

## Three Years - Four Installations/Inaugurations

*Presented by Catherine Bickford-White, C.C.E.P.  
University of Regina, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.*

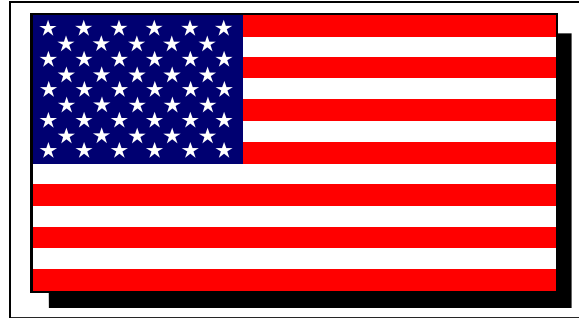
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I am pleased to present to you the planning process the University of Regina undertook as we worked through the installations of three presidents and a chancellor in three years.

I will walk you through the steps we took and what worked for us.

First, I need to talk about the language, as I've learned when it comes to ceremonies, Canadians and Americans don't always speak the same terms. I will be using Canadian terms in this paper.



**Convocation** is the term we use for the ceremony in which our graduates get their degrees.

**Graduation** is a term usually used in reference to Grade 12, not university.

**Commencement** is also a term that we do not use for any of the ceremonies.

**Inauguration** is a term we do not use.

**Installation** refers to the ceremony and activities around the installation of a new president or Chancellor.

A **Chancellor** is usually a figurehead, non-resident head; most often, the actual chief executive of a university is the President and Vice-Chancellor.

**Convocation** may be held for many different reasons such as awarding honorary degrees, to celebrate the opening of an academic year or an anniversary.

**Graduation or Commencement** is the crowning achievement to the academic year.

**Inauguration** encompasses a sequence of public events, which may include a play, concert performance and speech that celebrates the installation of a president. It is called an **investiture** if the ceremony is small and private.

**Installation** is the point in time the president is bestowed with the articles of office.

**Chancellor** seems to vary greatly throughout the States; some institutions do not have them, while in others, this is the chief administrative officer.

## **Where to Start?**

- **Talk to your incoming President as early as possible.**
- **Does he or she want a separate ceremony for the installation or will it be part of convocation?**
- **Try to get a feel for his or her style: colours, flowers, themes.**

Have a face-to-face with your incoming President as early as possible. If this is the first time you're meeting this person, take a good look at clothing, appearance, mannerisms and other items that indicate personal style. Find out what is important to him or her and what needs to happen in order to make the installation a success. As event planners, we create or keep the traditions of our campus; this is an extremely important time for your incoming president, his or her family, and your campus. You need to get it right.

Most presidents have attended other installations and, therefore, will have opinions of them, good and bad. It's usually a good conversation starter. Few presidents just have the installation ceremony; there are usually other events surrounding it. We've had everything from a campus-wide lunch to a month-long celebration throughout the various faculties. All have had a private dinner for family and friends.

Budget is always an important issue, so it's always good to address it right at the beginning.

## **And then what?**

- **Gather a committee:**
  - **Associate Registrar**
  - **University Secretary**
  - **University Secretary's Support Staff**
  - **Director of Communications**
  - **Event Director**

Our committee grew for each installation that we did. The first one was just the associate registrar and I. The first time we worked together was on a design that was used in all the paper pieces, which included invitations for all the events and the convocation program. The University Secretariat was involved in the second installation, as she oversees the actual convocation ceremony. For the third installation, the University Secretary's support staff became involved. By the fourth one, the Director of Communications was part of the team. The makeup of the committee may vary a great deal depending on what roles people play at your institution. Just realize that there is way too much to do on your own.

**Create a task list and divide it up:**

- **This is how we did it:**

**Associate Registrar**

- Investiture
- Convocation Reception
- Music for Convocation
- Greetings for Convocation

**University Secretary**

- Invocation
- Convocation Address
- Awards
- Investiture

**University Secretary's Support Staff**

- Reply list for all events

**Director of Communications**

- Communication needs

**Event Director**

- Invitations for all events
- Facilities and logistics for all events
- Greetings for all events
- Music for events other than Convocation
- Special guests of the President
- Dinner (location, program, menu, favours)

Everyone works a little differently, and our group worked more from a meeting agenda than a task list. We all knew what needed to be covered, and where each of us did our best work, so we went from there. It is important to have a group of people with diverse skills, who are able to support one another. We held meetings as required; they became more frequent closer to the actual event.

### **Create a time line:**

- **Use a form that works for you.**
- **Create as much detail as you require.**
- **Share it with those who need to know.**

When I look at a time line, I start at the end, the day of the event, and work backward. How soon before this event do I need to have my numbers to the caterer? When should the RSVP date be? I know I'll need to call people who don't reply, so I have to allow for that. When do I want my programs to be ready? And so on.

### **Start the invitation process:**

- **Send save the date letters to VIPs.**
- **Decide which functions require an invitation – paper vs. email invitation.**
- **Put your imagination to work and see where it takes you.**

For all the convocations, I was given a lot of leeway on the invitation design. This has worked well, as I love to stretch my creative abilities. I usually come up with a theme based on what I've learned about the incoming President, and then we work it into the paper pieces and table decor. I have a great designer in the print shop that helps to create my vision.

***This is an example of an invitation that we sent out in PDF format for platform party guests:***



Dr. William F. Ready, Q.C., Chancellor,  
and the Senate of the University of Regina  
invite you to attend, as a member of the Platform Party, the

### 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Convocation

and

### Installation of Dr. Vianne Timmons

Seventh President

and

Vice-Chancellor  
of the University of Regina

Saturday, October 18, 2008

2:00 p.m.

The Theatre  
Conexus Arts Centre

200A Lakeshore Drive  
Regina, Saskatchewan

Please arrive for assembly  
in the Theatre Lobby  
by 1:30 p.m.



Convocation Reception  
4:00 - 5:30 p.m.  
Convention Hall (lower level)

### Platform Party RSVP

To ensure you have a seat with the Platform Party, please convey  
the following information to the University Secretariat by October 6, 2008.

Phone: (306) 585-4956

E-mail: [convocation@uregina.ca](mailto:convocation@uregina.ca)

- Name
- Address
- Telephone
- E-mail
- I will take part in the Platform Party  
yes or no
- I will require an academic hood/  
stole:  
yes or no  
*If yes, please provide the description  
of the degree or stole you need.*
- I am attending to represent my  
institution, which is:  
*(indicate name of university, college, etc)*
- A member of my family is graduating  
and I would like to hood this  
individual at the ceremony:  
yes or no  
*If yes, please provide:*
  - Name of graduate
  - Relationship
  - Degree that the graduate is receiving
  - The faculty from which the student  
is graduating.

Photo: "Le Jardin de l'esprit (Mind's Garden)" \* Internationally acclaimed Saskatchewan artist Dr. Joe Fafard created the original design for this sculpture when he entered a competition calling for a Canadian war memorial to be located in London, England. Though he was not successful in the competition, the University of Regina greatly benefited in 2005 when Fafard donated his piece, which is now located on University grounds, overlooking Wascana Park. It is the intention of the artist that the viewer imagines what the images represent. Dr. Fafard received an honorary degree from the University of Regina in 1989.



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### **Book the facilities and caterers:**

- **Consider all the events and what will be needed for each.**
- **Meet with your caterer to work on menus for the events.**

We have extremely limited event facilities at our campus, so events that are larger than 100 people are taken off campus. Our Convocation ceremonies are booked years in advance at a facility close to the University that can accommodate the stage production and after-convocation public event, which at the U of R, is a tea. At times, we have done celebratory dinners there as well.



### **Once you get started:**

- **Check in with your incoming President and make sure you are going in the direction that he or she had envisioned.**

As soon as you have the main pieces in place, check back with your President and make sure you're on the right track. The amount of involvement the President may want to have in this process varies considerably. For some, it may be the spouse or partner who takes the reins on this. Show the President or his or her designate the draft invitations, and outline the facilities that have been booked, entertainment options, and anything else that may be of interest.

**Invitations for all events:**

- Family and friends dinner
- Convocation dinner
- Other campus events
- Convocation and platform
- Special guests of the President
- General Convocation

For the presidential events, there has always been a dinner for friends and family, most often the night before the installation. The guest list is provided by the President; most often, this event has occurred in the President's home. Guests are sent a paper invitation.

Guests are also sent a paper invitation to the Convocation dinner. I feel there are some events that require paper invitations, and to me, this is an important one.

For the Convocation event, we are working toward less and less paper. We are now at a point where only special guests receive a paper invite. We've gotten a really good response to the e-mail invitation. This is in PDF format with the same look as the paper invitations and, therefore, helps set our theme.

***This is an example of our general invitation for convocation that we sent out in PDF format:***



Dr. William F. Ready, Q.C., Chancellor,  
and the Senate of the University of Regina  
invite you to attend the

**35<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Convocation**  
and  
**Installation of**  
**Dr. Vianne Timmons**  
Seventh President  
and  
Vice-Chancellor  
of the University of Regina

Saturday, October 18, 2008  
2:00 p.m.  
The Theatre  
Conexus Arts Centre

200A Lakeshore Drive  
Regina, Saskatchewan

A block of tickets is reserved for staff  
and available on a first come, first served basis.

For tickets and/or information:  
Phone: (306) 585-4956  
E-mail: [convocation@uregina.ca](mailto:convocation@uregina.ca)

**Convocation Reception 4:00 - 5:30 p.m.**  
**Convention Hall (lower level)**

Photo: "*Le jardin de l'esprit (Mind's Garden)*" Internationally acclaimed Saskatchewan artist Dr. Joe Fafard created the original design for this sculpture when he entered a competition calling for a Canadian war memorial to be located in London, England. Though he was not successful in the competition, the University of Regina greatly benefited in 2005 when Fafard donated his piece, which is now located on University grounds, overlooking Wascana Park. It is the intention of the artist that the viewer imagines what the images represent. Dr. Fafard received an honorary degree from the University of Regina in 1989.



**Facilities and Logistics for all events:**

- **Our Convocation facility is booked years in advance.**
- **The facility for dinners and campus activities may change with each installation.**

As I mentioned, our campus has limited event facilities, requiring us to go off campus for most events. At times, we will have a dinner at the same facility as the Convocation; at other times, we use a facility close to campus that has a nice space but no catering facilities. One of our campus caterers is amazing and can create some great meals in this space.

**Greetings for all events:**

- **University**
  - **Board**
  - **Faculty**
  - **Staff**
  - **Alumni**
- **City**
  - **Mayor**
- **Province**
  - **Lieutenant Governor**
  - **Premier**

At the last installation, we decided that if someone were bringing greetings at the Convocation, ceremony, we would not have him or her do a repeat performance at the dinner. This helped to cut down the amount of speeches at the dinner. The other thing that you have to deal with is all the written greetings that other universities send. We chose to display them at the Convocation tea.

**Music for events other than Convocation:**

- **Family and friends dinner**
- **Convocation Dinner**
- **Other events**

Music has always played a role in our celebrations. Once again, this has been tailored to the President's preferences. We've had everything from classical, to show tunes, to an Aboriginal singer. They have been both featured entertainment and background music.

### **Special guests of the President:**

- **Friends and family of the President**
- **Spouses or partners of dignitaries on stage**
- **Honorary Degree recipients**
- **Any special guests not on stage**

We have a room set aside at Convocation for any special guests. They receive a different invitation, are met at the door, and are escorted to a room with refreshments. Just before the ceremony begins, they are escorted to their reserved seats. We also insure that they are well taken care of at the dinner events.

### **Dinner:**

- **Location**
- **Program**
- **Menu**
- **Table and room Decor**
- **Favours**

The number of guests will dictate the location of your event. For most of the installations, we had a dinner at the President's home for friends and family the night before the installation and a celebration dinner the day of the installation.

The family and friends dinner is usually informal, takes place the night before the installation, and has no program and minimal entertainment. The menu is chosen by the President. The home is not that large, so most often, it is a casual buffet meal. Being frugal, the table decor is usually the same flowers that are to be used the following night; I just order a few of the table centers early.

The Convocation dinner is usually a bit of a production, but that, too, has varied with the wishes of the President. We have had everything from a very high-end served meal to a casual and fun buffet. Once again, this is usually a reflection of the President.

That being said, at our University, this dinner is hosted by our Board of Governors. The program is usually quite structured and involves those who have not had a chance to speak at the Convocation ceremony. This can mean alumni, representatives of various levels of government, or the Board members, to name a few. I try to schedule speeches between courses, so people are not left sitting for great periods of time. There may also be entertainment to schedule in.

For all the installations I have done, the theme starts with the invitation and continues throughout the whole event, which usually makes the table and room

decor pretty easy. We've only had favours at one of the installations and they, too, reflected the theme.

**What I've learned:**

- **Each President has his or her own idea on what the installation should look like.**
- **Talk to the incoming President as early as possible.**
- **Assemble a good team: you can't do it all.**
- **Start early: six months ahead works well.**
- **Talk to others who have done this before.**
- **The more installations you do, the better you become at them.**

As with most first things, your first installation is always a learning experience, but it is also an exciting time for you and your university. As this is one of the first events that you will do for your President, you want to be sure to get it right. If you follow my lead, I know it will help you and your university shine in the eyes of your President and your community.

**Catherine Bickford-White C.C.E.P.**  
**Special Projects Officer**  
**University of Regina**  
[catherine.bickford-white@uregina.ca](mailto:catherine.bickford-white@uregina.ca)  
**306-585-5628**

