

U of A's Feasby signs on to head Calgary's medical department

Edmonton professor heading south to take over as Medicine dean at U of C

JEN HUYGEN
News Writer

A top professor at the University of Alberta is set to head south to preside over medical students in Calgary.

On 20 February, 2007, University of Calgary President Dr Harvey Weingarten announced the appointment of the U of A's Dr Tom Feasby to the position of dean of the Calgary institution's Faculty of Medicine.

Feasby will take on his new role 1 July, 2007, and will replace current Dean of Medicine Dr Grant Gall, who is leaving after serving two five-year terms in the position.

"I think there's a tremendous opportunity to provide leadership in the faculty, and develop new areas of education and research," Feasby said.

Feasby has held a number of positions over his four years with the U of A, notably Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs with the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, Vice-President (Academic Affairs) with Capital Health, and a professorship in the division of neurology with the Department of Medicine.

According to Feasby, the U of C's stature as a young university, particularly its medical school, presents an interesting juxtaposition to the U of A.

"Calgary is an interesting, developing city. It's an energetic city, and it [has] a relatively young university, only 40 years old, [along with] a young



WAGONS SOUTH Feasby says Calgary and Edmonton need not be rivals.

medical school," he said. "It's much earlier in its evolution than the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry here."

Feasby discussed his intent to focus on fostering new relationships between the U of C's Faculty of Medicine and outside sources.

"I'm most interested in developing the strong partnerships that are required for success in the faculty, and these partnerships are with the community, and with the Calgary Health Region, and with the University of

Calgary," Feasby explained. "But I also would like to say that I'm very keen to work co-operatively and on a provincial basis with the University of Alberta."

"The rivalry [between Edmonton and Calgary], while it can be stimulating, has not always been positive, and I think in many cases we should be aligned in our interests and our goals," Feasby said. "It makes sense for us to work together co-operatively whether it's negotiating with government or developing joint programs on a provincial basis."

NEWS BRIEFS

UKRAINE AMBASSADOR SEES CANADA AS PARTNER IN EDUCATION

Ukraine's ambassador to Canada was on campus Friday, looking to promote academic co-operation and discuss the possibilities of student exchanges between Ukrainian universities and the University of Alberta.

Ihor Ostash was appointed the Ukrainian ambassador to Canada in September 2006, and Friday marked his first visit to Edmonton. Ostash said that this year, which marks the 15th anniversary of diplomatic relations with Canada, is an important chance to strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries.

"In Alberta, there are approximately 300 000 Canadians of Ukrainian descent and that is why, for me, Alberta and Edmonton will be a very serious priority," Ostash said, adding that Canada and Ukraine, both being fairly young countries, share a long tradition of cultural relations.

During the meeting, which was sponsored by the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies (CIUS), Ostash added that along with solidifying political ties with Canada, his visit will include efforts to further scientific research projects between the two countries.

"We are looking to strengthen our civil society internationally. Not only for politicians, not only for business, but also this linkage of research and joint programs like the student exchange program. I hope we can extend student exchanges beyond Kiev," Ostash said.

Summer schools are another opportunity aimed at encouraging overseas students to study in Ukraine, he said.

"The desire by Ukrainian students for a Canadian education is immense, but there is so little information being offered to Ukrainian students that few know much about any exchange programs," Ostash said, adding that one of the main barriers to exchange lies in obtaining a student



JOSH NAULT

FROM KIEV TO CANADA The Ukrainian ambassador stops to visit the U of A.

visa. He said that it's crucial to improve visa accessibility for certain categories of people in Ukraine such as students, artists, and politicians.

Ostash plans on returning to the U of A in May.

Olesia Plokhii, News Staff

NEED FOCUS ON METIS HEALTH: EDGE

More specific research needs to be done into Métis health, says Lois Edge, a doctoral candidate in the University of Alberta's Indigenous Peoples Education Program.

Edge, who's also a researcher with the Métis Centre of the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO), says that this research isn't occurring, even though Métis in Canada represent close to 300 000 people and 31 per cent of the country's total Aboriginal population.

"There is a gap between the health status of Aboriginal people and that of the general population in Canada," Edge said. "[As a result], there is a need for Métis-specific health research as there is minimal available Métis population health data and information."

NAHO's work is backed up by the

2001 Canadian Census, as well as the Canadian Institute of Health Information (CIHI), which shows all Aboriginal populations in Canada, including Métis, lagging behind the rest of the country in every indicator of health. For instance, while most Canadians live long into their 70s, only 4.3 per cent of the total Métis population was over 65 at the time of the census.

According to CIHI, the Métis also fare behind the average Canadian in terms of resistance to disease and other conditions. A Métis person is more likely to be obese, contract an infectious disease, and display high blood pressure, heart problems or arthritis and rheumatism than the average Canadian. These health problems are highlighted by an incidence of diabetes, at six per cent, twice the national average.

With such a high prevalence of disease for Métis in so many areas, Edge said there's a need for broadly based research to determine the root causes behind it.

"There is a need for the adoption of a holistic approach to Métis population health, inclusive of the mental, physical, spiritual, emotional, and social aspects of health and wellness," Edge concluded.

Thomas Wagner, News Staff

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