

Dr. Cathy Rocke – Dean, University of Regina, Faculty of Social Work
Summary of Accomplishments

I have been honoured to serve as the Dean of the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Regina over the past 4 years and to now be considered for a further 5-year term. This document outlines a summary of my accomplishments since joining the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Regina. I believe that the work I have completed to date has set a good foundation for obtaining the goals that I have outlined in my vision and goals document for a further 5-year term.

When I began my tenure at the University of Regina, my first goal was to meet all of the faculty and staff and within four weeks had scheduled individual meetings to hear their perspectives on what was working well and what could be improved within the faculty. These in person meetings laid the foundation for relationships with all faculty and staff as the world shut down due to the pandemic in March 2020. In the first 1.5 years of my tenure, all faculty and staff worked remotely and were focused on delivering and maintaining our educational programs to our students virtually. One of the major challenges was how to deliver our practicum placements during the national shut down. I worked closely with our national accreditation body to ensure that our student still met the learning objectives in becoming future social workers.

In July 2020, I restructured the Faculty leadership to include two Associate Deans – Associate Dean Undergraduate Program and Associate Dean Graduate Program and Research. Prior to this change the Faculty of Social Work had had only one Associate Dean with an untenable workload for the individual and resulted in the focus of this position as responding to emerging issues and crises. With the addition of two Associate Deans the Faculty has been able to increase our research profile, redevelop our graduate program, address several challenges within the undergraduate program and plan for redevelopment of our undergraduate program. The senior leadership team at the Faculty of Social Work has been critical in supporting my Deanship. Much of the accomplishments over the past 4 years has been a result of the dedicated work of both faculty and staff to ensure teaching excellence and impactful research. I am very grateful for the faculty and staff who have supported me in the past 4 years.

I adhere to a relationship leadership style that is focused “on the process of getting people together to accomplish change, make a difference and create a synergistic environment where every person can feel empowered and welcomed” (Schuyler, 2021, n.p.).¹ The relational leadership style has 5 main characteristics – to be inclusive, empowering, purposeful, ethical and has a process orientation (Schulyer, 2021). In my tenure I have sought to build consensus within the faculty, across other university departments and with our community and government partners. Faculty and staff consistently speak to me about the collegiality and collaboration that occurs within the faculty. This collegiality is demonstrated by the strong involvement of faculty

¹ Schuyler, B.E. (2021, Oct 21). Five components of relational leadership theory. *Campus Rec Magazine*. Retrieved May 10, 2024 from <https://campusrecmag.com/five-components-of-relational-leadership-theory/>

and staff in meetings and robust engagement by faculty in pedagogical discussions that occur regularly over the academic year. I have observed faculty and staff working well together as demonstrated by several research collaborations between faculty members and, the engagement of staff members with faculty on programmatic changes.

The pandemic opened up opportunities for the Faculty to re-examine and pivot to different course delivery modalities based on our experience delivering our programming virtually. The pandemic however negatively impacted the university budget and resulted in the Faculty of Social Work navigating three years of budget reductions. Through cautious and strategic budgeting, I was able to continue the vision of the Faculty to deliver excellent teaching and impactful research.

A personal challenge within my past tenure as Dean was my partner's diagnosis with a serious illness in September 2021. This event in my personal life impacted some of the goals I had set for myself as Dean. Due to the medical resources being located in Manitoba for my partner, I worked largely remotely until September 2022. I was able to remain virtually connected to faculty, staff and students but was not able to develop relationships with many of the Saskatchewan social services community as much as I had hoped. Since returning to Regina full time in September 2022, I have worked diligently to develop these relationships and plan to continue this goal if I am renewed for a second term as Dean.

Achievements During Current Tenure

- The Faculty of Social Work at the University of Regina is both complex and geographically diverse with campuses in both Regina and Saskatoon. Approximately one third of the student population reside outside of these two urban settings. Since the beginning of my tenure at the Faculty, I have worked to develop a sense of connection and collegiality across the Regina and Saskatoon campuses. Historically, there has been a sense of disconnect between the two campuses. With the advent of the pandemic this disconnection melted somewhat with the pivot to remote work and faculty and staff connecting regularly virtually. In the August 2023 faculty/staff retreat it was identified there is a need to schedule in person meetings during the year to enhance the sense of connection and collegiality and this has been planned and will continue in the future.
- Beginning in 2020, I led the Faculty of Social Work in developing our strategic plan [*Faculty of Social Work 2021-2025 Strategic Plan*](#) that articulated our values, mission, vision and goals. The Faculty of Social Work Strategic Plan is aligned with the 5 areas of focus in the University of Regina [*All Our Relations: kahkiyaw kiwâhkômâkaninawak Strategic Plan 2020-2025*](#). As outlined in my vision and goals document the Faculty of Social Work is working towards aligning our strategic plan with the 34 actions in University of Regina, Indigenous Engagement Strategic Plan [*Tapwewin kwayaskwastâsowin: Truth and Putting Things Right*](#) released in 2023. Several of the objectives in the Faculty of Social Work strategic plan have been reached or are nearing completion. However, the Faculty strategic plan is a living document, and the faculty and staff meet in an annual retreat to review and update our plan as needed. A revitalization of our strategic plan will need to be initiated in late 2025.

Supporting the Research Enterprise at the Faculty

- I have worked hard to support and highlight the Faculty of Social Work research productivity and profile. Early in my tenure, I supported the faculty involvement in the University of Regina *Child Trauma Research Centre* (<https://www.childtraumaresearch.ca/>) and a current Faculty member was awarded the inaugural research chair.
- With a number of excellent faculty members, the research productivity and knowledge translation of the faculty has increased substantially. In 2022–2023-year, faculty were able to obtain just under one million dollars in external funding, disseminate their findings through 21 peer-reviewed articles, 13 books/book chapters, 25 conference presentations and numerous media interviews.
- In the past year, I have worked closely with the Vice President (Research) to highlight the impactful research completed by faculty members that helped raise the Faculty research profile. In the past few years, several Faculty members have been invited to present to both donors and government representatives on their current research projects. I have been advised by the VPR that the Faculty is next in line for a Canada Research Chair that is due to the increase in faculty research productivity.
- A staff position was created in 2023, with a focus on communication and student engagement. As a result of this hire, the awareness of faculty research has increased dramatically based on the social media metrics. This staff position is also responsible for student engagement and has supported and highlighted student led initiatives.

Supporting the Teaching Enterprise at the Faculty

- The Faculty of Social Work was successful in an application for one time funding offered by the Province of Saskatchewan to the University of Regina. I led a proposal to redevelop our Master of Social Work degree to increase accessibility for social work graduate students across the province. The Faculty was granted \$385,000.00 in 2021. The funding has been used for technological infrastructure upgrades and the redevelopment of all graduate courses to be more accessible virtually. All of the upgrades have been completed and the course redevelopment is nearing completion with several of the newly created courses currently being delivered.
- In Fall 2023, a Bachelor of Social Work cohort began in the North Battleford / Meadowlake region in collaboration with Northwest College. There was strong student interest in this community-based program with over 60 registrants at the beginning of the program.
- The Faculty has a long-standing partnership with Yukon University which I have successfully worked to maintain demonstrated by a re-signing of a 2-year MOU in 2023. Unfortunately, Yukon University has signaled their desire to end this partnership over the next couple of years and create their own social work program. If renewed for a further 5-year term I will work with Yukon University to ensure a smooth transition.
- The Faculty began a review of the Bachelor of Social Work degree beginning in the Fall 2023 term. Current plans include the need to refresh our curriculum (in line with the new Canadian Association of Social Work Education accreditation standards), course sequencing, admission criteria and, more accessible course delivery modalities.

- Excellent teaching is vitally important to me as Dean. I encourage and support faculty to continually enhance their teaching skills to meet the needs of our students. To support this goal, I have facilitated regular meetings throughout the year with faculty to address pedagogical issues that arise in the classroom. Topics discussed over the past years have included indigenizing our curriculum², handling racism within the classroom, dealing with academic integrity with the advent of artificial intelligence and, grade inflation. Faculty have found these sessions particularly helpful in providing ideas and support for each other in their classroom teaching.
- To support our sessional instructors, I assigned a faculty member to provide mentorship to sessional instructors that includes ongoing virtual seminars and individual coaching.
- Within the community, I hold regular meetings with our Community Advisory Board to keep abreast of issues within the provincial social work community as well as meeting our accreditation requirements. This advisory board helps to update the Faculty on emerging social issues within the community and inform our curriculum.
- In 2024, I spearheaded the revision of the Faculty *Professional Suitability Policy*. The policy and procedures were enhanced to include the principles of natural justice and are in line with the Saskatchewan Association of Social Worker *Standards of Practice for Registered Social Workers in Saskatchewan* (2020).
- In 2021, I developed the social work *Code of Ethics* module for the SW 099 online orientation course that all incoming undergraduate social work students are required to complete.

Human Resource Management

- A number faculty and staff members have either left or retired from the Faculty of Social Work during my tenure. For a Faculty of our size this has been disruptive as I have worked to rebuild our ranks. Many of the faculty members that left the Faculty were lured away by other universities in eastern Canada. To address this trend the Faculty has worked to hire local individuals rooted in the province of Saskatchewan with hopes to allow for some stability in the near future.
- I have had to deal with a number of very difficult human resource issues in the past two years that has unfortunately consumed my time. I have always worked to deal with these difficult human resource issues in a kind but firm way for the betterment of the Faculty.

Budget management

- With the help of very competent Faculty Administrators during my tenure, I have steered the faculty through challenging financial times (including 2 years of budget cuts to core

² This session included the viewing of an educational video that I co-created while still working at the University of Manitoba entitled *Nametwaawin - Making a Presence: Integrating Indigenous Knowledge into Curriculum and Teaching Methodologies*. The video includes a number of Elders and Indigenous academics responding to three questions – what is Indigenous knowledge, what are the challenges with integrating Indigenous knowledge into curriculum and teaching methodologies and, what are some of the ways instructors can integrate Indigenous knowledge into their teaching.

funding). As a result of an improved financial situation in the past year the Faculty will be reinvesting in alignment with our strategic priorities.

- During the budget cutbacks, I left a number of faculty lines vacant in order to protect the number of staff positions that were soft funded and avoid layoffs. I also became very cautious regarding any discretionary spending and reduced the travel expenses from the Deans Office and relied more heavily on virtual meetings with the Saskatoon campus.
- As the financial crunch has eased, I have begun filling the vacant faculty positions but continue to hold one position in abeyance until the financial picture becomes clearer in the next year.

Student Engagement

- I am deeply committed to including students in the Faculty. At the beginning of my tenure as Dean at the University of Regina, I worked hard to ensure our students remained engaged and supported during the pandemic. I facilitated a number of virtual town hall sessions for students that included information on how students can maintain good mental health during the shut down. I also worked with the Faculty student services team to organize a virtual convocation ceremony to celebrate their graduation.
- I approved financial support for a student-initiated podcast (<https://www.swss.ca/podcast/>). This podcast has been very popular with students by increasing the connection between practitioners and our social work students. I strongly believe that our students need the ability to become critically reflexive practitioners who graduate with skills to work with individuals, families and communities along with being strong advocates for social change. The connection with practitioners in the social work field supported by our excellent teaching enhances our student knowledge and skills in becoming those critically reflexive practitioners.
- Currently, I am working in partnership with the Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers and an undergraduate student (Bradley Fraser) on an initiative entitled “coffee with a social worker”. The goal of this initiative is to pair recently admitted BSW students with social workers working in the field.

Service to the University

- Within the university, I serve on a number of university wide committees that has allowed me to build relationships with other university departments and has been vital in negotiating cross university initiatives.
- Currently, I serve on the *Campus Merit Committee, Retention Advisory Committee, CTL Advisory Committee, Senate Appeals Committee* and the *Faculty Bargaining Team*.
- In the past, I have served on the *Campus Merit Appeals Committee (one tenure as Chair), DDL Funding Model Review Committee, Academic Conference Fund, Intellectual Property Committee, EDI Senior Strategic Team, Search Advisory Committee for the Dean – Faculty of Graduate Studies, Search Advisory Committee for the Associate Vice-President (Indigenous Engagement)* and the *4 Seasons of Reconciliation Working Group*.

Service to the Community

- I have developed and maintained a strong relationship with the *Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers (SASW)* by serving on the SASW Education Committee. This committee helped plan a research day for March 2024 to celebrate Social Work Week that included faculty members presenting on their research for SASW members. Since June 2023, I have been a registered social worker with the SASW.
- In March 2024, I facilitated the presentation of the photovoice exhibition at the University of Regina entitled *The Mosaic of Black Joy and Wellness Photovoice Exhibit* sponsored by the Saskatchewan Association of Black Social Workers.
- I have a strong relationship with the Ministry of Social Services and have regular meetings with the Assistant Deputy Minister to discuss issues ranging from addressing the shortage of trained social workers in rural and remote regions and the lack of social work placements for social work students.
- I have been a board member of the [*Child Welfare League of Canada*](#) (CWLC) since 2020 and have recently been appointed as a member of the Executive Committee. During my tenure as a CWLC board member, I have been a member of the Indigenous Child & Family Sub-Committee and a member of the Governance Sub-Committee. This national organization seeks to inform the public on best practices within the child welfare field.
- During my tenure as Dean, I have served as an advisory committee member on the [*Canadian Consortium on Child & Youth Trauma*](#) and a advisory committee member on *The Best Practices in Canadian Higher Education*.

Teaching, Research Grants/Publications and Presentations

- Along with my administrative duties, I have maintained my teaching, graduate student supervision and research involvement since joining the University of Regina in 2020.
- In 2021-2022, I developed an undergraduate course (SW 346 Social Work Practice 1) which I taught in a blended format in the Fall 2022.
- As an adjunct professor with the University of Manitoba, Peace and Conflict Studies program, I have continued to supervise graduate students. Currently, I serve as a committee member for a PhD student in the University of Manitoba Peace and Conflict Studies program. Since joining the University of Regina, I served as a faculty advisor for one University of Manitoba graduate student and a committee member for five University of Manitoba graduate students.
- In 2020, I was a co-investigator on a CIHR Project Grant entitled, *The Relationship between Health and Child Protection Services Involvement among Parents in Manitoba, Canada* (\$ 393,979.00). I am a co-author on a recent peer reviewed publication listed below.
- In 2020, I co-authored a book chapter with Dr. Regine King entitled *What does reconciliation mean to newcomers post TRC?* This book chapter was a result of a research project that I completed while working at the University of Manitoba.
- In 2021, I was co-author on a peer reviewed article entitled *Taking up a social work identity: Preparing undergraduate students for entry-level generalist practice* that was published in the Canadian Social Work Review. This journal publication was a result of a research project that I completed while working at the University of Manitoba.

- In 2022, I published a book chapter entitled, *Child Protection in a Rural Setting* that drew on my almost 20 years of experience in the social work field. The book entitled *Rural and Northern Social Work Practice: Canadian Perspectives* was co-edited by Drs. Bonnie Jeffery and Nuelle Novik with OEP funding.
- In 2024, I was a co-author on a publication entitled *Identifying Newborn Discharge to Child Protection Services: Comparing Discharge Codes from Birth Hospitalization Records and Child Protection Case Files*. The data used in this 2024 publication was a result of the CIHR Project Grant listed above.
- In 2021, I presented along with Laurie MacKensize on our co-authored paper entitled *The Waters of Sexual Exploitation: Understanding the World of Sexually Exploited Youth* at the conference From Awareness to Action – Supporting Systemic Responses to Sexual Violence Conference University of Regina, Regina, Saskatchewan.
- In 2023, I reviewed two submissions for the journal [*Child Welfare*](#).
- I have been a guest speaker in a number of social work classes on the topic of the best interests of the child (SW 414 and SW 811) based on my experience in the child welfare field.
- I have been an invited speaker at a number of university events including:
 - Panelist on the *Faculty of Science’s Professional Development Day on Reconciliation – Topic: Indigenous Identity*. University of Regina. (August 22, 2023)
 - Panelist on the *URSU Rhetoric Equity Series; A Discussion about Social Inequities and their Effects on Health Outcomes*. University of Regina. (November 24, 2022).
 - Speaker on the *New Faculty Orientation – Topic: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)*. University of Regina. (August 23, 2021).
 - *Overview of the Faculty of Social Work*. University of Regina Senate. (June 1, 2022).
 - *Moves to “Decolonize” & “Indigenize” Higher Education: A Critical Examination of Western Canadian Universities and the Trouble with Terms*, Lunch & Learn Series, Social Work Research Centre, Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina. (April 27, 2021) Co-presented with Dr. Michele Sorensen.
 - *Recognizing our Diversity and Taking Action Against Racism*, Panel Member, University of Regina EDI Townhall. (June 12, 2020).
 - *Introduction to Intergroup Dialogue*, University of Regina EDI Townhall. (July 9, 2020).

Finally, I have continued to engage in professional development by attending over 30 virtual seminars and two in person conferences over the past 4 years (as outlined in my CV). I believe my accomplishments in the past 4 years has laid a strong foundation if I am appointed for a further 5-year tenure as Dean of the University of Regina, Faculty of Social and would be honoured if given that opportunity.

Dr. Cathy Rocke
May 13, 2024