

President’s Remarks on the Retirement of the Chair of the Governing Council, Ms Rose M. Patten

There is one other retiring member of the Council whose work we have not yet recognized. Rose Patten is completing nine years of service on the Governing Council, including two years as Vice-Chair and three years as Chair.

Before her election as Vice-Chair of the Governing Council, Ms Patten served for two years as Vice-Chair of the Business Board. Her membership on the Business Board began on July 1, 1992 – almost exactly 15 years ago – as a co-opted lay member, and continued with her appointment to the Governing Council on July 1, 1998 in an uninterrupted record of service to governance and the University.

During her years as Chair of the Governing Council, Rose has provided exemplary leadership during a time of unprecedented transition in the senior administration of the University. Her first responsibility as Chair was to recommend the appointment of the Honourable Frank Iacobucci as Interim President – an inspired appointment that strengthened the University as it continued to pursue its vision. As regards her leadership and management of the Search Committee for the fifteenth President of the University, I think it is important to separate process from outcome! On process, suffice it to say that the “charter of expectations” that Rose Patten led the Committee in developing forms the core of standards we have adopted for all searches within the University. We learned last week that Shirley Hoy, Toronto’s city manager, has also introduced similar standards for the city government.

Rose is utterly committed to excellence in governance. She has exemplified high standards of conduct for meetings of the Council that have re-invigorated and fostered good governance at the University. Her discipline and focus in presiding at Council meetings has encouraged courteous, respectful and civil debate.

Of course, the role of Chair of the Governing Council includes much more than chairing meetings effectively. One of the most crucial responsibilities for the Chair is to ensure the working relationships with the senior administrators are based on open and frank communication, and on mutual respect. I speak for all administrators in affirming Rose’s capabilities in this regard.

Rose also understands deeply the critical interaction between governance and administration and the essential role of the Chair in this regard. Moreover, she has a thorough and nuanced understanding of the complex issues that we face – and will face in the future – and has brought her exceptional strategic expertise to every discussion and challenge.

Another important and often exhausting task is the involvement of the Chair in key events within the University community. Rose, your presence at the countless ceremonies, lunches, dinners, ground-breakings, and receptions has been greatly appreciated by all. Your dedication and your participation, always gracious and elegant, have been a hallmark of your stewardship and convey

to the University community a sense that all matters are well in hand and that you care deeply about this institution.

We pride ourselves at the University on our leadership position in Canada. And I can attest that among chairs of governing bodies, Rose Patten is acknowledged as a leader in governance.

Rose, at the start of the year, you reminded members that we were collectively and individually stewards of the University. Our stewardship as governors had to leave the University a better place, and every decision we made had to be guided by that principle. You reminded us that effective governors were those who provided oversight, insight, and foresight on matters facing the University, and who were able to take a value-added approach to governance.

Your leadership and your standing as an exemplar for these principles has provided a model of conduct now and in the future for all members of the Governing Council. You have given unselfishly of your time, your knowledge and your insights in order to leave the University a better place. And you have done all with enormous poise and grace, this while maintaining a grueling schedule with one of the most demanding executive positions in Canadian corporate life.

Rose, on a personal note, I have had the great privilege over the past twenty years of dealing with many council, committee, and corporate board chairs in many different situations – locally, nationally and internationally. I have not observed or interacted with a more effective chair. On behalf of all members of the Council and the University community, let me simply say thank you for your dedication, commitment and extraordinary service.