



2018 FIAT LUX ADDRESS

Dr. Mike Mahon, President & Vice-Chancellor

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Happy New

Year and welcome to the 2018 Fiat Lux Address.

I would like to begin by recognizing that our University rests on the traditional territory of the Blackfoot people.

It is my pleasure to be here today. Thank you for taking the time to join me. Welcome to everyone joining us online and those in Calgary as we stream this address to our Calgary Campus.

Welcome to the spring semester of the 2017-18 Academic Year at the University of Lethbridge and the start of our 51st year as a university. Celebrating our 50th Anniversary this past year and reflecting on those who preceded us — those individuals whose vision and tenacity made the impossible possible with the creation and continued growth of our university — have been a highlight of my presidency and have solidified many things for me.

First, it is my firm belief that we are on the correct course with the vision outlined in our strategic plan, Destination 2020. Like the founders before us,

we understand that a shared vision doesn't suggest we've "arrived" at an end goal, rather it validates that the past 50 years have brought us to this point and that our strategic priorities continue to guide us firmly in the right direction moving forward.

Second, our work is never done. We are setting the stage for the next 50 years. Continuing our momentum and trajectory as an institution is critical to our success. Destination 2020, in my opinion, is not the finish line. In reality, we have already started a new journey.

And thirdly, there are more questions to ask of ourselves. What does our future look like? And what specific initiatives should we undertake? What aspirational goals can we set for ourselves as we look forward to the future — a future I believe is incredibly bright!

Challenges

I am using this time to look forward but I recognize that there are some obstacles and challenges that we face today and in the near term. There always will be challenges but we need to keep our eyes on the horizon and move through rough waters as we have.

We will work through tough budget decisions once again this year as funding challenges continue to persist and our resources become further stretched. We have navigated such challenges over the last several years

with our core values in mind and we will continue this prudent work knowing that considerations of “people”, “quality”, and “access” will continue to guide what we do. Despite the pressures we know these values will be subjected to, we will remain committed to them, as well as the concepts of equity and fairness, as best we are able.

We have also been navigating an evolving legislative environment and we will meet this, as always, with respect. We will continue to work collegially in this new labour environment in the province, recognizing that all our employees and employee groups have an important role to play in our future development. In fact, I believe there is an opportunity for us to work more solidly together to build a stronger University for the future and I offer that as a challenge to everyone at the University.

In many ways, working through tough issues together creates opportunities to build strong relationships and make our institution stronger.

What really keeps us moving forward and able to overcome our challenges at this University is YOU, the world-class faculty, committed staff, engaged students and dedicated volunteers and advocates. Exceptional people all working together to a common, shared goal — to serve students and build a better society. I want to thank all of you for your contribution to who we are today.

Path Forward

So, let's talk about the future. The path forward begins by asking those questions as mentioned earlier and by being guided by the framework outlined by vice-presidents Drs. Andy Hakin and Erasmus Okine at last year's Fiat Lux Address. If you recall, they outlined a thematic framework that has been crucial to the University through its formative years. And, as I'm sure you would agree they are also crucial to our future. It is essential we focus on these as they define our shared mission.

To refresh you, they spoke about:

1. the Student Environment
2. Academic Programming
3. Research Culture, and
4. Connection to Community

As they outlined, and I want to reinforce, our attention to these themes have kept us focused in our development and on track. What I suggest is that our continued attention to them will guide us soundly into the future.

It is using those four themes as a guide that I pose the following questions and challenges:

1. Student Environment

What does it mean to truly be a Destination University? We have been successful in establishing ourselves as Alberta's destination university, but now we must focus on becoming a destination university for Canada and the world.

Why? Because our impact is not geographically local. Because our offerings are relevant, transformational and desired by people and communities around the world and our local community is enriched significantly by the students, faculty and staff that come here from across Canada and from the over 80 countries represented on our campuses.

So how do we do this?

- By increasing the breadth of where our students come from in Canada. Like other destination universities in the country, we need to expand our reach. Whilst serving Albertans, the reach of our institution needs to expand to students across Canada. Our enrolment demographic needs to reflect our aspiration as a Destination University. We should be attracting students from all areas of the country to our campuses — we should no longer be so reliant on our primary markets of Alberta, southern BC, and Saskatchewan to serve our enrolment needs.

- We will also do this by increasing the number of international students at our university. We will grow our international student population to 10 per cent of our overall student population. Increased diversity is good for our students, the University and also good for our society. The University should be a leader in the community, especially in these times of heightened tensions, in encouraging and promoting tolerance and diversity. We play an important role in bringing the world to this community and offering a global experience to our Canadian students. Our new Strategic Internationalization Plan has four pillars with one being “Internationalization at Home”. It is important for us to promote international perspectives on our campuses and in the classroom.
- We have an opportunity to expand our Theory into Practice programs. The recent Global Education report sets out a targeted plan for Canada’s governments, post-secondary institutions and the private sector to dramatically increase the number of young people participating in international study, co-ops, and internships over the next ten years — with particular emphasis on raising access and participation of Indigenous youth and those from underrepresented groups. We too need to grow our offerings. I recognize that we are one of the leading universities in the country on this front, with opportunities in nearly every discipline; I would like us to consider

how we can become the leader in offering these experiential learning opportunities and career pathways.

- We can also enhance our student focused mental-health initiatives, as well as other student supports. Over the last number of years we have built a comprehensive program focused on supporting our students' mental health needs. Finding ways to make these supports sustainable in light of provincial government funding challenges is absolutely necessary.
- Reducing barriers to equity, diversity and inclusivity on our campuses, the communities we serve and broader society is the right thing to do and attracting and retaining students, faculty, staff and leaders from all backgrounds remains key. We are committed to being active champions of equity, diversity and inclusion in all we do.

We have already submitted an action plan in response to the Canada Research Chairs program and I am looking forward to further action in the coming year as we have committed to the the Inclusive Excellence Principles as outlined by Universities Canada. We will continue to work with our extended administration and employee groups to ensure that inclusion remains an important priority.

- We should consider opportunities to offer a more immersive experience — more options for students to live on campus and be more deliberate, like the Library has been in their recent reconfigurations, in creating environments for students and community to gather and collaborate. The atriums in UHall and Markin Hall are ripe opportunities for this. Completion of the Destination Project will also certainly assist in creating these new, informal learning, collaboration and gathering spaces.
- Part of that immersive experience must also include Pronghorn Athletics and Recreation Services for the leadership development sport provides, the school pride and spirit it generates, and the holistic well-being and balance it fosters in not only our student population, but our campus community and city. Increasing the student experience can also be achieved through our fine arts programs, extracurricular academic programs, speaker series and the numerous social activities that abound on our campuses.
- Finally, I believe that our enrolment should continue to see managed and strategic growth that is consistent with our student-focused philosophy. For one, at the heart of our founding values is accessibility. Also, despite record enrolment over the last two years, with the growth of our campus footprint, comes the expectation that we will create new enrolment opportunities for students. We must

realize that with our categorization as a Comprehensive Academic and Research Institution in Alberta we need to continue to grow our student population.

2. Academic Programming

Another question we need to ask is:

- **What does our academic programming look like as we evolve as a comprehensive university?** Over the last number of years we have been recognized as one of the top primarily undergraduate universities in the country, but it's time to focus on furthering our recognition as a comprehensive university. In fact, it is time to submit the U of L to international rankings for consideration. International students look to these ranking to inform their decision making and increasingly, the federal government as well is looking at these rankings.

How do we evolve our academic programming?

- We grow our professional programs. I am very supportive of the direction of the Faculty of Arts & Science and the broader community to build an engineering program. An engineering program unique in its design, one that sets us apart from our competitors and serves the needs of our region and industries vital to southern Alberta. We can

do this because we have built incredible research and teaching capacity over the last 50 years. Such a program, if developed, when coupled with our outstanding research programs, has great potential to solve problems for our communities and industries and contribute to the diversification of our economy.

- Our liberal education foundation should be embedded throughout the entire undergraduate and graduate student experience — including our existing professional Faculties. At General Faculties Council, I have heard great support for the new School of Liberal Education and I know its principles are embraced throughout our university community. In many cases, it's simply a matter of diversifying and formalizing the offerings.
- The Destination Project also presents a unique and grand challenge for our academic programming in its transdisciplinary design. While this work has begun, we must direct our curricular reviews to ensure that our programs are reflective of the transdisciplinary design and transdisciplinary research that will be featured in the new building.
- The University has experienced considerable growth in graduate education in recent years. Indeed, in the last few years we have implemented new PhD programs in Education, Health Sciences, the Social Sciences, and the Humanities. We have also launched

important new professional graduate programs, such as our Master of Nursing program. It therefore comes as no surprise to me that our graduate student numbers have crested 600 this year, which is an historical high, and that we are poised for further growth with a number of proposed new graduate programs on the horizon.

- However, I want to challenge our community to reconsider our capacity for growth in graduate education. Looking at comprehensive universities similar to our own, the University of Regina being one example, we tend to see a proportion of graduate students around 12 per cent of the total. For us to reach a similar proportion, we will need to double our current graduate student enrolments. I feel strongly that we have the ability to get there. When I consider our top-of-category *Research InfoSource* ranking for graduate research intensity; when I consider that most comparable comprehensive universities have at least a 2 to 1 overall ratio of graduate students to faculty members; when I consider opportunities for new graduate programs; and when I consider the unequivocally high quality of the research and creative activity of our faculty members, I know that a doubling of our graduate student numbers is a goal that we should strive to achieve.
- This presents an opportunity to review and renew our programming. Our respective disciplines evolve and our programs need to mirror this. At a very pragmatic level, competition among post-secondary

institutions and enrolment pressures necessitate our attention to this. The introduction of new programs requires us to look to our existing program mix to ensure that it responds to our students' needs. One of my colleagues recently proposed the analogy, "we need to shine new light through old windows." This could mean the re-packaging of programs such as we saw with the introduction of the new Agribusiness degree in Management.

- The Calgary Campus should offer a broader programming mix beyond what we currently have. This would serve the diverse needs of working adults in Calgary and provide innovative ways for students to progress through their academic program in a true multi-campus university.

3. Research Culture

We need to ask –

What type of research culture do we need to strive for and maintain?

- A fundamental belief at the University of Lethbridge is that quality teaching is informed by research. Research and creativity is at the core of who we are — academic programs and research work hand in hand to inform each other. Ensuring our students are exposed to innovative thinking, creating an exciting intellectual community for our

students and faculty, is critical to our success.

- Research is also fundamental to our position as a CARl institution. To affirm our mandate we must stay committed to elevating research culture and intensity at this institution.
- We should continue to focus on our role of better preparing the next generation of leaders for society. We are a leader in the development of those who will contribute to a knowledge-driven future. Graduate students are the engine for our growth and success in research. The challenge is finding the resources to support this growth and supporting our faculty as they seek grants to help us get there.
- We need to stay committed to supporting industry engagement, knowledge mobilization and translation. The recent Research Infosource data on our university indicates we are at the bottom of our category on this topic. We can elevate our position without compromising our academic values or the freedoms we enjoy as academics. By building mutually-supportive relationships and partnerships with industry sectors that recognize that curiosity-driven research is the fuel that ignites discovery, development and innovation, we can make great strides in this area.

- We should also look to expand the breadth of research in all disciplines. Expanding research capacity by recruiting and retaining the most qualified candidates, increasing our graduate student population, fostering the scholarly development of our faculty, and providing a second-to-none learning environment enhanced by research opportunities for our students and post-doctoral fellows, need to be our focus.

4. Connection to Community

- We need to realize that our role is more than imparting knowledge — we are here to unlock human potential and to see that potential flourish through global citizenry. We are here to help our communities, both locally and globally, thrive; we are here to work with and to support community groups — social, arts and cultural organizations to make our communities better places to live, ultimately building a better society.
- Our connection to community has always been a core focus here at the University of Lethbridge and one very important community has been Indigenous peoples.
- As you all know, universities are about the search for knowledge; courses, degrees and research help us do just that and if you look at

it from an alternative perspective — underlying ways of knowing, gaining knowledge and methodology – are simply different ways of looking at the same reality. We want to continue to learn from these alternative perspectives to ensure that Indigenous culture is woven into the fabric of the University enriching the learning environment here.

- This past year we hired Kathleen Massey, our new Associate Vice-President Students, and have welcomed Roy Pogorzelski as Director of the Ikaisskini Gathering Place. Kathleen and Roy are co-Chairing the GFC Inniskim Committee. They have resumed the work of that committee to move toward an Indigenization strategy. The new strategy will be guided by Roy's expertise, together with the wisdom of Dr. Leroy Little Bear, who we recently named as our inaugural Niitsitapi Scholar so he may guide us more strategically, both internally and externally.
- This will be a plan that incorporates the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and pulls together our collective efforts related to indigenous peoples and culture — something we began in the early 1970s and which many institutions are just starting. We have already begun renaming our programs and services using the term "Indigenous" to be more modern in our approach. In December, GFC approved the renaming of Native American Studies

to Indigenous Studies and we look forward to updating other areas as we move through this year.

- We are actively analyzing opportunities for developing the land at the south end of campus, next to our Community Stadium. It is very early days, but we have a unique opportunity to enhance the student experience, our connection to community and the financial sustainability of the University through possibilities such as retail, food service and housing developments.
- We are actively exploring the concept of a Primary Care Network or “PCN” on campus — a co-location of health services for the University and also the residents of Lethbridge. This is a unique opportunity to enhance health services for our students and increase our connection to the community by providing professional health services in one location. The Canadian Centre for Behavioural Neuroscience building could be considered as a home for such an endeavour. Our successful partnership with Radiology Associates that brought the new MRI to campus serves as a proof of concept for this positioning.

We must also continue to build and support our internal community. We are pleased to welcome Chandra Singh, the new Chief Human Resources

Officer to the University. Chandra will champion the People Plan that guides and informs us as a University community.

As I said earlier, YOU are the heart of our institution. Each and every individual plays an important role in our university and in the success of our students. YOU define our university and YOU are our greatest strength.

I know that we all recognize the importance of achieving the vision and direction of our Strategic Plan. I know you can all appreciate the work it will take to get there and the need to undertake a deliberate and strategic approach to achieving these goals.

2017 was a year of reflection of who we are and how we came to be. In 2018 we will work to establish our future.

In the coming months, we will approach the completion of Destination Project Phase 1 and we will work even harder to realize Destination Phase 2.

We will celebrate our outstanding faculty as we did recently with Dr. Wismath's 3M Teaching Award, Dr. Kolb's induction into the Order of Canada, and Drs. Belanger and Wieden-Kothe's introduction into the Royal Society's College of new Scholars.

We will launch new programs, and learn of new research funding success and opportunities.

We will publicly launch our comprehensive fundraising campaign and we will celebrate some the most significant funding announcements in our history.

Most importantly, we will see approximately 1,800 students join the ranks of our alumni and we will welcome approximately 2,000 new students eager to begin their own journeys. At the heart of it, this is why, regardless of our role, we are here.

This for me reinforces our values of people, quality and access. These values guide us in good times and support us in tough times.

Our past 50 years illustrate the magnitude of what can be accomplished when people work together. Today, I set the stage for our next 50 years and a future that will be brighter for generations to come because of the work we all do from this day forward.

Our passion, our ideas and tenacity, and our unwavering commitment to the ideals of liberal education and the betterment of society will serve to propel us forward.

We create paths for people to shine, and in doing so, we prove:
together we really do shine brighter.

Thank you again for your continued commitment to the University of
Lethbridge.