4,400 per class as of April 1, 2006. We plan to reach parity with sessional lecturers from the U of R and the other federated colleges within 3 to 4 years. Most sessionals at the U of R and the federated colleges receive a stipend of \$5,714 per class. Our increase was the first increase of over \$100 per class in approximately 12 years.
- FNUUniv does not have a capital budget. We are obliged to make purchases of capital through our academic core funding.
- Since the new administration took office, it has submitted two balanced budgets.
- In January 2006 one of our administrative assistants discovered—buried in neglected filing cabinets—a number of outstanding corporate donations due to the FNUUniv of Canada. A total of \$463,000 in corporate commitments was simply waiting to be collected. To date we have received \$440,500 of those outstanding donations.

Other

- Her Royal Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness Prince Phillip, The Duke of Edinburgh, made FNUUniv their first stop on their Saskatchewan Centennial visit in May 2005.
- FNUUniv participated in the Canada Summer Games by hosting a Tipi and Cultural Village that provided a variety of activities and entertainment, complementing the activities hosted by the U of R. The 2005 Games marked the first time an Aboriginal “Division” was added to plan and facilitate the offering of Aboriginal components to supplement both the Games and the host community.
- On April 1st and 2nd 2006, FNUUniv hosted its 28th annual Powwow celebration. There was a record attendance of nearly 7,000 people. The theme of the powwow was “Healing Ourselves Through Prayer, Song and Dance.”
- On May 9th 2006 the Board of Governors passed a resolution to adopt FNUUniv as the official acronym for First Nations University of Canada.
- In mid November 2005, a two-day Elders’ Gathering for spiritual enrichment and healing was hosted in Saskatoon for senior staff from all three campuses. In addition to this gathering, Elders

have led many healing activities such as pipe ceremonies, feasts, round dances, and one-on-one consultations with staff and students on each campus. A two-day Elders' Gathering is planned for July 26th and 27th, 2006 in La Ronge to determine the role of Elders at our university and the best ways to disseminate their knowledge, including teaching courses for credit.

- An anniversary committee consisting of staff, faculty, and students is planning the celebration of our 30 years of success and growth since this institution was first established in 1976.

The mission of the First Nations University of Canada is to enhance the quality of life, and to preserve, protect, and interpret the history, language, culture, and artistic heritage of First Nations.