

## Media Release

June 24, 2015

### **St. Thomas University Renews Dawn Russell's Term as President and Vice-Chancellor**

The St. Thomas University Board of Governors has reappointed Dawn Russell as President and Vice-Chancellor for a second five-year term beginning July 1, 2016. The renewal follows a comprehensive consultation process that heard from each university constituency.

"I am honoured by the re-appointment and look forward to leading the next exciting phase of St. Thomas University as we work hard to maintain our momentum as the first choice for liberal arts in New Brunswick and one of the top choices in Maritime Canada," said Russell.

"We will continue to deliver a modern, first-class liberal arts education with a strong emphasis on teaching excellence, relevant research, a meaningful student experience and a concern for social justice—these benefit our students and benefit New Brunswick."

"Since she became President and Vice-Chancellor in 2011, President Russell's accomplishments have been outstanding and have served to position St. Thomas very well for the future," said Don Fitzgerald, Chair of the Board of Governors.

"In a short period of time, her achievements in organizational restructuring, building an effective senior management team, developing a five-year strategic plan, and improving openness within the university have been significant."

Fitzgerald said that early in her term, Russell addressed issues related to climate and culture, and took steps to modernize the organizational structure and improve transparency and accountability around key issues. The consensus-building work of the President's Advisory Committee on the Budget, for example, has been critical as the university has begun to address budgetary issues common to the post-secondary sector in the region. Relations with the faculty and staff unions have been positive and have resulted in mutually beneficial collective agreements that were achieved without work stoppages.

With an eye to the future, Russell led the development of a focused and achievable five-year *Strategic Plan* and the early results from a recent 18-month progress report were substantial. Steps to building effective advancement and alumni relations functions are also beginning to produce results.

"St. Thomas University has the largest liberal arts enrolment in New Brunswick and offers many unique programs to students. With education performance measures that demonstrate an outstanding student experience, we have one of the best learning environments in the country. Now President Russell is poised to take STU to the next stage of its development," added Fitzgerald.

Outside of St. Thomas, Russell chairs and serves on several committees for the Atlantic Association of Universities, Atlantic University Sport, and Universities Canada. She is a founding member and a director for the Centre for Law and Democracy, a member of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Foundation for the Advancement of Investors Rights, and a public director of the Mutual Fund Dealers Association of Canada.

Russell is a native of the Miramichi and holds a B.A. from St. Thomas University, an LL.B. from Dalhousie University and an LL.M. from Cambridge University. She served as Dean of Dalhousie Law School (now the Schulich School of Law) for 10 years and held the Purdy Crawford Chair in Business Law prior to her appointment at St. Thomas. She is married to artist Bill Johnson and they have three children.

The reappointment follows a consultation process that solicited feedback from the Board of Governors, faculty, staff, students, Senate, FAUST, STUSAU, the Alumni Association and the Student's Union. Leaders in the post-secondary sector in the region were also consulted.

Fitzgerald said that many of the responses received during the review commented on Russell's willingness and ability to build consensus while still making difficult decisions. Her personal integrity, strong work ethic, and passionate dedication to St. Thomas and the liberal arts were recognized overwhelmingly.

"Like other New Brunswick universities, we do have challenges ahead of us and the progress that President Russell has made will be invaluable as we begin to address these issues. The Board is confident that she has laid the necessary foundation and has the leadership qualities necessary to guide the university as it confronts these challenges," he said.

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