



**Senate Reception  
Annual Address to Past and Present Senators**

**February 25, 2010  
5:30 pm – 7:30 pm**

**PCL Lounge  
CCIS Lecture Theatres**

**I.V. Samarasekera, OC  
President and Vice-Chancellor**

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- Thank you, Linda.
- Distinguished guests, senators—past and present—friends and partners—welcome!
- Thank you so much for taking a break from the Olympics to join us tonight.
- What an exciting time it's been for Canada—for Vancouver, our athletes, and yes, for the U of A.
- Permit me to boast for just a couple of minutes—whenever I have a chance, I like to remind people of the U of A's connection to the games.
- We have faculty working behind the scenes helping to meet the psychological and medical needs of athletes, but we also have a few others working a little close to the front line.
- Rob Krepps, U of A curling coach, is there advising the women's curling team—helping them win tomorrow. Go Alberta!

- Another curler, Marc Kennedy, is the second on Kevin Martin's curling team—also major gold medal contenders.
- Alumna Melody Davidson is coaching Canada's women's hockey team to what I hope is the gold medal as I speak. Does anyone know the score?
- And tomorrow, two more alumni—Neville Wright and David Bissett—will be competing as the brakemen of each of Canada's two four-man bobsleigh teams.
- On a different kind of stage, our graduating BFA acting class will be in Vancouver performing the play "Spine" during the Paralympics as part of VANOC's Cultural Olympiad.
- The U of A's presence at the winter Olympics is a proud moment for all of us—and an inspiring reminder for me of how we are out there in the world participating in the events that matter to the global community.
- Back here at home, we have our share of excitement.
- Tonight's reception might not be Olympian in proportions but it **is** nonetheless noteworthy.
- This is the first event to be held in the PCL Lounge of the Centennial Centre for Interdisciplinary Science.
- Isn't this a wonderful space?
- Senators: This is the future of post-secondary education and research.

- There is still a lot to be done, but this part of the centre—the lecture theatre complex—is nearly completed and we thought we'd take advantage of tonight's event to share our excitement about the building with you.
- Why is the Centennial Centre for Interdisciplinary Science the future of post-secondary education and research?
- In the past, I've spoken with you about how undergraduate students can benefit from attending a research-intensive university like the University of Alberta.
- I know that it can sometimes be difficult to see how what happens in a lab connects to teaching in a first or second year classroom, but this building will change that.
- Surrounding us here in the PCL Lounge is some of the 90,000 square feet of exterior glass that will open up CCIS to the outside world. We look through the glass and see the beauty of the river valley and the heart of the city and we are reminded of how this campus is connected to the broader community outside of its walls.
- Now, imagine that 136,000 square feet of glass—almost 50% more than will face the outside world—will line the **interior** walls of CCIS—opening up the world of science to the students and members of the public who will walk through the halls.
- Students will see science as it happens—they will be able to track how it changes day-by-day and see how scientists work together to achieve advancements and make the big break-throughs.

- They themselves will be directly involved in the research environment—an environment with features that are unique across Canadian university campuses.
- As the name of this new building suggests, the future of research is in interdisciplinary approaches.
- Scientific research still demands highly specialized knowledge and skills, but to solve the complex challenges the global community faces, we are convinced that discoveries will be achieved faster and solutions developed more efficiently through interdisciplinary collaboration.
- Christine Szymanski [shh-man-ski] and her team of 10 researchers, for instance, are bringing together the skill sets from carbohydrate science and nanotechnology to improve treatments and diagnostics for food-borne bacteria such as salmonella and listeria.
- But CCIS is not only about creating interdisciplinary research spaces for like this—it is ultimately about an integrated, interdisciplinary approach to learning at all levels.
- The lecture halls behind [in front of?] us, for example, are designed to take advantage of the latest information technologies for use in teaching.
- If you're wondering what some of these new technologies look like, I hope you will have a conversation with the faculty and staff members over \_\_\_\_\_ who have joined us this evening.
- With us tonight are:

- Eleni Stroulia, iCORE chair in Computing Science,
  - Sharla King, director of the Health Sciences Education and Research Commons,
  - Patricia Boechler, director of the Masters program in Educational Technology,
  - Mike Carbonaro, professor in the department of Educational Psychology and
  - Jeff Klassen from the Centre for Teaching and Learning.
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- They'll be happy to show you how technologies which create virtual environments are starting to be used in their classrooms around campus.
  - Using virtual spaces, students can see how their learning and training can and will be used in real-life situations.
  - Take a look and you'll be surprised at what's possible.
  - CCIS will not only make the latest teaching technologies available, it will also continue to facilitate active, in-person exchange between instructors and students and among students themselves.
  - In classrooms, there's plenty of space to move around, to work in groups, to demonstrate scientific experiments, to put on performances, to bring in special guests and so on.
  - The building also includes new spaces outside of the classroom for students to meet, talk to each other, and collaborate in their learning.

- Outside the building altogether, quad has also become larger creating more student space for interaction and relationship building across campus.
- When CCIS is fully completed, the scientific disciplines within it will be grouped around five interdisciplinary approaches:
  - Integrated Earth and Landscape Management,
  - Nanostructures and New Materials,
  - Resource Geosciences,
  - Chemical Biology and Proteomics, and
  - Planetary Dynamics.
- Let me give you an example of how this interdisciplinary approach is changing how we teach.
- Within the area of resource geosciences, a new Masters level program was launched this past September in Integrated Petroleum Geosciences bringing together geophysicists, geologists, and petroleum engineers.
- This program came into being in response to industry and student demand for greater cross-disciplinary training in the complexities of oil and gas exploration and exploitation.
- So, CCIS is not just creating hundreds of new spaces for Alberta's students—but spaces in programs that will be in high demand upon their graduation.

- It is our hope that CCIS not only inspires new thinking in between the science disciplines but also between the sciences and the arts.
- The floor that we are standing on today is an example of what we mean. This floor is just one part of a 40,000 square foot mosaic that will flow throughout the entire facility.
- The work of artist, Scott Parsons, the floor is a visual representation of the multiple fields of inquiry that will be alive in the building.
- I think that you are probably starting to understand why we're so excited about this new facility.
- I know that concerns about the budget have been in the news a lot lately, but this building is testament to what is being accomplished thanks to major government investment in Alberta's universities over the last several years.
- Having state-of-the-art infrastructure like CCIS on our campus is one reason why the University of Alberta is taking a leading position among the best universities in Canada and the world.
- My thanks to Dean Taylor for his continuing leadership in the development of CCIS—his energy and commitment never flags.
- And my thanks to the Senate for continuing to be among the U of A's best advocates. Thank you for your gifts of time and enthusiastic support for the university, our students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

- I hope you enjoy the rest of the evening and have a productive meeting tomorrow.
- Thank you.