Bill 2 passed in Manitoba Legislature

*Bill 2: The Protecting Affordability for University Students Act (Council on Post-Secondary Education Act Amended)* was passed on June 14th by the Manitoba Legislature. The bill proposes a number of significant changes for universities including three year funding forecasts, annual tuition increases based on a rolling consumer price index average and permitting the adjustment of fees for designated professional degree programs if a number of criteria are met.

**Lower tuition not best way to improve access**

Improving access to post-secondary education is a priority for everyone involved in the field, and too often tuition is seen as the simplest solution. According to a recent OECD report, low tuition will not decrease barriers to participation. The report finds that the most significant determinant of whether Canadians attend university is if their parents attended. Students whose parents attended university are 4.6 times more likely to attend than those whose parents did not attend university. The report points out that tuition differentials across Canadian provinces do not appear to result in great variations in participation rates. The report also suggests that rather than blanket tuition cuts or freezing tuition, which can result in greater benefits to higher-income families, government should focus on targeting support to socio-economically disadvantaged students who often have an aversion to debt.

**Update on Bill C-11 – The Copyright Modernization Act**

Bill C-11 has passed in the House of Commons and is now before the Senate. The bill updates Canada’s copyright legislation and attempts to balance the needs of researchers, students and professors with those of creators and is obviously of interest to universities. According to AUCC, Bill C-11 contains many of the changes the university community suggested during the federal government’s public consultation during the summer of 2009, including exceptions permitting the educational use of Internet materials and the recording and Internet transmission of lessons, which will facilitate online learning and help make university education more accessible. Bill C-11 will also permit university researchers to obtain and keep research materials in digital format.

**Manitoba strengthens sustainable development education**

*The Provincial Government has announced Manitoba students* will have access to new resources at school to give young people the tools they need to make informed choices for themselves and the environment. A number of new initiatives are planned, focusing on all ages and grades, as well as post-secondary institutions. Of interest to the University is the creation of Canada's first Education for Sustainable Leadership Council comprised of school boards, teachers, parents and post-secondary institutions and an upcoming report on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in post-secondary institutions in Manitoba, done in partnership with the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD).
More doctors and nurse practitioners for Manitoba

The Government of Manitoba recently announced plans to increase family medicine residencies and nurse practitioner training seats this fall as part of its commitment to ensure all Manitobans have access to a family doctor by 2015. New funding will be made available for 14 new family medicine residencies and 3 new nurse practitioner training seats.

SSHRC distributes more than $6 million under Connection Program

SSHRC recently announced $6.3 million in Public Outreach Grants, part of the council's Connection Program, to researchers at PSE institutions across Canada for research-related events and outreach activities. 95 public outreach projects involving Canadian and international researchers will receive funding, with projects covering a wide range of topics, including history, education, and First Nations communities. 2 U of M researchers were successful in securing funding as lead applicants.

Value of post-secondary education highlighted in new data

A new Statistics Canada study shows workers with degrees and certificates weathered the recession better than those without any post-secondary education. Workers with a trade, college or university certificate saw their employment levels rise 5.1% between 2008 and 2011 while employment levels for those with less than a high school degree in 2011 were 14.5% lower and employment for workers with just a high school diploma was 1.8% lower for the same period. Workers with a bachelor's degree or higher saw the biggest increase between 2008 and 2011, up 8.8%, although the overall employment rate for this group fell from 75.0% to 73.7% due to a 10.7% increase in the population who have these credentials.

Ontario discussion paper outlines proposed transformation of PSE

The Ontario government has released a discussion paper on how to improve the province’s post-secondary system. The paper suggests shorter degrees, year-round classes, and making all general first- and second-year credits transferable to any provincial university as ways to keep PSE more relevant and flexible to students. Up for discussion is moving from 4 year to 3 year degrees, which would not compress material but have a different structure that meets student demands and offers choice and convenience. All of the issues raised in the paper will go out for wider consultation this summer and fall.
Visionary Conversations

Following an award-winning first year, Visionary Conversations will be back for another round of thought-provoking discussions this fall. Join President and Vice-Chancellor David Barnard, along with trailblazing researchers from the University of Manitoba, for the second season launch of Visionary Conversations in September during Homecoming.

We Need to Talk About Racism
Wednesday, September 12, 2012
Robert B. Schultz Theatre, St. John’s College, Fort Garry Campus
Reception in Galleria - 6:30PM-7:00PM - Sponsored by the Alumni Association Inc.
Panel Discussion – 7:00PM-8:30PM

Our full season of topics and speakers will be announced later this summer.

RSVP for the September 12 event to: Visionary_Conversations@umanitoba.ca. You can also interact with the University of Manitoba on Twitter (hashtag #umvisionary) and Facebook.