Welcome to the 2019-20 academic year at the University of Alberta! I hope that all of you had an enjoyable summer and that the first few weeks of the new term are going well. For those of you joining GFC for the first time: welcome to academic governance. I look forward to working with you in the months ahead.

We know that we are in a period of uncertainty and that we will face challenges. The agenda for our first meeting includes opportunities for us to discuss some of these key issues and concerns. Provost Steven Dew, Vice-President (Finance & Administration) Gitta Kulczycki, and I will provide an overview of our current situation in light of provincial and national contexts, and open the discussion on areas where we see opportunities to take action.

As we discussed at the final GFC meeting in June, the university has been reviewing its free expression policy framework over the past year. We are now moving onto the development of a statement or policy that will clearly communicate and support free expression within our post-secondary community and across our campuses. At this month’s meeting, GFC will have the opportunity to provide feedback on a set of Draft Principles on Free Expression. The draft principles were developed, in part, from input received from GFC in June and your continued engagement will be vital to the development process. In addition to discussion at GFC, the draft principles will also be brought to Academic Planning Committee and governance meetings. Opportunities for all faculty, staff, and students to provide input, include three town halls across our campuses and via email free.expression@ualberta.ca.

I also want to alert you to an important initiative that will arrive in your inboxes in early October: the Faculty and Staff Engagement Survey. More information about this will be shared at the meeting, but I’d like to highlight how essential your participation will be. From this survey, we will gain understanding about U of A’s culture and where changes are needed to foster a strong, engaged, and empowered faculty and staff community.

Lastly, I invite all of you to join me for this year’s State of the University Address:

Tuesday, October 1, 2019
12 p.m. – 1 p.m.
Convocation Hall, Old Arts Building
Dimensions Charter
Equity, diversity, and inclusion are values that the University of Alberta takes very seriously and has championed for a long time. At an event held on North Campus in August with Minister of Science and Sport Kirsty Duncan, I formally signed and endorsed the Dimensions Charter. Signing the Dimensions Charter aligns with our own EDI Strategic Plan and shows, on a national level, our full support for these initiatives.

KEY TALKING POINT:

We strive for a university community that embraces equity and diversity as fundamental to achieving excellence in all that we do—in learning, teaching, research, service, and community engagement.

Indigenous Initiatives
A key component of building an equitable and inclusive university is responding to the Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Dr. Florence Glanfield was appointed to the new role of Vice-Provost [Indigenous Programming and Research] on August 1, 2019 and will lead the Indigenous Initiatives Portfolio.

Congratulations to the Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute (CILLDI) for celebrating its 20th anniversary in June. This important institute facilitates programs to teach, preserve, and revitalize Indigenous languages.
EXPERIENCE

School in Cortona
In June 2019 U of A’s School in Cortona celebrated its twentieth anniversary. Through this program students have the opportunity to study classics, art history, political science, and Italian in an immersive environment, and the unique campus in Italy facilitates hands-on experiences, field trips, and guest lectures. Many thanks to the Faculty of Arts for establishing and maintaining this program, and to the Go Abroad team in University of Alberta International for their work to encourage and facilitate global learning experiences for our students.

Bugs 101
Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) remain popular with both internal and external users. Joining the very popular courses Dinos 101, Indigenous Canada, and Mountains 101, the new course Bugs 101 launched in July and had over 4,500 enrollments in just one month. To date, over 6,000 students have enrolled.

National Champions
In August, the Pandas tennis team won the 2019 Tennis Canada University Championships, making this the twenty-sixth consecutive season that a University of Alberta team has won a national championship. Congratulations to the team and to all of our athletes for their hard work and dedication during the 2018-2019 season.

New Programs
This academic year, BA students can enrol in a new, streamlined degree program: Modern Languages and Cultural Studies with a specialty in language studies or cross-cultural studies. This unique degree program is not offered elsewhere in Canada, and replaces several previously-available individual degree programs. The program emphasizes skills building and experiential learning while integrating language skills, cultural literacy, and community-based learning.

Changes approved by GFC’s Academic Standards Committee approved for the Peter Lougheed Leadership College are now in effect. Because of these changes, the Foundations of Leadership program is now open to all students, year-long courses are semester-length, students can take PLLC courses as early as their second year, and specified leadership courses in other departments will count towards the PLLC Certificate in Interdisciplinary Leadership Studies.
Research Funding
Our researchers continue to attract the attention and support of funders. Three recent examples stand out:

- In July, an unprecedented three U of A researchers each received a prestigious $2.5 million Partnership Grant through SSHRC to fund projects focused on how history is taught in K-12 classrooms, the preservation of Plains Cree and Tsuut’ina languages, and improvements to evidence-based testing for children.
- In August, 10 U of A researchers received a total of $2.2 million from the Canada Foundation for Innovation.
- In August, the Government of Canada announced $135,000 in funding for the Wahkohtowin Law and Governance Lodge, which was established in February with a grant from the Alberta Law Foundation. A collaboration between the Faculties of Native Studies and Law, this initiative facilitates programs around traditional Indigenous governance and laws.

Signature Areas Development
In For the Public Good, our community committed to identifying a portfolio of signature research and teaching areas where we are, or will be, recognized as global leaders, in position to play a key role in addressing complex challenges. By establishing signature areas, the U of A will increase its capacity to change by nurturing dynamic, innovative multi- and inter-disciplinary teams that are able to attract major, interdisciplinary grants and take multi-faceted approaches to problems. We have had a few exciting developments related to Signature Areas since our last meeting:

- Energy Systems Signature Area formally launched in May.
- Also in May, the Signature Areas Development Panel approved the creation of a new signature area: Situated Knowledges: Indigenous People and Place [SKIPP].
- The first Intersections of Gender conference will take place October 3-4 on North Campus.

Awards of Excellence
In July, two professors emeriti were named to the Order of Canada for their significant research contributions. John England was recognized for his environmental advocacy and research involving the Canadian Arctic, and Brian Sykes was recognized for his work related to biochemistry, including groundbreaking protein research.

Earlier this month, three of our researchers were announced as Royal Society of Canada inductees: Liang Li [Department of Chemistry, Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada], Yang Liu [Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Member of the College of New Scholars], and Zubia Mumtaz [School of Public Health, Member of the College of New Scholars].

Susan Chatwood from the School of Public Health was awarded the Governor General’s Polar Medal for her significant research contributions related to work in Northern Canada.
ENGAGE

U of A’s United Way Campaign
Our annual United Way Campaign will officially take place October 9 - 25. Over the summer, the organizing committee has been recruiting staff to join the team as United Way Team Members and Ambassadors. My thanks to all who have volunteered to help us surpass last year’s total of $658,000.

Visit to China
On October 6, I will depart on a one-week trip to Beijing and Shanghai for a series of meetings, keynote lectures, and events that will continue to strengthen the university’s connections with key alumni and institutions in China. Some highlights of my itinerary include renewing a student exchange agreement with Tsinghua University, and delivering a public lecture about “Building World Class Universities” at East China Normal University.

Our PhD Students are In-Demand
The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research recently completed the first PhD Career Preparation and Outcomes study with over 4,000 U of A PhD graduates participating. The results suggest that graduates are in-demand in diverse fields and sectors. More than 99 per cent of PhD graduates surveyed are currently employed, and 80 per cent secured jobs before graduation.

Community Engagement Consultations
You will recall that this time last year, University Relations launched a consultation process to gather input from internal and external community partners. In the past year more than 60 engagement sessions were held, in addition to online forums. More than 1200 people have provided feedback to date.
Integrated Asset Management Strategy
At our May meeting, the Campuses and Facilities Safety and Security Working Group shared their report. Aligned with that report, security updates were made to HUB Mall and Residence over the summer. As of August 20, most exterior ground-level doors can be accessed by residents only. Five stairwells and pedways allow for public entry during HUB Mall business hours; after-hours only residents and tenants have access.

The Board of Governors voted unanimously in support of the Integrated Asset Management Strategy in June, and one of the first projects in that portfolio—upgrades to the Dentistry/Pharmacy Centre—are well underway.

Budget Planning
On September 3, the provincial government released the report and recommendations of the MacKinnon Blue Ribbon Panel, with three recommendations specific to Advanced Education. Once the provincial budget is tabled later this fall, we will have a better idea of how these recommendations impact our university and the post-secondary sector in Alberta.

UniForum Program Update
As mentioned in previous reports, the university is participating in the UniForum Program in order to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of administrative services across campus. In May, the second UniForum Satisfaction survey was administered. In June, UniForum Activity Coding began. This process will help capture data on how support services are resourced across the university. Cubane Consulting will be collecting and analyzing the data, and we expect to start receiving high-level results in December 2019.

Access Open Minds Program
The nation-wide ACCESS Open Minds program has now been in place at U of A for over six months, and in that time the number of initial consultations available through Clinical and Counseling Services has increased by 15 per cent.
Leadership Transitions
In July we welcomed the following people to their new roles:

- Dr. Demetres Tryphonopoulou (Dean, Augustana Campus)
- Dr. Matina Kalcounis-Rueppell (Dean, Faculty of Science)
- Dr. Cen Huang (Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-Provost International)
- David Percy (Interim Dean, Faculty of Law)
- Dr. Maria Mayan (Interim Dean, Faculty of Extension)

On August 16, the Government of Alberta appointed Kathryn (Kate) Chisholm as Chair of the University of Alberta Board of Governors, and also appointed five new members to the Board of Governors. I would like to thank former Board Chair Michael Phair and the outgoing Board members for their commitment and service to the university.

Most recently, on September 12, we announced that Dr. Brenda Hammelgarn will be joining us as Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, effective January 1, 2020.

Thank you for your continued dedication to academic governance at the University of Alberta.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

David H. Turpin, CM, PhD, LLD, FRSC
President and Vice-Chancellor