

# President's Message

## First Impressions

At the beginning of July I arrived in Winnipeg to take up the role of president. This is a new community and a new institutional home for me, having grown up in northeastern Ontario. I studied at the University of Toronto and UBC before working at Queen's University for 19 years and the University of Regina for an additional 12. But before this latest move, I was already starting to feel at home in Winnipeg. This sense of comfort came from my experiences during several short visits to the city in early 2008.

During those trips, I met members of the university community and the community at large, including those involved in government, business and the arts. When I arrived on campus, I came with the knowledge that Manitobans are proud of this university, recognize its broad mandate (including being the source of most professional education in Manitoba), appreciate its important role in community development (cultural, social and economic) and see the school for what it is: the research engine of the province.

The diverse group of people I met made me feel welcome in the community and inspired me with their encouraging thoughts about the university's future.

In the few months that I've been here, I've already begun to learn the patterns and practices of life at the University of Manitoba. There have been annual retreats with the executive team, the deans, the directors and the administrative management group. During these events, I spoke about how I intend to behave as a leader, and how that has been shaped by my past experience in other leadership roles and as one who has been led. Each group has discussed the university's current situation by doing a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis, and by focusing on the possible major thematic emphases that can frame the narrative of a plan for the next several years.

While there are certainly constraints on what we can accomplish – and, as we should expect, there are more good ideas than there



David Barnard with Bison Sport's Jennifer Everard [BRS/02] at the Bison Homecoming football game.

are time, expertise or money to allocate to them – there are also substantial resources available to us: talented people, a broad base of support and a budget that can be used for many purposes. The next few years should be very exciting for all of us who love the University of Manitoba and take pride in our involvement.

One of the great fall traditions at the university is Homecoming. This was a wonderful series of events for me and my fiancée Gursh. Those who return for Homecoming are already committed to the university and are aware of its importance in their own lives – how it has exposed them to life-shaping ideas, prepared them for careers, and introduced them to lifelong friends. The stories that alumni tell of their university days and of their experiences since then can be amusing and deeply motivating. It is clear for anyone who participates in Homecoming that education is a transformative experience.

Recently I participated in the university's 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Fall Convocation Ceremony. The combination of witnessing hundreds of stu-

dents receive parchments following their successful completion of formal programs of study, along with recognizing inspirational individuals from within our own university (those who received special recognitions as students, staff or faculty members) and the broader community (those who received honorary degrees) was another moving experience.

My installation as the 11<sup>th</sup> president of the University of Manitoba coincided with convocation. During the ceremony, I articulated the hope that we will not be satisfied with anything less than achieving greatness. Based on the enthusiastic support for the university one finds in the community, the strengths of the leadership group involved in planning, and the inspiration that comes from seeing what the university represents to current and former students, I believe we can have a lot of fun working together over the next few years to achieve great things.

**DAVID T. BARNARD**  
president and vice-chancellor