

# **An Unauthorized History of the University of Saskatchewan**

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This is an unauthorized history of the University of Saskatchewan. First I will explain how this history became unauthorized and, then, tell why I want to make public my account of the history of the university.<sup>1</sup>

On February 21, 2005, I wrote a letter to President Peter MacKinnon. I told him that the combination of the 100th anniversary of the University of Saskatchewan, the completion of thirty years of university planning, as well as the significant and growing number of members of the university community who did not know its unique history made it an opportune time for a second edition of my 1983 book, *Seeking a Balance: The University of Saskatchewan, 1907-1982*.

I explained that the overall theme of the book would remain the same – how the U of S sought over the years to maintain a set of balances: among teaching, research and service; among the sciences, the humanities, the arts and the professions; and between autonomy and the university's role as a state university. I added that there would be a number of changes in the second edition, incorporating the results of new research, but that the most notable difference would be the addition of a new chapter titled "The Planning Years: 1975-2005."

I described the proposed new chapter in these words:

My discussion of the last three decades ... will have as its core the four major attempts at planning the future of the U of S which have taken place during those years. These were... the government appointed Universities Commission (1974-1983) which tried to balance the aspirations of the University of Regina with the accomplishments of the University of Saskatchewan; Issues and Options (1985-1990) which favoured a community oriented future for the U of S; the Mission Statement project (1990-93) which emphasized the importance of teaching at the U of S; and the most recent effort (1993-2005) which led to an emphasis on research as set out in the document "Strategic Directions: Renewing the Dream," and the latter's implementation with the 2003-07 Integrated Plan and a multi-year budget. ...

I told President MacKinnon that until recently, I had rejected suggestions that I revise my history of the U of S. Among the reasons for this were the facts that I had played a sometimes contentious role in the life of the U of S in the 1980s and 90s and that I have been a public opponent of the choices made for the future of the university. I was concerned that what I wrote on the 1980s and 90s and any comments I made about the present state of the U of S could be considered partisan. I said that I would present as objective a view as possible, using my recollections, the recollections of participants from all sides of all issues and all available documentation, and that I would end the book, not with a judgement, but with an open question: choices have been made for the future; what will be the result?

I added that University of British Columbia Press, the publishers of the 1983 book, would publish a revised second edition without a time consuming peer review since the first edition had been favourably peer reviewed before publication and had received good reviews subsequently, but the U of S would have to provide a subsidy.

A week later President MacKinnon replied:

I have been thinking of commissioning a history of the University of Saskatchewan for the 2007 centennial....I have thought it might be advisable to encourage an external historian to submit a proposal. For the most part, U of S history has been written by insiders, some amateurs and, in your case, a professional. I think it might be a good idea to encourage an arm's length appraisal from someone who has not been touched by the controversies and differences that are found among long service members of our community. If my memory serves me well, Hilda Neatby wrote a history of Queen's, going to that campus after a career at [sic] U of S. Perhaps this approach would be appropriate for another history of this University. In any event I want to continue to reflect on the matter.

I replied that he knew from personal experience that it was possible to have been directly involved in complex and controversial events and yet write an objective history and that involvement provides knowledge, insights and access to sources not available to others.<sup>2</sup> In addition, I wrote, there was not much time available for someone with little or no previous knowledge of the U of S. I noted that when I started work on my history of the U of S I already had substantial knowledge of its past because of my work on the life and writings of Hilda Neatby. In addition I had two years free to research and write the book. Nevertheless, I had to use every moment available and barely made the deadline. Hilda Neatby was given three years to write Queen's history. When she died four years later she was far from finished.

Since then I have heard nothing from President MacKinnon on this matter, even though our paths have often crossed. In an e-mail of Feb. 3, 2006 I specifically asked him if he had made a decision. His failure to reply meant that my proposed revised account of the history of the U of S had become unauthorized and, given the size of the potential market, unpublishable by a reputable press without a subsidy.

The focus of the U of S centennial celebrations was the present and the future. I think that it is important to discuss the history of the U of S between 1975 and the present in the context of the years 1907-1974. That is why I am writing this essay.

This essay is based on my forty years of study of the history of the U of S. Additional insights have come from my service as member and then chair of both university and Arts and Science planning and budget committees, as chair of the Promotions Appeal Committee and the U of S 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary committee, as a member of the University Review Committee and the President's Advisory Committee, as Treasurer and then Vice-Chair of the Faculty Association (and previously a vocal opponent of both sides during the 1988 faculty strike), as History Department Head, Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies, as a member of the steering and governance committees of Issues and Options, as a researcher, supported by substantial SSHRC grants which led to thirty articles and nine books, as a pioneer in distance education via television, and as a recipient of the Master Teacher Award.

Publication of this essay and placement of it in my papers in the University Archives will make it available for a future historian when she or he studies the years 1975-2005 in the context of the full history of the U of S. That person will be able to read this paper along with my 1983 history and the notes I have taken over the years.<sup>3</sup>

What follows is not as complete or as nuanced as would have been the case in the revised book, especially because I have to place the last twenty-five years into the context of the preceding seventy-five years. I have not kept my conclusion neutral. Nevertheless, I stand fully behind what I have written.

Most alumni, students, administrators and faculty do not realize how unusual the U of S once was and how usual it has become. In the beginning its system of governance, its autonomy from government, its choice of colleges and its dedication to service to the people of its province, made it unique.

The original character of the U of S can be summed up with the words “The People’s University.” These words have the ring of trite public relations verbiage favoured by university publicists such as “cutting edge,” “world class” and “research intensive,” or the bland slogan of the U of S centennial celebrations: “Engage, Enlighten, Explore,” one of those currently fashionable three word formulas favoured by PR types everywhere – and almost interchangeable with the slogan of the *StarPhoenix*: “Inform, Enlighten, Entertain.”

The phrase “the People’s University” was used as the theme of the 90th anniversary celebration of the U of S. It was chosen, at my urging, over the protests of the Human Resource and Public Relations representatives on the anniversary committee who had proposed several bubbly and trite slogans about having a party.

The phrase was first used publicly to describe the University of Saskatchewan by its first president, Walter Murray. In his first annual report he wrote “there should be ever present the consciousness that this is the University of the people, established by the people, and devoted by the people to the advancement of learning and the promotion of happiness and virtue.”<sup>4</sup> On the occasion of the opening of the College Building Walter Scott, the first premier of Saskatchewan, spoke of it as “the home of the people’s University.”<sup>5</sup>

For Scott and Murray, who could be called the founders of the University of Saskatchewan, the phrase “the people’s university” was not a public relations slogan. They believed that the university belonged to the people of the province because they paid for it with their taxes. It was the university’s duty to provide the people of Saskatchewan with the post secondary education, specialized training, and technical assistance they needed to enable them to earn a living and create and maintain a fully functioning civilized society.<sup>6</sup>

Murray’s operational interpretation of the words, “the People’s University” was first expressed publicly in his 1908-09 Presidential Report:

What is the sphere of the university? Its watchword is service – service of the state in the things that make for happiness and virtue as well as in the things that make for wealth. No form of that service is too mean or too exalted for the university.

Murray continued in the same paragraph of that report:

It is as fitting for the university ... to place within reach of the solitary student, the distant townsman, the farmer... the mothers and daughters... the opportunities for adding to their stores of knowledge and enjoyment, as it is that the university should foster researches into the properties of radium or the causes and cure of swamp fever.....<sup>7</sup>

The University of Saskatchewan was the first Canadian university founded with colleges of Arts and Science and Agriculture on the same campus. This was done so that the professors and students of both colleges could influence each other; so that future farmers could learn the sciences to improve their crops and the humanities to improve their lives, and so that the other students would realize how important agriculture was to Saskatchewan.

It was planned from the beginning that the U of S should have many professional colleges, because it was designed to be the source of all post-secondary education in the province so that quality could be guaranteed.<sup>8</sup> After Arts and Science and Agriculture, the other colleges were founded between 1912 and 1973.<sup>9</sup>

Murray believed his university should unite the University of Wisconsin tradition with the Oxford tradition. The first tradition was, in Murray's words, service both as "the scientific arm of the State for Research ... carrying the benefits of Science to all and sundry in the state," and also as the source of information for governments. The second tradition was service as "a place for Liberal Culture and preparation for the Learned Professions." But, Murray always added, the University of Saskatchewan should be staffed with individuals who appreciated Saskatchewan as it actually was and who were willing to provide its people with what they needed to develop both a civilization and a modern economy.<sup>10</sup>

A series of tensions present from the founding of the university have continued to interfere with the balances Murray sought. Four of these tensions are relevant to the role of the University of Saskatchewan as the People's University. The first of them was created by the leaders of the city of Regina and is maintained by them and, more recently, the University of Regina. The second tension developed between the natural and applied sciences and the other university disciplines. The third tension is a complicated one that exists between teaching and research and also between those two activities and service. The fourth tension results from the dichotomy between the ideal of university autonomy and the threat of control by the provincial and federal governments, and more recently, by private enterprise.

The first of the four tensions developed before the university existed. The economic and civic leaders of Regina were convinced that their city deserved the university. The Liberal government, however, was determined to gain political support by spreading out public institutions. Regina was

already the seat of the provincial government. Saskatoon got the university, Moose Jaw the normal school, Prince Albert the penitentiary and North Battleford the mental hospital.

Reginans never accepted the decision of the politicians. They wanted a university and agitated for this from 1907 until a separate University of Regina was founded in 1974. From then onward they have tried to obtain the same or more resources for the University of Regina as those possessed by the University of Saskatchewan. From the U of S perspective, while there may have been good reasons to develop a strong liberal arts college in Regina, the province does not have the people or the resources to support two fully developed universities.<sup>11</sup>

The primary internal tension in the early days of the U of S was not between colleges but rather within the largest of them, the College of Arts and Science. The issue was the relative places and consequent funding of the sciences and the humanities. Over the course of time some of the professional schools joined the science side while the fine arts and social sciences became allies of the humanities.

Originally, Walter Murray had intended to develop the humanities and sciences together because he believed both had a role in educating students and serving the province. In his report for 1916, however, he wrote that the science departments had received the major attention so far “largely because of their importance for all phases of University work.” He said he planned to develop what he called the “linguistic and humanistic departments” along with “departments in the Social and Political Sciences.”<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, he said, this would have to wait until the end of the war.

World War I ended, but the science departments insisted that they needed special buildings and expensive equipment and the humanists did not protest loudly enough. When the Engineering building burned down in 1925 funds were diverted to its immediate replacement. The *On Campus News* of January 5, 2007 presents the instant rebuilding as heroic. In fact the fire and its aftermath were tragic for the balanced development of the U of S.

In his 1928-29 presidential report Murray wrote:

The oldest and largest Faculty in the University has become the Cinderella of the University. While provision has been made for the accommodation of the other senior faculties, the members of the Arts Faculty have no common meeting place, nor have they adequate accommodation in the scattered quarters assigned to them on the University campus.<sup>13</sup>

In 1929 the university was ready to erect the building for humanists and the library that had been planned as one of the focal points of the campus in 1909. Then came the Depression. A library (the laboratory of the humanists) was finally opened in 1956. The Arts Building followed in 1960, but only after the federal government literally forced then President W.P. Thompson, a biologist, to do so or face loss of funding from the Canada Council. Thompson was also less than enthusiastic about encouraging the development of the social sciences at the U of S because he questioned their value to society.<sup>14</sup>

The humanities and social sciences have long since outgrown the Arts Building, which because of its floor plan never did provide Murray's "common meeting place" where scholars could interact with each other or with their students. Nevertheless, despite all the construction on campus in the past decade and that planned for the foreseeable future there has been no real improvement of the situation, despite occasional relocation of offices and vague talk about the future.

The third tension connected with the role of the University of Saskatchewan as the People's University concerns the relative roles of teaching, research and service. Undergraduate teaching and service were paramount during the first fifty years of the University of Saskatchewan. Despite a few initiatives such as establishment of the Master Teacher Award and the Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching Effectiveness, sincere encouragement of good teaching has not been a priority of university administrators in living memory.<sup>15</sup>

Research has always been a part of life of the U of S, not just in the sciences, despite the legend to the contrary. Nevertheless, before the mid-1960s research activity was concentrated in several (not all) of the sciences, as well as in history, economics and political science. From the mid-1960s onward involvement in research spread to more parts of the university, despite a chronic lack of funding and heavy teaching loads in many colleges. Today the spread of research is still uneven across departments and colleges, but involvement in research (or, perhaps more accurately, success in obtaining externally funded research grants) is now a requirement for advancement in a self-described "research intensive" university.<sup>16</sup>

As for service – what once was among the university's foremost goals has, since the 1930s, become last at the University of Saskatchewan. In most other North American universities service has always come last. From 1907 into the 1930s this was not so at the University of Saskatchewan because of extension work.

From the beginning it was recognized both by politicians and by university leaders that education, training and technical assistance should take place both on campus and throughout the province. Originally a special appropriation for extension activities was provided by the government, but as Murray complained, there was never enough money. Still, the university continued to provide these services as an essential part of its mission by diverting funds from other parts of its budget.

The golden years of university extension work in Saskatchewan came between the opening of the University of Saskatchewan in 1909 and 1930. All professors were expected to be involved in extension work. An Extension Department was established in 1910 and it was active throughout the province. An important and influential part of its activities was sponsorship of homemakers clubs for women and farm camps for rural children.

Extension work was an important part of the life of the College of Agriculture. The best known early example of this activity was the Better Farming Train which toured the province during the years 1914 to 1922. Other early activities included short courses, institutes and exhibitions held throughout Saskatchewan. Later developments included cooperation with the Extension Department

in Field Days and Farm and Home Week. Unfortunately, the college was not prepared to deal with the drought of the 1930s, despite the warnings of two of its early soil scientists. The failure to provide solutions led to a lingering distrust of the college among farmers.<sup>17</sup>

During the 1930s the U of S cut its extension budget as it cut everything. This combined with Walter Murray's concern that faculty not become involved in any activity that could be considered politically partisan led to a lack of faculty involvement in seeking solutions to the economic and social problems of the time.<sup>18</sup>

Immediately after World War II a choice was made to use university funds to provide the infrastructure for research in a broad range of scientific areas rather than to fund extension work adequately. The pressure to do this came from the CCF provincial government, from newer faculty members who had been trained as research scientists and also from the availability of a significant amount of federal money to support such research, as long as the university provided the infrastructure such as labs, heat and electricity – a significant cost that was ignored by university administrators until the 1980s, to the detriment of non-science departments and colleges.<sup>19</sup>

From the mid-1940s through the 1970s scientists were very influential both in administration and in faculty affairs at the University of Saskatchewan. This contributed to research and publication becoming recognized as the primary means to obtain promotion and salary increases, rather than teaching or public service. The faculty in the sciences also wanted graduate students to help them carry out their research. As a result, university funds were diverted to the development of what eventually became the College of Graduate Studies in 1946. After this, bit by bit undergraduate teaching became less emphasized, though the process was long, slow and uneven.

These developments continued despite the recommendations of bodies such as the Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life in the mid-1950s that the University of Saskatchewan should rededicate itself to community service. But the only changes in the extension field were that the name of the Department was changed from Agricultural Extension to Extension and the separate organization known as Women's Work was amalgamated with it. Adult education programs were supposed to be developed, but adequate funding was not provided by the university.<sup>20</sup>

In the 1960s, as the university expanded rapidly, a new generation of faculty was hired to do research (largely theoretical in nature), to publish and to teach (in moderation in some of the sciences). New faculty members were not told about the history of extension work and applied research at the University of Saskatchewan, nor were most of them, outside the College of Agriculture, assigned any extension duties.<sup>21</sup> Senior faculty and administrators wanted to make the University of Saskatchewan what they considered to be a "real" university – one that emphasized research and on campus teaching. There was also less demand for public lectures as the rural population declined, automobiles and improved roads made travel easier, entertainment opportunities increased and television became common.

To obtain government funding to develop a university that emphasized theoretical research administrators at the U of S, like those throughout North America, made a serious mistake, perhaps their worst to date. They promised politicians and parents that a university education guaranteed jobs for young people. This promise brought money for expansion in the 1960s, but has haunted universities ever since – they could not deliver on their promise. This contributed to governments' decision to cut university funding in the 1970s, as the economy ran into serious problems and politicians faced growing demands for expanded and improved health care and social services. This promise is also the root of the idea that university education is a commodity, students are clients or customers and professors are service providers.

The situation was not helped by the fact that many faculty members were much more interested in research than in redesigning universities to improve teaching, help create jobs or provide service to the community. The process of retreat into an ivory tower that had begun in the 1930s continued and as a consequence the U of S suffered a loss of public respect. Most faculty members now had no connection with extension work and were not sympathetic to its goals or its practitioners, especially from the 1970s onward, as funds for research decreased and the size of classes on campus grew. To central administrators Extension seemed like a good place to cut funding because few faculty members would protest and, therefore, their own lives would be more peaceful.

Extension is now dead – at a monetary cost of perhaps \$3,000,000 to buy out faculty who refused to become part of the new order. In its place – at an unknown additional cost – are the Centre for Continuing and Distance Education, operating on a cost recovery basis, and the University Learning Centre directed inward, not outward toward the community. The announced President's Roundtable on Outreach and Engagement may be coming into being, though in a different form. Perhaps the supposedly planned Office of University-Community Relations will appear one day – do not hold your breath or ask what it will do.<sup>22</sup>

Once the University of Saskatchewan had coordinated community service through a single Extension Division; in its place there are four unconnected bodies – two of which do not exist – and three vapid phrases: “community outreach,” “engagement” and “sense of place,” unified only through the policy of “user pay.” A clear message has been sent to the people of Saskatchewan. The U of S is no longer the People's University. The U of S has become RRU: Research R Us.

The fourth of the tensions is that between university autonomy and the desire for control by government or business. University autonomy was important to the two founding Walters – Murray and Scott – and the degree of autonomy granted originally to the University of Saskatchewan contributed significantly to making it, once upon a time, an unusual university. The original University Act gave ultimate academic decision making power to a Senate, elected by university alumni, which also chose the majority of members of the Board of Governors. In addition, the university was guaranteed part of its core funding. The latter provision disappeared between 1920 and 1938.

Effective academic power was transferred fairly quickly to the Faculty Council, but the Senate continued to choose the majority of the board. That was changed by the province's first CCF



government in 1946. The move to what amounted to government control of the Board had the support of a significant number of faculty members who believed that a new era of a university-friendly government was at hand. That did not come to pass. One of the long term effects of this restriction on university autonomy was that the politicians in power were more able to push the university in directions they wanted whether through the Board or by withholding or directing money.<sup>23</sup>

As scientific research has become more and more expensive both the federal and provincial governments and private corporations have been asked for and have provided research funding. A problem with this is that those who pay have the ability to affect the scope and aims of the research, in the present situation toward the short term achievement of so-called practical goals. As a result, the curiosity driven research which has been responsible for most of the breakthroughs that have improved the health and welfare of humans and has provided an understanding of the universe and its inhabitants is either not being done or has to be hidden in funding applications for the types of research that governments and companies are willing to support. Applied research has always been part of the life of the University of Saskatchewan and government suggestions in this area have always been welcomed, but the freedom of university faculty to be guided by their expertise toward the most fruitful types of research is now seriously threatened.

Until Walter Murray retired in 1937 there was little change in the structure of the U of S or much formal planning. The creation of the Regina Campus of the U of S in 1959 (a result of government pressure) necessitated changes that were never fully developed. When government fiat made the University of Regina independent in 1974 the government created the Universities Commission to take charge of university planning.

With the disappearance of the Universities Commission in 1983 planning returned to the U of S with the creation of Issues and Options in 1985. Despite lack of support from most administrators and the belief of many faculty members that no change or planning was needed, Issues and Options produced a number of studies of the possible future of the University of Saskatchewan that were innovative, yet fit the university's tradition. Unfortunately, the process took too long as its leaders sought to prepare a "perfect" final report.

In 1990 a new president disbanded Issues and Options and began a planning process that still continues. What began as an information gathering exercise became an effort to re-emphasize the importance of teaching in a university that was aware of its responsibilities to the people of the province. The result was the university's mission statement of 1993. It is now mostly ignored because of its embarrassing emphasis on service to the people of Saskatchewan, on the importance of quality teaching and on meaningful extension work.

After 1993 the planning process was more and more led by people who were unaware of the U of S tradition or, at crucial moments, were neglectful of it. Planning became an attempt to create a research institution that concentrated on selected sciences, while paying only lip service to other disciplines and to the traditional teaching and service functions of the University of Saskatchewan.

While it is true that the move toward emphasis on applied scientific research was taking place across Canada, this does not mean that the U of S had to abandon its original unusual status.

The years 1994-95 saw the work of the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee of Council and the development of the Program Audit Project. While these were working their way through the system a new planning initiative was developing which resulted in the March 1998 document “A Framework for Planning at the University of Saskatchewan.” In February, 1999 the Systematic Program Review burst upon the scene. June of 2000 saw Council’s endorsement of an increase in “research intensiveness” at the U of S. Buttressing these efforts were the new standards for tenure and promotion of February 2002. Later in 2002 the “Integrated Planning Process for Priority Setting” was announced. The whole process was woven together in the same year with President Peter MacKinnon’s document “Strategic Directions: Renewing the Dream” and put into practice with the 2003-07 Integrated Plan and multi-year budget. The planners, largely on their own, chose eight vague and unoriginal themes for the “Second Planning Cycle” scheduled for the years 2008-12. They had to drop one theme, though, because they forgot what it meant.<sup>24</sup>

In constant dollars university funding in Saskatchewan has been cut almost continuously from the early 1970s onward, despite the creation of an independent University of Regina in 1974 and the overall increase in student enrollment and rising infrastructure costs. The final straw was the cutting of federal transfer funds for post-secondary education in 1995. President MacKinnon decided that the university had to find a significant amount of money to rebuild decaying infrastructure, provide space for students and hire new faculty to replace the rapidly retiring large cohort who had been hired in the 1960s. Since the major sources of this money were the federal and provincial governments and private enterprise he decided that the price to be paid was concentration on selected research that promised immediate concrete results.<sup>25</sup>

Those who remember the promise to governments that allowed the expansion of the 1960s – money for jobs – shudder to think what the cost to the U of S will be when federal and provincial politicians tire of unfulfilled promises that heavily subsidized research will bring quick solutions to society’s ills while creating prosperity and employment in Saskatoon and Saskatchewan.

The move of the University of Saskatchewan to its self-declared status as a “research intensive” university was aided by the coming of the first Canadian synchrotron, dubbed “The Canadian Light Source.” The campaign to obtain this significant piece of research equipment began with the well-intentioned efforts of the head of the campus-based Saskatchewan Linear Accelerator to find positions for his research staff when the National Science and Engineering Research Council announced that it would not fund the accelerator after 1998. U of S president George Ivany joined the effort to convince local and provincial business people and politicians that a synchrotron would be of great benefit to the economy of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan.<sup>26</sup>

After a long and intense campaign of political and scientific lobbying the synchrotron came to the University of Saskatchewan. This instrument provides the means to perform important research, but its significance and potential impact on the economy of Saskatoon have been oversold in the same way that the economic value of a university education was mischaracterized in the 1960s. The CLS

may be a first for Canada, but it is still only one of more than fifty similar light sources around the world. Much of the research will be done by scientists from other institutions or for the benefit of private companies located outside of Saskatchewan.<sup>27</sup>

Despite the propaganda neither the scientists nor the companies will be buying houses or buildings in Saskatoon, nor will their user fees provide much stimulation to the local economy. In fact, they very well may not even cover operating costs at the facility itself. Despite government grants for operating funds (whose continuation is not guaranteed) and private investment (little of which has yet appeared), the University of Saskatchewan had to find money internally to support the operation at the beginning and may well have to find more in the future. This, combined with the funneling of scarce resources to synchrotron-related disciplines, has had a significant detrimental effect on the university's other academic and community programs. Unfortunately, the vast majority of U of S students study everything but the now favoured synchrotron-related sciences.

There are other elements of the history of the U of S between 1975 and the present that would have been included in my new chapter, but there is not enough space available to discuss them adequately. These include changes in the preparation and expectations of students, the welcome but challenging influx of aboriginal students, the complex relationships among the changes in numbers and type of faculty, administrative staff and students and the move from collegiality to top down industrial style management. Factors involved in the last – very contentious – item include faculty unionization, the growing influence of “human resource” thinking, emphasis on research and its funding, and the unanticipated evolution of the representative council, combined with the failure of the General Academic Assembly to function.

Not only is space lacking, but I have not fully studied some of these topics because crucial information has only recently become available. Especially important are faculty and staff data for the years 2000-2005 which became available only in November, 2006, after years of stalling by central administrators.<sup>28</sup>

Preliminary study shows the following increases in Full Time Equivalent (FTE) administrative staff between May 1, 2000 and April 30, 2005: 57% in the Human Resources Division (despite the removal of the Department of Health, Safety and Environment in 2002), 90% in Facilities Management (while janitorial service has almost disappeared on campus). Overall, “general administrative staff” (i.e. ASPA, not CUPE) increased 55% while tenure and tenure track faculty increased only 10% (and faculty numbers were still below those of the early 1990s). On April 30, 2005 there were 242 more FTE general administrative staff than five years earlier, while there were only seventy-three more FTE tenure and tenure track faculty.<sup>29</sup>

Two-thirds of the increases in FTE tenure and tenure track faculty during the period 2000-2005 were in the Colleges of Nursing (48% increase), Law (+21%), Vet Med (+15%), Agriculture (+14%), Engineering (+8%) and Medicine (+8%). The increase in enrollment in all these colleges combined was 7%. In the College of Arts and Science there was a 12 % increase in enrollment, but

only a 4% increase in faculty. In the social sciences there was no increase in faculty even though enrolment there increased by 11%.<sup>30</sup>

I come now to my conclusion – which is not the noncommittal one that would have appeared in the book I proposed to President MacKinnon.

As the University of Saskatchewan celebrates its 100th anniversary I think there are two questions that need to be asked. They are “What is the U of S today?” and “What could it become?”

I think the People’s University has become an ordinary middle-sized university overloaded with bureaucrats and professional planners (most with little or no teaching or research experience). Rather than focusing on the unique needs and opportunities of Saskatchewan, they have set their sights on trying to compete with the likes of the universities of Toronto, British Columbia and Alberta without a realistic hope of acquiring adequate funding in a province with two (or is it three) universities and soaring health costs that remains stubbornly under a million people.

Historians try to explain the present by studying the past, but are wary about predicting the future. I will go no further than to say that I do not foresee any significant deviation from the present course of the U of S until two changes take place. The first is the eventual decision by politicians to limit severely or redirect research funding, either because there have not been enough immediate, visible societal benefits that produce votes or because the funding is identified with programs instituted earlier by political opponents. The second necessary change will be the eventual disappearance of present day U of S central administrators.

Once these two changes have occurred three paths will be open to the University of Saskatchewan. It could continue to aspire to be the Sparta of the North. This is the program of the present day administration – a university that concentrates on whatever applied research politicians and business people will fund, while providing limited support for teaching and largely ignoring service.

The U of S of the future could strive to become the Athens of the Prairies – a university that emphasizes research for the sake of research, not immediate practical results, letting researchers find their own funding, while letting teaching and service take care of themselves. This was the program of the leaders of the U of S from the 1950s through the 1980s.

Or the University of Saskatchewan could return to its roots and once again become a university as unique and unusual as the province it once served. It could become a 21<sup>st</sup> century version of the People’s University – a university that would restore the balances that once made it unique by truly combining research, teaching and service to help the people of Saskatchewan build and maintain their society. It would encourage and support theoretical and applied research and also general and specific education for all segments of Saskatchewan society in the natural and social sciences, the humanities and the fine arts. It would provide programs of community and personal development, both on and off campus. It would also re-establish its autonomy. It could then, once again, become a university whose graduates are prominent in government, business, education, the professions and

the arts in Saskatchewan and throughout Canada.

There is no doubt that the needs of the people of Saskatchewan are different than they were in the first half of the twentieth century. Initiatives already exist in a number of colleges and departments to meet the practical needs of the people of Saskatchewan. Destroying Extension has not helped, nor will the creation of the School of Public Policy help.

There is no doubt that most faculty have become accustomed to emphasizing research and that innovative means would have to be found to encourage the revival of teaching. A realistic possibility would be a policy that would allow those who most want to teach to concentrate on that activity, while those who most want to do research would concentrate in that area. Both groups would do some teaching and some research and both groups would be rewarded equally for documented achievement. It would not be easy for the U of S to become again the People's University. The president and board would have to convince provincial politicians that the people of Saskatchewan need and want a revitalized people's university, one that truly serves them, rather than an artificial institution featuring research intensiveness in a few predetermined areas. Additional funding would probably have to be found. Perhaps alumni who recognize the importance of dedicated undergraduate teaching could be the source. But if faculty and administrators, supported by the Board and Senate, wanted to achieve this goal they could. The result would be a University of Saskatchewan that could take pride in its many achievements, instead of concentrating on only a few areas of research while largely ignoring the intellectual interests and needs of the vast majority of students and the people of Saskatchewan.

At least, that's my view. I will let future historians decide how right or wrong I am.

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1. This essay began as a Centennial Lecture delivered on March 1, 2007. A few changes have been made in the text and notes because of subsequent developments at the U of S (final revisions submitted March 15, 2008).

2. Peter MacKinnon, "Labour Relations in the Academy: A Case Study at the University of Saskatchewan," *Dalhousie Law Journal*, 14 (November 1991), 355-71. Janice MacKinnon, *Minding the Public Purse: The Fiscal Crisis, Political Trade-Offs, and Canada's Future* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003).

3. That future historian should also consult my three page article in the Saskatoon *Star Phoenix* of September 15, 2007. He or she might also be interested in the printed reactions a few days later from my former colleagues Bill Waiser and Jim Miller. The former missed the point of my article, while the latter ignored my evidence, claimed I had provided none and gave no evidence for his own views. Some weeks later Synchrotron supporters joined in with their usual claims of future greatness, while ignoring the substance of my article.

4. *President's Report, 1908-09*, 12. For the early history of the University of Saskatchewan see A.S. Morton, *Saskatchewan: the Making of a University* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959). For its history from its remote origins to the early 1980s see Michael Hayden, *Seeking a Balance:*

*The University of Saskatchewan, 1907-1982* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983). See also Michael Taft, *Inside These Greystone Walls: An Anecdotal History of the University of Saskatchewan* ([Saskatoon], 1984). See also Michael Hayden, "Why are All Those Names on the Walls? The University of Saskatchewan and World War I," *Saskatchewan History*, 58 (2006), 4-15.

5. Quoted in *University of Saskatchewan, President's Report, 1912-13, 1913-14*, 1.

6. For Walter Scott see Gordon Barnhart, *Peace, Progress and Prosperity: A Biography of Saskatchewan's First Premier, Walter T. Scott* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2000). For Walter Murray see David R. and Robert Murray, *The Prairie Builder, Walter Murray of Saskatchewan* (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1984). Neither Scott nor Murray left any extended account of their career. Three of the later presidents did so. James S. Thomson, *Yesteryears at the University of Saskatchewan, 1937-1949* (Saskatoon: Modern Press, 1969); W.P. Thompson, *The University of Saskatchewan, A Personal History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970) which covers the years 1907-1959 (see also his unpublished memoir in the University Archives); J.W.T. Spinks, *A Decade of Change, The University of Saskatchewan, 1959-1970* (Saskatoon: Mercury Printers, 1972) and *Two Blades of Grass, An Autobiography* (Saskatoon: Prairie Books, 1980).

7. *President's Report, 1908-09*, 11.

8. Among the histories of the professional colleges that make up the University of Saskatchewan the College of Medicine has had the most written about it. See Douglas J. Buchan, *Greenhouse to Medical Centre: Saskatchewan's Medical School, 1926-1978* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, 1983) and Louis Horlick, *Medical College to Community Resource, Saskatchewan's Medical School, 1978-1998* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, 1998). . See also Christopher Bigland, *WCVM, The First Decade and More: The history of the Western College of Veterinary Medicine* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, 1990) and R.H. Macdonald, *Thorough: An Illustrated History of the College of Engineering, 1912-1982* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, 1982). Among the federated and affiliated colleges only one has a published history, Margaret Sanche, *Heartwood, A History of St. Thomas More College and Newman Centre at the University of Saskatchewan* (Muenster, Sask.: St. Peter's Press, 1986). Two departmental histories have been formally published: Balfour Currie, *Physics Department, 1910-1976, University of Saskatchewan* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, 1976) and Shirley Spafford, *No Ordinary Academics: Economics and Political Science at the University of Saskatchewan, 1910-1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

9. The list of colleges and dates of founding are Arts and Science and Agriculture (1907) (Arts and Science began teaching in 1909, Agriculture in 1912), Law (1912), Engineering (department 1912, school 1914, college 1921), Pharmacy (school 1913, college 1921), Education (department 1913, school 1927, college 1946), Commerce (school 1917, college 1936), Home Economics (department 1917, college 1942, disbanded 1990), Medicine (school 1926, college 1946), Physical Education

(now Kinesiology) (department 1931, school 1958, college 1972), Nursing (school 1938, college 1973), Graduate Studies (1946), Veterinary Medicine (1964), Dentistry (1965).

10. Walter Murray to President Falconer of the University of Toronto, Feb. 22, 1930. Quoted in Hayden, *Seeking a Balance*, 36.

11. For the origins and early history of the University of Regina see two books by James M. Pitsula: *An Act of Faith. The Early Years of Regina College* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1988) and *As One Who Serves: The Making of the University of Regina* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), as well as W.A. Riddell, *The First Decade: A History of the University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus, 1960-1970* (n.p., n.d). Pitsula created a myth by describing the University of Saskatchewan's goals of being politically independent and the sole university in the province as a myth designed to mislead the people and politicians of Saskatchewan. James Pitsula, "Higher Education Policy in Saskatchewan and the Legacy of Myth," *The Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy, Public Policy Paper 12* (February 2003). His paper, my reaction to it, his response to my reaction and my reply to his response can be found in *SIPP Policy Paper 15* (May 2003), "Saskatchewan's Universities – A Perception of History." Professor Pitsula recycled his original article, almost word for word, in "History, Myth and the University of Saskatchewan, 1907-1974," *Saskatchewan History*, LV, 2 (Fall 2003), 27-41, but did not cite either its earlier appearance or my reaction to it. See also *ibid.*, LVI, 1 (Spring 2004), 2.

12. Quoted in Hayden, *Seeking a Balance*, 49.

13. Quoted in *ibid.*, 138.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 201-08, 225-32.

15. The latest proof of this statement is the fact that the university planning bureaucrats fast tracked the so-called "foundational document" on research, scholarly and artistic work during the first planning cycle while the foundational document on teaching and learning is still incomplete. An example of ways in which other Canadian universities have made teaching a priority can be found in Pierre Zundel, "Nurture Your Teachers and Help Them Grow," *University Affairs* January 2003, 4-19. See also Gary Poole, "Crisis? What Crisis?" *Ibid.*, March 2007, pp. 40-41

16. For research and its relationship to teaching and service before the mid-1960s see Carlyle King, *The First Fifty: Teaching, Research and Publication at the University of Saskatchewan, 1909-1959* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959) and *Extending the Boundaries: Scholarship and Research at the University of Saskatchewan, 1909-1966* (Saskatoon, University of Saskatchewan 1967). For the period 1960-1982 see Hayden, *Seeking A Balance*, 291-317. See also the annual reports of the President (and for the years 1968-74 the annual reports of the Principal of the Saskatoon campus) available in the University of Saskatchewan Archives.

17. See Hayden, *Seeking a Balance*, pp. 158-60. In addition, there is substantial anecdotal evidence from a variety of individuals connected with the U of S who have travelled widely in the province and have encountered this distrust.

18. For a discussion of the breadth and complexity of Walter Murray's understanding of service, accountability and autonomy and the effect of these on the failure of the U of S to play an important role in addressing the problems of Saskatchewan in the 1930s see Roger Petry, "Walter Murray and the State University: The Response of the University of Saskatchewan to the Great Depression, 1930-1937." *Saskatchewan History*: 56 (Fall 2004), 5-23.

19. Hayden, *Seeking a Balance*, pp. 195-6, 210-11, 225-32.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 229-32.

21. An exception was the Division of Continuing Medical Education in the College of Medicine between 1968 and 1991. In 1991 it became a cost recovery program. Nursing, Pharmacy and Physical Therapy also maintain continuing education programs.

22. See the *Star Phoenix* Dec. 9, 2006 and *On Campus News* July 7, 2006 and May 4, 2007.

23. Hayden, *Seeking a Balance*, pp. 119, 164-65, 209-10, 288-90.

24. Self-selection is evident in the words of John Rigby, chair of the Planning Committee. See *On Campus News*, XIV (Feb. 2, 2007), p. 8: Rigby, also stated that the theme "innovate and focus" was removed because the committee 'didn't really know what we meant' by those two words."

25. The last two sentences are based on a conversation with President MacKinnon in 2003 about a much earlier version of the second half of this paper.

26. For the explanation of the director of the Saskatchewan Accelerator lab of the development of the Synchrotron see account of Dennis Skopik in the *Star Phoenix* of Nov. 4, 2004. I watched the development and campaign carefully and closely from my post as Chair of the Planning and Budget Committee of the College of Arts and Science (of which Prof. Skopik was a valued member) because it was apparent that the outcome of the negotiations would have a profound effect on the college.

27. For the continuing hype backed by little substance see the article "Synchrotron Boom: CLS Beaming with Optimism," *The Star Phoenix*, Wed., Mar. 28, 2007, p. 1. In addition, while governments provide some one time funding, they still have not committed to the necessary long term operational funding.

28. The choice of the word "stalling" is based on an e-mail I received on April 1, 2005 from Robert Schultz, the Director of Institutional Analysis: "Yes, Barrie [Dubray, Assistant Provost, Integrated Planning and Analysis] is correct that we have not been able to perform the FTE analysis since the



time the new HR system went into place 1 January 2000. There are a number of reasons for the delay, but essentially it boils down to resources and priorities.”

29. The FTE data for May 1, 2005 - April 30, 2007 became available some time after this talk was presented. They show that the trends are constant. For the entire period 2000-2007 the increase in administrative staff in Human Resources was 79%, in Facilities Management 97%. Overall “general administrative staff” increased 105% while tenure and tenure track faculty increased by 18% The FTE increase in what is now called University Advancement between 2000 and 2005 was 222%, but some of these positions are funded differently. This needs further study.

30. For the data on which this and the preceding paragraph are based see <http://www.usask.ca/ia/statistics>.