

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: April 21, 2020

GENERAL

There has been significant collective engagement with governments, nationally and provincially, in responding to the impacts of the pandemic. U15 and Universities Canada have been working together on advocacy with the federal government, both with elected officials and with departmental representatives. Similarly, Manitoba's post-secondary institutions have been engaged on an ongoing basis in discussions with provincial officials, both as part of sector-based discussions and as individual universities and colleges.

The University has been contributing to relief efforts in a number of ways, such as the provision of equipment and supplies, staff volunteers working on the procurement of personal protective equipment, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences students volunteering the health care system (e.g. as screeners), and several important research projects being undertaken by UM faculty members.

Further details on UM activities are found within the sections below, current to April 9, 2020.

ACADEMIC MATTERS

- COVID-19 planning highlights for the Academic portfolio since the last report at the March Board of Governors' meeting include:
 - The announcement of the cancellation of Spring Convocation 2020 and the decision to mail graduation parchments to all graduates.
 - Summer term 2020 will be offered online or through alternative means. Summer registration will begin on May 19th. Distance Education courses in Summer Session will continue as planned.
 - Student Affairs has established a suite of student service supports by phone, email and video including academic advising, academic learning centre, student accessibility, student counselling, student advocacy and case management, spiritual care, Elder-in-Residence supports, and international student advising.
 - Grading approaches for the Winter term as approved by Senate Executive will include:
 - Standard grading: students can elect to receive their letter grade and it will be calculated as part of their GPA;
 - Option 1: students can elect to receive their letter grade but it will not be calculated as part of their GPA and notated as such on their official transcript;
 - Option 2: students can elect to receive a Pass/Fail. No letter grade would be recorded or retained.
 - The UM established a COVID-19 UM Student Emergency Fund to provide emergency financial support to students. This is a one-time, non-repayable, direct deposit fund for full and part-time students who meet the eligibility criteria.
- Andrea Charron, political studies, was named Vice-President of the Canadian Armed Forces' Defence Advisory Board and the first woman in this role. This board, made up of volunteer academics, practitioners and industry representatives, helps brainstorm solutions and ideas for problems faced by the Canadian Armed Forces.

- The Decolonizing Lens presented the screening of a short film titled *Invasion*. Following the screening, a panel discussion took place as part of “Art and Activism,” an important evening of discussion, learning and understanding. Canada is in the midst of a land title crisis that has left many Canadians questioning things like Indigenous title, land protection, the Indian Act, and Indigenous sovereignty. This event was meant to create a safe space for a shared dialogue and understanding about the Wet’suwet’en Nation’s efforts to protect their traditional territory and to discuss the role art can play in political activism.
- A new two-year family medicine residency program was announced which will allow medical residents to experience northern and remote health-care service delivery and encourage physician recruitment and retention to underserved areas across the large and diverse region. This program is a partnership between the Rady Faculty Health of Health Science and the Northern Regional Health Authority to support stronger recruitment and retention efforts across northern Manitoba.
- Desautels Faculty of Music held a *Dream Big: Music Out of Bounds* Conference in February 20-21 at the Desautels Faculty of Music (DFOM). This international conference is the first of its kind in Canada. Participants came to the conference to discuss collaborative piano in Canada, engaging in workshops, masterclasses, panels, a curated tour of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR), and concerts.

RESEARCH MATTERS

- On March 2, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and UK Research and Innovation announced \$517,288 in funding to Dr. Babak Mehran, Civil Engineering, for his project titled: *Responsible Automation for Inclusive Mobility or RAIM*. He was one of 10 successful projects funded across Canada, with UK counterparts. These projects, co-led by principal investigators from both countries, will advance understanding of important AI challenges. Mehran’s projects will explore how AI can help older adults use an on-demand autonomous vehicle service. His UK co-PI is Dr. Ed Manley (University of Leeds) with co-investigator Dr. Jens Kandt (University College of London). UM co-investigators are: Dr. Michelle Porter, Centre on Aging/Kinesiology and Recreation Management and Dr. Ahmed Ashraf, Electrical and Computer Engineering.
- The UM is one of six Canadian universities sharing \$1.8 million from the [Canadian Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Scholarships](#) (QES) program to support an international exchange.

UM was recognized for its program, Engaging Indigenous Languages, Knowledges, Learning and the Land. Led by Faculty of Education professor Sandra Kouritzin, this project has received \$298,000 to support 19 students. Her team is made up of Drs. Clea Schmidt (Education), Satoru Nakagawa (Arts) and Filiberto Penados (Natural Resources Institute).

This program’s goal is to create a community of Education-focused scholars who will become leaders and advocates in global Indigenous language vitality, Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies, Indigenous food sovereignty and learning from the land. This scholarship program will engage both community-driven and higher education approaches, with the ultimate goal of the program becoming fully Indigenous focused and Indigenous led.

To that end, UM will provide 16 scholarships for Canadian graduate or senior undergraduate student interns, and three scholarships for visiting international graduate students selected by our partnering organization in Belize—the Center for Engaged Learning Abroad. The first scholars in the QES Caribbean cohort are expected to begin their placements abroad in the summer of 2021.

- Twenty-nine research projects led by fourteen investigators received a total of \$4,728,818 in grant funding from multiple sponsors. Those projects receiving more than \$25,000 are:

PI	Sponsor	Title	Awarded
Brown, Cara (Occupational Therapy)	CIHR Catalyst Grant: Patient-Oriented Research	Extending the safety net: How can interprofessional primary care teams facilitate successful hospital discharges?	\$74,413
Burgener, Adam (Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences)	CIHR Team Grant: Canadian Microbiome Initiative 2: Research Teams	The microbiome in cervical cancer	\$2,000,000
El-Gabalawy, Hani (Internal Medicine)	CIHR Team Grant: Human Immunology Initiative: Research Teams	Prediction and prevention of rheumatoid arthritis in First Nations People	\$1,587,778
Klassen, Terry (Pediatrics and Child Health)	Children's Hospital Research Institute of Manitoba	Innovative Pediatric Clinical Trials (iPCT)	\$180,000
Louis, Deepak (Pediatrics and Child Health)	Research Manitoba	School readiness, its predictors and implications on higher school educational outcomes in preterm neonates born in Manitoba	\$75,071
McGavock, Jonathan (Pediatrics and Child Health)	CIHR Planning and Dissemination Grants	Creating a decolonizing urban plan to reduce inequities in chronic diseases among Indigenous people living in urban Winnipeg	\$65,000
Nickel, Nathan (Manitoba Centre for Health Policy (MCHP))	Children's Hospital Research Institute of Manitoba	REMAIN - Resilience after Maternal Incarceration: A whole-population administrative data cohort study of children whose mothers experienced incarceration	\$60,000
Prehna, Gerd (Microbiology)	Manitoba Medical Service Foundation	Alternative protein targets to understand virulence and create new antimicrobials against group A Streptococcus	\$30,000
Rieger, Kendra (Nursing)	CIHR Catalyst Grant: Patient-Oriented Research	Elevating the uses of storytelling approaches within Indigenous health research: A patient-engaged scoping review study involving Indigenous people and settlers	\$100,000
Russell, Kelly (Pediatrics and Child Health)	Children's Hospital Research Institute of Manitoba	ENRRICH: Excellence in neurodevelopmental and rehabilitation research in child health	\$35,000
Shoostari, Shahin (Community Health Sciences)	Mitacs Accelerate	Evidence-informed planning and evaluation of community transitions: Impact on health and quality of life (Phase II)	\$150,000

Stobart, Jill (Pharmacy)	Manitoba Medical Service Foundation	Brain mural cell dysfunction and blood flow changes in aging	\$25,000
Zahradka, Peter (Physiology & Pathophysiology)	Mitacs Accelerate	A pilot study to examine the effect of pea protein on limiting the loss of muscle mass during weight loss	\$110,000
Zeiler, Frederick (Surgery)	National Institutes of Health	Near infrared based cerebrovascular reactivity as a means of monitoring cerebral autoregulation and predicting outcome in moderate-severe traumatic brain injury: A pilot study	\$105,996

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

- The Office of Fair Practices and Legal Affairs is providing support to the university community regarding COVID-19:
 - urgent measures, safety and security, border closings, shutdowns;
 - contracts, leases, placements, construction, labour relations;
 - Assessing tools to ensure Privacy compliance for remote work and online examination;
 - Providing direct support re: copyright/ownership issues during the change to online course delivery, and developing best practices for use of protected materials during pandemic;
- The copyright office is preparing guides for changing course delivery from in-person to online and following and participating in the development of best practices for copyright during pandemic in the Canadian Post-Secondary Community.
- The copyright office also is providing advice and guidance around copyright ownership of developed online courses and course materials.
- The Access and Privacy office is assessing online tools that members of the academic community are using to complete delivery of courses for the Winter Term and Summer Session. These tools enable online exam and proctoring, assignment completion, and communication with groups and individual students.
- Consultation and guidance is being provided to the University community to ensure we uphold our obligations to protect the privacy of individuals under privacy legislation.
- The Access and Privacy office is assessing and providing guidelines for online tools that will enable the University community to effectively and securely work remotely during this time. This includes the creation and management of records, ensuring business continuity, and protecting confidential information.
- Pandemic plans have been enacted. Most services continue to be provided and most staff are able to work from home.
- *Sustainability Night*: The third annual Sustainability Night took place on March 4, with 110 people in attendance. There were ten PechaKucha presentations with focus on moving climate knowledge into climate action. Presenters touched on recycling streams, climate and eco-anxiety, community lead food production and general sustainable lifestyles.

- The 2020 UM Sustainability Awards were presented by Terry Duguid, MP Winnipeg South. Categories included undergraduate, graduate, student group and staff awards. The Sustainability Committee selected the winners, based on each of the nominee's contribution and leadership in sustainability activities on campus.
- UM Bookstore has won the Award for Excellence in Store Management for 2019. This award is given out by the ICBA (Independent College Stores Association) and the LSG (The Large Store Group) with a membership of over 230 ICBA and 70 LSG stores in North America.
- As of March 24, 2020, 90% of IST staff are working remotely and on-site personnel is limited to essential services.
- VPN license capacity has increased from 1,250 concurrent connections to a max of 5,000 concurrent connections for 1 year (\$100k CDN).
- Phone connection capacity has increased from 200 concurrent to 1,000 on forwarding their phones to their home phones and this action takes up two connections instead of one. Cost TBD.
- Increased Video Conferencing capacity--Working with The Center, which manages teaching and learning requirements, videoconferencing capability has been deployed using services from Cisco(WebEx) and Bluejeans for all administration. For Bluejeans (different licensing model) we have 100 accounts with approximately 25 free.
- A 100% increase in licenses has been ordered for the university's call center application (Interactive Intelligence) that supports IST, HR, Finance and the Registrar's Office to support greater demand for remote working and migration of requests from walkup to voice or chat. This capacity has maxed out previously during high demand situations.
- Staff continue to assist staff as requested with setting up remote work technology.
- A number of IT security measures have been put in place, including a security message on COVID-19 webpage as a reminder to staff to be vigilant against malware/phishing threats and adding an "external message" notification on all email to reduce the probability of successful phishing.
- IST has made Office365 available for all staff and faculty on an as requested basis. Currently, Faculties of Engineering/Architecture/Nursing, the Registrar's Office, NCTR, HR, IST, President's office, VP Admin office, have been deployed.
- Provided access to instructions and training materials for remote working tools.
- The IST Service Desk has been closed to walk up traffic as of end of day March 18th, 2020, but support provided virtually has been extended starting March 12th to run Sat and Sun (0900 to 1600) as well as M-F 0800 to 2000.
- IST has made 125 desktops and 12 laptops available to staff to support remote work. Have allocated all 12 laptops. An additional 25 laptops have been ordered from Dell and will begin to arrive in early April.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

- On April 2, the University celebrated the success of the Front and Centre campaign and revealed the final total funds raised as \$626,260,909. This announcement was made by video by President Barnard and Campaign Chair Paul Soubry, and was shared with approximately 70,000 alumni, faculty and staff via email.

The video was promoted extensively through UM's social media and news channels, receiving over 11,500 views as of Friday, April 3.

Media coverage included live interviews with CBC Information Radio and CJOB, and coverage by Global News, CTV and Virgin Radio and Academica. UM secured the Winnipeg Free Press' wrap-around on Saturday, April 4, allowing the University to share the campaign's impact and success with a broader audience, and the op-ed coauthored by President Barnard and Paul Soubry.

UM Today: The Magazine "Gratitude Issue", highlighting stories of the campaign's impact, will hit mailboxes on the week of April 6.

- External Relations has created a dedicated team that is actively working with areas across UM to support timely decision-making and communications. The strategy has been to direct all communications to UM's central COVID-19 webpage at umanitoba.ca/coronavirus which serves as the primary source for all information required by students, faculty and staff, and visitors.
- New information is being communicated actively to the University community via our news and social media channels, linking back to the UM webpage to access the latest information.
- To date, approximately 120 COVID-19 related messages and stories have been communicated. At March 31, total pageviews for umanitoba.ca/coronavirus were at over 72,000. Significant updates have been made to ensure the site is easy to navigate for users and information will continue to be added as the situation evolves.
- UM Today news stories have drawn significant traffic to the website – over the month of March, there were over 210,000 pageviews, up more than 120% as compared to March 2019. UM as well as its students, faculty and staff members have received extensive media coverage over the last month, being featured in 9,063 news and broadcast stories around the world that mention both University of Manitoba and COVID-19. Dr. Jason Kindrachuk, Assistant Professor of Viral Pathogenesis and Canada Research Chair, has been featured as a top UM expert by various media outlets.
- A communication from President Barnard to alumni and donors launched a COVID-19 Student Support Fund to provide students with access to emergency bursaries and we are actively soliciting donors to support this fund. Within three days of the President's email, 70 donors responded with gifts totalling \$124,160. This includes a \$100,000 from Chancellor Mahon and her husband Paul. Wawanesa has also committed \$50,000 for this fund. Eight faculties have come forward with additional funds and several are reaching out to faculty and staff for donations as well. A solicitation to all previous \$500,000+ donors will be going out this week signed by Chancellor Mahon, encouraging them to join her in supporting our students.

- Engagement, activity and collaboration with all levels of government has increased and intensified substantially due to the onset of COVID-19. UM Administration is continuously working in solidarity with our leadership partners at the City of Winnipeg, Province of Manitoba and Government of Canada to find solutions to the complex and diverse challenges we face due to the pandemic while continuing to advance other important priorities of the University.
- Nominations for the 2020 Distinguished Alumni Awards closed on January 17. The selection panel has met to select this year's recipients and we have postponed the announcement date to occur later in the spring. The DAA 2020 Celebration of Excellence event is scheduled for October 1, 2020.
- The 2020 Board of Governors Alumni Representative nominations opened on February 13 and will close on March 16. The election will be held via online voting from April 15 to May 15, with the successful candidate to be announced on May 26.
- Online engagement opportunities for alumni will be announced in the coming weeks including the Seniors' Alumni Learning for Life program which will be delivered as an online lecture series in May and June.
- Migration of content into the new website is ongoing and scheduled to continue until late 2020. Recent migrations include content related to student supports, such as first year student resources, and career services. The Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences, Faculty of Architecture and Graduate Studies are also queued to be transitioned over the next few months.
- Work continues on the implementation of UM Intranet, a staff portal, with initial content being available for faculty and staff later this year.