



Convocation 2015
June 5 and 6, 2015
Principal Michael Goldbloom, C.M.'s Address

Friday afternoon

Mr. Chancellor,

Dr. Louis Vachon,

Saturday morning,

Mr. Chancellor,

Dr. Beverley McLachlin,

Saturday afternoon,

Mr. Chancellor,

Dr. Clayton Spencer,

Members of the Class of 2015

Members of Convocation

Families and friends.

Every year, for 172 years, Bishop's has celebrated this special day in the life of our university.

The central role of the Chancellor,
the academic dress,
the Latin citations,
and the other formalities of the Convocation proceedings,
remind us that the idea of the university as a community of learning dates back to the Middle Ages and has endured through the centuries.

Like all great institutions, Bishop's has evolved over the decades as each generation has been charged with ensuring that the University meets the needs of its time.

We can all take pride in knowing that although much has changed, Bishop's continues to pursue its core mission of offering a sound and liberal education to undergraduate students.

We take pride in being an institution of choice for outstanding young people seeking academic excellence and a comprehensive undergraduate experience.

We strive:

- to be a community that instills confidence, courage and a sense of responsibility in its students.
- to be a place that nurtures personal and intellectual freedom and fosters enduring friendships.

Through its National Survey of Student Engagement, the University of Indiana asks university students the question: “if you had it to do over again, would you choose the university you attended?”

The last two times that Bishop’s students participated in this survey, they ranked Bishop’s in the top three universities in Canada.

We are proud that our graduating students consistently tell us that we have delivered on the promises we made to them when they chose Bishop’s.

Much of Bishop’s endures over time, our heritage buildings, our bucolic campus, and most importantly our focus on a liberal education for undergraduates.

But, it is also true that each generation of students reinvents the University.

And the class of 2015 has contributed to Bishop’s being an intellectually vibrant, ambitious and caring community.

J'ai été vivement impressionné par les efforts de nos finissants afin que les valeurs fondatrices de notre université soient transmises à la prochaine génération d'étudiants qui, à leur tour, sauront les adopter et les transmettre.

Ils ont démontré aux étudiants qui les suivent que les valeurs fondamentales que sont

la rigueur,

le respect d'autrui,

l'intégrité

et l'engagement

sont des valeurs sûres et, ce faisant, ils ont marqué de façon positive leur université.

Et grâce à nos étudiants et toute notre communauté universitaire, je peux dire que Bishop's a eu une année exceptionnelle.

Our highest priority is undergraduate teaching.

So we were thrilled when Dr. Jessica Riddell earned a 3M National Teaching Fellowship, Canada's highest teaching honour for university professors.

The award recognizes extraordinary contributions to teaching and learning.

This is the first time a Bishop's professor has received this award.

A few weeks later, Jason Earl, a third year education student earned a 3M National Student Fellowship.

This is also the first time a Bishop's student has received this prestigious award.

Bishop's was one of only three universities in Canada to have both a professor and a student receive a 3M award.

We recently celebrated the 15th anniversary of the Dobson-Lagassé Entrepreneurship Centre.

The goal of the Centre is to support the teaching of entrepreneurship at Bishop's and to stimulate entrepreneurship in the Eastern Townships.

Over its fifteen years the Dobson Lagassé Centre has supported 225 student entrepreneurship projects, 800 businesses and created 200 connections between mentors and entrepreneurs.

I would like to pay tribute to David Monty the Executive Director of the Dobson Lagassé Centre who announced that he will be retiring at the end of this summer.

David, who was a successful entrepreneur himself, has been an outstanding mentor to our students and to many entrepreneurs.

Congratulations are also due to the Bishop's University Commerce Society on winning the 2015 Canadian Association of Business Students Rising star award.

Congratulations as well to Williams School of Business student Zhenyi Chen for his 1st place at the Quebec Regional Entrepreneurship Competition.

Tabitha Brasso-Ernst, who sang that beautiful rendition of Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah we heard at the beginning of Convocation, will be competing in the National Finals of the Canadian Music Competition in Vancouver.

She will be graduating tomorrow with a major in English, and minors in Drama and Music.

The Bishop's University Singers, under the direction of Fannie Gaudette for the first time, had an ambitious and successful year.

They performed Handel's Messiah and Bethoven's 9th Symphony with the Orchestre Symphonique de Sherbrooke, and, in collaboration with local children's choirs, put on a wonderful concert of songs by Canadian artists.

Our men's basketball team won the Quebec championship and went on to play at the National championships in Toronto.

It was a surprise to many - but not to us- that although Bishop's was the smallest university, it had the largest and the most vociferous fans at the tournament.

One of the highlights of this year was the inauguration of the J.H. Price Sports and Recreation Centre.

At \$30 million, it was the largest infrastructure project in the University's history and we are very pleased with the elegance of the architecture and the quality of the facilities.

The inauguration itself was a spectacular day particularly when Jane Molson, of the class of 1963, was the first person to skate out onto the ice.

We were honoured to name the arena after her and her husband Eric.

It was also a special moment when Geoff Molson, the President of the Montreal Canadiens, proclaimed that he and his family bleed Bishop's purple.

So it was a year of achievement and it was also a year of reflection.

Across North America, post-secondary institutions have been increasingly focused on finding ways to support students' diverse needs, specifically addressing issues related to mental health, sexual safety, and gender equity.

At Bishop's we have been working closely with our student government to educate our campus community on these topics, and to improve the way that we support our students.

Last September we welcomed the Date Safe Project to campus for Orientation Week.

Our entire incoming class, as well as more than 100 Orientation Week Volunteers participated in the "Can I Kiss You" presentation, where topics related to enthusiastic consent, the bystander effect, and sexual assault were openly discussed and expectations were clearly outlined.

In February, we welcomed our third annual Mental Health and Wellness Week.

We partnered with the Mood Disorders Society of Canada and we focused on decreasing the stigma related to mental illness, raising awareness about how to facilitate mental health, and encouraging our community to dedicate time to personal wellness.

Recently, we received a generous donation from one of our alumni, which has allowed us to create a new student internship position dedicated to sexual health and safety, and gender equity.

Our goal is to ensure that Bishop's is providing the education, support and resources necessary to create a campus culture of gender equity, and sexual health and safety.

So the campus has been busy, but our community has also been very active beyond the Bishop's bubble.

Our students participated at the national model UN competition in New York City and were named a distinguished delegation ranking them amongst the best of nearly 200 groups.

Our Eastern Townships Resource Center created a new scholar-in-residence exchange program with the State University of New York of Plattsburg.

Our strategic alliance with Acadia, Mount Allison and St. Francis Xavier universities is helping us extend our four institutions' common objectives of providing students from across Canada and the world with the highest quality undergraduate education in a residential setting.

We are now discussing together how technology might enable our four universities to connect to one another and to offer more breadth and depth in our students' experiences while maintaining our intimate environments.

And, our B.E.S.T. program has enabled students to pursue their diverse and ambitious dreams:

- at a science lab in Germany;
- studying Byzantine mosaics in Ravenna, Italy;
- as an intern on Wall Street;
- studying young adult literature in the United States;
- shadowing a cardiac surgeon in Croatia, and
- working in a sound studio in Montreal.

In September, we launched a \$30 million capital campaign – the first in more than a decade – which will help preserve the Bishop's that we love – its small classes, its residential character, the access to professors and the other life-changing experiences that make it so special.

As you know Quebec universities are facing major financial challenges.

We are a public university and our funding is in large measure dependent on government funding.

But private philanthropy has always been and will continue to be a key factor in Bishop's capacity to achieve its high ambitions.

The first objective of the campaign was to equip the John H. Price Centre.

And there are several other important objectives which will allow us to invest further in scholarships, our academic programs, the Williams School of Business and the Dobson-Lagassé Centre.

We still refer to the Abbott, Munster and Kuehner residences as 'Newside' but they were actually built more than 50 years ago and need to be updated.

We will begin that process in August with the renovation of Abbott.

Another major objective of the campaign is to renovate the John Bassett Memorial Library.

The Library was last renovated 30 years ago.

It was configured to accommodate 1500 full-time students.

Today, Bishop's has approximately 2,300 students and we can add to that the 1,100 students of Champlain Regional College who also use the Bassett Library.

So we are trying to serve 3,500 students – as well as faculty and community members – in a building designed for only 1,500 students.

La bibliothèque, c'est la pierre angulaire de toute université, là où on peut trouver des renseignements et générer et partager des idées.

À une époque où l'acquisition des connaissances se fait à une vitesse sans précédent, nous devons adapter la bibliothèque aux réalités du 21^e siècle.

Nous imaginons de nouveaux espaces et de nouvelles technologies qui aideront nos étudiantes et nos étudiants à accéder à l'information et à collaborer ensemble.

Nous imaginons un corps professoral capable de poursuivre ses recherches et d'en diffuser les résultats efficacement.

Nous imaginons enfin un lieu qui sera le cœur spirituel de notre campus.

We are enormously grateful to the class of 2015 for joining with students from other classes in donating one million dollars to this project.

One of the most powerful messages of this gift is that our students have wanted to support future generations of students.

In current parlance they have chosen to 'pay it forward'.

They won't be here to benefit from the renovated library but they have felt indebted to the alumni who have supported them.

And they wished to do the same for the students who will follow.

This fundraising effort is called the Leading the Way Campaign and one of the ways we are leading the way is the support from our faculty and staff.

In a two-week period last September 80% of our faculty and staff made commitments to the campaign.

I suspect that this is unprecedented in Canada where the average participation rate is significantly lower than this.

It would not be possible to recognize every donor but I know that the Bishop's community would want me to honour John Donald of the class of 1960 who established the Donald Lecture Series in perpetuity with a \$3 million gift to Bishop's.

From Roméo Dallaire, Jessie Jackson and Clara Hughes to Michaëlle Jean, Ed Burtynsky and Chris Hadfield, each of our speakers has brought us unique insights and provoked stimulating debates on the most compelling issues and events of our time.

I cannot think of more appropriate way to show support for the essence of what Bishop's is – and what we must constantly aspire to be - than John Donald's decision to give us the means to invite these distinguished speakers to expand our knowledge, to challenge us, to encourage us to reflect, to question and to learn.

John Donald has helped bring the world to Bishop's and this happened in other ways as well.

The imprisonment and flogging of Saudi Arabian blogger, Raif Badawi, has galvanized people around the world but especially here in Sherbrooke where his wife and three young children have sought refuge.

Raif faces ten years in prison and 1,000 lashes after peacefully advocating for religious tolerance and the relaxing of strict Islamic laws in Saudi Arabia.

I have been proud of the mobilization of the Bishop's Community in support of the campaign to free Raif Badawi.

The North American media has come to Bishop's this week because the Montreal Alouettes football team is once again holding its training camp here and has welcomed Michael Sam, the first openly gay professional football player to their team.

Every step that we take on the long human journey towards equality, fairness and respect is important.

We can now look forward to the day when an openly-gay professional athlete will be a non-story.

It is important that we all be engaged in advancing equality and justice in our society.

In this regard it is important to note that this week the Truth and Reconciliation Commission issued its report on Canada's Indian Residential School System and its on-going legacy.

The Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair issued a call for action towards reconciliation.

The Commission did not only call upon governments to act, it called upon us individually and collectively to respond to the legacy of the Residential Schools.

Canada's universities educate more than a million students each year.

But fewer than 10% of Indigenous people in Canada have a university degree compared to 28 % of non-aboriginals

There is an urgent need to close this education gap.

Closing this gap will benefit not only indigenous graduates and their communities but Canada as a whole.

The residential school system attempted to deprive Indigenous Canadians of their customs and traditions and attempted to strip them of their identities.

The education system caused the problem and education must be a central part of the solution to counter the legacy of the deliberate attempt at cultural genocide.

Bishop's offers a welcoming and respectful learning environment and we stand ready to do our part.

Individually and collectively, the Class of 2015 consistently responded to the needs of people less fortunate than themselves here in Sherbrooke and around the world.

Whether it was:

Cystic Fibrosis,

ALS, or

Disadvantaged children,

our students have consistently given of their time, their energy and their resources to help others.

For the past 22 years, the faculty, staff and students of Bishop's University and Champlain Regional College have raised funds to sponsor and support 35 refugees to come to study in Canada.

Three of our Psychology students organized a raffle that raised \$15,000 for three local non-profit organizations including our refugee sponsorship project.

And the community garage sale raised an additional \$17,000 for this important cause.

Our students are concerned with making our world a better place.

So we owe a great debt of gratitude to the Class of 2015 for how they have cared for each other, for this institution and for the world.

Included in Friday afternoon's address

Speaking of gratitude, I would like to take a moment to recognize one of our most respected volunteers who will be stepping down from our Board of Governors:

Stephen Lloyd graduated from Bishop's in 1989 with a degree in Economics and History.

Stephen was the player-coach of the Gaiter's men's volleyball team and he won the Ferguson Cup and the Golden Mitre Award.

He has a demanding law practice at Denton's, one of Canada's major law firms, but he has given a great deal of time, support and guidance to Bishop's.

He served as Chair of our Executive Committee and as Vice Chair of the Board of Governors.

He chaired the Sustainable Development and Land Use Committee and the Ad Hoc Committee for the Sports Centre project.

He served on our Governance Task Force and he drafted the Statutes of the University.

In addition to all of that, he has been a consistent and determined advocate for maintaining the breadth and depth of our academic programs.

And he has been a good friend and wise counsel to me.

Please join me in expressing our gratitude to Stephen for his loyalty, his guidance and his support for Bishop's.

Thank you Stephen.

Included in Saturday morning's address

Speaking of gratitude, I would like to take a moment to recognize one of our most respected volunteers who will be stepping down from our Board of Governors:

Squee Gordon graduated from Bishop's in 1960.

While a student he was an outstanding basketball player.

He was chosen as the team's most valuable player a remarkable four times and was selected as Bishop's Athlete of the Year in 1960.

He went on to become a respected educator and administrator as president of Dawson College in Montreal and for 25 years as president of Humber College in Toronto.

He has been one of the most outstanding volunteer leaders in the history of Bishop's University.

He served as a member of the Corporation from 1971 to 1981, and again from 2003 until today.

He took on the role of Chair of the Board at a critical time for our University helping to guide it from a time of financial crisis and division through to a period of positive growth and unity.

As Principal of Bishop's I could not have asked for a better partner.

He was always available as a sounding board and to provide wise counsel based on his knowledge and enormous affection for Bishop's.

He stepped down as Chair of the Board a year ago and has continued to serve on the Board this year to ensure an effective transition with his successor, Robert Hall.

Squee has made innumerable contributions to Bishop's.

And to the long list of those contributions we can now add a Faculty Leadership Award which he has created.

The Gordon Educational Leadership Development Fund will support faculty in the design and implementation of projects related to educational leadership.

Please join me in expressing our profound gratitude to Squee for his loyalty, his guidance and his leadership.

Thank you Squee.

And now I would like to ask the Class of 2015 to rise together so that we can express our gratitude to them - not for what they have achieved individually - but for what they have contributed collectively to Bishop's.

As I see you standing there together, I am reminded that it was late on a September night, only a few years ago, that many of you stood together on the lawn in front of the Principal's residence singing at the top of your lungs that

you were conditioned to your fate,

you would never graduate,

and that you would stay here forever more.

Well, fortunately, you were wrong about never graduating but I suspect that you were right when you sang the line that “College days will linger ever in our hearts”.

You will certainly linger in ours.

Vous avez fait honneur à votre université, à vos familles et, surtout, à vous-même.

C'est donc avec une grande fierté mêlée d'un peu de tristesse que nous vous disons au revoir.

You have done your university, your families and yourselves proud.

It is with a bittersweet feeling that we bid you adieu.

We do so, however, with confidence that you leave here ready and determined

to choose your own paths

to further the boundaries of knowledge

to care for our planet, and

to do your part in the never-ending quest to advance peace, justice, equality and prosperity in the world.

Nous suivrons vos réalisations avec grand intérêt.

It will be exciting to watch you.

Congratulations for all you have achieved.

Thank you for all you have contributed.

So celebrate tonight.

And tomorrow go out and use the knowledge and skills you acquired at Bishop's to make the better world you believe in.

Congratulations.