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Eric Charron
Deputy Minister
Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration
Department of Advanced Education, Skills & Immigration
160-450 Broadway
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0V8
dmaesi@leg.gov.mb.ca

Dear Mr. Charron:

We would like to respond to what we heard at the PSAF consultation on Friday, June 17 as well as share again the feedback we provided in the consultation process. We welcomed the opportunity to share our perspectives, and we do hope to have the opportunity to elaborate further in direct discussions both with you and with Minister Reyes.

We want to reiterate that post-secondary institutions already are accountable both to government and to the people of Manitoba. We consistently demonstrate our commitment to that accountability, including through the established reporting and accountability mechanisms of our Board of Governors. Any Manitoban who wishes to understand how UM allocates resources has full access to our budgets and financial reports, which are all made public. Our Senate meetings are also accessible to the public and we continue to engage in a number of measures to meaningfully connect with the broader community including sharing stories of impact that demonstrate our value to Manitobans.

Additionally, we recognize that government has established a set of reporting expectations that are designed to ensure that you receive the information you need from us, and we consistently complete all reports as requested, providing the level of detail possible with the templates we are given and sometimes working outside the template to provide all relevant information. For example, our annual financial report and quarterly financial submissions provide a great deal of accountability data to the province. The annual report is tabled in the Legislature and made available publicly by UM.

Specific to the discussion on metrics, we continue to assert that in a sector of this size, alignment and progress on shared priorities can be achieved without a new system of metrics. In fact, we believe there is potential for the large amount of data we already collect and submit to be put to greater use.

However, for the imposition of any new metrics, we must first:

- Seek to develop a system that recognizes the different strengths and contributions among all Manitoba institutions. As Manitoba's only research university, we are in a sector all our own.

- Commit to things we can move and measure. Employment and earnings by graduates, for example, are not within the institutions' control.
- Select only those metrics that are long-term in nature. Many of the things that are important in post-secondary education are multi-year in nature. Our shared objective should be continuous improvement over the long-term, not short term, quick 'fixes'.
- Refrain from specifically tying funding to metrics as this is not necessary to motivate post-secondary institutions to make progress. Lessons from other jurisdictions show that tied funding generates unintended consequences; making progress on specific metrics for example can come at a cost to other priorities, such as accessibility. Furthermore, focusing on specific metrics can have the effect of punishing institutions for building programs that may not connect directly to these specific metrics, such as those that address equity and social justice.
- Some metrics that PSIs could report on in the short term include:
 - Board fulfilment of legislative requirements
 - Work Integrated Learning / Experiential Learning
 - Student Satisfaction
 - Supporting Indigenous Reconciliation
 - Research Impact
 - Industry / Community Partnerships
 - Fundraising / Community Engagement
- Implementation timing should be phased in to allow for data collection and establishing trends and appropriate benchmarks.

As noted in the OAG report, a successful framework requires government to communicate a clear vision and objectives for the post-secondary system, otherwise the process to develop a set of metrics simply invites micromanagement and intrusions on autonomy without transparent benchmarks. Once the government has confirmed its long-term vision, institutions should be allowed to develop measures to demonstrate how they contribute to the broader system.

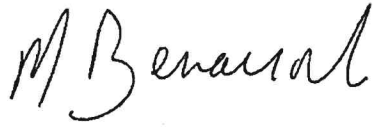
I would also reiterate that UM's ability to support the vision and objectives for the post-secondary system and to engage in long-term planning, reporting and the pursuit of specific outcomes would greatly benefit from multi-year funding commitments from government, alongside a transparent tuition policy framework.

Current monitoring and reporting practices already support accountability. If an additional layer of oversight is expected going forward, this may require an investment to support the collection of additional data.

UM, along with all of its post-secondary partners, is committed to having open and honest conversations as a part of this process. However, it is important that these discussions reflect the benefits our post-secondary institutions continue to deliver to this province every day. UM is built on the strength of our community and our relationship with the people of Manitoba is a big part of our continuing growth.

We look forward to continuing our discussions and hope to have provided clarity on our position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M Benarroch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter "M" being particularly large and stylized.

Michael Benarroch, Ph.D.
President and Vice-Chancellor

- C: Madhur Sharma, Chief of Staff to the Honourable Jon Reyes, Minister of Advanced Education,
Skills and Immigration
Dr. Catherine Cook, Vice-President (Indigenous)
Dr. Diane Hiebert-Murphy, Provost & Vice-President (Academic)
Dr. Mark Torchia, Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning)